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Brecht, Bertolt

The Threepenny Opera Songs

translated by Eric Bentley

THE THREEPENNY OPERA SONGS

By Bertolt Brecht

Translated by Eric Bentley (1960)

SONG OF THE GUN AND THE SABRE

John was a soldier and so was James
And George became a Sergeant in short order.
But the army is not interested in names;
They were soon marching north to the border.
We love our neighbour
With gun and sabre
From the Congo to Ceylon.
If it should rain one night
And we should chance to sight
Pallid or swarthy faces
Of uncongenial races
Maybe we'll slice them up to make some
fillet mignon.

Now John was rather cold at night
And James, he found the whiskey "rather hot, sir."
But George said: "Everything's all right
For the army simply cannot go to pot, sir."
We love our neighbour
With gun and sabre
From the Congo to Ceylon.
If it should rain one night
And we should chance to sight
Pallid or swarthy faces
Of uncongenial races
Maybe we'll slice them up to make some
fillet mignon.

So John's gone west and James is dead
And George is both missing and barney.
Blood, however, is still blood-red;
They're recruiting again for the army.
We love our neighbour
With gun and sabre
From the Congo to Ceylon.
If it should rain one night
And we should chance to sight
Pallid or swarthy faces
Of uncongenial races
Maybe we'll slice them up to make some
fillet mignon.

Brecht -- Weill

THE THREEPENNY OPERA

English lyrics by Eric Bentley

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PROLOGUE

The Moritat of Mackie the Knife*

A Fairground in Soho

Beggars beg, robbers rob, and whores whore. A Moritat Singer sings a Moritat.

And the shark he has his teeth and
There they are for all to see.
And Macheath he has his knife but
No one knows where it may be.

When the shark has had his dinner
There is blood on all his fins.
But Macheath, he has his gloves on:
They say nothing of his sins.

All along the Thames Embankment
People fall down with a smack.
And it is not plague or cholera:
Word's around that Mac is back.

On a blue and balmy Sunday
Someone drops dead in the Strand.
And a man slips round the corner.
People say: Macheath's on hand.

And Shmul Meyer still is missing
Like many another rich young man.
And Macheath has got his money.
Try to prove that if you can!

From left to right Peachum with his wife and daughter takes
a walk across the stage.

Jenny Towler was discovered
With a jackknife in her breast.
And Macheath strolls down the dockside
Knows no more than all the rest.

Where is Alphonse Glite the coachman?
Was he stabbed or drowned or shot?
Maybe someone knows the answer.
As for Mackie, he does not.

One old man and seven children
Burnt to cinders in Soho!
In the crowd is Captain Mackie who
Is not asked and does not know.

And the widow, not yet twenty,
(Everybody calls her Miss)
Woke up and was violated.
What did Mackie pay for this?

A burst of laughter from among the whores. A man disengages himself from them and moves swiftly off across the square.

GINNY JENNY. That was Mackie the Knife!

*A Moritat is a kind of ballad in the English sense (not ballade, a French conception). It consists of a piece of narrative in simple quatrains, often accompanied by a "panorama" or set of pictures to which the singer points.

E. B.

PEACHUM'S MORNING HYMN

Wake up, you old Image of Gawd!
Get on with your sinful backsliding!
Continue to perpetrate fraud!
Jehovah will do the providing!

Go barter your brother, you turd!
Sell your wife at an auction, you lout!
You think G.O.D. is a word?
On Judgment Day you will find out.

THE I-FOR-ONE SONG

Peachum

I for one
Like to spend the night at home and in my bed.
She prefers fun:
Does she think the Lord keeps busy pouring manna on her head?

Mrs. Peachum

Such is the moon over Soho!
Such is that magic "Can you feel my heart beating" spell!
Oh, it's "Whither thou go'st, I will go with thee, Johnny":
And the new moon's shining on the asphodel!

Peachum

I for one
Like to do what has a purpose and a goal.
They prefer fun:
After which of course they end up in the hole.

