



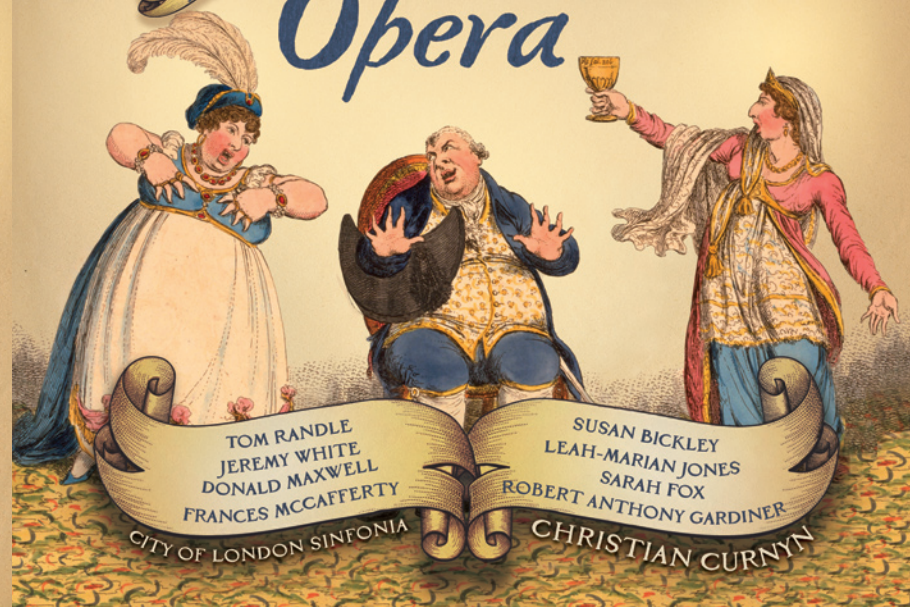
CHRISTIAN CURNYN

CHAN 10548(2)

CHANDOS

BENJAMIN
BRITTEN
presents
JOHN GAY'S

The Beggar's Opera



TOM RANDLE
JEREMY WHITE
DONALD MAXWELL
FRANCES MCCAFFERTY
CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA

SUSAN BICKLEY
LEAH-MARIAN JONES
SARAH FOX
ROBERT ANTHONY GARDINER
CHRISTIAN CURNYN



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Benjamin Britten with Peter Pears

Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)

The Beggar's Opera, op. 43

(1947 – 48)

Ballad Opera in three acts

Realised from the original airs of John Gay's ballad opera (1728)

Words by John Gay (1685 – 1732)

with alterations and additions by Tyrone Guthrie (1900 – 1971)

Full score prepared for publication by David Matthews

Dedicated to James Lawrie

Mrs Peachum	Susan Bickley <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Mr Peachum	Jeremy White <i>bass-baritone</i>
Polly Peachum	Leah-Marian Jones <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Captain Macheath	Tom Randle <i>tenor</i>
Filch	Robert Anthony Gardiner <i>tenor</i>
Lockit	Donald Maxwell <i>baritone</i>
Lucy Lockit	Sarah Fox <i>soprano</i>
Mrs Diana Trapes	Frances McCafferty <i>mezzo-soprano</i>

Ladies of the Town
(divided into sopranos, mezzo-sopranos and contraltos)

Mrs Vixen	Kathryn Jenkin
Suky Tawdry	Siobháin Gibson
Mrs Coaxer	Clare McCaldin
Dolly Trull	Bernadette Lord
Mrs Slammekin	Alison Place
Molly Brazen	Katy Batho
Jenny Diver	Miranda Westcott
Betty Doxy	Katherine Paterson

Gentlemen of the Road
(divided equally into tenors, baritones and basses)

Harry Paddington	Bryn Evans
Ben Budge	Aidan Smith
Wat Dreary	Mark Saberton*
Mat of the Mint	Ben Thapa
Jemmy Twitcher	Paul Hopwood
Nimming Ned	Thomas Barnard*

* take the parts of Ben Budge and Mat of the Mint in No. 40 'The modes of the Court so common are grown'

Beggar Sirena Tocco

City of London Sinfonia
Nicholas Ward leader
Richard Hetherington assistant conductor
Christian Curnyn

City of London Sinfonia

<i>violin I</i> Nicholas Ward	<i>oboe/cor anglais</i> Daniel Bates
<i>violin II</i> Jane Carwardine	<i>clarinet</i> David Rix
<i>viola</i> Stephen Tees	<i>bassoon</i> Jo Graham
<i>cello</i> Sue Dorey	<i>horn</i> Stephen Stirling
<i>double-bass</i> Markus van Horn	<i>timpani/percussion</i> Charles Fullbrook
<i>flute/piccolo</i> Karen Jones	<i>harp</i> Thelma Owen

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TT 65:09



City of London Sinfonia

Gay/Britten: The Beggar's Opera

History and Reception

The attachment of the name John Gay (1685 – 1732) to *The Beggar's Opera* suggests that he was the composer, whereas he was the librettist and did not write a note of the music for this Hogarthian picture of London low life in the early eighteenth century. With it he created the new form of 'ballad opera' by weaving popular songs into the spoken dialogue. Before *The Beggar's Opera*, he had written several unsuccessful plays and some verse. He had also written a part of the libretto of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. But no one anticipated the success of *The Beggar's Opera* in which the music comprised sixty-nine songs. Of these, twenty-eight were traditional ballads or folksongs, twenty-three were Irish, Scottish and French songs, and the rest were drawn from Purcell, Handel and several others. The overture, based on the tune 'One evening, having lost my way', is attributed to Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667 – 1752). The work was first produced at John Rich's theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields on 29 January 1728, having been turned down for Drury Lane by Colley Cibber. It was a hit, running for sixty-two performances and being revived every season for the rest of the century. It was produced in many towns in the United Kingdom and in America and made

Gay and Rich wealthy. London audiences relished the political satirising of public figures such as Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister.

The Beggar's Opera went out of favour in the more prudish nineteenth century but received a new lease of life in 1920 when it ran for 1,463 performances at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in a production by Nigel Playfair with the score revised by Frederic Austin and the text bowdlerised by Arnold Bennett. This was revived every year from 1925 until 1930 except in 1927. In 1928 in Berlin, Bertolt Brecht based *Die Dreigroschenoper* (The Threepenny Opera) on the plot and characters but updated the scene to the end of the nineteenth century. A new score was provided by Kurt Weill, the hit number being 'Mack the Knife'. There were other productions of *The Beggar's Opera* in the 1940s, and Laurence Olivier made a film in 1953 with the score edited by Sir Arthur Bliss. Other composers who have arranged the score, or re-arranged it, include J.L. Hatton, Edward J. Dent and, of course, Benjamin Britten who began work on his realisation while on a European tour from January to March 1948.

His interest in *The Beggar's Opera* as a vehicle for the newly formed English Opera Group stemmed

naturally from his love of folksong. He chose as his collaborator the theatre producer Tyrone Guthrie who shared his wish to restore the 'bite' of the original. Britten used sixty-six of the original sixty-nine airs (Austin had used only forty-five) and twice combined two of the songs in one musical number: first for a duet between Lucy and Lockit and then for a trio for Macheath, Polly and Lucy. He jettisoned Pepusch's overture and substituted his own in which he used tunes associated with the principal characters. He described the airs as:

the most characteristically English of any of our folk-songs. They are often strangely like Handel and Purcell... They have strong leaping intervals, sometimes in peculiar modes, and are often strange and severe in mood... I feel that most previous arrangements have avoided their toughness and strangeness and have concentrated only on their lyrical prettiness. For my arrangements of the tunes I have gone to a contemporary edition of the original arrangements by Dr Pepusch. Apart from one or two extensions and repetitions, I have left the tunes exactly as they stood (except for one or two spots where the original seemed confused and inaccurate).

In his preface to the vocal score Britten wrote:

The production of this new version sprang from a hint given in the original Prologue to the play, which stated that the opera had previously been performed in the beggar's 'great room at Saint Giles', to celebrate the marriage of two ballad-singers. Accordingly the

producer and the composer planned to stage the opera in this 'great room', which they imagined as a laundry frequented by beggars, who worked there in return for food and warmth. A permanent setting of this laundry was the scene of the performances; all changes of scene were made by the swift adjustment of screens and furniture in full view of the audience. This was done by the beggars for whose entertainment the opera was being given, and who took part in the action as stage-audience, as chorus and as small-part performers. This way of presenting the opera demanded the re-writing of some parts of the text and the insertion of a few extra speeches.

This additional material was written by Guthrie. The most drastic of the changes involved transferring Gay's original first scene of Act II – in a tavern near Newgate – to the end of Act I which now concludes with the exciting scene in which Macheath is arrested. Seven short scenes (five from Act III) were omitted; there were also some revisions and some extra dialogue, amounting to a line here and there. Nevertheless these, together with the supplying of original accompaniments – there is no authoritative version of the original score – justified Britten's decision to give the work the opus number 43 in his own catalogue. Only one of the omitted scenes involved the deletion of an air ('The Lass of Patie's Mill'). The orchestra comprises flute, piccolo, oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bassoon, horn, percussion, harp, string quartet and double bass, much the same as

for *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) and *Albert Herring* (1947).

Britten's version was first performed at Cambridge Arts Theatre on 24 May 1948. Peter Pears sang Macheath, Nancy Evans was Polly, and Rose Hill was Lucy Lockit. Britten conducted. The critic for *The Times* thought some of the tunes were lost in the 'clever and elaborate settings' and the *Evening Standard* complained that Pears's Macheath was sung like 'a polite Palm Court tenor'. A similar but ruder remark which Guthrie made to Pears at rehearsal ensured that he never worked with Britten again. During this period there was a great deal of antagonism towards Britten from the musical establishment and from devotees of the Playfair-Austin version, who felt that Britten had invaded their territory. The production was seen at Sadler's Wells in London in the autumn. It was also taken to Hamburg, where it was conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, and to Vienna. In a new production by the English Opera Group at the 1963 Aldeburgh Festival, the cast was headed by Pears, Janet Baker and Heather Harper. With cast changes, this production went to London, Edinburgh and Montreal. Lately, however, Britten's version has become something of a rarity.

Originally, the role of Macheath had always been sung by a tenor, but over time it became increasingly allotted to a baritone. Britten, with Pears on hand, restored it as a tenor part. However,

he later sanctioned the use of a baritone, a decision which necessitated revision of at least ten of the airs and ensembles in which Macheath participates. This chore was undertaken by Julius Harrison. The predominance of low voices and the consequent extra darkness of the orchestration eventually led Britten to change his mind.

Synopsis

Act I

After the spoken Prologue, in which we are informed that the piece has been written to celebrate the marriage of two ballad-singers, Act I opens with Peachum, a receiver of stolen goods (a 'fence'), going through his accounts while singing 'Through all the employments of life, each neighbour abuses his Brother'. Filch, his employee, reports the fate of members of Peachum's gang, who have appeared in court, and is given messages to deliver to them in gaol. He sings 'Tis Woman that seduces all Mankind'. Peachum muses about giving up his activities and making money by turning his gang over to the authorities. Enter his wife who says that women are bad judges of men, whom they love for their courage ('If any wench Venus' Girdle wear'). Mr and Mrs Peachum talk about the highwayman Captain Macheath, much admired by their daughter, Polly. Mrs Peachum sings 'If Love the Virgin's Heart invade', but her husband is against the idea of marriage and leaves in search of Polly 'to terrify

her from it'. Mrs Peachum sings 'A Maid is like the Golden ore' and questions Filch about the relationship between Macheath and Polly. Filch takes her off to tell her. Meanwhile Peachum returns with Polly, who insists that she can look after herself ('Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre'). Peachum warns her against marrying, whereupon Mrs Peachum returns in a towering rage to proclaim that they are too late – Polly is already married. 'Our Polly is a sad slut!' sing Mrs Peachum and the chorus of beggars (who are on stage whether the action requires them or not). Polly retorts, 'Can Love be controlled by Advice?' Her mother's reply is the exquisite 'O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed' (set for Mrs Peachum, Polly and the chorus), to which Polly's excuse is, 'I, like a Ship in storms, was tossed'. Polly is then sent out to attend to customers. The Peachums plan to benefit from the affair but are worried that a lawyer may intervene and take the profits ('A fox may steal your hens, Sir'). They summon Polly and tell her that she must hand Macheath over to the law so that she will be a widow. 'O ponder well! Be not severe', Polly pleads, adding that as a widow she would never stop weeping: 'The Turtle thus with plaintive crying, her Lover dying' (depicted by a tremolo flute). This is the last scene in which Mrs Peachum is either seen or heard.

Now at last we meet Macheath. His and Polly's love duet is constructed by Britten from five numbers which range emotionally from ecstasy to the despair which Polly experiences when thinking of her parents'

plot against Macheath. The songs are: 'Pretty Polly, say... Did your fancy never stray?', 'My heart was so free', 'Were I laid on Greenland's coast... Over the hills and far away', 'O! what pain it is to part!' and, as *finale*, 'The Miser thus a shilling sees'. For the last air, one of the highlights of the work, Britten wanted a third section to bring the voices together for the climax, and the extra lines ('The sailor climbs the swaying mast') were provided by Eric Crozier.

In a tavern near Newgate, Macheath and his men are carousing: 'Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us'. He sends them off on their nefarious business and they leave singing 'Let us take the road', to the tune of the march from Handel's *Rinaldo*, a brilliant setting with a polytonal horn part. Macheath ponders the delights of women – the ever-popular 'If the heart of a man is depressed with cares' – and as the women of the town join him he leads them in the dance 'Youth's the season made for joys', a cotillion with a sensitive harp part. While they dance, Jenny Diver sings 'Before the barn-door crowing'. While the women sing 'The Gamesters and Lawyers are jugglers alike', Jenny and Betty Doxy seize Macheath's pistols. They give a signal to Peachum, who arrives with constables and arrests Macheath. Macheath is angry with the women and sings 'At the Tree I shall suffer with pleasure' as he is led away.

Act II

At Newgate, Macheath is met by the gaoler Lockit who points out that nothing in gaol comes free

of charge (bribery is the rule). Macheath blames women for his plight ('Man may escape from rope and gun'). Lockit's pregnant daughter Lucy blames her condition on Macheath and tells him that she is intent on revenge: 'Thus when a good Housewife sees a rat', which contains a virtuoso part for cor anglais. Macheath calls himself her husband but this will not wash with Lucy ('How cruel are the traitors'). He explains that the account which Polly has given of her marriage to him is vanity ('The first time at the looking glass'). They leave to look for a priest.

Peachum and Lockit discuss how well they do by working for the law at the same time as organising crime. When Peachum mentions betrayal of friends, Lockit urges him to be careful what he says ('When you censure the age'). Peachum then questions the probity of Lockit and the two villains are at each other's throats until they calm down. Lucy now has a spat with her father, as she pleads for mercy for Macheath. Lockit says she should be grateful that she will be a widow. Britten here makes a duet of their airs 'Is then his fate decreed, Sir?' and 'You'll think e'er many days ensue'. Macheath rejoins Lucy, but so does Polly, greeting him as 'my dear husband' and singing 'Thus when the Swallow seeking prey'. Macheath's air, 'How happy could I be with either', and the duet of Lucy and Polly, 'I'm bubbled, oh how I am troubled!', are combined by Britten into a trio. Lucy and Polly quarrel: 'Cease your funning', sings Polly, accompanied by the chorus, and this is

followed by a duet, 'Why how now, Madam Flirt!' The act ends with an elaborate ensemble, 'No power on earth can e'er divide', to the tune known as the 'Irish Howl', during which Lucy releases Macheath from his chains.

Act III

Lucy tells Lockit that love was the reason for her helping Macheath to escape: 'When young at the bar you first taught me to score' (a Purcell tune). But doubts enter her mind: 'My love is all madness and folly'. Britten tops and tails this aria with the words 'Ungrateful Macheath!', lifted from the original spoken dialogue. Lockit throws her out so that he will not have to hear her wailing, and decides that he must get even with Peachum who, he is sure, is trying to outwit him over Macheath: 'Thus Gamesters united in friendship are found'.

Macheath is now in a gaming house with his cronies and sings 'The modes of the Court so common are grown', to the air of 'Lilliburero'. At Peachum's house, Peachum and Lockit give up trying to settle their accounts and agree that if they keep an eye on Polly she will lead them to Macheath: 'What Gudgeons are we men!' At this point a Mrs Trapes, the 'tally woman', calls on them: 'In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove'. She wants to buy scarves and petticoats, and she also drops the hint that she has just seen Macheath. Lockit and Peachum say that she can name her own price for her goods if she leads them to him.

Back in Newgate, Lucy is still bewailing her fate ('I'm like a Skiff on the Ocean tossed'), and is planning to get even with Polly for whom she has laced gin with rat-poison. Lucy is all smiles when Polly arrives and refuses the drink she is offered. Their duet, 'A curse attends a woman's love', is outwardly amicable, as are their subsequent airs, Polly's 'Among the men Coquets we find' and Lucy's 'Come, sweet lass'. They are interrupted by the arrival of a chained Macheath. 'Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes', Polly sings; 'Bestow one glance to cheer me', Lucy beseeches. Macheath's response is less positive: 'Which way shall I turn me, how can I decide?' Polly pleads with Peachum, 'When my Hero in court appears', and Lucy implores Lockit, 'When he holds up his hand arraigned for his life'. The fathers are adamant ('Ourselves, like the Great, to secure a retreat') and Macheath is told to be ready for the Old Bailey ('The Charge is prepared; the Lawyers are met').

Now follows the great scene which more than anything else makes this work into Britten's Opus 43. It is an elaborate *scena* for Macheath, in which he sings parts of ten airs while drinking to give himself courage before he is hanged. Gay quoted them fragmentarily; Austin omitted six and Dent employed mainly the orchestra. Britten used the final air, 'Greensleeves' (to lyrics beginning 'Since laws were made for ev'ry degree'), as a ground bass to link the previous airs, which are: 'O cruel, cruel case!', 'Of all the friends in

time of grief', 'Since I must swing, I scorn to wince or whine', 'But now again my spirits sink', 'But valour the stronger grows', 'If thus a man die much bolder with brandy!', 'So I drink off this bumper, and now I can stand the test', 'But can I leave my pretty hussies', 'Their eyes, their lips, their busses' and, to end, a reprise of 'Since laws were made'.

Two of his gang come to say farewell to Macheath and he bids them take revenge on Peachum and Lockit. As for Polly and Lucy, they say that they would gladly take his place on the scaffold ('Would I might be hanged!' / 'And I would so too!'). Macheath joins in and the sound of the passing-bell gives the trio the character of a dirge. Here the Beggar is told that if Macheath is hanged the opera will become a tragedy instead of the intended wedding celebration. The Beggar insists, 'The piece must carry a moral. Vice must meet with its right reward!' But a reprieve is at last granted and Macheath leads the *finale*: 'Thus I stand like a Turk, with his doxies around'.

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Susan Bickley is firmly established as one of the most versatile mezzo-sopranos of her generation. In venues such as the Opéra de Paris, San Francisco Opera, New Israeli Opera, De Vlaamse Opera, De Nederlandse Opera, Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Garsington Opera and all the major British opera houses she has sung,

among others, Penelope (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Kostelnicka (*Jenůfa*), Herodias (*Salome*), Kabanicha (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Countess Geschwitz (*Lulu*), Baba the Turk (*The Rake's Progress*), the Ghost (Birtwistle's *The Last Supper*) and Mrs Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*). She has also created roles in Louis Andriessen's *Writing to Vermeer*, Turnage's *Twice through the Heart* and Gerald Barry's *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. She works regularly with all the major British symphony orchestras and ensembles, and on the international concert platform has performed with Les Arts Florissants, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hanover, and The Sixteen. She made her Carnegie Hall debut singing Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles* and has also appeared at the Kennedy Center, Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, BBC Proms, and at the Wigmore Hall. In recital she has performed with Roger Vignoles, Iain Burnside, Julius Drake, and the Nash Ensemble. For Chandos, Susan Bickley has recorded works by Rossini, Edmund Rubbra, and John Eccles.

Born in Liverpool and educated at Oxford, the bass-baritone **Jeremy White** enjoys an international career in the opera house, concert hall and recording studio, in repertoire ranging from early music to

contemporary compositions. He works regularly with all the leading British orchestras and conductors, and opera performances have taken him from Aix-en-Provence to The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where he has appeared each season since his debut in 1991, in roles from Mozart to Janáček, and with which he also made his first appearance at The Metropolitan Opera, New York. In recent years he has sung Kecál (*The Bartered Bride*), Snug (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Surin (*The Queen of Spades*), Lignière (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*), Mr Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*) and Sacristan (*Tosca*) at Covent Garden, Pluto (*Orfeo*), Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*) and Prince Selim (*Il turco in Italia*) at English National Opera, Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*), Il Re (*Aida*), Dikoj (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Talbot (*Giovanna d'Arco*) and Tiresias (*Oedipus Rex*) for Opera North, Benoit (*La bohème*) at the Bregenz Festival, Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) at Grange Park Opera, Parsons (*1984*) at Teatro alla Scala, Milan and Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) for Opéra national de Bordeaux. He will sing Dansker (*Billy Budd*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 2010. Jeremy White appears by kind permission of the Royal Opera House.

Born in Wales, the mezzo-soprano **Leah-Marian Jones** is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Opera Studio, London. As a Company Principal at The Royal Opera, Covent

Garden for eight years, she sang roles such as Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*), Varvara (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Karolka (*Jenůfa*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Bersi (*Andrea Chénier*), Flora (*La traviata*), Emilia (*Otello*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Flosshilde (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) and Young Doctor (*Palestrina*). She has also appeared at English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera and, abroad, at The Metropolitan Opera, New York, San Francisco Opera and Châtelet – Théâtre musical de Paris, her repertoire including Carmen, Orestes (*La Belle Hélène*), Sonetka (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*), Rosswisse and Norn (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Meg Page (*Falstaff*), the Page of Herodias (*Salome*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), Polly Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*) and Junon (*Platée*). Additionally, Leah-Marian Jones has participated in a Gala Concert with Luciano Pavarotti at the Royal Albert Hall, a Verdi Programme at the BBC Proms, a concert performance of *Götterdämmerung* with the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder and a concert performance of Act III of *Die Walküre* at the Glastonbury Festival.

