

FOR RELEASE:

IMMEDIATE

Mailed February 10, 1987

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio - A musical described as "a shining landmark in the history of international musical theatre" will open at Youngstown State University on Feb. 19.

"The Threepenny Opera," written by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht and translated from the German by Marc Blitzstein, will be staged for two consecutive weekends, Feb. 19-21 and 26-28 at 8 p.m. in Ford Auditorium of YSU's Bliss Hall.

Premiered in pre-Nazi Berlin in 1928, the play is based on the 18th century classic, "The Beggar's Opera," by John Gay.

The story is of the master criminal, Macheath, and his exploits during the time of Queen Victoria's coronation.

Playwright Brecht achieved instant international recognition with this musical, and composer Weill is well-remembered for such songs as "Mack the Knife" and "Tango Ballad" from this show.

Director Frank A. Castronovo of Boardman has chosen to present the production in its intended "Epic Theatre" style.

"Brecht defined the 'epic' style as episodic and narrative, without the restrictions of time, place or formal plot," Dr. Castronovo explained. "Threepenny Opera" will feature such devices as projected scenery and scene titles, direct address to the audience, and an acting style that admits the theatricality of the event.

"These devices," continued Dr. Castronovo, "serve to distance the spectator emotionally from what is happening on stage, thereby allowing the audience to engage the intellectual component of the play and turn it into action."

Set design for the musical is being done by Nicholas A. DePaola, a graduate of the YSU Theatre program who has recently been working in scenic design in New York City.

MORE

ADD ONE

Choreography is by Leah Flock, director of the Leah Flock Dance Studio at F.A.M.E. Conservatory, Youngstown.

Costume design is by Jane Shanabarger, YSU instructor in theatre from Boardman. Lighting Design is by senior theatre major Michael Angelo Tortora of Youngstown. Musical direction is by Leslie W. Hicken, instructor in the University's Dana School of Music.

The 19 member cast includes John M. Campana (Street Singer), Joan L. Claypoole (Lucy Brown), and Joseph Mineo (Walt Dreary), all from Austintown; Ruth Smrek (Coaxer), of Boardman; assistant choreographer Beth Chepke (as Betty), Canfield; Paula Rose McConnell (Mrs. Peachum), Canton.

Todd W. Dicken (Crookfinger Jake), Columbiana; Lisa Anne Ensinger (Jenny), East Liverpool; Matthew Thomson Koren (Readymoney Matt), East Palestine; Darryl Yeager (Tiger Brown), Girard; Will Christy (Warden Smith), Howland.

Vocal coach William Ambert (as Mr. Peachum), Hubbard; Juliann Cortese (Dolly), Liberty; F. Wesley Brainard (Filch), Niles; Tania Marie Pshsniak (Polly Peachum), Salem; Christopher J. Kocis (Macheath, or Mack the Knife), Sharpsville, Pa.; YSU anthropologist Dr. John White (Bob the Saw) and Chuck Mastran (Rev. Kimball), both of Youngstown; and Melanie Ferguson (Molly), Washingtonville.

Tina M. Lavorata of North Jackson is stage manager, and Cathleen Connors of Warren, assistant stage manager.

"The Threepenny Opera" is the third offering in YSU's 1986-87 University Theatre season. Tickets for the production may be reserved by calling the Theatre Box Office at (216) 742-3105 weekdays.

Parking will be available in the adjacent Wick Avenue Deck.

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Ea, b, d, e, h

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YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio - Youngstown State University professor of History, Dr. George I Kulchytsky, was recently named "1986 Man of the Year in the Greater Cleveland Ukranian Community" by the United Ukranian Organizations of Greater Cleveland.

Dr. Kulchytsky, a resident of Parma, was born in Western Ukraine. He has taught at YSU since 1969, specializing in Ukranian, Russian, East European and Balkan Studies.

He is a member of nine professional organizations, including the International Social Science Honorary Society, Delta Tau Kappa, and is a member of the editorial boards of the Ukranian Quarterly in New York and the Ukranian Review in London, England. He is a former member of the Executive Board of the Intercollegiate Council of Ohio.

Dr. Kulchytsky has been active as a leader in Ukranian communities since 1961 on local, national and international levels. He was also chairman of the Millennium Committee of Christianity in the Ukraine.

He received his Bachelor of Science degree from Kent State University, his Master's of Art degree at John Carroll University, Cleveland and doctoral degree from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

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CUTLINE

Prancing through a lively song and dance scene in YSU's production of "The Threepenny Opera" are, from left, Paula McConnell of Canton, William Ambert of Hubbard and Tania Pshsniak of Salem. The musical opens Feb. 19 in Ford Auditorium of Bliss Hall.

(YSU photo by Elise Cleary)

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Chris Kocis of Sharpsville, Pa., playing the part of Macheath, or Mack the Knife, in the University Theatre production of "The Threepenny Opera" describes the beauty of the moon over Dock Street to his new wife, portrayed by Tania Pshsniak of Salem. The Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht musical, based on "The Beggar's Opera," opens Feb. 19 in Ford Auditorium.
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In a scene from University Theatre's production of "The Threepenny Opera," Polly Peacham, portrayed by Tania Pshsniak of Salem, visits her jailed husband Macheath, or Mack the Knife, played by Chris Kocis of Sharpsville, Pa. The Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht musical, based on "The Beggar's Opera," opens Feb. 19 in Ford Auditorium, Bliss Hall.

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In a duet from "The Threepenny Opera," Mr. and Mrs. Peacham, Paula McConnell of Canton and Bill Ambert of Hubbard, agree that young people fall in love for the wrong reasons. University Theatre will present the Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht musical Feb. 19 through Feb. 28 in Ford Auditorium, Bliss Hall.

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Christopher Kocis of Sharpsville, Pa., playing the part of Macheath (also known as Mack the Knife), is captured on the stairs by Paula McConnell of Canton, who portrays Mrs. Peacham in "The Threepenny Opera." The Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht musical will be presented by YSU's University Theatre beginning Feb. 19.

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