Both

So where is their moon over Soho?
What's left of their confounded "Can you feel my heart beating" spell?
Where now is their "Whither thou go'st, I will go with thee, Johnny"?
For the old moon's waning and you're shot to hell!

WEDDING SONG FOR POORER FOLK

Bill Lawgen and Mary Syer
They were spliced last Tuesday night by law!
(I give you Bill and Mary, Gawd bless 'em!)
Where the bride's gown came from he did not know
She'd no name for her man but So and So,
And yet they got a license from the Registrar!
(a toast!)
Do you know what your good wife does? No!
Will you let her go on doing it? No!
(I give you Bill and Mary, Gawd bless 'em!)
Billy Lawgen said to me: It's fine
So long as just one part of her is mine.
(The swine!)

PIRATE JENNY

Gentlemen, today you see me washing up the glasses
And making up the beds and cleaning.
When you give me p'raps a penny, I will curtsey rather well.
When you see my tatty clothing and this tatty old hotel
P'raps you little guess with whom you're dealing.
One fine night, however, there will be shouting from the harbour.
Folk will ask: what's the reason for that shout?
They will see me smiling while I rinse the glasses
And will say: what has she to smile about?
And an eight-masted galleon
Armed with fifty great cannon
Sails in to the quay.

They say: go and wipe your glasses, my girl,
And their pennies are thrown to me.
And I thank them for the penny and I do the beds up right
Though nobody is going to sleep in them tonight
And they haven't the least idea who I may be.
One fine night, however, there will be roaring from the harbour.
Folk will ask: what's the reason for that roar?
They will see me standing just beside the window
And will say: now what's she sneering for?
And the eight-masted galleon
With its fifty great cannon
Will shoot up the town.

Gentleman, I fear this puts an end to your laughter
For your walls, they will all cave in.
And this whole fair city will be razed to the ground.
Just one tatty old hotel will survive safe and sound.
Folk will ask what special person dwells therein.
And all night long round this hotel there will be shouting
Folk will ask: why was it this they'd spare?
Folk will see me leave the place the following morning
And will say: so that's who was in there!
And the eight-masted galleon
With its fifty great cannon
Will run flags up the masts.

And a hundred men will come ashore before it's noon
And will go where it's dark and chill.
And every man they find they will drag him through the street
And they'll clap him in chains and lay him at my feet
And they'll ask: now which of these are we to kill?
And that afternoon it will be still down by the harbour
When folk ask: now just who has got to die?
You will hear me say at that point: All of them!
And when their heads fall, I'll say: Whoopee!
And the eight-masted galleon
Armed with fifty great cannon
It will sail off with me.

SONG OF THE HEAVY CANNON

~~What soldiers count on
Is heavy cannon~~

Johnny joined up and so did James
And George became a Sergeant in short order.
But the army is not interested in names:
They were soon marching north to the border.

Soldiers can live on
Long knives and cannon
From the Cape to Cutch Behar.
If it should rain one night
And they should chance to sight
Pallid or swarthy faces
Of unfamiliar races
They'll maybe chop them up to make some
beafsteak tartare.

For John, the whiskey was a bit too warm.
For James, the cold was quite infernal.
Sergeant George, he had to take them by the arm
And remind them: Boys, the army is eternal!

Soldiers can live on
Long knives and cannon
From the Cape to Cutch Behar.
If it should rain one night
And they should chance to sight
Pallid or swarthy faces
Of unfamiliar races
They'll maybe chop them up to make some
beafsteak tartare.

Now John's gone west and James is dead
And George is missing and barmy.
Blood, however, is still blood-red:
They're recruiting again for the army.

Soldiers can live on
Long knives and cannon
From the Cape to Cutch Behar.
If it should rain one night
And they should chance to sight
Pallid or swarthy faces
Of unfamiliar races
They'll maybe chop them up to make some
beafsteak tartare.