The tenor **Tom Randle** began early studies in conducting and composition but a scholarship to

study voice soon meant a change in career direction. Well known for his vivid and committed stage portrayals and a unique ability to embrace a wide variety of repertoire, he has emerged as one of the most exciting and versatile artists of his generation. At The Royal Opera, Covent Garden he has sung Essex (*Gloriana*), Johnny Inkslinger (*Paul Bunyan*), the Fool (*Gawain*) and Captain Macheath (*The Beggar's Opera*), and at English National Opera has performed Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Achilles (*King Priam*), Števa Buryja (*Jenůfa*), Dionysus (John Buller's *The Bacchae*), Loge (*The Rhinegold*) and Monteverdi's Orfeo. He has appeared as Bénédict (*Beatrice et Bénédict*), Boris (*Kát'a Kabanová*) and Prince Andrey Khovansky (*Khovanshchina*) at Welsh National Opera, Alfredo (*La traviata*) at Opera North, and Bajazet (*Tamerlano*) and Idomeneo at Scottish Opera. At international festivals and in opera houses throughout Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand he has been heard as Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Gerald (*Lakmé*), the title roles in Haydn's *Orlando Paladino*, Hasse's *Solimano* and Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, as well as leading roles in *The Fairy Queen*, *Wozzeck*, *Peter Grimes*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Henze's *The Bassarids*, Messiaen's *St François d'Assise*, Peter Schat's *Symposium*, Mark-Anthony Turnage's *The Country of the Blind* and Birtwistle's *The Last Supper*.

After gaining a B.Sc. Honours in astrophysics at Durham University and a Certificate of Education at Manchester University, the British tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner** studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, Frankfurt Opera School and National Opera Studio, winning numerous awards. He has sung Eurimaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) for Opera Frankfurt, Aubry (*Maria di Rohan*) and Ctésippe (*Pénélope*) for the Wexford Festival, Testo (*Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*) for St Pompont and Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) for the Ryedale Festival. In September 2008 he joined the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme and made his debut at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Egoldo (*Matilde di Shabran*), followed by Filch (*The Beggar's Opera*). Other roles in his repertoire include Pane (*Calisto*), Nathanaël (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Borsa (*Rigoletto*), Steuermann (*Der fliegende Holländer*), First Sailor (*Dido and Aeneas*), Damon and Coridon (*Acis and Galatea*), Ruiz (*Il trovatore*), Gastone (*La traviata*), the Count of Lerma (*Don Carlos*), Major Domo (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Second Croupier (*The Gambler*), Second Jew (*Salome*), Panas (*Cherevichki*) and Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*). Robert Anthony Gardiner has given many solo recitals and sung in oratorios with choirs and choral societies all over the UK.

Born in Perth, Scotland and having graduated in geography from Edinburgh University, the baritone

Donald Maxwell studied singing with Joseph Hislop. He has appeared at all the major opera houses and festivals throughout the United Kingdom, as well as The Metropolitan Opera, New York, Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Vienna Staatsoper and the opera houses of Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Houston, Buenos Aires and Athens. His vast repertoire includes, among many others, the title roles in *Falstaff*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Wozzeck*, as well as Leander (*The Love for Three Oranges*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Germont (*La traviata*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*), Amonasro (*Aida*), Marcello (*La bohème*), Iago (*Otello*), the Count (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Golaud (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), Balstrode and Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), Klingsor (*Parsifal*), Don Pizarro (*Fidelio*), Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), Yeletsky (*The Queen of Spades*), Gunther (*Götterdämmerung*), Dr Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*), Don Perlimpin in the world premiere of *The Nightingale's to Blame* and the English Archer in the British premiere of *The King Goes forth to France*. For Chandos, Donald Maxwell has recorded Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Father Philippe (*The Wandering Scholar*), Sir John Falstaff (*Sir John in Love*) and Howells's *Missa Sabrinensis*.

Having studied at the University of London and the Royal College of Music, the soprano **Sarah Fox** won the Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Award in 1997 and the John Christie Award in 2000. At The Royal Opera, Covent Garden she has sung Woglinde (*Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*), Waldvogel (*Siegfried*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) and Lucy Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*), while at the Glyndebourne Festival her roles have included Zerlina and Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*). She has further sung Anne Page (*Sir John in Love*) with English National Opera, Merab (*Saul*) with Opera North, Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*) with Welsh National Opera and Iphis (*Jephtha*) and Cleofide (*Poro*) at the Edinburgh International Festival. Abroad she has performed Ilia (*Idomeneo*) at De Vlaamse Opera, Michal (*Saul*), Asteria (*Tamerlano*) and Eurydice (*Orphée et Eurydice*) at the Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, Susanna at the Royal Danish Opera, Woglinde (*Das Rheingold*) at the Salzburg Festival and Zerlina at the Cincinnati Opera Festival. She recently toured throughout Europe and the USA as Josabeth (*Athalia*) with the Köln Konzert under Sir Ivor Bolton. In concert she has performed with the Bach Choir, the Hallé, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and The English Concert. On Chandos Sarah Fox can be heard in recordings of *The Magic Flute*, *Owen Wingrave*, Kenneth Leighton's Second Symphony, and Christmas music by Vaughan Williams.

A graduate of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the mezzo-soprano **Frances McCafferty** is a regular guest artist at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden where she has sung the Nurse (*Boris Godunov*), the Governess (*Cyrano de Bergerac* and *The Queen of Spades*), First Maid (*Elektra*), the Mother (*Lulu*), Mrs Trapes (*The Beggar's Opera*), and Yeta Zimmerman in the world premiere of Nicholas Maw's *Sophie's Choice*. She has performed Katisha (*The Mikado*) and Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*) at English National Opera, Katisha at Teatro La Fenice, Venice, Hata (*The Bartered Bride*) and Mrs Herring (*Albert Herring*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Mistress Quickly, Genevieve (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Filipp'yevna (*Eugene Onegin*) and Belissa's Mother (*The Nightingale's to Blame*), among others, at Opera North, Solokha (*Cherevichki*) at Garsington Opera, the title role in *The Medium* at the Wexford Festival, La Haine (Gluck's *Armide*) at the Buxton Festival, the Fortune Teller (*Julietta*) at the Ravenna Festival, Auntie (*Peter Grimes*), Gertrud (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and the Hostess at the Inn (*Boris Godunov*) at the Nationale Reisopera, the Mother (*Mavra*) at the Greek National Opera and Mistress Quickly at New Israeli Opera and the Staatsoper Stuttgart. She has also sung at La Bâtie Festival, Geneva and the Edinburgh International Festival. Frances McCafferty made her American debut at the Grant Park Festival, Chicago in 2009.

The **City of London Sinfonia** (CLS) is one of the UK's most highly regarded chamber orchestras. Founded in 1971 by the late Richard Hickox CBE, it offers expert and stylish interpretations with a focus on the human voice and music by British composers. CLS makes regular London appearances at Cadogan Hall, St Paul's Cathedral and churches in the City of London, and is resident orchestra at the capital's popular Opera Holland Park festival. With long-standing residencies in High Wycombe and Chatham, it is also a regular guest at major UK festivals. It offers inventive family concerts with audience engagement and participation in core musical works. Abroad, it recently made a first-ever visit to Croatia and served as resident orchestra at the Cartagena International Music Festival. When not on the concert platform, CLS musicians, as part of the Orchestra's acclaimed Meet the Music programme, work creatively in schools and community projects; to UK companies they deliver the project Development through Music, training professional skills through the medium of music.

Described as 'Our finest young Handelian' by *The Times*, **Christian Curnyn** was born in Glasgow and studied at York and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. In 1994 he founded the Early Opera Company which has now established

an international reputation as a leader in historically informed performance of the baroque repertoire. As a guest conductor he has directed, among others, Rameau's *Platée* in Lisbon, *Messiah* in Girona, Handel's *Semele* with British Youth Opera and Budapest Chamber Opera, and *L'elisir d'amore*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Semele* at Grange Park Opera where he returned to conduct Cavalli's *Eliogabalo* in the summer of 2009. In 2005 he made his debut with Scottish Opera conducting *Semele*, returning in 2006 for a production of Handel's *Tamerlano*. He recently made his debut with English National Opera, in a new production of Handel's *Partenope*, and with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, in Britten's realisation of *The Beggar's Opera*. He returned to English National Opera in 2009 for Katie Mitchell's realisation of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He has also appeared at the Halle Handel Festival, the Opera Theatre Company in Dublin and at Opera North, and is soon to make his debut with New York City Opera and Chicago Opera Theater. He has further been invited to conduct the Ulster Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hanover, the Hallé, Academy of Ancient Music and The English Concert. For Chandos he has made acclaimed recordings of *Partenope* and *Semele*, the latter of which won the 2008 Stanley Sadie Handel Prize, as well as of John Eccles's *The Judgment of Paris*.



Susan Bickley

Samantha Owens



Jeremy White



Robert Walker

Leah-Marian Jones



Andrew Palmer

Tom Randle

Gay/Britten: The Beggar's Opera

Geschichte und Rezeption

Die Verknüpfung des Namens John Gay (1685 – 1732) mit *The Beggar's Opera* lässt vermuten, dass es sich hier um den Komponisten handelt, doch eigentlich war Gay der Librettist und schrieb keine einzige Note der Musik zu diesem Hogarth'schen Sittenbild der Londoner Unterschicht im frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert. Gay erfand hier die neue Gattung der "Ballad-Opera", indem er die gesprochenen Dialoge mit populären Liedern vermischte. Vor der *Beggar's Opera* hatte er eine Reihe von erfolglosen Schauspielen sowie allerhand Gedichte geschrieben. Zudem hatte er Teile des Librettos für Händels *Acis and Galatea* verfasst. Niemand konnte jedoch den Erfolg der *Beggar's Opera* voraussehen, deren Musik neunundsechzig Lieder umfasste. Von diesen waren achtundzwanzig traditionelle Balladen oder Volkslieder, bei dreiundzwanzig Nummern handelte es sich um irische, schottische und französische Lieder und der Rest war von Purcell, Händel und verschiedenen anderen Komponisten entlehnt. Die Ouvertüre basiert auf der Melodie "One evening, having lost my way" (Als ich mich eines Abends verirrt hatte) und wird Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667 – 1752) zugeschrieben. Die Oper wurde am 29. Januar

1728 am Theater von John Rich in Lincoln's Inn Fields uraufgeführt, nachdem Colley Cibber eine Inszenierung in der Drury Lane abgelehnt hatte. Das Stück war ein Riesenerfolg – es wurde zweiundsechzig Mal aufgeführt und bis zum Ende des Jahrhunderts in jeder Spielzeit wiederholt. Auch in zahlreichen anderen Städten in Großbritannien und den USA gab es Aufführungen, und das Werk machte Gay und Rich zu wohlhabenden Männern. Besonders das Londoner Publikum begeisterte sich für die satirische Behandlung öffentlicher Persönlichkeiten wie zum Beispiel des Premierministers Sir Robert Walpole.

Im eher pruden neunzehnten Jahrhundert büßte die *Beggar's Opera* ihre Beliebtheit ein, 1920 wurde sie jedoch wiederbelebt und erfuhr in einer Inszenierung von Nigel Playfair am Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith nicht weniger als 1.463 Aufführungen, für die Frederic Austin die Partitur überarbeitet und Arnold Bennett den Text bereinigt hatte. Diese Fassung wurde von 1925 bis 1930 – mit Ausnahme des Jahres 1927 – alljährlich wiederaufgeführt. 1928 ließ Bertold Brecht in Berlin seine *Dreigroschenoper* auf Handlung und Charakteren der *Beggar's Opera* basieren, wobei er den zeitlichen Rahmen des Werks ans Ende des

neunzehnten Jahrhunderts verlegte. Kurt Weill lieferte die Musik zu Brechts neuem Stück, dessen absoluter Hit der Song “Mackie Messer” war. In den 1940er Jahren gab es weitere Inszenierungen der *Beggar’s Opera*, und 1953 drehte Laurence Olivier einen Film, für den Sir Arthur Bliss die Musik arrangierte. Zu der Gruppe von Komponisten, die das Werk bearbeiteten oder umarbeiteten, zählen ferner J.L. Hatton, Edward J. Dent und natürlich Benjamin Britten, der seine Fassung während einer Reise durch Europa im Januar bis März 1948 in Angriff nahm.

Brittens Interesse an der *Beggar’s Opera* als passendes Werk für die neugegründete English Opera Group entsprang natürlich seiner Liebe zum Folksong. Er entschied sich für die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Theaterregisseur Tyrone Guthrie, der seinen Wunsch teilte, den “Bis” der Originalfassung wiederherzustellen. Britten verwendete sechsendsechzig der ursprünglichen neunundsechzig Songs (Austin hatte lediglich fünfundvierzig übernommen); zweimal verknüpfte er zwei der Songs zu jeweils einer musikalischen Nummer – erst für ein Duett zwischen Lucy und Lockit und sodann für ein Trio von Macheath, Polly und Lucy. Pepuschs Ouvertüre verwarf er zugunsten einer eigenen Komposition, in der er mit den Hauptfiguren assoziierte Melodien verwendete. Die Lieder beschrieb er als

die englischsten aller unserer Folksongs. Sie erinnern häufig verblüffend an Händel und Purcell ... Sie

haben starke Intervallsprünge, die manchmal in eigenwilligen Modi stehen, und vermitteln oft eine eigenwillig strenge Stimmung ... Mir scheint, die meisten früheren Bearbeitungen haben ihre Rauheit und Fremdheit vermieden und sich nur auf ihre lyrische Gefälligkeit konzentriert. Für meine Bearbeitung der Melodien habe ich mir eine zeitgenössische Ausgabe der originalen Arrangements von Dr. Pepusch vorgenommen. Abgesehen von ein oder zwei Erweiterungen und Wiederholungen habe ich die Melodien genauso gelassen, wie sie waren (mit Ausnahme einiger Stellen, wo das Original wirr und ungenau zu sein schien).

In seinem Vorwort zum Klavierauszug schrieb Britten:

Die Inszenierung dieser neuen Fassung geht zurück auf einen Hinweis in dem originalen Prolog zu dem Stück, in dem es heißt, die Oper sei ursprünglich im “großen Saal der Bettler in Saint Giles” aufgeführt worden, wo die Hochzeit von zwei Bänkelsängern gefeiert wurde. Dementsprechend planten Regisseur und Komponist, die Oper in diesem “großen Saal” spielen zu lassen, unter der sie sich eine Wäscherei vorstellten, die vor allem von Bettlern frequentiert wurde, die dort als Gegenleistung für Essen und einen warmen Aufenthaltsort arbeiteten. Diese Wäscherei diente bei den Aufführungen als festes Bühnenbild, während sämtliche Szenenwechsel mittels schnellen Arrangierens von Stellwänden und Mobiliar im vollen Blickfeld des Publikums bewerkstelligt wurden. Dies wurde von den Bettlern ausgeführt, zu deren

Unterhaltung die Oper gegeben wurde und die als Bühnenpublikum, als Chor und mit der Übernahme kleiner Rollen an der Aufführung teilhatten. Diese Art der Inszenierung bedingte, dass einige Textpassagen umgeschrieben und einige zusätzliche Reden eingefügt werden mussten.

Das hierzu notwendige zusätzliche Material schrieb Guthrie. Die drastischste Änderung betraf die Verlegung von Gays ursprünglicher erster Szene des zweiten Aktes – die in einer Schenke in der Nähe von Newgate spielt – ans Ende des ersten Aktes, der nun mit der dramatischen Szene endet, in der Macheath verhaftet wird. Sieben kurze Szenen (fünf davon aus dem dritten Akt) wurden ausgelassen, außerdem gab es einige Revisionen und hier und da einzelne zusätzliche Textzeilen. All dies sowie die Bereitstellung einer neuen Instrumentalbegleitung – es gibt keine autoritative Fassung der ursprünglichen Musik – rechtfertigten offenbar Brittens Entscheidung, der Komposition in seinem eigenen Werkverzeichnis die Opus-Nummer 43 zu geben. Nur eine der gestrichenen Szenen betraf die Auslassung eines Songs (“The Lass of Patie’s Mill”; “Das Mädchen von Paties Mühle”). Das Orchester ist mit Flöte, Piccolo, Oboe, Englischhorn, Klarinette, Fagott, Horn, Schlagzeug, Harfe, Streichquartett und Kontrabass besetzt, ähnlich wie *The Rape of Lucretia* (1946) und *Albert Herring* (1947).

Brittens Fassung wurde am 24. Mai 1948 am Cambridge Arts Theatre uraufgeführt. Peter Pears

sang den Macheath, Nancy Evans die Polly und Rose Hill die Lucy Lockit. Britten dirigierte. Der Kritiker der *Times* fand, einige der Melodien seien in den “cleveren und ausgefeilten Arrangements” verlorengegangen, und der *Evening Standard* beklagte, dass Pears’ Macheath wie ein “höflicher Palm-Court-Tenor” geklungen hätte. Eine ähnliche, doch wesentlich unhöflichere Bemerkung, die Guthrie während der Proben Pears gegenüber machte, führte dazu, dass Britten nie wieder mit ihm zusammenarbeitete. In dieser Zeit gab es Britten gegenüber zahlreiche Anfeindungen aus dem musikalischen Establishment und von Anhängern der Playfair-Austin-Fassung, die der Meinung waren, Britten habe sich auf ihrem Territorium breitgemacht. Die Inszenierung wurde im Herbst an Sadler’s Wells in London vorgestellt. Sie kam auch nach Hamburg, wo sie von Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt dirigiert wurde, und nach Wien. In einer neuen Inszenierung der English Opera Group auf dem Aldeburgh Festival von 1963 zählten Pears, Janet Baker und Heather Harper zu den Ausführenden. Anschließend wurde diese Inszenierung mit geänderter Besetzung in London, Edinburgh und Montreal gegeben. In jüngerer Zeit ist Brittens Fassung nur noch selten zu sehen.

Die Rolle des Macheath wurde ursprünglich immer von einem Tenor gesungen, im Laufe der Zeit wurde sie jedoch zunehmend dem Bariton zugeordnet. Britten, der mit Pears

zusammenarbeitete, richtete sie wieder als Tenorpartie ein. Später erlaubte er jedoch auch die Verwendung eines Baritons – eine Entscheidung, die die Überarbeitung von mindestens zehn der Songs und Ensembles bedingte, an denen Macheath mitwirkt. Diese Arbeit wurde von Julius Harrison ausgeführt. Die überwiegende Verwendung von tiefen Stimmen und die sich hieraus ergebende ausgesprochen dunkle Orchestrierung bewogen Britten später, seine Meinung zu ändern.

Synopse Erster Akt

Nach dem gesprochenen Prolog, in dem uns mitgeteilt wird, dass das Stück anlässlich der Hochzeitsfeier von zwei Bänkelsängern geschrieben wurde, beginnt der erste Akt mit Peachum, einem Hehler, der seine Konten überprüft, während er singt: “Through all the employments of life, each neighbour abuses his Brother” (In allen möglichen Lebenslagen spricht man nur schlecht voneinander). Filch, sein Angestellter, berichtet über die Lage der Mitglieder von Peachums Bande, die vor Gericht erscheinen mussten, und erhält Instruktionen, was er ihnen im Gefängnis ausrichten soll. Er singt: “’Tis Woman that seduces all Mankind” (Die Frau ist’s, die sämtliche Mannsbilder verführt). Peachum überlegt sich, ob er seine Geschäfte aufgeben und lieber sein Geld damit verdienen soll, dass er die Mitglieder seiner Band den Behörden überstellt.

Seine Frau erscheint und erklärt, Frauen könnten Männer schlecht beurteilen, da sie diese wegen ihres Mutes bewunderten (“If any wench Venus’ girdle wear”; “Trägt eine Dirne den Gürtel der Venus”). Mr. und Mrs. Peachum sprechen über den Straßenräuber Captain Macheath, den ihre Tochter Polly heiß bewundert. Mrs. Peachum singt: “If Love the Virgin’s Heart invade” (Wenn Liebe der Jungfrau Herz betört), doch ihr Mann ist gegen eine mögliche Heirat und geht ab, um Polly zu suchen und “sie davon abzuschrecken” (“to terrify her from it”). Mrs. Peachum singt “A Maid is like the Golden ore” (Ein Mädchen gleicht dem Erze Gold) und fragt Filch über die Beziehung zwischen Macheath und Polly aus. Filch geht mit ihr ab, um ihr darüber zu berichten. In der Zwischenzeit kehrt Peachum mit Polly zurück, die insistiert, sie könne selber auf sich aufpassen (“Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre”; “Jungfrauen sind wie die liebliche Blüte in ihrem Glanz”). Peachum warnt sie vor der Ehe, woraufhin Mrs. Peachum wutschnaubend zurückkehrt und erklärt, dass es zu spät sei – Polly ist bereits verheiratet. “Our Polly is a sad slut!” (Unsre Polly ist eine armselige Dirne!), singen Mrs. Peachum und der Chor der Bettler (die sich die ganze Zeit auf der Bühne befinden, ganz gleich ob sie gerade an der Handlung teilhaben oder nicht). Polly erwidert: “Can Love be controlled by Advice?” (Kann man Liebe mit Ratschlägen begegnen?). Ihre Mutter antwortet mit der herrlichen Nummer

(für Mrs. Peachum, Polly und den Chor gesetzt): “O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed” (Ach hättest du nur geschäkert, geküsst), woraufhin Polly als Entschuldigung vorbringt, “I, like a Ship in storms, was tossed” (Wie ein Schiff im Sturm packte es mich). Dann wird Polly hinausgeschickt, sich um die Kundschaft zu kümmern. Die Peachums überlegen, wie sie aus der Affäre Profit ziehen können, machen sich aber Sorgen, dass jemand vom Gericht einschreiten und das Geld einstreichen könnte (“A fox may steal your hens, Sir”; “Ein Fuchs könnte deine Hennen stehlen, Sir”). Sie rufen Polly herein und tragen ihr auf, Macheath dem Gesetz zu überantworten, so dass sie Witwe würde. “O ponder well! Be not severe” (Bedenkt es wohl! Seid nicht so streng), fleht Polly und fügt hinzu, dass sie als Witwe niemals zu weinen aufhören würde (dies wird von einer tremolierenden Flöte dargestellt): “The Turtle thus with plaintive crying, her Lover dying” (Die Taube so voll bitt’ren Klagens, ihr Liebster sterbend). Dies ist die letzte Szene, in der Mrs. Peachum gesehen oder gehört wird.

Nun lernen wir endlich Macheath kennen. Sein Liebesduett mit Polly wird von Britten in fünf Nummern präsentiert, deren Emotionen von ekstatischer Liebe bis hin zur Verzweiflung reichen, die Polly ergreift, als sie an das Komplott ihrer Eltern gegen Macheath denkt. Die Songs sind: “Pretty Polly, say ... Did your fancy never stray?” (Sag’, hübsche Polly, ... hast du dich nie nach einem anderen

umgesehen?); “My heart was so free” (Mein Herz war so frei); “Were I laid on Greenland’s coast ... Over the hills and far away” (Wäre ich an die Küste Grönlands verbannt ... Über die Hügel und in die Ferne); “O! what pain it is to part!” (O wie tut der Abschied weh!) sowie als Finale “The Miser thus a shilling sees” (So sieht der Geizhals einen Kreuzer). Für diesen letzten Song, eines der musikalischen Glanzlichter des Werks, wünschte Britten noch einen dritten Teil, der die Stimmen zu einem Höhepunkt vereinen würde, und Eric Crozier lieferte hierzu die zusätzlichen Zeilen (“The sailor climbs the swaying mast”; “Der Seemann erklimmt den schwankenden Mast”).

Macheath und seine Männer zechen in einer Schenke nahe dem Newgate-Gefängnis: “Fill ev’ry glass, for wine inspires us” (Füllt alle Gläser, denn der Wein regt uns an). Dann schickt er sie auf ihre krummen Geschäfte und sie gehen ab, wobei sie auf die Melodie des Marsches aus Händels *Rinaldo*, einer brillanten Vertonung mit einer polytonalen Horn-Partie, singen: “Let us take the road” (Nehmen wir uns die Straße vor). Macheath denkt über die Vorzüge der Frauen nach – hier erklingt das populäre “If the heart of a man is depressed with cares” (Ist das Herz eines Mannes von Sorgen geplagt) – und indem die Frauen der Stadt in sein Lied einstimmen, führt er sie in dem Tanz “Youth’s the season made for joys” (Jugend ist die Zeit der Freuden) an, einem Cotillon mit einer empfindsamen Harfenpartie. Sie tanzen,

und Jenny Diver singt dazu: “Before the barn-door crowing” (Vor dem Scheunentor kräht er). Während die Frauen nun singen “The Gamesters and Lawyers are jugglers alike” (Spieler und Advokaten sind beides Ganoven), ergreifen Jenny und Betty Doxy Macheaths Pistolen. Sie geben Peachum ein Zeichen, der in der Begleitung von einigen Polizisten auftaucht und Macheath verhaften lässt. Macheath ist wütend auf die Frauen und singt, indem er abgeführt wird: “At the Tree I shall suffer with pleasure” (Mit Vergnügen werde ich am Galgen hängen).

Zweiter Akt

In Newgate wird Macheath von dem Gefängniswärter Lockit empfangen, der ihn darauf hinweist, dass nichts im Gefängnis kostenlos ist (Bestechung ist die Regel). Macheath macht die Frauen für seine traurige Lage verantwortlich (“Man may escape from rope and gun”; “Strang und Kugel mag ein Mann entgehen”). Lockits schwangere Tochter Lucy macht Macheath für ihre Situation verantwortlich und teilt ihm mit, dass sie sich zu rächen beabsichtigt (diese Nummer enthält eine virtuose Partie für Englischhorn): “Thus when a good Housewife sees a rat” (Wenn nämlich eine gute Hausfrau eine Ratte erspäht). Macheath bezeichnet sich als ihren Ehemann, doch damit kommt er bei ihr nicht weit (“How cruel are the traytors”; “Wie grausam sind doch Verräter”). Er erklärt, dass Pollys Behauptung, sie sei mit ihm verheiratet, nur auf ihrer

Eitelkeit basiere (“The first time at the looking glass”; “Beim ersten Blick in den Spiegel”). Sie gehen ab, um einen Priester zu suchen.

Peachum und Lockit sprechen darüber, wie gut es ihnen dabei geht, wenn sie für das Gesetz arbeiten und gleichzeitig ihre kriminellen Machenschaften betreiben. Als Peachum den Betrug an Freunden erwähnt, rät Lockit ihm, bei der Wahl seiner Worte vorsichtig zu sein (“When you censure the age”; “Wenn du deine Zeit kritisierst”). Peachum stellt sodann Lockits Redlichkeit in Frage und die beiden Schurken gehen einander an die Kehle, bis sie sich wieder beruhigen. Nun hat Lucy einen Schlagabtausch mit ihrem Vater, den sie für Macheath um Gnade bittet. Lockit sagt, sie solle dankbar sein, Witwe zu werden. Britten verbindet hier ihre Songs “Is then his fate decreed, Sir?” (Ist sein Schicksal also besiegelt, Sir?) und “You’ll think e’er many days ensue” (Ehe viele Tage vergangen sind, wirst du denken) zu einem Duett. Macheath gesellt sich wieder zu Lucy, doch auch Polly taucht auf, die ihn als “mein lieber Gatte” (“my dear husband”) begrüßt und singt: “Thus when the Swallow seeking prey” (Wenn die Schwalbe auf der Suche nach Beute). Macheaths Song “How happy could I be with either” (Wie glücklich könnte ich mit jeder von ihnen sein) und das Duett von Lucy und Polly “I’m bubbled, oh how I am troubled!” (Ich bin betrogen, oh wie bin ich durcheinander!) werden von Britten zu einem Trio verbunden. Lucy und Polly streiten sich: “Cease

your funning” (Lass das Scherzen), singt Polly vom Chor begleitet, gefolgt von dem Duett “Why how now, Madam Flirt!” (Was soll das, Madame Kokett!). Der Akt endet mit einem ausgedehnten Ensemble, “No power on earth can e’er divide” (Keine Macht der Welt kann je trennen) zu der als “Irish Howl” bekannten Melodie, währenddessen Lucy Macheath von seinen Ketten befreit.

Dritter Akt

Lucy erzählt Lockit, dass sie Macheath aus Liebe zur Flucht verholfen hat (zu einer Melodie von Purcell): “When young at the bar you first taught me to score” (Als ich jung hinter dem Schanktisch stand, zeigtest du mir, wie man anschreibt). Doch nun kommen ihr Zweifel: “My love is all madness and folly” (Meine Liebe ist nur verrückt und töricht). Als Beginn und Abschluss dieser Arie wählt Britten die Worte “Ungrateful Macheath!” (Undankbarer Macheath!), die er dem ursprünglichen gesprochenen Dialog entnimmt. Lockit wirft Lucy hinaus, um nicht ihre Klagen hören zu müssen, und beschließt, dass er sich an Peachum rächen muss, der ihn in der Angelegenheit um Macheath offensichtlich übers Ohr hauen will: “Thus Gamesters united in friendship are found” (So geben die Spieler vor, gut Freunde zu sein).

Macheath ist nun mit seinen Kumpanen in einem Spielhaus und singt zu der Melodie von “Lilliburlero”: “The modes of the Court so common

are grown” (Die Sitten bei Gericht sind heute so verkommen). In Peachums Haus geben Peachum und Lockit den Versuch auf, ihre Geschäfte abzurechnen, und sind gemeinsam der Meinung, dass sie nur Polly bespitzeln müssen, um von ihr zu Macheath geführt zu werden: “What Gudgeons are we men!” (Was sind wir Männer doch für Bolzen!). In diesem Augenblick klopft eine Mrs. Trapes, die Lumpenfrau, bei ihnen an: “In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove” (In meiner Jugend konnte ich schnäbeln wie ein Täubchen). Sie will Schals und Unterröcke kaufen und verrät außerdem, dass sie soeben Macheath gesehen habe. Lockit und Peachum sagen daraufhin, sie könne ihren eigenen Preis für die Waren nennen, wenn sie sie zu ihm führe.

Zurück in Newgate beklagt Lucy noch immer ihr Schicksal (“I’m like a Skiff on the Ocean tossed”; “Ich bin wie ein Boot auf offenem Meer”) und plant, sich an Polly zu rächen, für die sie ein Glas Gin mit Rattengift versetzt hat. Lucy ist voller Lächelns, als Polly eintrifft und das angebotene Getränk ablehnt. Ihr Duett “A curse attends a woman’s love” (Ein Fluch liegt auf der Frauen Liebe) wirkt an der Oberfläche freundschaftlich, ebenso wie die sich anschließenden Songs, Pollys “Among the men Coquets we find” (Auch Männer können kokett sein) und Lucys “Come, sweet lass” (Komm, süße Maid). Sie werden vom Eintreffen des gefesselten Macheath unterbrochen. “Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes” (Hierher, lieber Gatte, wende deine Augen), singt

Polly; “Bestow one glance to cheer me” (Gönne mir einen Blick, mich zu erfreuen), fleht Lucy. Macheaths Erwiderung ist weniger einladend: “Which way shall I turn me, how can I decide?” (Wohin soll ich mich wenden, wie kann ich entscheiden?). Polly wendet sich an Peachum: “When my Hero in court appears” (Wenn mein Held vor Gericht erscheint), während Lucy Lockit anfleht: “When he holds up his hand arraigned for his life” (Wenn er die Hand erhebt, auf sein Leben verklagt). Die Väter bleiben hartnäckig (“Ourselves, like the Great, to secure a retreat”; “Wie die Großen uns einen Vorteil zu verschaffen”), und Macheath wird angewiesen, sich für den Old Bailey bereitzuhalten (“The Charge is prepared; the Lawyers are met”; “Die Anklage steht; das Gericht ist versammelt”).

Nun folgt die große Szene, die mehr als alle anderen dieses Werk zu Britten's Opus 43 gemacht hat. Es handelt sich um eine ausführliche *scena* für Macheath, in der dieser Teile von zehn Songs singt, während er sich angesichts seiner bevorstehenden Hinrichtung Mut antrinkt. Gay zitierte diese nur fragmentarisch; Austin ließ sechs von ihnen aus, und Dent verwendete hauptsächlich das Orchester. Britten setzt den abschließenden Song, “Greensleeves” (auf einen Text, der beginnt: “Since laws were made for ev’ry degree”; “Da es für jeden Stand Gesetze gibt”), als einen Ostinato-Bass ein, der die vorangehenden Songs verknüpft; diese sind: “O cruel, cruel case!” (Oh grausamer, grausamer

Fall!); “Of all the friends in time of grief” (Von allen Freunden in schlechten Zeiten); “Since I must swing, I scorn to wince or whine” (Da ich nun hängen muss, werde ich doch weder heulen noch klagen); “But now again my spirits sink” (Doch wieder wird mir Angst und bang); “But valour the stronger grows” (Doch wieder wächst in mir der Mut); “If thus a man die much bolder with brandy!” (Wenn also ein Mann mit Branntwein heldenhafter stirbt!); “So I drink off this bumper, and now I can stand the test” (So leere ich diesen Humpen, dann kann ich die Probe bestehen); “But can I leave my pretty hussies” (Doch kann ich von meinen hübschen Liebchen lassen); “Their eyes, their lips, their busses” (Ihre Augen, Lippen, Küsse) und schließlich eine Reprise von “Since laws were made” (Da es für jeden Stand).

Zwei Mitglieder seiner Bande kommen, sich von Macheath zu verabschieden, und er trägt ihnen auf, an Peachum und Lockit Rache zu üben. Polly und Lucy versichern ihm, sie würden gerne an seiner Stelle hängen (“Would I might be hanged!” / “And I would so too!”; “Würde doch ich gehängt!” / “Und auch ich wünschte es!”). Macheath fällt mit ein und die erklingende Totenglocke verleiht ihrem Trio den Charakter eines Klagelieds. Hier wird dem Bettler mitgeteilt, dass, wenn Macheath am Galgen endet, die Oper zu einer Tragödie anstelle der beabsichtigten Hochzeitsfeier wird. Der Bettler beharrt: “The piece must carry a moral. Vice must meet with its right reward!” (Das Stück muss eine

Moral haben. Das Laster muss seine gerechte Strafe erfahren!). Doch zu guter Letzt lässt man Gnade walten und Macheath stimmt das Finale an: “Thus I stand like a Turk, with his doxies around” (So steh’ ich hier wie ein Türke, von seinem Harem umgeben).

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Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

Susan Bickley hat sich als eine der vielseitigsten Mezzosopranen ihrer Generation etablieren können. Sie hat an solch renommierten Institutionen wie der Opéra de Paris, der San Francisco Opera, der New Israeli Opera, De Vlaamse Opera, De Nederlandse Opera, der Staatsoper Unter den Linden, der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, der Garsington Opera sowie allen größeren britischen Opernhäusern unter anderem die Penelope (*Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*), Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Kostelnicka (*Jenůfa*), Herodias (*Salome*), Kabanicha (*Kát’a Kabanová*), Gräfin Geschwitz (*Lulu*), Baba den Türken (*The Rake’s Progress*), den Geist (Birtwistle’s *The Last Supper*) sowie Mrs. Peachum (*The Beggar’s Opera*) gesungen. Außerdem hat sie Rollen in Louis Andriessens *Writing to Vermeer*, Turnages *Twice through the Heart* und Gerald Barrys *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* kreiert. Sie arbeitet regelmäßig mit allen größeren britischen Sinfonieorchestern und Ensembles zusammen und ist auf den

internationalen Konzertpodien mit Les Arts Florissants, dem Ensemble Intercontemporain, dem Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, der Deutschen Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, der NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hannover und dem Ensemble The Sixteen aufgetreten. Ihr Debüt an der Carnegie Hall feierte sie mit Strawinskys *Requiem Canticles*, außerdem ist sie am Kennedy Center, auf den Salzburger Festspielen, dem Edinburgh International Festival, den BBC Proms und in der Wigmore Hall aufgetreten. Mit Roger Vignoles, Iain Burnside, Julius Drake und dem Nash Ensemble hat sie Recitals gegeben. Für Chandos hat Susan Bickley Werke von Rossini, Edmund Rubbra und John Eccles eingespielt.

Der Bass-Bariton Jeremy White wurde in Liverpool geboren und in Oxford ausgebildet. Heute hat er eine internationale Karriere an der Oper, auf dem Konzertpodium und im Aufnahmestudio mit einem Repertoire, das von der Alten Musik bis zu zeitgenössischen Kompositionen reicht. Er arbeitet regelmäßig mit allen führenden britischen Orchestern und Dirigenten zusammen und seine Opernaufführungen haben ihn von Aix-en-Provence bis zur Royal Opera, Covent Garden geführt, wo er seit seinem Debüt im Jahre 1991 in jeder Spielzeit aufgetreten ist, in Rollen von Mozart bis Janáček, mit dem er auch seinen ersten Auftritt an der Metropolitan Opera in New York hatte. In den

letzten Jahren hat er in Covent Garden den Kecal (*Die verkaufte Braut*), Snug (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Surin (*Pique Dame*), Ligniere (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*), Mr. Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*) und Sakristan (*Tosca*) gesungen, an der English National Opera Pluto (*Orfeo*), Warlaam (*Boris Godunow*) und Prinz Selim (*Il turco in Italia*), für die Opera North Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*), Il Re (*Aida*), Dikoj (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Talbot (*Giovanna d'Arco*) und Tiresias (*Oedipus Rex*), sowie Benoit (*La bohème*) auf den Bregenzer Festspielen, Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) an der Grange Park Opera, Parsons (1984) am Teatro alla Scala in Mailand und Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) an der Opéra national de Bordeaux. Im Jahr 2010 wird er an der Glyndebourne Festival Opera den Dansker (*Billy Budd*) singen. Jeremy White wirkt hier mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Royal Opera House mit.

Die aus Wales gebürtige Mezzosopranistin **Leah-Marian Jones** absolvierte ihr Studium am Royal Northern College of Music und dem National Opera Studio in London. Während ihres achtjährigen Engagements als Prinzipalin an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden sang sie Rollen wie die Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*), Varvara (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Karolka (*Jenůfa*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), die Zweite Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Bersi

(*Andrea Chénier*), Flora (*La traviata*), Emilia (*Otello*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Flosshilde (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) und den jungen Doktor (*Palestrina*). Engagements haben sie auch an die English National Opera, die English Touring Opera, die Opera North, die Welsh National Opera und die Scottish Opera sowie im Ausland an die Metropolitan Opera in New York, die San Francisco Opera und ans Châtelet – Théâtre musical de Paris geführt, wobei Carmen, Orestes (*La Belle Hélène*), Sonetka (*Lady Macbeth von Mzensk*), Rossweiße und Norn (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Meg Page (*Falstaff*), den Pagen der Herodias (*Salome*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), Polly Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*) und Junon (*Platée*) zu ihrem Repertoire zählten. Außerdem hat Leah-Marian Jones gemeinsam mit Luciano Pavarotti an einem Galakonzert in der Royal Albert Hall, einem Verdi-Programm der BBC Proms, einer konzertanten Aufführung der *Götterdämmerung* mit dem Hallé Orchestra unter Sir Mark Elder sowie auf dem Glastonbury Festival an einer konzertanten Aufführung des dritten Akts der *Walküre* teilgenommen.

Der Tenor **Tom Randle** studierte zunächst Dirigieren und Komposition, änderte jedoch seine Studienrichtung, als er ein Stipendium für eine Gesangsausbildung erhielt. Die für ihn typische

lebhaft und engagierte Interpretation seiner Rollen wie auch seine einzigartige Fähigkeit, ein breit gefächertes Repertoire zu beherrschen, hat ihn als einen der anregendsten und vielseitigsten Künstler seiner Generation hervortreten lassen. An der Royal Opera, Covent Garden hat er den Essex (*Gloriana*), Johnny Inkslinger (*Paul Bunyan*), den Narren (*Gawain*) sowie Captain Macheath (*The Beggar's Opera*) und an der English National Opera den Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Achilles (*King Priam*), Števa Buryja (*Jenůfa*), Dionysus (John Bullers *Bacchae*), Loge (*Das Rheingold*) und Monteverdis Orfeo gesungen. Er ist an der Welsh National Opera in der Rolle des Bénédict (*Béatrice et Bénédict*), Boris (*Kát'a Kabanová*) und Prinz Andrej Khowsanski (*Khowsantschina*), an der Opera North als Alfredo (*La traviata*) sowie an der Scottish National Opera als Bajazet (*Tamerlano*) und Idomeneo aufgetreten. Auf internationalen Festivals und in Opernhäusern in ganz Europa, Nordamerika, Australien und Neuseeland war er als Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*) und Gerald (*Lakmé*) zu hören, ferner in den Titelrollen von Haydns *Orlando Paladino*, Hasses *Solimano* und Monteverdis *Orfeo* sowie in führenden Rollen in *The Fairy Queen*, *Wozzeck*, *Peter Grimes*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Henzes *Bassariden*, Messiaens *St. François d'Assise*, Peter Schats *Symposium*, Mark-Anthony Turnages *The Country of the Blind* und Birtwistles *The Last Supper*.

Der britische Tenor **Robert Anthony Gardiner** erwarb zunächst an der Durham University einen Bachelor of Sciences (mit Auszeichnung) in Astrophysik und machte an der Manchester University sein Examen in Pädagogik, bevor er am Royal Northern College of Music, der Frankfurter Opernschule und dem National Opera Studio seine musikalische Ausbildung absolvierte und zahlreiche Auszeichnungen erwarb. Er hat den Eurimaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) an der Frankfurter Oper gesungen, Aubry (*Maria di Rohan*) und Ctésippe (*Pénélope*) auf dem Wexford Festival, den Testo (*Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*) in St. Pompont und Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) auf dem Ryedale Festival. Im September 2008 wurde er in das Jette Parker Young Artists Programme aufgenommen und feierte sein Debüt an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden in der Rolle des Egoldo (*Matilde di Shabran*), gefolgt von Filch (*The Beggar's Opera*). Zu den weiteren Rollen in seinem Repertoire zählen Pane (*Calisto*), Nathanaël (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Borsa (*Rigoletto*), der Steuermann (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Erster Matrose (*Dido and Aeneas*), Damon und Coridon (*Acis and Galatea*), Ruiz (*Il trovatore*), Gastone (*La traviata*), der Graf von Lerma (*Don Carlos*), der Haushofmeister (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Zweiter Croupier (*Der Spieler*), Zweiter Jude (*Salome*), Panas (*Tscherewitschki*) und Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*). Robert Anthony Gardiner hat auf zahlreichen britischen Podien Solo-Recitals

gegeben und mit verschiedenen Chören und Chorvereinigungen Oratorien aufgeführt.

Der Bariton **Donald Maxwell** wurde in Perth in Schottland geboren und absolvierte an der Edinburgh University ein Geographiestudium, bevor er bei Joseph Hislop Gesang studierte. Er ist an sämtlichen großen britischen Opernhäusern und auf den wichtigen Festivals des Landes aufgetreten sowie auch an der Metropolitan Opera in New York, dem Teatro alla Scala in Mailand, der Wiener Staatsoper und den Opernhäusern von Paris, Brüssel, Berlin, Houston, Buenos Aires und Athen. Zu seinem umfassenden Repertoire zählen unter anderem die Titelrollen in *Falstaff*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Der fliegende Holländer* und *Wozzeck*, sowie Leander (*Die Liebe zu den drei Orangen*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Germont (*La traviata*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*), Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*), Amonasro (*Aida*), Marcello (*La bohème*), Iago (*Otello*), der Graf (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Golaud (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), Balstrode und Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), Klingsor (*Parsifal*), Don Pizarro (*Fidelio*), Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), Jeletski (*Pique Dame*), Gunther (*Götterdämmerung*), Dr. Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*), Don Perlimpin in der Uraufführung von *The Nightingale's to Blame*

sowie der englische Bogenschütze in der britischen Erstaufführung von *The King Goes forth to France*. Für Chandos hat Donald Maxwell Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), Father Philippe (*The Wandering Scholar*), Sir John Falstaff (*Sir John in Love*) und Howells' *Missa Sabrinensis* eingespielt.