LOVE SONG

Mac: And if there's no license or Registrar
Nor lovely flowers to make you a crown

Polly: And if I don't know exactly who you are
Or where I got hold of this gown:

Both: The platter from which you are eating your bread
Don't you keep it long, throw it down
For love lasts forever (or not so long)
In ever so many a town.

IN A LITTLE SONG POLLY GIVES HER PARENTS A HINT OF HER MARRIAGE WITH
THE ROBBER MACHEATH

When I was a girl, and an innocent girl
(I was innocent once as were you),
I thought that perhaps I might interest some fellow
And so I must know just what to do.
And if he's a rich fellow
And if he's a nice fellow
And his collar is as white as snow
And if he knows how he should treat a real lady
Then I must tell him: No.
That way I can hold my head up high
And be a lady comme il faut,
Yes, the moon shines bright until it's day!
Yes, the boat is launched and duly sails away!
And that's just how far things go.
For one must not rush a fellow off his feet!
So I sang my song adagio.
For, hey presto, so much might happen!
The only word to use is No.

The first man who came was a man from Kent
Who was all that a man should be.
The second, oh, he had three schooners in the harbour,
And the third one was crazy for me.
And as they were rich men
And as they were nice men
And their collars were as white as snow
And as they knew how they should treat a real lady
I had to say to each one: No.
That way I could hold my head up high
And be a lady comme il faut.
Yes, the moon shone bright till it was day!
Yes, the boat was launched and duly sailed away!
And that's just how far things could go.
For one must not rush a fellow off his feet!
So I sang my song adagio.
For, hey presto, so much might happen!
But not if you will whisper: No.

And yet one afternoon (and that day the sky was blue)
Came someone who did not ask.
And he hung his bowler hat upon the nail inside my bedroom
And applied himself to his task.
And as he was not rich
And as he was not nice
And even his Sunday collar was black as a crow
And as he didn't know how he should treat a real lady
I could not tell him: No.
This way I couldn't hold my head up high
Or be a lady comme il faut.
Oh, the moon shone bright the whole night long
And the boat was tied up good and strong
For it all had to be just so!
For man must simply rush us off our feet:
And why must we be cold and slow?
For, hey presto, it had to happen:
I could not tell that someone No.

All three walk forward and sing the first finale. Song lighting.
On the screens or boards is written:

FIRST THREEPENNY FINALE

Polly.

There's a thing I want to try:
Once in this my dark existence
To reward a man's persistence.
Do you think I aim too high?

Peachum, with a bible in his hands.

The right to happiness is fundamental:
Men live so little time and die alone.
Nor is it altogether incidental
That they want bread to eat and not a stone.
The right to happiness is fundamental.
And yet how great would be the innovation
Should someone claim and get that right -- hooray!
The thought appeals to my imagination!
But this old world of ours ain't built that way.

Mrs. Peachum.

How I wish I could supply
Philanthropical assistance
To relieve your dark existence:
But one must not aim so high.

Peachum.

To be a good man -- what a nice idea!
And give the poor your money? That is fine!
When all mankind is good, His Kingdom's near!
Who would not like to bask in Light Divine?
To be a good man -- what a nice idea!
But there's the little problem of subsistence:
Supplies are scarce and human beings, base.
Who would not like a peacable existence?
But this old world is not that kind of place.

Polly.

I fear he's right, my dear old dad:*
The world is poor and men are bad.

Peachum.

Of course, he's right, your dear old dad:
The world is poor and men are bad.
An earthly paradise might be arranged
If this old world of ours could but be changed!

* Mrs. Peachum, chiming in, sings: "I fear he's right, you dear old dad..."

(first 3penny finale, contd.)

But that can never be arranged.
Your brother might be fond of you
But if the meat supply won't do
He'd cut you down right where you stood.
(We'd all be loyal if we could.)
Your good wife might be fond of you
But if your love for her won't do
She'd cut you down right where you stood.
(We'd all be grateful if we could.)
Your children might be fond of you
But if your pension would not do
They'd cut you down right where you stood.
(We'd all be human if we could.)