Nach ihrem Studium an der University of London und dem Royal College of Music wurde die Sopranistin **Sarah Fox** 1997 mit dem Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Award und im Jahr 2000 mit dem John Christie Award ausgezeichnet. An der Royal Opera, Covent Garden hat sie die Woglinde (*Das Rheingold* und *Götterdämmerung*), Waldvogel (*Siegfried*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) und Lucy Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*) gesungen, während ihre Rollen auf dem Glyndebourne Festival Zerlina und Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*) umfassten. Zudem hat sie die Anne Page (*Sir John in Love*) an der English National Opera gesungen, Merab (*Saul*) an der Opera North, Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*) an der Welsh National Opera sowie Iphis (*Jephtha*) und Cleofide (*Poro*) auf dem Edinburgh International Festival. Im Ausland hat sie Ilia an De Vlaamse Opera, Michal (*Saul*), Asteria (*Tamerlano*) und Eurydice (*Orphée et Eurydice*) an der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München, Susanna an der Königlich Dänischen Oper, Woglinde (*Das Rheingold*) auf den Salzburger Festspielen und Zerlina auf dem

Cincinnati Opera Festival gegeben. In jüngerer Zeit unternahm sie in der Rolle der Josabeth (*Athalia*) mit dem Köln Konzert unter Sir Ivor Bolton eine Tournee durch Europa und die USA. Im Konzert ist sie mit dem Bach Choir, dem Hallé Orchestra, dem City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra und dem English Concert aufgetreten. Auf Chandos-CDs ist Sarah Fox in der *Zauberflöte*, *Owen Wingrave*, Kenneth Leightons Zweiter Sinfonie und mit Weihnachtsmusik von Vaughan Williams zu hören.

Die Mezzosopranistin **Frances McCafferty** absolvierte ihr Studium an der Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama und hat heute regelmäßig Gastengagements an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden, wo sie die Amme (*Boris Godunow*), die Gouvernante (*Cyrano de Bergerac* und *Pique Dame*), die erste Magd (*Elektra*), die Mutter (*Lulu*), Mrs. Trapes (*The Beggar's Opera*) und Yeta Zimmerman in der Uraufführung von Nicholas Maws *Sophie's Choice* gesungen hat. An der English National Opera hat sie die Katisha (*The Mikado*) und Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*), am Teatro La Fenice in Venedig die Katisha, an der Glyndebourne Festival Opera die Håta (*Die verkaufte Braut*) und Mrs. Herring (*Albert Herring*), an der Opera North unter anderem Mistress Quickly, Geneviève (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Filipp'jewna (*Eugen Onegin*) und Belissas Mutter (*The Nightingale's to Blame*), an der Garsington Opera Solokha (*Tschereuitschki*), auf dem Wexford Festival die Titelrolle in *The Medium*, auf dem

Buxton Festival La Haine (in Glucks *Armide*), auf den Ravenna Festspielen die Wahrsagerin (*Julietta*), an der Nationale Reisopera die Auntie (*Peter Grimes*), Gertrud (*Hänsel und Gretel*) und die Schenkwirtin (*Boris Godunow*), an der Griechischen Nationaloper die Mutter (*Mavra*) und an der Neuen Israelischen Oper und der Stuttgarter Staatsoper die Mistress Quickly gesungen. Weitere Auftritte hatte sie auf dem Festival von La Bâtie in Genf und dem Edinburgh International Festival. Ihr amerikanisches Debüt feierte Frances McCafferty im Jahr 2009 auf dem Grant Park Festival in Chicago.

Die **City of London Sinfonia** (CLS) ist eines der geschätztesten Kammerorchester Großbritanniens. Das Ensemble wurde 1971 von dem inzwischen verstorbenen Richard Hickox CBE gegründet und bietet kundige und stilsichere Interpretationen mit einem Schwerpunkt auf der Vokalstimme und Musik britischer Komponisten. In London spielt das CLS regelmäßig in der Cadogan Hall sowie der St. Paul's Cathedral und anderen Kirchen in der City of London, außerdem ist es das Stammorchester des beliebten Opera Holland Park Festivals. Auch auf anderen britischen Festivals ist das CLS regelmäßig zu Gast, wobei es vor allem mit High Wycombe und Chatham seit vielen Jahren verbunden ist. Das Orchester bietet phantasievolle Familienkonzerte an, bei denen es das Publikum aktiv beteiligt, und betreibt auch musikalische Basisarbeit. Im Ausland

hat es vor kurzem seinen ersten Besuch in Kroatien absolviert und war zudem Gastorchester auf dem internationalen Musikfestival in Cartagena. Wenn das Ensemble nicht gerade auf dem Konzertpodium engagiert ist, wirken seine Musiker im Rahmen des gefeierten "Meet the Music"-Programms des Orchesters an kreativen Projekten in Schulen und Gemeinden mit; außerdem bieten sie britischen Firmen ihr Projekt "Development through Music" (Entwicklung durch Musik) an, in dessen Rahmen sie Musik als Medium zur Erlangung professioneller Kompetenzen einsetzen.

Christian Curnyn, nach dem Urteil der *Times* "unser bester junger Händel-Interpret", wurde in Glasgow geboren und studierte in York sowie an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. 1994 gründete er die Early Opera Company, die sich inzwischen einen internationalen Ruf als führende Institution für historisch getreue Aufführungen des Barockrepertoires erworben hat. Als Gastdirigent hat er unter anderem Rameaus *Platée* in Lissabon, den *Messiah* in Girona, Händels *Semele* mit der British Youth Opera und der Budapester Kammeroper dirigiert sowie *L'elisir d'amore*, *Le nozze di Figaro*

und *Semele* an der Grange Park Opera, an die er im Sommer 2009 zurückkehrte, um eine Inszenierung von Cavallis *Eliogabalo* zu leiten. 2005 feierte er sein Debüt an der Scottish Opera mit *Semele*, und 2006 kehrte er für eine Inszenierung von Händels *Tamerlano* dorthin zurück. Jüngst feierte er sein Debüt an der English National Opera in einer Neuinszenierung von Händels *Partenope* und das an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden mit Brittens Bearbeitung der *Beggar's Opera*. 2009 kehrte er für Katie Mitchells Umsetzung von Purcells *Dido and Aeneas* an die English National Opera zurück. Außerdem ist er auf dem Händel-Fest in Halle, mit der Opera Theatre Company in Dublin und an der Opera North aufgetreten; in Kürze wird er sein Debüt an der New York City Opera und dem Chicago Opera Theater feiern. Des weiteren erhielt er Einladungen, das Ulster Orchestra, das Stavanger Sinfonieorchester, die NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hannover, das Hallé Orchestra, die Academy of Ancient Music und das English Concert zu dirigieren. Für Chandos hat er gefeierte Aufnahmen von *Partenope* und *Semele* eingespielt, von denen das letztgenannte Werk 2008 mit dem Stanley Sadie Handel Prize ausgezeichnet wurde, sowie von John Eccles' *The Judgment of Paris*.



Robert Anthony Gardiner

Wadey James



Donald Maxwell

Louis Flood

Gay / Britten: The Beggar's Opera

Historique et accueil

L'apposition du nom de John Gay (1685 – 1732) sur *The Beggar's Opera* (L'Opéra du gueux) donne à penser qu'il en était le compositeur, alors qu'il en fut le librettiste et n'écrivit pas la moindre note de la musique de cette fresque hogarthienne décrivant la vie des bas-fonds de Londres au début du dix-huitième siècle. Avec cette œuvre il créa une nouvelle forme, celle de l'"opéra-ballade", en incorporant des chants populaires au dialogue parlé. Avant *The Beggar's Opera* il avait écrit plusieurs pièces dépourvues de succès et quelques vers. Il avait aussi écrit une partie du libretto d'*Acis and Galatea* de Haendel. Toutefois personne ne s'attendait au succès remporté par *The Beggar's Opera* dont la musique comportait soixante-neuf chants. Parmi ceux-ci vingt-huit étaient des ballades traditionnelles ou chants populaires, vingt-trois étaient des chants irlandais, écossais ou français, et le reste était tiré de la musique de Purcell, de Haendel et de plusieurs autres compositeurs. L'ouverture, fondée sur l'air de "One evening, having lost my way" (Un soir ayant perdu mon chemin), est attribuée à Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667 – 1752). L'œuvre fut créée le 29 janvier 1728 à Lincoln's Inn Fields, dans le théâtre de John Rich, Colley Cibber ayant refusé de

la monter à Drury Lane. Ce fut un énorme succès, elle fit l'objet de soixante-deux représentations et fut reprise à chaque saison jusqu'à la fin du siècle. Elle fut montée dans bon nombre de villes du Royaume-Uni et d'Amérique, et fit la fortune de Gay et de Rich. Les salles londoniennes se délectèrent de la satire politique qu'elle faisait de figures publiques comme le Premier ministre Sir Robert Walpole.

The Beggar's Opera, qui passa de mode au cours du dix-neuvième siècle, plus prude, trouva un regain de vie en 1920 lorsqu'il tint pendant 1463 représentations au Lyric de Hammersmith, dans une mise en scène de Nigel Playfair pour laquelle la partition avait été révisée par Frederic Austin et le texte expurgé par Arnold Bennett. Cette production fut reprise tous les ans de 1925 à 1930, à l'exception de 1927. En 1928 à Berlin, Bertolt Brecht basa *Die Dreigroschenoper* (L'Opéra de quat'sous) sur l'intrigue et les personnages de l'œuvre, mais en situant l'action à une période plus récente, la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. Il incombait à Kurt Weill de fournir une partition nouvelle, dont l'air célèbre fut "Mackie le Couteau". Il y eut d'autres mises en scène du *Beggar's Opera* dans les années 1940, et Laurence Olivier porta l'œuvre au cinéma en 1953, la partition ayant été éditée par Sir Arthur Bliss. Parmi

les autres compositeurs qui ont arrangé ou réarrangé la partition, figurent J.L. Hatton, Edward J. Dent et, bien sûr, Benjamin Britten qui se mit à travailler à sa réalisation de janvier à mars 1948 au cours d'une tournée effectuée en Europe.

L'intérêt qu'il montra pour *The Beggar's Opera* en tant qu'œuvre permettant de présenter l'English Opera Group, nouvellement formé, venait tout naturellement de sa passion pour les chants traditionnels. Il se choisit pour collaborateur le metteur en scène de théâtre Tyrone Guthrie, qui partageait son désir de redonner à l'œuvre son mordant original. Britten utilisa soixante-six des soixante-neuf mélodies d'origine (Austin n'en avait utilisé que quarante-cinq) et par deux fois réunit deux airs pour en faire un numéro musical unique: d'abord pour créer un duo entre Lucy et Lockit, ensuite un trio entre Macheath, Polly et Lucy. Il abandonna l'ouverture de Pepusch pour en substituer une de son cru dans laquelle il avait utilisé des airs associés aux personnages principaux. Voici la description qu'il fit de ces airs:

Les plus typiquement anglais de tous nos chants traditionnels. Ils ressemblent parfois étrangement à du Haendel ou du Purcell... Ils présentent des intervalles vertigineux, quelquefois dans des modes bizarres, et ont souvent une atmosphère étrange et austère... Je trouve que la plupart des arrangements antérieurs ont négligé cette âpreté et cette bizarrerie pour se concentrer sur leur grâce lyrique. Pour faire mes arrangements

de ces airs j'ai consulté une édition contemporaine des arrangements originaux effectués par le docteur Pepusch. Mis à part une ou deux prolongations ou répétitions, j'ai laissé les airs tels quels (excepté à un ou deux endroits où l'original semblait confus ou imprécis).

Dans sa préface à la partition vocale Britten explique:

La production de cette nouvelle version provient d'une indication donnée dans le Prologue original de la pièce, qui signalait que l'opéra avait précédemment été interprété dans "la halle de Saint Giles", pour célébrer le mariage de deux chanteurs de ballades. Le metteur en scène et le compositeur projetèrent donc de situer l'opéra dans cette "halle" qu'ils imaginèrent comme une blanchisserie fréquentée par des mendiants, qui y travaillaient en échange de nourriture et de chaleur. Cette blanchisserie devint le décor permanent où se déroulèrent toutes les scènes; tous les changements de tableaux furent réalisés par des ajustements rapides de paravents et de mobilier sous les yeux du public, la responsabilité en incombant aux mendiants que l'opéra se proposait de divertir, et qui participaient à l'action en tant que spectateurs sur scène, cœur et petits rôles. Cette façon de présenter l'opéra exigea la ré-écriture de quelques passages du texte et l'ajout de quelques dialogues parlés.

Ce matériau supplémentaire fut écrit par Guthrie. Le changement le plus radical consista à faire passer la première scène originale de l'acte II de Gay – située

dans une taverne près de Newgate – à la fin de l’acte I qui se termine maintenant par l’excitante scène où Macheath est arrêté. Sept courtes scènes (dont cinq à l’acte III) furent omises; il y eut aussi quelques révisions et l’introduction de quelques éléments de dialogue supplémentaires, une bribe ici et là. Néanmoins ces changements, auxquels vint s’ajouter la fourniture d’accompagnements originaux – il n’existe pas de version faisant autorité de la partition originale – justifient la décision prise par Britten d’inclure l’œuvre sous le numéro d’opus 43 dans son propre catalogue. Seule une des scènes omises entraîna la suppression d’un air – “The Lass of Patie’s Mill” (La jeune fille de Patie’s Mill). L’orchestre, qui comporte flûte, piccolo, hautbois, cor anglais, clarinette, basson, cor, percussion, harpe, quatuor à cordes et contrebasse, s’avère presque identique à celui du *Rape of Lucretia* (1946) et d’*Albert Herring* (1947).

La première de la version de Britten fut donnée au Cambridge Arts Theatre, le 24 mai 1948. Peter Pears y incarnait Macheath, Nancy Evans, Polly, et Rose Hill, Lucy Lockit. Britten dirigeait. Le critique du *Times* pensa que certaines des mélodies avaient été noyées dans “l’ingéniosité sophistiquée des arrangements” et l’*Evening Standard* se plaignit que Pears, en Macheath, chantait avec l’aimable politesse d’un ténor de thé dansant. Une remarque similaire, en moins poli, décochée par Guthrie à Pears au cours d’une répétition, fit qu’il ne travailla plus

jamais avec Britten. À l’époque Britten affrontait un antagonisme énorme de la part de l’establishment musical et des partisans de la version Playfair-Austin, qui pensaient que Britten avait envahi leur territoire. La production passa au Sadler’s Wells de Londres à l’automne. Elle alla aussi à Hambourg, où elle fut dirigée par Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, puis à Vienne. Dans une nouvelle production réalisée par l’English Opera Group au Festival d’Aldeburgh en 1963, Pears, Janet Baker et Heather Harper apparurent en tête d’affiche. Après quelques changements apportés à la distribution, la production alla ensuite à Londres, Édimbourg et Montréal. Néanmoins ces derniers temps, la version de Britten n’est que rarement jouée.

Le rôle de Macheath, qui à l’origine était toujours chanté par un ténor, fut, au fil du temps, de plus en plus souvent assigné à un baryton. Britten, ayant Pears à ses côtés, en refit un rôle de ténor. Néanmoins il autorisa plus tard le recours à un baryton, décision qui nécessita la révision d’au moins dix airs et ensembles auxquels Macheath participe. Ce fut Julius Harrison qui entreprit cette tâche. Toutefois la prédominance des voix graves et l’assombrissement de l’orchestration ainsi provoqué finirent par amener Britten à changer d’avis.

Synopsis

Acte I

Après le Prologue parlé, qui nous informe que la pièce a été écrite pour célébrer le mariage de deux

chanteurs de ballades, l’acte I débute nous montrant Peachum, receleur de marchandises volées (une “clôture”), qui fait ses comptes en chantant “Through all the employments of life, each neighbour abuses his Brother” (En toutes circonstances de la vie, le voisin dénigre son frère). Filch, son employé, rend compte du sort de certains membres de la bande de Peachum, qui ont été traduits en justice, et reçoit des messages à leur remettre en prison. Il chante “Tis Woman that seduces all Mankind” (C’est la femme qui séduit l’humanité). Peachum songe à abandonner ses activités et à se faire de l’argent en livrant sa bande aux autorités. Entre son épouse qui dit que les femmes sont mauvais juges des hommes, qu’elles aiment pour leur courage: “If any wench Venus’ Girdle wear” (Si une jeune fille porte la ceinture de Vénus). M. et Mme Peachum parlent du capitaine Macheath, bandit de grand chemin que leur fille Polly admire tant. Mme Peachum chante “If Love the Virgin’s Heart invade” (Si l’amour s’empare du cœur de la vierge), mais son mari s’oppose à l’idée d’un mariage et sort pour se mettre à la recherche de Polly “afin de l’en dissuader par la terreur”. Mme Peachum chante “A Maid is like the Golden ore” (Une jeune fille est comme l’or brut) et questionne Filch sur les rapports entre Macheath et Polly. Filch l’emmène pour lui en dire plus. Pendant ce temps Peachum revient en compagnie de Polly, qui insiste sur sa capacité à veiller sur ses propres intérêts: “Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre” (Les vierges sont comme la belle

fleur dans son éclat). Peachum la met en garde contre le mariage, sur quoi Mme Peachum revient livide de colère pour annoncer qu’ils arrivent trop tard – Polly est déjà mariée. “Our Polly is a sad slut!” (Notre Polly est une triste catin!), chantent Mme Peachum et le chœur de mendiants (qui demeure sur scène, que sa présence soit requise ou non par l’action). Polly réplique “Can Love be controlled by Advice?” (L’amour peut-il être maîtrisé par un conseil?). La réponse de sa mère (écrite pour Mme Peachum, Polly et le chœur) est exquise “O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed” (Oh Polly, tu aurais pu te contenter de petits jeux et de baisers), mais Polly lui oppose cette excuse: “I, like a Ship in storms, was tossed” (Comme un bateau pris dans la tempête, j’étais ballottée). On envoie alors Polly servir des clients. Les Peachum projettent de tirer un bénéfice de l’affaire, mais s’inquiètent de ce qu’un homme de loi pourrait intervenir et s’emparer des profits: “A fox may steal your hens, Sir” (Un renard peut voler vos poules, monsieur). Ils appellent Polly et lui disent qu’elle doit livrer Macheath aux autorités afin de devenir veuve. “O ponder well! Be not severe” (Oh, réfléchissez bien! Ne soyez pas sévères), supplie Polly, ajoutant que veuve, elle ne ferait plus que pleurer: “The Turtle thus with plaintive crying, her Lover dying” (Ainsi la tortue au cri plaintif, son amant mourant) – son affliction étant dépeinte par les trémolos de la flûte. Il s’agit de la dernière scène où Madame Peachum est présente, après elle ne sera plus ni vue, ni entendue.

Nous faisons alors enfin la connaissance de Macheath. Pour construire le duo d'amour de ce dernier avec Polly, Britten a utilisé cinq numéros qui, sur le plan des émotions, varient de l'extase au désespoir ressenti par Polly lorsqu'elle pense au complot que ses parents tramant contre Macheath. Ces chants sont les suivants: "Pretty Polly, say... Did your fancy never stray?" (Dis-moi, jolie Polly... ton affection ne s'est-elle jamais égarée?), "My heart was so free" (Mon cœur était si libre), "Were I laid on Greenland's coast... Over the hills and far away" (Serais-je sur la côte du Groenland... Au-delà des collines, bien loin), "O! what pain it is to part!" (Oh! qu'il est douloureux de se séparer!) et, en *finale*, "The Miser thus a shilling sees" (Ainsi l'Avare voit un shilling). Pour le dernier air, un des grands moments de l'œuvre, Britten voulut qu'une troisième section réunit toutes les voix pour atteindre un apogée, et ce fut Eric Crozier qui fournit les vers supplémentaires: "The sailor climbs the swaying mast" (Le marin grimpe au mat qui oscille).

Dans une taverne près de Newgate, Macheath et ses hommes font ribote: "Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us" (Remplissez tous les verres, car le vin nous inspire). Il les envoie faire leur vile besogne et ils partent en chantant "Let us take the road" (Prenons la route) sur l'air de la marche du *Rinaldo* de Haendel, arrangement particulièrement brillant comportant une partie de cor polytonale. Macheath médite sur les plaisirs procurés par les femmes –

chantant l'air demeurant toujours très populaire "If the heart of man is depressed with cares" (Si l'homme a le cœur lourd de soucis) – et comme les femmes de la ville viennent le rejoindre, il les entraîne dans une danse "Youth's the season made for joys" (La jeunesse est la saison des joies), cotillon doté d'une partie de harpe pleine de délicatesse. Tandis qu'ils dansent, Jenny Diver chante "Before the barn-door crowing" (Chantant à la porte de la grange). Tandis que les femmes entonnent "The Gamesters and Lawyers are jugglers alike" (Joueurs et hommes de loi comme filous se valent), Jenny et Betty Doxy s'emparent des pistolets de Macheath. Elles font un signal à Peachum, qui arrive avec des policiers et arrête Macheath. Ce dernier, furieux contre les femmes, chante "At the Tree I shall suffer with pleasure" (Pendue à l'arbre je souffrirai avec plaisir) tandis qu'on l'emmène.

Acte II

À Newgate, Macheath est accueilli par le geôlier Lockit qui lui explique qu'au cachot rien n'est gratuit (la corruption règne). Macheath rend les femmes responsables de sa triste situation: "Man may escape from rope and gun" (L'homme peut échapper à la corde et au fusil). La fille de Lockit, qui est enceinte, impute sa grossesse à Macheath et lui dit qu'elle a bien l'intention de se venger: "Thus when a good Housewife sees a rat" (Ainsi quand la bonne ménagère voit un rat), qui comporte une partie

pleine de virtuosité pour cor anglais. Macheath se dit l'époux de Lucy, mais son excuse ne prend pas: "How cruel are the traitors" (Que les traîtres sont cruels). Il explique que le récit fait par Polly de son mariage avec lui n'est que vanité: "The first time at the looking glass" (La première fois devant un miroir). Ils sortent, partant à la recherche d'un prêtre.

Peachum et Lockit discutent des avantages qu'ils trouvent à travailler pour la loi tout en organisant des activités criminelles. Lorsque Peachum se dit prêt à trahir leurs amis, Lockit lui conseille vivement de faire attention à ses paroles: "When you censure the age" (Quand vous critiquez l'époque). Peachum met alors en question la probité de Lockit et les deux coquins se battent, mais finissent quand même par se calmer. Lucy a alors une prise de bec avec son père tandis qu'elle implore la clémence pour Macheath. Lockit affirme qu'elle devrait être heureuse à la perspective d'être veuve. Britten transforme leurs airs en duo: "Is then his fate decreed, Sir?" (Son sort est-il arrêté, monsieur?) et "You'll think e'er many days ensue" (Vous penserez après bien des jours passés). Macheath rejoint Lucy, mais Polly fait de même. Et par surcroît elle l'appelle "mon cher mari" et chante: "Thus when the Swallow seeking prey" (Ainsi lorsque l'hirondelle cherchant sa proie). Britten combine l'air de Macheath, "How happy could I be with either" (Comme je pourrais être heureux avec l'une ou l'autre), et le duo de Lucy et de Polly, "I'm bubbled, oh how I am troubled!" (Je suis dupé,

oh! que de tourments!), pour en faire un trio. Lucy et Polly se disputent: "Cease your funning" (Cessez la plaisanterie), chante Lucy accompagnée par le chœur, puis vient un duo "Why how now, Madam Flirt!" (Eh bien! maintenant Madame la coquette!). L'acte se termine par un ensemble sophistiqué, "No power on earth can e'er divide" (Aucune puissance sur terre ne pourra jamais séparer), écrit sur l'air du "Irish Howl", durant lequel Lucy libère Macheath de ses chaînes.

Acte III

Lucy dit à Lockit que c'est par amour qu'elle a aidé Macheath à s'échapper: "When young at the bar you first taught me to score" (Lorsque jeune au bar vous m'avez appris à tenir l'ardoise" (un air de Purcell). Cependant des doutes s'insinuent dans son esprit: "My love is all madness and folly" (Mon amour n'est que folie et déraison). Britten débute et termine l'aria avec des reproches tirés du dialogue parlé original: "Ungrateful Macheath!" (Ingrat Macheath!). Lockit jette sa fille dehors pour ne pas avoir à l'entendre pleurnicher, et décide qu'il doit prendre sa revanche sur Peachum, qui, il en est sûr, tente de le doubler à propos de Macheath: "Thus Gamesters united in friendship are found" (Ainsi trouve-t-on des joueurs unis par amitié).

Macheath, qui se trouve maintenant dans une maison de jeu avec ses acolytes, chante "The modes of the Court so common are grown" (Les manières de la cour sont devenues si vulgaires) sur l'air de

“Lilliburlero”. Dans la demeure de Peachum, Peachum et Lockit abandonnent l’idée de régler leurs comptes et conviennent qu’en surveillant Polly, elle les conduira à Macheath: “What Gudgeons are we men!” (Les hommes sont de vrais goujons!). C’est alors qu’une certaine Mme Trapes, marchande à tempérament, leur rend visite: “In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove” (Dans le temps de ma jeunesse je savais roucouler comme une tourterelle). Elle désire acheter des fichus et des jupons, mais laisse aussi entendre qu’elle vient de voir Macheath. Lockit et Peachum lui disent qu’elle pourra elle-même fixer le prix de ses marchandises si elle les mène au capitaine.

De retour à Newgate, Lucy, qui se lamente toujours sur son sort, “I’m like a Skiff on the Ocean tossed” (Je suis telle une barque ballottée sur l’océan), a la ferme intention de se venger de Polly pour qui elle a préparé du gin additionné de mort-aux-rats. Lucy est tout sourire lorsque Polly arrive refusant la boisson qui lui est offerte. Leur duo, “A curse attends a woman’s love” (La malédiction accompagne l’amour de la femme), s’avère en apparence amical, comme le sont les airs ultérieurs, celui de Polly “Among the men Coquets we find” (Parmi les hommes se trouvent des coquets) et celui de Lucy “Come, sweet lass” (Allons, douce jeune fille). L’arrivée de Macheath enchaîné les interrompt. Polly chante “Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes” (Tourne les yeux par ici, cher époux) et Lucy implore: “Bestow one glance to cheer me” (Juste un regard pour me donner courage). La réponse de Macheath est

plus mitigée: “Which way shall I turn me, how can I decide?” (De quel côté me tourner? Comment puis-je décider?). Polly implore Peachum, “When my Hero in court appears” (Quand mon héros à la barre paraîtra), et Lucy supplie Lockit, “When he holds up his hand arraigned for his life” (Quand il lèvera la main, sa vie en jeu). Les deux pères sont inflexibles, “Ourselves, like the Great, to secure a retreat” (Nous, comme les grands de ce monde, pour nous ménager une retraite), et disent à Macheath de s’apprêter à gagner l’Old Bailey: “The Charge is prepared; the Lawyers are met” (L’accusation est prête; les hommes de loi, réunis).

Vient ensuite la grande scène qui plus que toute autre chose fait de l’œuvre l’opus 43 de Britten. C’est une *scena* élaborée écrite pour Macheath dans laquelle il chante des passages de dix airs tout en buvant pour se donner du courage avant d’être pendu. Gay les avait cités de façon fragmentaire, Austin en avait omis six et Dent avait eu surtout recours à l’orchestre. Britten utilisa l’air final, celui de “Greensleeves” – avec des paroles débutant par “Since laws were made for ev’ry degree” (Puisque les lois pour toutes les conditions furent créées) – comme basse obstinée pour servir de lien entre les airs précédents, qui sont: “O cruel, cruel case!” (Oh! si cruelle situation!), “Of all the friends in time of grief” (De tous les amis quand frappe le malheur), “Since I must swing, I scorn to wince or whine” (Puisque la pendaison me guette, ni à broncher, ni à gémir je ne m’abaisserai), “But now again my spirits sink” (Mais de

temps à autre l’accablement m’êtreint), “But valour the stronger grows” (Mais la bravoure s’accroît), “If thus a man die much bolder with brandy!” (Si donc le brandy aide l’homme à mourir plus hardi!), “So I drink off this bumper, and now I can stand the test”, (Je finis donc cette rasade et maintenant suis prêt), “But can I leave my pretty hussies” (Mais puis-je quitter mes jolies drôlesses), “Their eyes, their lips, their busses” (Leurs yeux, leurs lèvres, leurs baisers) et, pour terminer, une reprise de “Since laws were made”.

Deux membres de sa bande viennent lui faire leurs adieux et Macheath les enjoint de le venger de Peachum et de Lockit. Quant à Polly et Lucy, elles disent qu’elles prenaient volontiers sa place sur le gibet: “Would I might be hanged!” (Je voudrais que l’on me pendre!); “And I would so too!” (Et moi de même!). Macheath se joint à elles et le son du glas donne au trio des allures de chant funèbre. C’est alors que l’on dit au gueur que si Macheath est pendu l’opéra va devenir une tragédie au lieu d’une pièce pour célébrer un mariage, comme il était prévu. Le gueur insiste: “L’œuvre doit avoir une morale. Le vice doit avoir sa juste récompense!” Macheath finit cependant par être gracié et mène le *finale*: “Thus I stand like a Turk, with his doxies around” (Me voici donc tel un Turc, entouré de ses catins).

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Traduction: Marianne Fernée-Lidon

Susan Bickley s’est imposée comme l’une des plus talentueuses mezzo-sopranos de sa génération. Dans des salles telles que l’Opéra de Paris, le San Francisco Opera, le Nouvel Opéra d’Israël, De Vlaamse Opera, De Nederlandse Opera, le Staatsoper Unter den Linden, au Festival de Glyndebourne, au Garsington Opera et dans tous les grands théâtres lyriques de Grande-Bretagne, elle a incarné des rôles tels que Penelope (*Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*), Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Kostelnicka (*Jenůfa*), Herodias (*Salome*), Kabanicha (*Kát’a Kabanová*), la Comtesse Geschwitz (*Lulu*), Baba la Turque (*The Rake’s Progress*), le Fantôme (*The Last Supper* de Harrison Birtwistle) et Mrs Peachum (*The Beggar’s Opera*). Elle a également créé des rôles dans *Writing to Vermeer* de Louis Andriessen, *Twice through the Heart* de Mark-Anthony Turnage et *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* de Gerald Barry. Elle chante régulièrement avec tous les grands orchestres symphoniques et ensembles britanniques, et s’est produite en concert avec Les Arts Florissants, l’Ensemble Intercontemporain, l’Orchestre symphonique de Hong Kong, la Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, la NDR Radiophilharmonie de Hanovre, et The Sixteen. Elle a fait ses débuts au Carnegie Hall de New York dans les *Requiem Canticles* de Stravinsky, et a chanté au Kennedy Center, au Festival de Salzbourg, au Festival international d’Édimbourg, aux BBC Proms et au Wigmore Hall de Londres. En récitation, elle s’est produite avec Roger Vignoles, Iain Burnside, Julius

Drake, et le Nash Ensemble. Pour Chandos, Susan Bickley a enregistré des œuvres de Rossini, Edmund Rubbra et John Eccles.

Né à Liverpool, le basse-baryton **Jeremy White** a fait ses études à Oxford. Il mène une carrière internationale à l'opéra, en concert et en studio d'enregistrement, dans un répertoire s'étendant de la musique ancienne aux œuvres contemporaines. Il travaille régulièrement avec tous les grands orchestres et chefs britanniques, et chante sur les scènes lyriques allant d'Aix-en-Provence au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, où il se produit chaque saison depuis ses débuts en 1991, dans des rôles allant de Mozart à Janáček, et avec lequel il a également fait ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York. Au cours de ces dernières années, il a interprété les rôles de Kecal (*La Fiancée vendue*), Snug (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Sourine (*La Dame de Pique*), Ligniere (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*), Mr Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*) et le Sacristain (*Tosca*) à Covent Garden, Pluto (*Orfeo*), Varlaam (*Boris Godounov*) et le Prince Selim (*Il turco in Italia*) à l'English National Opera, le Superintendent Budd (*Albert Herring*), le Roi d'Égypte (*Aida*), Dikoy (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Talbot (*Giovanna d'Arco*) et Tiresias (*Oedipus Rex*) à l'Opera North, Benoît (*La bobème*) au Festival de Bregenz, Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*) au Grange Park Opera, Parsons (1984) au Teatro alla Scala de Milan et Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) à l'Opéra national de Bordeaux. Il

incarnera le rôle de Dansker (*Billy Budd*) au Festival de Glyndebourne en 2010. Jeremy White apparaît avec l'aimable autorisation du Royal Opera de Covent Garden.

Née en Pays de Galles, la mezzo-soprano **Leah-Marian Jones** est diplômée du Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester et du National Opera Studio de Londres. Comme "Company Principal" au Royal Opera de Covent Garden pendant huit ans, elle a chanté des rôles tels que Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*), Varvara (*Kát'a Kabanová*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Karolka (*Jenůfa*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), la Deuxième Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Bersi (*Andrea Chénier*), Flora (*La traviata*), Emilia (*Otello*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Flosshilde (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) et le Jeune médecin (*Palestrina*). Elle s'est également produite à l'English National Opera, avec l'English Touring Opera, à l'Opera North, au Welsh National Opera, au Scottish Opera, et à l'étranger au Metropolitan Opera de New York, au San Francisco Opera et au Châtelet – Théâtre musical de Paris. Son répertoire inclut Carmen, Orestes (*La Belle Hélène*), Sonyetka (*La Lady Macbeth du district de Mtsensk*), Rossweisse et une Norne (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Meg Page (*Falstaff*), le Page d'Hérodiade (*Salome*), Lola (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Giovanna (*Rigoletto*), Polly Peachum (*The Beggar's Opera*) et

Junon (*Platée*). Par ailleurs, Leah-Marian Jones a participé à un concert de gala avec Luciano Pavarotti au Royal Albert Hall de Londres, à un programme Verdi aux BBC Proms, à une exécution en concert de *Götterdämmerung* avec le Hallé Orchestra sous la direction de Sir Mark Elder, et à une exécution en concert de l'Acte III de *Die Walküre* au Glastonbury Festival.

Le ténor **Tom Randle** a d'abord porté son attention à la direction d'orchestre et à la composition, mais une bourse pour étudier le chant l'a très vite conduit à un changement de carrière. Bien connu pour ses interprétations vivantes et engagées sur scène, et sa capacité unique pour embrasser un répertoire très varié, il s'est imposé comme l'un des artistes les plus passionnants et les plus talentueux de sa génération. Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden il a incarné des rôles tels que Essex (*Gloriana*), Johnny Inkslinger (*Paul Bunyan*), l'Idiot (*Gawain*) et le Capitaine Macheath (*The Beggar's Opera*), à l'English National Opera des personnages tels que Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*), Achilles (*King Priam*), Števa Buryja (*Jenůfa*), Dionysus (*The Bacchae* de John Buller), Loge (*Das Rheingold*) et Orfeo de Monteverdi. Il a chanté Bénédicte (*Béatrice et Bénédicte*), Boris (*Kát'a Kabanová*) et le Prince André Khovansky (*La Khovantchina*) au Welsh National Opera, Alfredo (*La traviata*) à l'Opera North, Bajazet (*Tamerlano*) et Idomeneo au Scottish Opera. Dans

les festivals internationaux et dans les théâtres lyriques en Europe, en Amérique du Nord, en Australie et en Nouvelle Zélande, il s'est produit dans les rôles de Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Pelléas (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Gerald (*Lakmé*), dans les rôles titres de *Orlando Paladino* de Haydn, *Solimano* de Johann Adolf Hasse et *Orfeo* de Monteverdi, ainsi que des rôles importants dans *The Fairy Queen*, *Wozzeck*, *Peter Grimes*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *The Bassarids* de Henze, *Saint François d'Assise* de Messiaen, *Symposium* de Peter Schat, *The Country of the Blind* de Mark-Anthony Turnage et *The Last Supper* de Harrison Birtwistle.

Après avoir obtenu une licence (mention très bien) en astrophysique à l'Université de Durham et un "Certificate of Education" de l'Université de Manchester, le ténor anglais **Robert Anthony Gardiner** a étudié au Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester, à l'École d'opéra de Frankfort et au National Opera Studio de Londres, remportant de nombreux prix. Il a incarné Eurimaco (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) à l'Opéra de Frankfort, Aubry (*Maria di Rohan*) et Ctésippe (*Pénélope*) au Festival de Wexford, Testo (*Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*) à St Pomont et Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*) au Festival de Ryedale. En septembre 2008 il est devenu membre du Jette Parker Young Artists Programme, et a fait ses débuts au Royal Opera de

Covent Garden dans le rôle d'Egildo (*Matilde di Shabran*), suivi de celui de Filch (*The Beggar's Opera*). Parmi les autres rôles de son répertoire, on citera Pane (*Calisto*), Nathanaël (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Borsa (*Rigoletto*), Steuermann (*Der fliegende Holländer*), le Premier Marin (*Dido and Aeneas*), Damon et Coridon (*Acis and Galatea*), Ruiz (*Il trovatore*), Gastone (*La traviata*), le Comte de Lerma (*Don Carlos*), le Majordome (*Der Rosenkavalier*), le Second Croupier (*Le Joueur*), le Deuxième Juif (*Salome*), Panas (*Tcherevitchki*) et Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*). Robert Anthony Gardiner a donné de nombreux récitals et chanté dans des oratorios avec des chœurs et des sociétés chorales à travers toute la Grande-Bretagne.

Né à Perth en Écosse, le baryton **Donald Maxwell** a obtenu une licence de géographie de l'Université d'Édimbourg puis a étudié le chant avec Joseph Hislop. Il s'est produit dans tous les grands théâtres lyriques et les festivals de Grande-Bretagne, ainsi qu'au Metropolitan Opera de New York, au Teatro alla Scala de Milan, au Staatsoper de Vienne, aux opéras de Paris, Bruxelles, Berlin, Houston, Buenos Aires et Athènes. Son vaste répertoire inclut les rôles titres dans *Falstaff*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Der fliegende Holländer* et *Wozzeck*, Leander (*L'Amour des trois oranges*), Escamillo (*Carmen*), Germont (*La traviata*), Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte*),

Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Renato (*Un ballo in maschera*), Nick Shadow (*The Rake's Progress*), Amonasro (*Aida*), Marcello (*La bohème*), Iago (*Otello*), le Comte (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Golaud (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), Balstrode et Swallow (*Peter Grimes*), Klingsor (*Parsifal*), Don Pizarro (*Fidelio*), Dulcamara (*L'elisir d'amore*), Yeletsky (*La Dame de Pique*), Gunther (*Götterdämmerung*), Dr Bartolo (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*), Don Perlimpin dans la création mondiale de *The Nightingale's to Blame* et l'Archer anglais dans la création anglaise de *The King Goes forth to France*. Pour Chandos, Donald Maxwell a enregistré les rôles de Tarquinius (*The Rape of Lucretia*), le Père Philippe (*The Wandering Scholar*), Sir John Falstaff (*Sir John in Love*), et la *Missa Sabrinensis* d'Herbert Howells.

Après avoir étudié à l'Université de Londres et au Royal College of Music, la soprano **Sarah Fox** a remporté le Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Award en 1997 et le John Christie Award en 2000. Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden elle a chanté les rôles de Woglinde (*Das Rheingold* et *Götterdämmerung*), l'Oiseau de la forêt (*Siegfried*), Zerlina (*Don Giovanni*) et Lucy Lockit (*The Beggar's Opera*), et au Festival de Glyndebourne des rôles tels que Zerlina et Susanna (*Le nozze di Figaro*). Elle a également incarné Anne Page (*Sir John in Love*) à l'English

National Opera, Merab (*Saul*) à l'Opera North, Servilia (*La clemenza di Tito*) au Welsh National Opera, Iphis (*Jephtha*) et Cleofide (*Poro*) au Festival international d'Édimbourg. À l'étranger, elle a interprété Ilia (*Idomeneo*) au Vlaamse Opera, Michal (*Saul*), Asteria (*Tamerlano*) et Eurydice (*Orphée et Eurydice*) au Bayerische Staatsoper de Munich, Susanna à l'Opéra royal danois, Woglinde (*Das Rheingold*) au Festival de Salzbourg et Zerlina au Cincinnati Opera Festival. Elle a récemment fait une tournée à travers toute l'Europe et les États-Unis dans le rôle de Josabeth (*Athalia*) avec le Köln Konzert sous la direction de Sir Ivor Bolton. En concert, elle a chanté avec le Bach Choir, le Hallé Orchestra, le City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra et l'English Concert. Pour Chandos, Sarah Fox figure dans des enregistrements de *Die Zauberflöte*, *Owen Wingrave*, la Deuxième Symphonie de Kenneth Leighton, et de la musique de Noël de Vaughan Williams.

Diplômée de la Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, la mezzo-soprano **Frances McCafferty** est régulièrement invitée à chanter au Royal Opera de Covent Garden où elle a incarné les rôles de la Nourrice (*Boris Godounov*), la Gouvernante (*Cyrano de Bergerac* et *La Dame de Pique*), la Première Servante (*Elektra*), la Mère (*Lulu*), Mrs Trapes (*The Beggar's Opera*), et Yeta Zimmerman dans la première mondiale de *Sophie's Choice* de Nicholas Maw. Elle a interprété Katisha (*The Mikado*) et

Mistress Quickly (*Falstaff*) à l'English National Opera, Katisha au Teatro La Fenice de Venise, Hâta (*La Fiancée vendue*) et Mrs Herring (*Albert Herring*) au Festival de Glyndebourne, Mistress Quickly, Geneviève (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), Filipievna (*Eugène Onéguine*) et la Mère de Belissa (*The Nightingale's to Blame*) entre autres à l'Opera North, Solokha (*Tcherevitchki*) au Garsington Opera, le rôle titre dans *The Medium* de Menotti au Festival de Wexford, La Haine (*Armide* de Gluck) au Festival de Buxton, la Diseuse de bonne aventure (*Julietta*) au Festival de Ravenne, Auntie (*Peter Grimes*), Gertrud (*Hänsel und Gretel*) et l'Hôtesse de l'auberge (*Boris Godounov*) au Nationale Reisopera, la Mère (*Mavra*) à l'Opéra national de Grèce et Mistress Quickly au Nouvel Opéra d'Israël et au Staatsoper de Stuttgart. Elle a également chanté au Festival La Bâtie de Genève et au Festival international d'Édimbourg. Frances McCafferty a fait ses débuts en Amérique au Grant Park Festival de Chicago en 2009.

Le **City of London Sinfonia** (CLS) est l'un des orchestres de chambre les plus réputés de Grande-Bretagne. Fondé en 1971 par le défunt Richard Hickox CBE, il offre des interprétations pleines d'autorité et de style en plaçant un accent tout particulier sur la voix humaine et la musique des compositeurs britanniques. Le CLS se produit régulièrement à Londres au Cadogan Hall, à la cathédrale Saint-Paul et dans les églises de la City

of London, et est l'orchestre résident du populaire Festival Opera Holland Park de la capitale. Depuis longtemps en résidence à High Wycombe et Chatham, il est régulièrement invité par les grands festivals de Grande-Bretagne. Le CLS propose des concerts spécialement conçus pour un public familial, l'invitant à prendre une part active dans les œuvres de base du répertoire. À l'étranger, il a récemment fait sa première visite en Croatie et a été orchestre en résidence au Festival international de musique de Cartagena. En dehors des concerts, les musiciens du CLS dirigent des ateliers de création dans les écoles et les organisations associatives dans le cadre de leur programme musical très acclamé "Meet the Music"; pour les entreprises britanniques, ils présentent le projet "Development through Music", qui offre une formation professionnelle s'appuyant sur la musique.