Polly and Mrs. Peachum.
We do not mind confessing
The whole thing is depressing.
The world is poor and men are bad:
And we have nothing more to add.

PEACHUM.
There is of course no more to add;
The world is poor and men are bad.
We would be good, instead of base,
But this old world is not that kind of place.

ALL THREE.
We take no comfort in your bunk
For everything's a heap of junk.

PEACHUM.
The world is poor and men are bad;
There is of course no more to add.

ALL THREE.
We do not mind confessing
The whole thing is depressing.
We take no comfort in your bunk
For everything's a heap of junk.

[Faint, illegible text]

[Faint, illegible text]

POLLY'S SONG

Sweet while it lasted
And now it is over.
Tear out your heart
Say "Goodbye," good Polly!
What use is your weeping
(Blessed Virgin, restore me)
When 'tis plain my mother
Knew all this before me!

Here Mackie is heard singing: For love lasts forever (or not so long)
In ever so many a town.

[Faint, illegible text]

BALLADE OF SEXUAL SUBMISSIVENESS*

Now here's a man who fights old Satan's battle:
The butcher, he! All other men, mere cattle!
He is a shark with all the world to swim in!
What gets him down? What gets 'em all down" Women.
He may not want to, but he'll acquiesce
For such is sexual submissiveness.

He does not heed the Bible; nor the Statute Book;
He says he is an egomaniac.
If women look at him, he won't look back,
For girls can murder with a look.
His fortitude by daylight is surprising
But when the night is falling, he is rising.

And many saw the tragic fall of many:
The great Macheath fell into Harlot Jenny.
Those who stood by might swear his sins were scarlet
But when they died, who buried them? Some harlot.
They may not want to, but they acquiesce
For such is sexual submissiveness.

Some read the Bible; others take a Law Degree;
Some join the Church and some attack the State;
While some remove the celery from their plate
And then devise a theoree.
By evening all are busy moralizing
But when the night is falling, they are rising.

Now here's a man who towards the gallows races.
The quicklime's bought that will rub out his traces.
He's dead the minute hangmen do their duty.
And what's his mind on now, this chap? Some beauty.
Here at the gallows' foot he'll acquiesce
For such is sexual submissiveness.

He's had it. He's been sold. He marches to his doom.
He's seen the money in a female's hand
And he begins to understand
That woman's orifice will be his tomb.
His self-reproaches are uncompromising
But, as the night is falling, he is rising.

* The title smacks of Krafft-Ebing, but the equivalent phrases in Havelock Ellis's Psychology of Sex -- "erotic slavery" and "erotic servitude" -- refer to a disease decidedly different from the one diagnosed by Mrs. Peachum. I have therefore chosen a word that is closer to the phenomenon described.

The metre of the refrains is that of the Weill score and not that of the lyrics as published in the Stucke. E. B.

BALLADE OF THE FANCY MAN

Once on a time -- who knows how long ago? --
We shared a home together, I and she.
My head and her abdomen turned the trick.
I protected her and she supported me.
(Some say it's different, but I say it's slick.)
And when a wooer came I crept out of our bed
And had myself a schapps and showed myself well bred.
When he shelled out, I said: Auf Wiedersehn,
If any time you'd care to, come again!
For half a year we had no cause to roam
For that bordello was our home from home.

At that same time -- 'twas rather long ago --
He took the bloom off our relationship.
For when the cash was short, he bawled me out.
One day he yelled: I'm gonna pawn your slip!
(A slip is nice but one can do without.)
And then -- you know how 'tis -- I felt a certain pique.
I asked him more than once: how did he have the cheek?
Then he would pummel me, would my good pal,
And I would end up in the hospital.
Life was all honey from the honey comb
In that bordello which was home from home.