Salué comme "Notre meilleur jeune haendélien" par le *Times*, **Christian Curnyn** est né à Glasgow et a étudié à York et à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama de Londres. En 1994 il a fondé la Early Opera Company qui connaît maintenant une réputation internationale comme l'un des tout premiers ensembles interprétant le répertoire baroque selon une approche historique. Comme chef invité, il a

dirigé entre autres *Platée* de Rameau à Lisbonne, le *Messiah* à Girona, *Semele* de Haendel avec le British Youth Opera et l'Orchestre d'opéra de chambre de Budapest, *L'élisir d'amore*, *Le nozze di Figaro* et *Semele* avec le Grange Park Opera, où il est revenu au cours de l'été 2009 pour diriger *Eliogabalo* de Cavalli. En 2005 il a fait ses débuts avec le Scottish Opera avec *Semele*, puis s'est produit de nouveau en 2006 pour une production de *Tamerlano* de Haendel. Il a récemment fait ses débuts à l'English National Opera, dans une nouvelle production de *Partenope* de Haendel, et au Royal Opera de Covent Garden avec la réalisation de Britten de *The Beggar's Opera*. En 2009, il a dirigé à l'English National Opera la réalisation de Katie Mitchell de *Dido and Aeneas* de Purcell. Il s'est également produit au Festival Haendel de Halle, à l'Opera Theatre Company de Dublin et à l'Opera North, et il fera prochainement ses débuts au New York City Opera et au Chicago Opera Theater. Il est en outre invité à diriger l'Ulster Orchestra, l'Orchestre symphonique de Stavanger, la NDR Radiophilharmonie de Hanovre, le Hallé Orchestra, l'Academy of Ancient Music et l'English Concert. Pour Chandos il a réalisé les enregistrements très acclamés de *Partenope* et de *Semele*, ce dernier ayant obtenu le Stanley Sadie Handel Prize en 2008, ainsi que *The Judgment of Paris* de John Eccles.



Sarah Fox

Clive Barda



Frances McCafferty

Mike Hoban

Glossary

arraigned	called to answer on a criminal charge
Bagshot	town in Surrey
bambouzzle	to deceive by trickery, to hoax
bawd	a pimp, madam or prostitute
brimmer	a brimming goblet
broad cloth	fine double-width black cloth used chiefly for men's garments
bubble	the victim of a swindle or delusion
bumper	a cup or glass filled to the brim, especially for a toast
busses	kisses
cambric	fine white linen
cart	the hangman's cart
catch	a round in which each singer catches at the words of another
cordial	aromatic and sweetened spirit for drinking
Covent Garden	the London vegetable market, where John Rich built the first theatre of the name in 1732, largely from the profits of his first presentation of <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> in 1728
dower	the dowry, or portion given with the wife
dram	a small draught of spirit
Drury Lane	the site of the Theatre Royal, first opened in 1663. John Gay offered <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> to Drury Lane but it was rejected.
fleaing	flaying, skinning
fob	a small pocket in the waistband of breeches, used for carrying a watch or money
garnish	money extorted from a new prisoner as a jailer's fee
gudgeon	a gullible person, one who will swallow anything
hoop	a circle of whalebone or steel used to expand the skirt of a woman's dress
Jack Ketch	a nickname for the common hangman
jointure	an estate limited to the wife, to take effect upon her husband's death
lock	(thieves' slang) a house where stolen goods are received
lutestring	a glossy silk fabric
mantoe	a cloak or mantle

Marybone	the parish of Marylebone in London
mercier	a dealer in silks and other costly materials
Moorfields	a parish of London
Newgate	the notorious London prison, dating from the Middle Ages and demolished in 1902
nick	to hit
Old Bailey	Central Criminal Courts of London
otamy	(probably) a slipshod way of pronouncing 'anatomy'
padesoy	a strong corded silk fabric, usually spelt 'paduasoy'
'peach	to impeach, to inform against an accomplice, to turn informer
perquisite	a customary 'tip'
petty-larceny	larceny of property of less than twelve pence in value
pumpt	(probably) punished for an offence by being ducked under a water-pump
quadrille	a card-game played by four persons; a square-dance performed by four couples
ratsbane	rat-poison, especially arsenic
reprieve	a warrant granting the remission of a capital sentence
retrench	to cut down, to reduce
Saint Giles	a parish of London
sessions	the period during which a series of sittings of a Court continues to be held
souse	a small coin, 'sou'
stays	corsets
Surgeons' Hall	the headquarters of the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields, within a stone's throw of the theatre where, in 1728, John Gay's <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> was first performed
tallyman, -woman	one who supplies goods on credit, to be paid for by instalments
transportation	banishment to a penal settlement, deportation
the (Tyburn) Tree	the place of public execution for Middlesex until 1783: the gallows
trepan	to entrap, to snare
turnkey	a prison warder
turtle	turtle-dove
women's pockets	purses or bags worn over the dress

The Beggar's Opera

(In this recording, some passages of spoken dialogue have been omitted.)

COMPACT DISC ONE

Introduction

(The Beggar breaks through a tear in a ragged curtain and addresses the audience.)

Beggar

- [1] If Poverty be a title to Poetry, I am sure nobody can dispute mine. I own myself of the company of Beggars and I make one at their weekly festivals at St Giles. I have introduced the similes that are in all your celebrated Operas – the Swallow, the Moth, the Bee, the Ship, the Flower, etc. Besides, I have a Prison Scene, which the ladies always reckon charmingly pathetic. *(confidentially, in such a manner as not to be overheard by the actresses backstage)*

As to the parts, I have observed such a nice impartiality to our two principal ladies, that it is impossible for either of them to take offence. I hope I may be forgiven that I have not made my opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue, for I have no Recitative. Otherwise it must be allowed an opera in all its forms.

The piece, indeed, hath heretofore been frequently represented by ourselves in our great room at St Giles. *(The orchestra begins to tune up.)*

Listen! The actors are preparing to begin.

(The curtain begins slowly to rise.)
Come! Play away the overture!

(During the Overture the actors are seen getting ready for the performance and setting the scene of Peachum's Lock.)

[2] Overture

Act I

Scene: Peachum's Lock

1

Peachum *(sitting at a table, with a large Book of Accounts before him)*

- [3] Through all the employments of life,
Each neighbour abuses his Brother;
Whore and Rogue, they call Husband and Wife:
All professions berogue one another.
The Priest calls the Lawyer a cheat:
The lawyer beknives the Divine;
And the Statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his Trade as honest as mine.
(speaking)

A Lawyer is an honest employment, so is mine...

...like me too he acts in a double capacity, both against Rogues and for them; for it is but fitting that we should protect and encourage Cheats, since we live by them.

(Enter Filch.)

Filch

- [4] Sir, black Moll hath sent word her trial comes on in the afternoon, and she hopes you will order matters so as to bring her off.

Peachum

Why, she may plead her belly at worst; to my knowledge she hath taken care of that security. But as the wench is very active and industrious, you may satisfy her that I will soften the evidence.

Filch

Without dispute, she is a fine woman! It was to her I was obliged for my education, and (to say a bold word) she hath trained up more young fellows to the business than the Gaming-table.

Peachum

Truly, Filch, thy observation is right. We and the Surgeons are more beholding to women than all the professions besides.

2

Filch

- [5] 'Tis Woman that seduces all Mankind;
By her we first were taught the wheedling Arts:
Her very eyes can cheat; when most she's kind,
She tricks us of our money, with our hearts.

For her, like wolves by night, we roam for Prey,
And practice ev'ry fraud to bribe her Charms;
For Suits of Love, like Law, are won by Pay,
And Beauty must be fee'd into our arms.

Peachum *(speaking)*

But make haste to Newgate, boy,...

...and let my friends know what I intend.

Filch

I'll away, for it is a pleasure to be the messenger of comfort to friends in affliction.

(Exit.)

Peachum

- [6] But it is now high time to look about me for a decent Execution against the next Sessions. *(reading)*
Crook-fingered Jack. A year and a half in the service: Let me see how much the stock owes to his industry; one, two, three, four, five gold watches, and seven silver ones. A mighty clean-handed fellow! Wat Dreary, alias Brown Will, an irregular dog, who hath an underhand way of disposing of his goods. I will try him only for a Sessions or two longer upon his good behaviour. Robin of Bagshot, alias Bob Booty.

(Enter Mrs Peachum.)

Mrs Peachum

What of Bob Booty, husband? I hope nothing bad hath betided him. You know, my dear, he is a favourite customer of mine. It was he made me a present of this ring.

Peachum

I have set his name down in the black list, that is all, my dear: he spends his life among women, and as soon as his money is gone, one or other of the ladies will hang him for the reward and there is forty pound lost to us forever.

Mrs Peachum

You know, my dear, I never meddle in matters of Death; I always leave those affairs to you.

7 Women indeed are bitter bad judges in these cases, for they are so partial to the brave that they think...

3

Mrs Peachum (*speaking*)

...ev'ry Man handsome who is going to the Camp, or the Gallows.

(*singing*)

If any wench Venus' Girdle wear,
Though she be never so ugly;
Lilies and Roses will quickly appear,
And her Face look wond'rous smugly.
Beneath the left Ear so fit but a Cord
(A Rope so charming a Zone is!).
The Youth in his Cart hath the Air of a Lord,
And we cry, There dies an Adonis!
(*speaking*)
But really, husband,...

...you should not be too hardhearted, for you never had a finer, braver set of men than at present.

Peachum

8 Was Captain Macheath here this morning?

Mrs Peachum

Yes, my dear. Sure there is not a finer gentleman upon the road than the Captain! Pray, my dear, is the Captain rich?

Peachum

The Captain keeps too good company ever to grow rich. Marybone and the Chocolate houses are his undoing.

Mrs Peachum

Really, I am sorry upon Polly's account that the Captain hath not more discretion.

Peachum

Upon Polly's account?

Mrs Peachum

If I have any skill in the ways of women, I am sure Polly thinks him a very pretty man.

Peachum

And what then? You would not be so mad as to have the wench marry him! Gamesters and highwaymen are generally very good to their whores, but they are very devils to their wives.

Mrs Peachum

But if Polly should be in love, how should we help her, or how can she help herself? Poor Girl, I am in the utmost concern about her.

4

Mrs Peachum

9 If Love the Virgin's Heart invade,
How, like a Moth, the simple Maid
Still plays about the Flame!
If soon she be not made a Wife,
Her Honour's singed, and then for Life,
She's what I dare not name!

Peachum

Look ye, wife. I would indulge the girl as far as prudently we can. In anything, but marriage! If the wench does not know her own profit, sure she knows her own pleasure better than to make herself a property! If the affair is not already done, I will terrify her from it, by the example of our neighbours. I will go to her this moment, and sift her.

(*Exit.*)

Mrs Peachum

Never was a man more out of the way in an argument than my husband! Why must our Polly, forsooth, differ from her sex, and love only her husband? All men are thieves in love, and like a woman the better for being another's property.

5

Mrs Peachum

10 A Maid is like the Golden ore,
Which hath guineas intrinsical in't,
Whose worth is never known, before
It is tried and impressed in the Mint.

A Wife's like a guinea in Gold,
Stamped with the name of her Spouse;
Now here, now there, is bought or is sold;
And is current in every house!

(*Enter Filch.*)

Mrs Peachum

11 Come hither, Filch. I am as fond of this child, as though my mind misgave me he were my own. He hath as fine a hand at picking a pocket as a woman, and is as nimble-fingered as a juggler. But, hark you, my lad. Do not tell me a lye; for you know I hate a liar. Do you know of anything that hath past between Captain Macheath and our Polly?

Filch

I beg you, Madam, do not ask me; for I must either tell a lye to you or to Miss Polly; for I promised her I would not tell.

Mrs Peachum

But when the honour of the family is concerned –

Filch

I shall lead a sad life with Miss Polly, if ever she comes to know that I told you. Besides, I would not willingly forfeit my own honour by betraying any body.

Mrs Peachum

Yonder comes my husband and Polly. Come, Filch, you shall go with me into my own room, and tell me the whole story. I will give thee a glass of the most delicious cordial that I keep for my own drinking.

(*Exeunt.*)

6

(*Enter Peachum and Polly.*)

Polly (*speaking*)

- [12] I know as well as any of the fine ladies how to make the most of myself and of my Man, too. A woman knows how to be mercenary, though she hath never been in a Court or at an Assembly. We have it in our natures, Papa. If I allow Captain Macheath some trifling liberties, I have this watch and other visible marks of his favour to show for it. A girl who cannot grant some things and refuse what is most material will make but a poor hand of her beauty, and soon be thrown upon the common.

(*singing*)

Virgins are like the fair flower in its lustre,
Which in the garden enamels the ground;
Near it the bees in play flutter and cluster,
And gaudy Butterflies frolic around.
But when once pluck'd, 'tis no longer alluring;
To Covent Garden 'tis sent (as yet sweet);
There fades, and shrinks, and grows past all enduring,
Rots, stinks and dies, and is trod under feet.

Peachum (*speaks*)

You know, Polly, I am not against your toying and trifling with a customer in the way of business, or to get out a secret or so. But, if I find out that you have played the fool and are married, you jade you, I will cut your throat, hussy. Now you know my mind.

7

(*Enter Mrs Peachum.*)

Mrs Peachum (*in a very great passion*)

- [13] Our Polly is a sad slut! nor heeds what we have taught her.
I wonder any man alive will ever rear a daughter!
For she must have both hoods and gowns, and hoops to swell her pride,
With scarves and stays, and gloves and lace; and she will have men beside;
And when she's drest with care and cost, all tempting, fine, and gay,
As men should serve a cucumber, she flings herself away.
(*screaming*)
You Baggage!

Omnes

Our Polly is a sad slut! etc.

Mrs Peachum (*screaming*)

You Hussy!
You inconsiderate jade!
Had you been Hanged it wouldn't have vexed me;
For that might have been your misfortune.
But to do such a mad thing by choice!
The wench is married, Husband!

Peachum

Married! Do you think your mother and I should have lived comfortably so long together, if ever we had been married? Baggage!

Mrs Peachum

I knew she was always a proud slut; and now the wench hath played the fool and married, because forsooth she would do like the Gentry.

Peachum

Tell me, hussy, are you ruined or no?

Mrs Peachum

With Polly's fortune, she might very well have gone off to a person of distinction. Yes, that you might, you pouting slut!

Peachum

What, is the wench dumb! Speak, or I will make you plead by squeezing out an answer from you. Are you really bound wife to him, or are you only upon liking.

(*pinches her*)

Polly

Oh!

8

Polly

- [14] Can Love be controlled by Advice?
Will Cupid our Mothers obey?
Though my Heart were as frozen as ice,
At his Flame 'twould have melted away.
When he kissed me, so closely he pressed,
'Twas so sweet that I must have complied,
So I thought it both safest and best
To marry for fear you should chide.

Mrs Peachum

Then all the hopes of our family are gone for ever and ever!

Peachum

And Macheath may hang his father- and mother-in-law, in hopes to get into their daughter's fortune.

Polly

I did not marry him (as it is the fashion) coolly and deliberately for honour or money. But, I love him.

Mrs Peachum

Love him! worse and worse! I thought the girl had been better bred. My head swims! I am distracted! I cannot support myself – Oh!

(*faints*)

Peachum

See, wench, to what a condition you have reduced your poor mother! a glass of cordial this instant!

(*Polly goes out, and returns with it.*)

Polly

Give her another glass, Sir; my Mama drinks double the quantity whenever she is out of order. This, you see, fetches her.

9

Mrs Peachum (*speaking*)

- [15] The girl shows such a readiness and so much concern that I could almost find it in my heart to forgive her.

(singing)

O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed;
By keeping men off, you keep them on.

Polly

But he so teased me,
And he so pleased me,
What I did, you must have done.

Omnes

Polly, you might have toyed and kissed, etc.

Mrs Peachum

O Polly, you might have toyed and kissed, etc.

Omnes

But he so teased me, etc.

Polly

But he so teased me, etc.

Mrs Peachum *(speaking)*

But not with a Highwayman – you sorry slut!

Peachum

A word with you, wife. Make yourself a little easy; I
have a thought shall soon set all matters again to rights.
Why so melancholy, Polly? Since what is done cannot be
undone, we must all endeavour to make the best of it.

Mrs Peachum

Well, Polly; as far as one woman can forgive another, I
forgive thee. Your father is too fond of you, hussy.

Polly

Then all my sorrows are at an end.

Mrs Peachum

A mighty likely speech in troth, for a wench who is just
married!

10

Polly

16 I, like a Ship in storms, was tossed,
Yet afraid to put into land,
For seized in the port, the vessel's lost,
Whose treasure is contraband.
The waves are laid, my duty's paid;
O joy beyond expression!
Thus safe ashore, I ask no more;
My all is in my possession!

Mrs Peachum

I am very sensible, husband, that Captain Macheath is
worth money; but I am in doubt whether he hath not
two or three wives already, and then, if he should die in a
Session or two, Polly's dower would come into dispute.

Peachum

That, indeed, is a point which ought to be considered.
The Lawyers are bitter enemies to those in our way.
They do not care that any body should get a clandestine
livelihood but themselves.

11

Peachum and Mrs Peachum

17 A fox may steal your hens, Sir,
A whore your health and pence, Sir,
Your daughter rob your chest, Sir,
Your wife may steal your rest, Sir,
A thief your goods and plate.

But this is all but picking,
With rest, pence, chest and chicken;
It ever was decreed, Sir,
If lawyer's hand is fee'd, Sir,
He steals your whole estate!

(Enter Polly.)

Peachum

But now, Polly, to your affair: for matters must not be
left as they are. You are married then, it seems?

Polly

Yes, Sir.

Peachum

And had you not the common views of a gentlewoman
in your marriage, Polly?

Polly

I do not know what you mean, Sir.

Peachum

Of a jointure, and of being a widow.
(Polly gasps.)

Why, that is the whole scheme and intention of all
Marriage articles. The comfortable estate of widowhood
is the only hope that keeps up a wife's spirits. If you have
any views of this sort, Polly, I shall think the match not
so very unreasonable.

Polly

How I dread to hear your advice!

Peachum

Secure what he hath got, have him 'peached at the next
Sessions, and then at once you are made a rich widow.

Polly

What, murder the man I love! The blood runs cold at my
heart with the very thought of it.

Mrs Peachum

Ay, husband, now you have nicked the matter. To have
him 'peached is the only thing could ever make me
forgive her.

12

Polly

18 O ponder well! Be not severe;
So save a wretched wife!
For on the rope that hangs my dear,
Depends poor Polly's life.

Mrs Peachum

But your duty to your Parents, hussy, obliges you to
hang him. What would many a wife give for such an
opportunity!

Polly

What is a jointure, what is widowhood, to me? I know my heart. I cannot survive him.

13

Polly

- [19] The Turtle thus with plaintive crying, her Lover dying.
The Turtle thus with plaintive crying, laments her Dove.
Down she drops, quite spent with sighing,
Paired in death, as paired in Love.

Polly (*speaking*)

Thus, Sir, it will happen to your poor Polly.

Mrs Peachum

What, is the fool in love in earnest then? Why, wench, thou art a shame to thy very Sex.

Peachum

Keep out of the way, Polly, for fear of mischief, and consider of what is proposed to you.

Mrs Peachum

Away, hussy! Hang your husband, and be dutiful.
(*Polly retires, listening.*)

The thing, husband, must and shall be done. For the sake of intelligence we must take other measures, and have him 'peached next Session without her consent. If she will not know her duty, we know ours. I will undertake to manage Polly.

Peachum

And I will prepare matters for the Old Bailey.

(*Exeunt.*)

14. Melodrama

(*Polly comes forward.*)

Polly (*speaking*)

- [20] Now I'm a wretch indeed!
Methinks I see him already in the Cart, sweeter and more lovely than the Nosegay in his hand.
I hear the Crowd extolling his Resolution and Intrepidity!
What Vollies of Sighs are sent from the windows of Holborn, that so comely a Youth should be brought to disgrace!
I see him at the Tree!
The whole circle are in tears – even Butchers weep.
Jack Ketch himself hesitates to perform his duty...
And would be glad to lose his fee, by a Reprieve!
What then will become of Polly?
As yet I may inform him of their design and aid him in his Escape!
It shall be so!
But then he flies, absents himself, and I bar myself from his dear, dear conversation.
That too will distract me.
If he keep out of the way, My Papa and Mama may in time relent, and we may be happy. If he stays, he is hanged and then he is lost forever! He intended to lye concealed in my room, 'till the dusk of evening: If they are abroad, I'll this instant let him out, lest some accident should prevent him.

(*goes to door*)

Omnes

Pretty Polly say!
Pretty Polly say!

Macheath

Pretty Polly, say,
When I was away,
Did your fancy never stray
To some newer lover?

Polly

Without disguise,
Heaving sighs,
Doting eyes,
My constant heart discover.

Fondly let me loll!

Macheath

O Pretty, Pretty Poll!

Omnes

O fondly let me loll!
O Pretty, Pretty Poll!

Polly (*spoken*)

And are you as fond as ever, my dear?

Macheath

Suspect my honour, my courage, suspect anything but my love. – May my pistols miss fire, and my mare slip her shoulder while I am pursued, if I ever forsake thee!

Polly

Nay, my dear, I have no reason to doubt you, for I find, in the Romance you lent me, none of the great Heroes were ever false in love.

15

Macheath

- [21] My heart was so free,
It roved like the bee,
Till Polly my passion required:
I sipt each flower,
I chang'd ev'ry hour,
But here ev'ry flower is united.

Polly

Were you sentenced to Transportation, sure, my dear, you could not leave me behind you – could you?

Macheath

Is there any power, any force, that could tear me from thee? You might sooner tear a pension from the hands of a Courtier, a fee from a Lawyer, a pretty woman from a looking glass, or any woman from Quadrille. – But to tear me from thee is impossible!

16

Macheath

- [22] Were I laid on Greenland's coast,
And in my arms embraced my lass;
Warm amidst eternal frost,
Too soon the half year's night would pass.

Polly

Were I sold on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning day was closed,
I could mock the sultry toil,
When on my charmer's breast reposed.