Both. And at that time -- long, long, long, long ago --
Mac. (To think of it right now gives me a lift)
Jen. By day alone could we two meet in bed
Mac. For night was usually her working shift.
(If you wanna be different, go right ahead.)
Jen. One day I felt beneath my heart a young Macheath.
Mac. We then and there agreed: I should lie underneath.
Jen. An unborn child, you know, so often crushes.
Mac. At that, this child was destined for the rushes.
Both. Though that bordello was our home from home
In half a year we were constrained to roam.

So, gentlemen, is this what you'd call living?
Take no offence if Mackie disagrees.
While still a babe I heard with grave misgiving:
None but the well-to-do can live at ease.

THE SECRET OF GRACIOUS LIVING: A BALLADE

Great praise is always lavished on great thinkers
Who think of books (but do not think of dinner)
In some old shack where even rats grow thinner--
I can't abide such solitary stinkers!
For Simple Living simply does not pay,
And I'd be glad to hear the last of it.
From here to Rome no turtle-dove or tit
Would live on such a menu for one day.
Let 'em keep their freedom! Let 'em keep their fleas!
Only the well-to-do can live at ease.

Those brave adventurers whose quaint addiction
Is Truth and Freedom in and out of season
And risking their own necks for no good reason
(Material for adventurous non-fiction!):
See how they waste the wintry evenings napping
Then silently with wintry wife to bed
Their wintry thoughts three thousands years ahead
And both their ears agog for cheers and clapping!
Let 'em keep their bravery! I've a better wheeze:
Nonebut the well-to-do can live at ease.

In spring I ask: could there be something to it?
Could not Macheath be great and solitary?
But then the year works round to January
And I reply: My boy, you'll live to rue it.
Poverty makes you sad as well as wise
And bravery mingles danger with the fame.
Poor, lonely, wise, and brave -- in heaven's name!
Goodbye to greatness! I return the prize
With this my repartee of repartees:
None but the well-to-do can live at ease.

THE JEALOUSY DUET

Lucy. Come right out, Old Soho's beauty queen!
I must see those legs they call so pretty!
I too should like to recite the praises
Of the cutest cutie in the city?
You might, it is true, produce quite an effect on Mackie!
If the whole idea were not so wacky!
He has better things to do
Than to try his hand on you.
Ha ha ha ha ha It can't be fun
To get mixed up with such a one.
(Very well, let's wait and see.)

Lucy loves Mac:
I actually adore him.
He loves her back:
All other women bore him.
A man will not dissever
A love that lasts forever
To please some filthy creature!
(Ludicrous!)

Polly. Yes, they call me Soho's beauty queen!
When they see these legs they call them pretty!
They all adore to recite the praises
Of the greatest beauty in the city?
I have, please observe, produced quite an effect on Mackie!
This idea of yours is oh so wacky!
Who, if both his hands were free,
Would not try those hands on me?
Ha ha ha ha ha But as for you
Who'd dip his spoon in such a stew?
(Very well, let's wait and see.)

Polly loves Mac:
I actually adore him.
He loves her back:
All other women bore him.
A man will not dissever
A love that lasts forever
To please some filthy creature!
(Ludicrous!)*

* In performance, the refrains are duets, and when Lucy sings: "Lucy loves Mac," Polly sings: "Polly loves Mac," and so on. There are also spoken interjections between lines of singing. (Example: "Shitpot!" "Shitpot yourself!") These can be seen in the piano-vocal score or heard on recordings. They are omitted here because they make a messy page, and the reader loses track of the metre. E. B.

Curtain. Macheath and Ginny Jenny step in front of the curtain and sing.
Song lighting.

THE SECOND THREEPENNY FINALE

Macheath.

Now all you gentlemen who wish to lead us
And teach us to desist from mortal sin
Your prior obligation is to feed us:
When we've had lunch, your preaching can begin.
All you who love your paunch and our propriety
You may proclaim, good sirs, your fine philosophy
But till you feed us, right and wrong can wait!
Or is it only those who have the money
Can enter in the land of milk and honey?