Macheath

And I would love you all the day,

Polly

Ev'ry night would kiss and play,

Macheath

If with me you'd fondly stray

Polly

Over the hills and far away.

Macheath and Polly

And I would love you all the day, etc.
Ah!

Omnes

Were I laid on Greenland's coast, etc.

Polly (*spoken*)

Yes, I would go with thee.

But oh! – how shall I speak it? I must be torn from thee.
We must part.

Macheath

How! Part!

Polly

We must, we must. – My Papa and Mama are set against
thy life. They are preparing evidence against thee. Thy
life depends upon a moment – begone – farewell.

17

Polly

[23] O! what pain it is to part!
Can I leave thee, can I leave thee?
O! what pain it is to part!
Can thy Polly ever leave thee?
But, lest death my love should thwart,
And bring thee to the fatal cart,
Thus I tear thee from my bleeding heart,
Fly hence and let me leave thee.
(*speaking*)
One kiss and then... one kiss.
Begone! Farewell!

Macheath

My hand, my heart, my dear, are so riveted to thine, that
I cannot unloose my hold.

Polly

But my Papa may intercept thee, and then I should lose
the very glimmering of hope.

Macheath

Must I then go?

Polly

And will not absence change your love?

Macheath

If you doubt it, let me stay – and be hanged.

Polly

O how I fear! How I tremble! – Go – but, when safety
will give you leave, you will be sure to see me again; for
till then Polly is wretched.

(*Polly and Macheath parting and looking back at each
other with fondness*)

18

Macheath

[24] The Miser thus a shilling sees,
Which he's obliged to pay,
With sighs resigns it by degrees,
And fears 'tis gone for aye.

Polly

The Boy thus, when his Sparrow's flown,
The Bird in silence eyes;
But, soon as out of sight 'tis gone,
Whines, whimpers, sobs and cries:

Macheath and Polly

The sailor climbs the swaying mast
To wave his long adieu,
Till home and friends are lost at last,
(*They turn to leave.*)
And darkness hides the view.
(*in the distance*)
Till home and friends are lost at last.

The scene changes.

Scene: A tavern near Newgate

*Jemmy Twitcher, Wat Dreary, Nimming Ned, Harry
Paddington, Mat of the Mint, Ben Budge at the table with
wine, brandy and tobacco*

Ben Budge

[25] But pr'thee, Mat, what is become of thy brother Tom?

Mat of the Mint

Poor brother Tom had an accident this time
twelvemonth; and now, poor man, he is among the
Otamys at Surgeon's Hall.

Ben Budge

So it seems, his time was come.

Jemmy Twitcher

But the present time is ours, and nobody alive hath
more.

Nimming Ned

Where shall we find such another set of practical
philosophers, who to a man are above the fear of Death?

Harry Paddington

Sound men, and true!

Wat Dreary

Of tried courage, and indefatigable industry!

Mat of the Mint

We retrench the superfluities of mankind.

Jemmy Twitcher

Our several stations for the day are fixt. Good luck attend us all! Fill the glasses.

19

Gentlemen of the Road

[26] Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us,
And fires us with courage, love and joy.
Women and wine should life employ.
Is there aught else on earth desirous?
Fill ev'ry glass, for wine inspires us, etc.

(Enter Macheath.)

Macheath

[27] Gentlemen, well met. My heart hath been with you this hour; but an unexpected affair hath detained me.

Mat of the Mint

We were just breaking-up to go upon duty.

Macheath

I have a fixt confidence, gentlemen, in you all, as men of honour, and as such I value and respect you. Peachum is a man who is useful to us. We have had a slight difference, and until it is accommodated I shall be obliged to keep out of his way. Make him believe I have quitted the band, which I can never do but with life. A week or so will probably reconcile us.

Mat of the Mint

Your instruction shall be observed. It is now high time for us to repair to our several duties: so till this evening at our quarters in Moor-fields, we bid you farewell.

20

Macheath

[28] I shall wish myself with you. Success attend you!

(sits down melancholy at the table)

Tenor Solo (Harry Paddington)

Let us take the road,
Hark! I hear the sound of coaches!
The hour of attack approaches,
To arms, brave boys, and load.

See the ball I hold!

Let the Chymists toil like asses;
Our fire their fire surpasses,
And turns all our lead to gold.

Gentlemen of the Road

Let us take the road, etc.
To your arms,
To your arms,
To your arms!

(The gang load their pistols and stick them under their girdles, then go off.)

Macheath

What a fool is a fond wench! Polly is most confoundedly bit. – I love the sex. And a man who loves money, might as well be contented with one guinea, as I with one woman. The town perhaps hath been as much obliged to me, for recruiting it with free-hearted ladies, as to any recruiting Officer in the army.

21

Macheath

[29] If the heart of a man is depressed with cares,
The mist is dispelled when a woman appears;
Like the notes of a fiddle, she sweetly, sweetly
Raises the spirits, and charms our ears.

Roses and Lilies her cheeks disclose,
But her ripe lips are more sweet than those.
Press her,
Caress her,
With blisses,
Her kisses
Dissolve us in pleasure, and soft repose.

(speaking)

I must have women. There is nothing unbends the mind like them.

(Enter Mrs Coaxer, Dolly Trull, Mrs Vixen, Betty Doxy, Jenny Diver, Mrs Slammekin, Suky Tawdry and Molly Brazen.)

22

Macheath

[30] Dear Mrs Coaxer, you are welcome.
You look charmingly today.
I hope you do not want the repairs of quality, and lay on paint.
Dolly Trull! kiss me, you slut; are you as amorous as ever, hussy?
Ah, Dolly, thou wilt ever be a Coquette.
Mrs Vixen!
I am yours!
I always loved a woman of wit and spirit; they make charming Mistresses,... but plaguy wives.
Betty Doxy! come hither, hussy.
Do you drink as hard as ever?
You had better stick to good wholesome beer; for in troth, Betty, strong-waters will in time ruin your constitution. You should leave those to your betters – What! and my pretty Jenny Diver too! As prim and demure as ever!
Ah! thou art a dear artful hypocrite.
Mrs Slammekin!
As careless and genteel as ever! all you fine ladies, who know your own beauty, affect an undress.
But see, here is Suky Tawdry come to contradict what I was saying. Everything she gets one way she lays out upon her back.
Molly Brazen!
(She kisses him.)
That is well done!
I love a free-hearted wench. Thou hast a most agreeable assurance, girl, and art as willing as a Turtle.
But hark! I hear musick. The Harper is at the door.

If musick be the food of Love, play on. Ere you seat yourselves, ladies, what think you of a dance?
(*Enter Harper.*)
Play the French Tune Mrs Slammekin is so fond of!

(*a dance à la ronde in the French manner*)

Youth's the season made for joys,
Love is then our duty.
She alone who that employs,
Well deserves her beauty;
Let's be gay,
While we may,
Beauty's a flower despised in decay.
Ah.

Ladies of the Town
Youth's the season made for joys, etc.
Ah.

Macheath
Let us drink and sport today,
Ours is not tomorrow.
Love with youth flies swift away,
Age is nought but sorrow.
Dance and sing,
Time's on the wing,
Life never knows the return of Spring.
Ah.

Ladies of the Town
Let us drink and sport today, etc.
Ah!

Macheath
[31] Now pray, ladies, take your places. If any of the ladies choose gin, I hope they will be so free to call for it.

Jenny Diver
You look as if you meant me. Wine is strong enough for me. Indeed, Sir, I never drink strong-waters, but when I have the colic.

Macheath
Just the excuse of the fine ladies! Why, a lady of quality is never without the colic.

Mrs Coaxer
If any woman hath more art than another, to be sure, it is Jenny Diver. Though her fellow be never so agreeable, she can pick his pocket as coolly, as if money were her only pleasure. Now, that is a command of the passions uncommon in a woman!

Jenny Diver
I never go to the tavern with a man, but in the view of business. I have other hours, and other sorts of men for my pleasure. But had I your address, madam –

Macheath
Have done with your compliments, ladies; and drink about: You are not so fond of me, Jenny, as you used to be.

Jenny Diver
'Tis not convenient, Sir, to show my fondness among so many rivals...

23
Jenny Diver (*speaking*)
[32] It is your own choice, and not the warmth of my inclination that will determine you.
(*singing*)
Before the barn-door crowing,
The Cock by Hens attended,
His eyes around him throwing,
Stands for a while suspended.
Then one he singles from the crew,
And cheers the happy Hen;
With a how d'you do and how d'you do
And a how d'you do again!

Ladies of the Town
With a how d'you do and how d'you do
And a how d'you do again!

Macheath
Ah, Jenny, thou art a dear slut!

Dolly Trull
Pray, madam, were you ever in keeping?

Suky Tawdry
I hope, madam, I have not been so long upon the town, but I have met with some good fortune, as well as my neighbours.

Dolly Trull
Pardon me, madam, I meant no harm by the question; it was only in the way of conversation.

Suky Tawdry
Indeed, madam, if I had not been a fool, I might have lived very handsomely with my last friend. But, upon his missing five guineas, he turned me off. Now I never suspected he had counted them. Now, for my part, I own I like an old fellow; for we always make them pay for what they cannot do.

24
Jenny Diver (*speaking*)
[33] But to be sure, Sir, with so much good fortune as you have had upon the road, you must be grown immensely rich.

Ladies of the Town
The Gamesters and Lawyers are jugglers alike,
If they meddle, your all is in danger;
Like Gipsies, if once they can finger a souse,
Your pockets they pick and they pilfer your house,
And give your estate to a stranger.

(*They hum.*)

Jenny Diver (*speaking*)
A man of courage should never put anything to the risk, but his life. These are the tools of a man of honour. Cards and dice are only fit for cowardly cheats, who prey upon their friends.

(*She takes Macheath's pistol. Betty takes up the other.*)

Betty Doxy (*speaking*)
This, sir, is fitter for your hand. Besides your loss of money, it is a loss to the ladies. Gaming takes you off

from women. How fond could I be of you! But before company, 'tis ill bred.

Macheath
Wanton hussies!

Jenny Diver
I must and will have a kiss to give my wine a zest.

Ladies of the Town
Ah. Ah!

(They take him about the neck, and make signs to Peachum and Constables, who rush in upon them.)

Peachum
I seize you, Sir, as my prisoner.

Macheath
Was this well done, Jenny? – Women are Decoy-ducks; who can trust them! Beasts, Jades, Jilts, Harpies, Furies, Whores!

Peachum
Your case, Mr Macheath, is not particular. The greatest Heroes have been ruined by women. You must now, Sir, take your leave of the ladies; and if they have a mind to make you a visit, they will be sure to find you at home.

[34] The gentleman, ladies, lodges in Newgate.

25
Peachum *(speaking)*
Constables, wait upon the Captain to his lodgings.

Macheath
At the Tree I shall suffer with pleasure.
Let me go where I will,
In all kinds of ill,
I shall find no such Furies as these are!

Peachum
Ladies, I will take care the reckoning shall be discharged.

(Exit Macheath, guarded by Constables. Peachum tosses a handful of silver coins in the air, and the Ladies scramble to catch them as they fall.)

Curtain

End of Act I

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II
Scene: Newgate
Enter Lockit, Turnkeys, Macheath, Constables.

Lockit
[1] Noble Captain, you are welcome. You have not been a lodger of mine this year and half. Hand me down those fetters there. We have them of all prices, from one guinea to ten; and it's fitting every gentleman should please himself.

Macheath
I understand you, Sir.
(gives money)
The fees here are so many, and so exorbitant, that few fortunes can bear the expence of getting off handsomely, or of dying like a gentleman.

Lockit
Those, I see, will fit the Captain better. – Take down the further pair. Do but examine them, Sir – Never was better work –
(He puts on the chains.)
If I had the best gentleman in the land in my custody, I could not equip him more handsomely. And so, Sir – I now leave you to your private meditations.

(Exeunt Lockit, Turnkeys, and Constables.)

26
Macheath
[2] Man may escape from rope and gun;
Nay, some have outlived the doctor's pill,
Who takes a woman must be undone,
That basilisk is sure to kill.
The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets;
So he that tastes woman ruin meets.

Macheath *(speaking)*
To what a woeful plight have I brought myself? Here must I (all day long, till I am hang'd) be confin'd to hear the reproaches of a wench who lays her ruin at my door. – I am in the custody of her father; and to be sure if he knows of the matter, I shall have a fine time of it betwixt this and my execution. – But I promised the wench marriage.

(Enter Lucy.)

Lucy Lockit
You base man, you!

Macheath
Would I were deaf!

Lucy Lockit
How can you look me in the face after what hath past between us? – See here, perfidious wretch, how I am forced to bear about the load of infamy you have laid upon me – O Macheath! Thou hast robbed me of my quiet – to see thee tortured would give me pleasure.

27
Lucy Lockit
[3] Thus when a good Housewife sees a rat
In her trap in the morning taken,
With pleasure her heart goes pit-a-pat,
In revenge for her loss of bacon,
Then she throws him to the dog or cat,
To be worried, crushed and shaken!

Macheath
Have you no bowels, no tenderness, my dear Lucy, to see a husband in these circumstances?

Lucy Lockit
A husband!

Macheath
In every respect but the form, and that, my dear, may be said over us at any time.

28

Lucy Lockit (*speaking*)

[4] It is the pleasure of all you fine men...
...to insult the women you have ruined!
(*singing*)
How cruel are the traytors,
Who lye and swear in jest
To cheat unguarded creatures
Of virtue, fame and rest!

Who ever steals a shilling,
Through shame the guilt conceals;
In love the perjured villain
With boasts the theft reveals.

Macheath

The very first opportunity, my dear, (have but patience)
you shall be my wife in whatever manner you please.

Lucy Lockit

Insinuating monster! And so you think I know nothing
of the affair of Miss Polly Peachum. – I could tear thy
eyes out!

Macheath

Sure, Lucy, you cannot be such a fool as to be jealous
of Polly!

Lucy Lockit

Are you not married to her, you brute, you?

Macheath

Married! Very good. The wench gives it out only to vex
thee, and to ruin me in thy good opinion. It is true, I

go to the house; I chat with the girl, I kiss her, I say a
thousand things to her (as all gentlemen do) that mean
nothing, to divert myself; and now the silly jade hath
put it about that I am married to her, to let me know
what she would be at. Indeed, my dear Lucy, these
violent passions may be of ill consequence to a woman in
your condition.

Lucy Lockit

Come, come, Captain, for all your assurance, you know
that Miss Polly hath put it out of your power to do me
the justice you promised me.

Macheath

A jealous woman believes everything her passion
suggests. To convince you of my sincerity, if we can find
the Chaplain, I shall have no scruples in making you
my wife; and I know the consequences of having two
at a time.

Lucy Lockit

That you are only to be hanged, and so get rid of them
both.

Macheath

I am ready, my dear Lucy, to give you satisfaction – if
you think there is any in marriage. – What can a man of
honour say more?

Lucy Lockit

So then, it seems, you are not married to Miss Polly?

Macheath

You know, Lucy, the girl is prodigiously conceited. No
man can say a civil thing to her, but (like other fine
ladies) her vanity makes her think he's her own for ever
and ever.

29

Macheath

[5] The first time at the looking glass,
The mother sets her daughter,
The image strikes the smiling lass
With self-love ever after.

Each time she looks, she, fonder grown,
Thinks ev'ry charm grows stronger.
But alas, vain maid, all eyes but your own
Can see you are not younger!

Macheath (*speaking*)

When women consider their own beauties, they are
all alike unreasonable in their demands: for they
expect their lovers should like them as long as they like
themselves.

Lucy Lockit

Yonder is my father – perhaps this way we may light
upon the Chaplain, who shall try if you will be as good
as your word. – For I long to be made an honest woman.

(*Exeunt.*)

(*The scene is quickly changed and Peachum and Lockit
enter, with an Account Book.*)

Lockit

[6] In this last affair, brother Peachum, we are agreed.
You have consented to go halves in Macheath.

Peachum

We shall never fall out about an execution. – This long
arrear of the government is very hard upon us. Can it be
expected we should hang our acquaintance for nothing,
when our betters will hardly save theirs without being
paid for it.

Lockit

Perhaps, brother, they are afraid these matters may
be carried too far. We are treated too by them with
contempt, as if our profession were not reputable.

Peachum

In one respect indeed, our employment may be reckoned
dishonest, because like great Statesmen, we encourage
those who betray their friends.

30

Lockit (*speaking*)

[7] Such language, brother, anywhere else, might turn
to your prejudice. Learn to be more guarded, I beg you.
(*singing*)

When you censure the age,
Be cautious and sage,
Lest the courtiers offended should be:
If you mention vice or bribe
'Tis so pat to all the tribe,
Each cries: That was levelled at me!

(Exit Peachum.)

(Enter Lucy.)

Lockit
Whence come you, hussy?

Lucy Lockit
My tears might answer that question.

Lockit
You have then been whimpering and fondling, like a Spaniel, over the fellow that hath abused you.

Lucy Lockit
One cannot help love; one cannot cure it. It is not in my power to obey you, and hate him.

Lockit
Learn to bear your husband's death like a reasonable woman.

31
Lucy Lockit
[8] Is then his fate decreed, Sir?
Such a man can I think of quitting?
When first we met so moves me yet,
O see how my heart is splitting?

Lockit
You'll think e'er many days ensue,
This sentence not severe.
I hang your husband, child, 'tis true,
But with him hang your care.

Lucy Lockit
Is then his fate decreed, Sir?

Lockit
Twang dang dillo dec,
Twang dang dillo dec!

(dying away)

(Exit Lockit.)

(Enter Macheath.)

Lucy Lockit
[9] Though the Chaplain was out of the way to-day,
I hope, my dear, you will, upon the first opportunity,
quiet my scruples – Oh, Sir! – my father's hard heart is
not to be softened, and I am in the utmost despair.

Macheath
But if I were able to raise a small sum – would not
twenty Guineas, think you, move him?

Lucy Lockit
What love or money can do, shall be done; for all my
comfort depends upon your safety.

(Enter Polly.)

Polly
Where is my dear husband? – was a rope ever intended
for this neck? – O let me throw my arms about it, and
throttle thee with love! – Why dost thou turn away
from me? – It is thy Polly – it is thy wife.

Macheath
Was ever such an unfortunate rascal as I am!

Lucy Lockit
Was there ever such another villain!

Polly
O Macheath! – I will stay with thee till death – no force
shall tear thy dear wife from thee now. – What means
my love? – Not one kind word! not one kind look! Think
what thy Polly suffers to see thee in this condition.

32
Polly
[10] Thus when the Swallow seeking prey,
Within the sash is closely pent,
His consort, with bemoaning lay,
Without sits pining for th'event.
Her chatt'ring lovers all around her skim;
She heeds them not (poor bird!),
Her soul's with him.

Macheath
I must disown her.
(aside)
The wench is distracted.

Lucy Lockit
Am I then bilked of my virtue! Can I have no
reparation? Sure men were born to lye, and women to
believe them! O Villain! Villain!

Polly
Am I not thy wife? – Thy neglect of me, thy aversion to
me too severely proves it. – Look on me. – Tell me, am I
not thy wife?

Lucy Lockit
Perfidious wretch!

Polly
Barbarous husband!

Lucy Lockit
Hadst thou been hanged five months ago, I had been
happy.

Polly
And I too!

Lucy Lockit
Art thou then married to one another? Hast thou two
wives, monster?

Macheath
[11] If women's tongues can cease for an answer – hear me.

33
Lucy Lockit (speaking)
I will not! – Flesh and blood cannot bear my usage.

Polly (speaking)
Shall I not claim my own! Justice bids me speak.

Macheath

How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away!
But, while you thus tease me together,
To neither a word will I say;
But tol de rol, tol de rol ray.

Polly

I'm bubbled,
Oh how I am troubled!
My distresses are doubled.
Bambouzled and bit!
Tol de rol ray!

Lucy Lockit

I'm bubbled,
Bambouzled and bit!
When you come to the Tree, should the hangman
refuse,
These fingers with pleasure could fasten the noose.
Tol de rol ray!

Macheath (*speaking*)

Be pacified, my dear Lucy...

This is all a fetch of Polly's, to make me desperate with
you in case I get off. If I am hanged, she would fain have
the credit for being thought my widow. – Really, Polly,
this is no time for a dispute of this sort; for whenever
you are talking of marriage, I am thinking of hanging.

Lucy Lockit

Really, Miss Peachum, you but expose yourself. Besides,
it is barbarous in you to worry a gentleman in his
circumstances.

34

Polly

^[12] Cease your funning;
Force or cunning,
Never shall my heart trepan.
All these sallies
Are but malice
To seduce my constant man.
'Tis most certain,
By their flirting
Women oft have envy shown;
Pleased, to ruin
Others wooing;
Never happy in their own!

Omnes (*humming at first, then*)

Ah!
'Tis most certain, etc.

(*humming*)

Polly

Decency, madam, methinks might teach you to behave
yourself with some reserve with the husband, while his
wife is present.

Macheath

But seriously, Polly, this is carrying the joke a little too far.

Lucy Lockit

If you are determined, madam, to raise a disturbance in
the prison, I shall be obliged to send for the Turnkey to
shew you the door. I am sorry, madam, you force me to
be so ill-bred.

Polly

Give me leave to tell you, madam; these forward Airs
do not become you in the least, madam. And my duty,
madam, obliges me to stay with my husband, madam.

35

Lucy Lockit

^[13] Why how now, Madam Flirt!
If you thus must chatter;
And are for flinging dirt,
Let's try who best can spatter,
Madam Flirt!

Polly

Why how now, saucy Jade!
Sure the wench is tipsy;
(*to Macheath*)
How can you see me made
The scoff of such a gipsy?
(*to Lucy*)
Saucy Jade!

(*Enter Peachum and Lockit.*)

Peachum

Where is my wench? Ah hussy! hussy! – Come you
home, you slut; and when your fellow is hanged, hang
yourself, to make your family some amends.

Polly

Dear, dear father, do not tear me from him. – I must
speak; I have more to say to him. – Oh! twist thy fetters
about me, that he may not haul me from thee!

Peachum

Away! – Not a word more.