*Take note of this
one thing for
it is late:*

Voice Off

What does a man live by?

Macheath

What does a man live by? By hourly sweating
His fellows, beating, cheating, eating, time and again!
A man can only live by mere forgetting
He is himself a man like other men.

Chorus Off

So, gentlemen, don't be taken in:
Men live exclusively by mortal sin.

Ginny Jenny

All you who say what neckline is decreed us
And who decide when ogling is a sin
Your prior obligation is to feed us
When we've had lunch, your preaching can begin.
You who insist upon your pleasure and our shame
Take note of this one thing (for it is late);
Your fine philosophy, good sirs, you may proclaim,
But till you feed us, right and wrong can wait!
Or is it only those who have the money
Can enter in the land of milk and honey?

Voice Off

What does a man live by?

Ginny Jenny

What does a man live by? By hourly sweating
His fellows, beating, cheating, eating time and again!
A man can only live by mere forgetting
He is himself a man like other men.

Chorus Off

So, gentlemen, do not be taken in:
Men live exclusively by mortal sin.

THE SONG OF THE FUTILITY OF ALL HUMAN ENDEAVOR

A man lives by his head.
 That head will not suffice.
 Just try it: you will find your head
 Will scarce support two lice.
 For the task assigned them
 Men aren't smart enough or sly
 Any rogue can blind them
 With a clever lie.

Go make yourself a plan
 And be a shining light.
 Then make yourself a second plan
 For neither will come right.
 For the situation
 Men aren't bad enough or vile.
 (Human aspiration
 Only makes me smile.)

Go running after luck
 But don't you run too fast:
 We all are running after luck
 And luck is running last.
 For the real conditions
 Men are more demanding than is meet.
 Their ideal ambitions
 Are a great big cheat.

Since men are just no good
 Pick up a piece of wood
 And hit them on the head with it:
 Then maybe' they'll be good.
 For the human function
 They'll be good when they are dead.
 So without compunction
 Hit'em on the head!

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

You saw what came of Solomon
The wisest man on earth:
Such was his perspicacity
He cursed the hour of his birth
Declaring: All is Vanity.
How very wise was Solomon!
But all the world knew what was what
Before the setting of the sun:
His wisdom 'twas that put him on the spot.
So thank your stars if you have none.

You saw Queen Cleopatra too
And what her talents were:
Oh, it was quite a life she led
Until her past caught up with her!
Two emperors joined her in bed.
How beautiful was Babylon!
But all the world knew what was what
Before the setting of the sun:
Her beauty 'twas that put her on the spot.
So thank your stars if you have none.

And Julius Caesar, who was brave:
You saw what came of him.
He sat like God on an altar-piece
And yet they tore him limb from limb
While his prestige did still increase!
"Et tu, Brute? I am undone!"
And all the world knew what was what
Before the setting of the sun:
'Twas bravery that put him on the spot.
So thank your stars if you have none.

You know that eager student Brecht.
You sang his poetry.
But when he studied all too well
His economic history
You told him he could go to hell.
O what a studious simpleton!
For all the world knew what was what
Before the setting of the sun:
'Twas studiousness that put him on the spot.
So thank your stars if you have none.

And here you see our friend Macheath.
His life is now at stake.
So long as he was rational
And took whate'er there was to take
His fame was international.
His rationality is gone!
The whole world will know what is what
Before the setting of the sun:
'Tis passion that has put him on the spot.
So thank your stars if you have none.

EPISTLE TO HIS FRIENDS

Hark to the voice that pleads for pity, hark!
Macheath lies here -- beneath no hawthorn tree
Nor under elms but in a dungeon dark
He was struck down by angry Fate's decree.
God grant you all may hear what he doth say!
Him thickest walls surround and chains entwine.
Do you not ask, my friends, where he has strayed?
When he is dead, brew elderberry wine!
But while he still doth live, lend him your aid.
Or must his martyrdom endure for aye?

Alas, he's fallen from his high estate
And his affairs have gone from bad to worse.
O ye who recognize nor God nor Fate
But place your bets upon your own fat purse
You'd better rescue him or, well-a-day,
He'll drag you all down to that dungeon grim.
Run then unto the Queen for your Macheath.
Tell her the pass he's come to. Say of him:
That man of sorrows, Queen, has fangs for teeth,
O must his martyrdom endure for aye

BALLADE IN WHICH MACHEATH BEGS PARDON OF ALL

All you who will live long and die in bed
Pray harden not your hearts against us others
And do not grin behind your beards, my brothers,
When you behold us hung till we are dead,
Nor do not curse because we came a cropper.
Be not, as was the Law to us, unkind:
Not every Christian has a lawful mind.
Your levity, my friends, is most improper.
O brother men, let us a lesson be
And pray to God on High to pardon me.

And now the stormwinds with the rain conspire
To wash the flesh we once did over-nourish
And ravens gouge our eyes out with a flourish,
These eyes which see so much and more desire.
We were not always virtuous, alas,
That's why you'll see us hanging by the neck
For every greedy bird of prey to peck
As were we horses' offal on the grass.
So, brother men, let us a warning be
And pray to God on High to pardon me.

The wenches with their bosoms showing
To catch the eye of men with yearnings
The urchins just behind them going
In hopes to filch their sinful earnings
The outlaws, bandits, burglars, gunmen
All Christian souls that love a brawl
Abortionists and pimps and fun-men
I cry them mercy one and all.

Except the coppers -- sons of bitches --
For every evening, every morning
Those lice came creeping from their niches
And frequently without a warning.
Police! My epidermis itches!
But for today I'll let that fall
Pretend I love the sons of bitches
And cry them mercy one and all.

O how I wish that I could get them
And smash them with an iron maul!
But 'tis my duty to forget them
And cry them mercy one and all.

THE ROAD TO THE GALLOWS

Peachum.

Ladies and gentlemen, to this point we have come.
Macheath will now be strung up by the neck.
Which proves that in the whole of Christendom,
Nothing is spared a man, by heck.

But lest you jump to the conclusion
That we are parties to the deal, and in collusion,
Macheath will not be hanged till he is dead.
We have devised another end instead.

You all will hear (yes, all; it's rather loud)
Mercy give Justice quite a dreadful hiding.
This is an opera, and we mean to do you proud.
The Royal Messenger will make his entrance -- riding.

On the boards or screens is written: Irruption of the Mounted Messenger.

THIRD THREEPENNY FINALE

CHORUS: Hark, who comes?
The royal messenger riding comes!

Riding high, Brown enters as the Messenger.

BROWN, recitative. On the occasion of her coronation, our Gracious Queen commands that one Captain Macheath shall at once be released. All cheer. At the same time he is raised to the permanent ranks of the nobility. Cheers. The castle Marmarel and a pension of ten thousand pounds a year are his as long as he shall live, while to the happy couples here our great Queen presents her very cordial congratulations.

MACHEATH, A rescue! A rescue! I was sure of it. Where the need is greatest, there will God's help be nearest.

POLLY. A rescue! A rescue! My dearest Mackie has been rescued. I am so happy.

MRS. PEACHUM. So now the whole thing has a happy end! How calm and peaceful would our life be always if a messenger came from the king whenever we wanted.

PEACHUM. Therefore all remain standing where you are now and sing the chorale of the poorest of the poor, of whose difficult life you have shown us something today. In reality, their end is gen'rally bad. Mounted messengers from the queen come far too seldom, and if you kick a man he kicks you back again. Therefore never be too eager to combat injustice.

ALL sing to the organ and walk forward:

Combat injustice but in moderation:

Such things will freeze to death if left alone.

Remember: this whole vale of tribulation

Is black as pitch and cold as any stone.