Lockit

You are my prisoner now, hussy.

36

Lucy Lockit and Polly

^[14] No power on earth can e'er divide
The knot that sacred love hath tied.
When parents draw against our mind,
The true love's knot they faster bind.

Macheath, Lockit and Peachum

Horay horay in Amborah,
Ho derry ho derry hi derry hoo.

Lucy Lockit and Polly

No power on earth can e'er divide, etc.

Macheath, Lockit and Peachum

Horay horay in Amborah, etc.

Lucy Lockit and Polly

Hoo derry, derry in Amborah.

Omnes

No power on earth can e'er divide, etc.
(*Peachum drags Polly away, Lockit removes Lucy.*)

(Macheath is left alone.)
Horay horay in Amborah, etc.

(Lucy comes back with the keys to release Macheath... and waves goodbye to him as he hurries from the prison.)

(Lucy collapses in the arms of the sympathetic beggars.)

Curtain

End of Act II

Act III

Scene: Newgate
Lockit, Lucy Lockit

Lockit

- [15] To be sure, wench, you must have been aiding and abetting to help him to this escape.

Lucy Lockit

Sir, here hath been Peachum and his daughter Polly; and to be sure they know the ways of Newgate as well as if they had been born and bred in the place all their lives.

Lockit

Did he tip handsomely? – How much did he come down with? Come, hussy, do not cheat your father; and I shall not be angry with you. – Perhaps, you made a better bargain with him than I could have done; – How much, my good girl?

Lucy Lockit

You know, Sir, I am fond of him, and would have given money to have kept him with me.

Lockit

Ah, Lucy! thy education might have put thee more upon thy guard; for a Girl in the bar of an Ale-house is always besieged.

Lucy Lockit

- [16] Dear Sir, mention not my education, for it was to that I owe my ruin.

37

Lucy Lockit

When young at the bar you first taught me to score,
And bid me be free of my lips, and no more;
I was kissed by the Parson, the Squire, and the Sot;
When the guest was departed, the kiss was forgot.
But his kiss was so sweet and so closely he pressed,
That I languished and pined till I granted the rest.

Lucy Lockit *(speaking)*

If you can forgive me, Sir, I will make a fair confession, for to be sure he hath been a most barbarous villain to me.

Lockit

And so you have let him escape, hussy – have you?

Lucy Lockit

When a woman loves; a kind look, a tender word, can persuade her to anything. – Notwithstanding all he swore, I am now fully convinced that Polly Peachum

is actually his wife. – Did I let him escape, (fool that I was!) to go to her? – Polly will wheedle herself into his money, and then Peachum will hang him, and so cheat us both.

Lockit

So I am to be ruined, because, forsooth, you must be in love! – a very pretty excuse!

Lucy Lockit

I could murder that impudent happy strumpet; – I gave him his life, and that creature enjoys the sweets of it.

38

Lucy Lockit

- [17] Ungrateful Macheath!

My love is all madness and folly;
Alone I lye,
Toss, tumble, and cry!
What a happy creature is Polly,
Was e'er such a wretch as I?

With rage I reddened like scarlet
That my dear inconstant varlet,
Stark blind to my charms,
Is lost in the arms
Of that Jilt, that inveigling Harlot!
This, this my resentment alarms.

Ungrateful Macheath!

(Exit Lucy Lockit.)

Lockit

Peachum then intends to outwit me in this affair; but I will be even with him. – The dog is leaky in his liquor, so I will ply him that way, get the secret from him, and turn this affair to my own advantage. I'll go to him at his Lock and will artfully get into his secret – so that Macheath shall not remain a day longer out of my clutches.

39

Lockit

- [18] Thus Gamesters united in friendship are found,
Tho' they know that their industry all is a cheat;
They flock to their prey at the dice box's sound,
And join to promote one another's deceit.

But if by mishap,
They fail of a chap,
To keep in their hands, they each other entrap.
Like Pikes, lank with hunger, who miss of their ends,
They bite their companions, and prey on their friends.

(Lockit goes off.)

(The scene changes as the Beggar speaks, to represent a gaming house at Marylebone, with gamblers surrounding Macheath at play, and Ben Budge waiting with Mat of the Mint outside the window.)

40

Beggar *(speaking)*

- [19] Our scene doth represent a Gaming House.

Macheath

The modes of the Court so common are grown,
That a true friend can hardly be met;
Friendship for interest is but a loan,
Which they let out for what they can get.

'Tis true, you find some friends so kind
Who'll give you good counsel themselves to defend:
In sorrowful ditty,
They promise, they pity,
But shift you for money from friend to friend!

Ben Budge and Mat of the Mint

'Tis true, you find some friends so kind, etc.
Ah!

Omnes

The modes of the Court so common are grown, etc.
La la la la la la la la la.

Scene: Peachum's Lock
(*a Table with Wine, Brandy, Pipes and Tobacco*)
(*Enter Peachum and Lockit.*)

Lockit

^[20] The Coronation account, brother Peachum, is of so intricate a nature, that I believe it will never be settled. Bring us then more liquor. – To-day shall be for pleasure – to-morrow for business. – Ah brother, those daughters of ours are two slippery hussies...

41**Lockit** (*speaking*)

Keep a watchful eye on Polly; and Macheath in a day or two shall be our own again.

(*singing*)

What Gudgeons are we men!
Ev'ry woman's easy prey:
Though we have felt the hook, agen
We bite, and they betray!

Peachum

The bird that hath been trapped,

Lockit

...that hath been trapped,

Peachum

When he hears his calling mate,

Lockit

...he hears his mate,

Peachum

To her he flies, again he's clapped

Lockit

He's clapped, again he's clapped,

Peachum

Within the wiry grate.

Lockit

Within the wiry grate.

(*Enter a Servant.*)

Servant

Sir, here's Mrs Diana Trapes wants a word with you.

Peachum

Shall we admit her, brother Lockit?

Lockit

By all means.

Peachum

Desire her to walk in.

(*Exit Servant.*)

(*Enter Mrs Trapes.*)

Dear Mrs Dyc, your servant – one may know by your kiss, that your Gin is excellent.

Lockit

There is no perfumed breath like it – I have been long acquainted with the flavour of those lips – have I not, Mrs Dye?

Mrs Trapes

Fill it up. – I take as large draughts of liquor, as I did of love. – I hate a Flincher in either.

42**Mrs Trapes**

^[21] In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove,
Fa la la Fa la Fa la la la la,
Like a Sparrow, at all times was ready for love,
Fa la la la la Fa la la la la la.

Lockit and Peachum

Fa la la la Fa la la la.

Mrs Trapes

The life of all mortals in kissing should pass,
Fa la la Fa la Fa la la la la la,
Lip to lip while we're young, then the lip to the glass,
Fa la la la la Fa la la la la la.

Lockit and Peachum

Fa la la la Fa la la la.

Mrs Trapes (*speaking*)

But now, Mr Peachum, to our business...

Mrs Trapes (*speaking*)

If you have any blacks of any kind, brought in of late; Mantoes – Velvet Scarfs – Petticoats – let it be what it will – I am your chap – for all my ladies are very fond of mourning. No doubt you know Mrs Coaxer. – To be sure, I stript her of a suit of my own cloaths about two hours ago; and have left her as she should be, in her shift, with a lover of hers at my house. – And I hope, for her own sake and mine, she will persuade the Captain to redeem her, for the Captain is very generous to the ladies.

Lockit

What Captain?

Mrs Trapes

He thought I did not know him. – An intimate acquaintance of yours, Mr Peachum – only Captain Macheath – as fine as a Lord.

Peachum

To-morrow, dear Mrs Dye, you shall set your own price upon any of the goods you like. Mr Lockit and I have a little business with the Captain; – you understand me – and we will satisfy you for Mrs Coaxer's debt.

Lockit

Depend upon it – we will deal like men of honour.

Mrs Trapes

I do not enquire after your affairs – so whatever happens, I wash my hands of it.

(Exeunt severally, Mrs Trapes singing.)

43a

Mrs Trapes *(to herself)*

^[22] In the days of my youth I could bill like a dove,
Fa la la Fa la Fa la la la la,
Like a Sparrow, at all times was ready for love.

(dying away)

Beggar

Hurry! Hurry! Change the scene! The customers are waiting!

(The scene is quickly changed back to Newgate Prison.)

43b

(Enter Lucy.)

Lucy Lockit *(speaking)*

^[23] Jealousy, rage, love and fear are at once tearing me to pieces.

How I am weather-beaten and shattered with distresses!

(singing)

I'm like a Skiff on the Ocean tossed,
Now high, now low, with each billow borne,
With her rudder broke, and her anchor lost,
Deserted and all forlorn.

While thus I lie rolling and tossing all night,
That Polly lies sporting on seas of delight!
Revenge, revenge, revenge,
Shall appease my restless sprite!

Lucy Lockit *(speaking)*

^[24] I have the Rat's-bane ready. – I run no risque; for I can lay her death upon the Gin; and so many die of that naturally, that I shall never be called into question. – But say I were to be hanged – I could never be hanged for anything that would give me greater comfort, than poisoning that slut.

(Enter Filch.)

Filch

Madam, here is our Miss Polly come to wait upon you.

Lucy Lockit

Show her in.

(Enter Polly.)

Dear madam, your servant – I hope you will pardon my passion, when I was so happy to see you last. – I was so over-run with the spleen, that I was perfectly out of myself. And really, when one hath the spleen, every thing is to be excused by a friend. – I wish all our quarrels might have so comfortable a reconciliation.

Polly

I have no excuse for my own behaviour, madam, but my misfortunes. – And really, madam, I suffer too upon your account.

Lucy Lockit

But, Miss Polly – in the way of friendship, will you give me leave to propose a glass of Cordial to you?

Polly

I am sorry, madam, my health will not allow me to accept of your offer. – I should not have left you in the rude manner I did when we met last, madam, had not my Papa hauled me away so unexpectedly – I was indeed somewhat provoked, and perhaps might use some expressions that were disrespectful. – But really, madam, the Captain treated me with so much contempt and cruelty, that I deserved your pity, rather than your resentment.

Lucy Lockit

But since his escape, no doubt, all matters are made up again.

Polly

Sure, madam, you cannot think me so happy as to be the object of your jealousy. – A man is always afraid of a woman who loves him too well – so that I must expect to be neglected and avoided.

Lucy Lockit

Then our cases, my dear Polly, are exactly alike. Both of us indeed have been too fond.

44

Polly

^[25] A curse attends a woman's love
Who always would be pleasing:
The pertness of the billing Dove,
Like tickling, is but teasing.

Lucy Lockit

What then in love can woman do?
If we grow fond they shun us,
And when we fly them, they pursue;
But leave us when they've won us.

Polly and Lucy Lockit

What then in love can woman do, etc.

Lucy Lockit *(speaking)*

Love is so very whimsical in both sexes, that it's impossible to be lasting. – But my heart is particular, and contradicts my own observation.

Polly

But really, mistress Lucy, by his last behaviour, I think I ought to envy you. –

^[26] When I was forced from him, he did not show the least tenderness...

45

Polly *(speaking)*

But perhaps he hath a heart not capable of it.

(singing)

Among the men Coquets we find,
Who court by turns all womankind;

And we grant all their hearts desired,
When they are flattered and admired.

Polly (*speaking*)

The Coquets of both sexes are self-lovers; and that is a love no other whatever can dispossess. I fear, my dear Lucy, our husband is one of those.

Lucy Lockit

Away with these melancholy reflections, – indeed, my dear Polly, we are both of us a cup too low. – Let me prevail upon you to accept my offer.

46

Lucy Lockit

[27] Come, sweet lass,
Let's banish sorrow
Till to-morrow;
Come, sweet lass,
Let's take a chirping glass.
Wine can clear
The vapours of despair,
And make us light as air;
Then drink and banish care.

Lucy Lockit (*speaking*)

I cannot bear, child, to see you in such low spirits. – And I must persuade you to what I know will do you good... I shall now soon be even with the hypocritical Strumpet.

(*Exit.*)

Polly

All this wheedling of Lucy cannot be for nothing. – At this time too! when I know she hates me! – By pouring strong-waters down my throat, she thinks to pump some secrets out of me – I will be upon my guard, and I will not taste a drop of her liquor, I'm resolved.

(*Enter Lucy, with strong-waters.*)

Lucy Lockit

Come, Miss Polly.

Polly

Indeed, child, you have given yourself trouble to no purpose. – You must, my dear, excuse me.

Lucy Lockit

Really, Miss Polly, you are as squeamishly affected about taking a cup of strong-waters, as a lady is before company. I vow, Polly, I shall take it monstrously ill if you refuse me. – Brandy and Men (though women love them never so well) are always taken by us with some reluctance – unless it is in private.

Polly

I protest, madam, it goes against me. – What do I see! Macheath again in custody!

(*Enter Lockit, Macheath, Peachum, Filch and Constables.*)

47

Polly (*speaking*)

[28] Now every glimmering of happiness is lost.

Lucy Lockit (*speaking*)

O husband, husband, my heart longed to see thee; but to see thee thus distracts me.

Polly (*speaking*)

Will not my dear husband look upon his Polly? Why hadst thou not flown to me for protection? With me thou hadst been safe.

(*singing*)

Hither, dear husband, turn your eyes:

Lucy Lockit (*singing*)

Bestow one glance to cheer me:

Polly

Think, with that look, thy Polly dies;

Lucy Lockit

O shun me not, but hear me.

Polly

'Tis Polly sues.

Lucy Lockit

'Tis Lucy speaks.

Polly

Is thus true love required?

Lucy Lockit

My heart is bursting.

Polly

Mine, too, breaks.

Lucy Lockit and Polly

Must I be slighted?

Macheath

What would you have me say, ladies? – You see, this affair will soon be at an end, without my disobliging either of you.

Peachum

But the settling of this point, Captain Macheath, might prevent a Law-suit between your two widows.

48

Macheath

[29] Which way shall I turn me, how can I decide?
Wives, the day of our death, are as fond as a bride.
One wife is too much for most husbands to bear:
But two at a time there's no mortal can bear.
This way, and that way, and which way I will,
What would comfort the one, t'other wife would take ill.

Polly

But if his own misfortunes have made him insensible to mine – a Father sure will be more compassionate. –
[30] Dear, dear Sir, sink the material evidence, and bring him off at his trial.

49

Polly (*speaking*)

Polly upon her knees begs it of you.
(*singing*)

When my Hero in court appears,
And stands arraigned for his life,
Then think of poor Polly in tears;
For ah! poor Polly's his wife.

Like the Sailor he holds up his hand
Distressed on the dashing wave:
To die a dry death on land
Is as bad as a wat'ry Grave.

And alas! poor Polly!
Alack and well a-day!
Before I was in love,
Oh! ev'ry month was May!

Lucy Lockit

If Peachum's heart is hardened; sure you, Sir, will have
more compassion on a daughter. I know the evidence is
in your power...

50

Lucy Lockit (*speaking*)

[31] How then can you be a tyrant to me.
(*kneels as she sings*)

When he holds up his hand arraigned for his life,
O think of your daughter, and think I'm his wife!
What are cannons, or bombs, or clanking of swords?
For death is more certain by witnesses' words.
Then nail up your lips; that dread thunder allay;
And each month of my life will hereafter be May.

Lockit

Macheath's time is come, Lucy. – We know our own
affairs; therefore let us have no more whimpering or
whining.

51

Lockit and Peachum

[32] Ourselves, like the Great, to secure a retreat,
When matters require it must give up our Gang;
And good reason why;
Or, instead of the fry,
Ev'n Peachum / Lockit and I
Like poor petty rascals might hang!

Peachum

Set your heart at rest, Polly, – Your husband is to die
to-day. – Therefore, if you are not already provided,
it is high time to look about you for another. There is
comfort for, you slut.

Lockit

[33] We are ready, Sir,...

52

Lockit (*speaking*)

...to conduct you to the Old Bailey!

Lucy Lockit, Polly, Macheath, Lockit, Peachum and Omnes

The Charge is prepared; the Lawyers are met;
The Judges all rang'd (a terrible show);
He goes undismayed, for death is a debt,
A debt on demand, so take what he owes.

Lucy Lockit and Polly

Then farewell, my love, adieu! contented he dies.
Here ends all dispute the rest of our lives,
For this way at once he pleases his wives.

Lockit, Peachum and Omnes

Then farewell, adieu! contented he dies.
Here ends all dispute the rest of our lives,
For this way at once he pleases his wives.

Macheath

Dear charmers, adieu!
'Tis the better for you...
...ends dispute the rest of our lives,
For this way at once I please all my wives.

Mrs Peachum

Ah!

(*They all conduct Macheath out.*)

*Scene: The condemned hold
Macheath, in a melancholy posture*

53. **Scena**

Macheath

[34] O cruel, cruel case!
Must I suffer this disgrace?

Of all the friends in time of grief,
When threat'ning Death looks grimmer,
Not one so sure can bring relief,
As this best friend, a brimmer.
(*He drinks.*)
Since I must swing, I scorn to wince or whine.

But now again my spirits sink,
I'll raise them high with wine.
(*He drinks.*)
But valour the stronger grows,
The stronger the liquor we're drinking.
And how can we feel our woes,
When we've lost the trouble of thinking?
(*He drinks.*)
If thus a man die much bolder with brandy!

So I drink off this bumper, and now I can stand the test.
And my comrades shall see, that I die as brave as the
best.

But can I leave my pretty hussies, without one tear, or
tender sigh?

Their eyes, their lips, their busses,
Recall my love – Ah! must I die?

Since laws were made for ev'ry degree,
To curb vice in others, as well as me,
I wonder we han't better company
Upon Tyburn Tree!
But gold from law can take out the sting;
And if rich men like us were to swing,
'Twould thin the land such numbers to string
Upon Tyburn Tree!

Jailer

Miss Polly and Miss Lucy intreat a word with you.

(*Enter Lucy and Polly.*)

Macheath

My dear Lucy – my dear Polly – Whatsoever hath past between us is now at an end. – If you are fond of marrying again, the best advice I can give you, is to ship yourselves off to the West Indies, where you will have a good chance of getting a husband apiece; or by good luck two or three, as you like best.

54

Polly

[35] Would I might be hanged!

Lucy Lockit

And I would so too!

Polly and Lucy Lockit

To be hanged with you, My dear, with you.
Would I might be hanged with you!
No token of love? Adieu, Farewell!
But hark! I hear the sound of the bell!

Macheath

O leave me to thought! I fear! I doubt!
I tremble! I droop! See, my courage is out!
See, my courage is out! Adieu, Farewell!
But hark! I hear the sound of the bell!

Mat of the Mint (*who has been tolling the bell with Ben Budge*)

[36] But surely you don't intend that Macheath shall really be executed?

Beggar

Most certainly. To make my piece perfect I am for doing strict poetical justice.

Mat of the Mint

Why then, this is a downright deep tragedy!

Ben Budge

Let us have a reprieve!

Lucy Lockit and Polly (*running across to the Beggar*)

O pray, madam, do please command a reprieve!

Beggar

But the moral of the...! I am for showing...

Ben Budge

Damn your morals! Let us have a reprieve!

Mat of the Mint (*to the audience*)

You there! Cry a reprieve!

Beggar (*to the audience*)

Do no such thing! The piece must carry a moral. Vice must meet with its right reward!

Mat of the Mint (*to the audience*)

Which would you rather? The Moral? Or the Reprieve?

(*Cries from the audience and the stage – 'Reprieve!' 'Reprieve!'; Lockit runs on to the stage waving a large document.*)

Lockit

Reprieve! Reprieve! Captain, you are saved!

All (*entering*)

Hurrah!

Beggar (*to the audience*)

But, gentlemen! gentlemen! the play as I wrote it would have carried a most excellent moral!
(*cries and boos, which she dominates*)
It would have shown that the lower kind of people...
(*louder interruptions, above which she yells*)
...have the vices in the same degree as the rich! Vice must be punished!

Peachum

Away! Screech owl! Away and hang yourself in your own garters! – Ladies! A dance!

All

A Dance! A Dance!

55

Macheath

[37] Thus I stand like a Turk, with his doxies around;
From all sides their glances his passion confound.
And the different beauties subdue him by turns.

Mrs Peachum and Peachum

For black, brown and fair his inconstancy burns,
And the different beauties subdue him by turns.

Ladies of the Town and Gentlemen of the Road

Fa la la Fa la la Fa la la

The different Beauties subdue him by turns.

Lucy Lockit, Polly, Mrs Trapes and Lockit

Each calls forth her charms to provoke his desires:
Though willing to all, with but one he retires.
But think of this maxim, and put off all sorrow,
The wretch of today may be happy tomorrow.

Ladies of the Town and Gentlemen of the Road

Tra la la! Tra la la! Tra la la!

The wretch of today may be happy tomorrow.

Lucy Lockit, Polly, Mrs Peachum, Mrs Trapes, Macheath, Lockit and Peachum

Each calls forth her charms to provoke his desires, etc.
La la la la la la!

Ladies of the Town and Gentlemen of the Road

Fa la la la la Tra la la la la

All

The wretch of today may be happy tomorrow.

Quick curtain

End of Opera

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(1947–48)

Ballad Opera in three acts

Realised from the original airs of John Gay's ballad opera (1728)

Words by John Gay (1685–1732)

with alterations and additions by Tyrone Guthrie (1900–1971)

Full score prepared for publication by David Matthews

Dedicated to James Lawrie

Mrs Peachum	Susan Bickley <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Mr Peachum	Jeremy White <i>bass-baritone</i>
Polly Peachum	Leah-Marian Jones <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Captain Macheath	Tom Randle <i>tenor</i>
Filch	Robert Anthony Gardiner <i>tenor</i>
Lockit	Donald Maxwell <i>baritone</i>
Lucy Lockit	Sarah Fox <i>soprano</i>
Mrs Diana Trapes	Frances McCafferty <i>mezzo-soprano</i>



COMPACT DISC ONE

Introduction • Overture • Act I

TT 52:43

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II • Act III

TT 65:09

City of London Sinfonia

Nicholas Ward
leader

Richard Hetherington
assistant conductor

Christian Curnyn

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