

The Beggars Opera John Gay

A collection of critical essays on Gay's play arranged in chronological order of original publication

The Beggar's Opera, often referred to today as the first musical comedy, was the most popular dramatic piece of the eighteenth century—and is the work that John Gay (1685-1732) is best remembered for having written. That association of popular music and satiric lyrics has proved to be continually attractive, and variations on the Opera have flourished in this century: by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, by Duke Ellington, and most recently by Vaclav Havel. The original opera itself is played all over the world in amateur and professional productions. But John Gay's place in all this has not been well defined. His Opera is often regarded as some sort of chance event. In John Gay and the London Theatre, the first book-length study of John Gay as dramatic author, Calhoun Winton recognized the Opera as part of an entirely self-conscious career in the theatre, a career that Gay pursued from his earliest days as a writer in London and continued to follow to his death. Winton emphasizes Gay's knowledge of and affection for music, acquired, he argues, by way of his association with Handel. Although concentrating on Gay and his theatrical career, Winton also limns a vivid portrait of London itself and of the London stage of Gay's time, a period of considerable turbulence both within and outside the theatre. Gay's plays reflect in varying ways and degrees that social, political, and cultural turmoil. Winton's study sheds new light not only on Gay and the theatre, but also on the politics and culture of his era.

Polly

John Gay's The Beggar's Opera

Viz. The Captives, ... The Beggar's Opera. Polly, ... Achilles, ... The Distress'd Wife, ... The Rehearsal at Gotham, ... To which is Prefixed An Account of the Life and Writings of the Author

Beggar's Opera

John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, 1728-2004

After the Beggar's Opera by John Gay

The Beggar's Opera A Ballad Opera in Three Acts By John Gay The Beggar's Opera is a ballad opera in three acts written in 1728 by John Gay with music arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch. It is one of the watershed plays in Augustan drama and is the only example of the once thriving genre of satirical ballad opera to remain popular today. Ballad operas were satiric musical plays that used some of the conventions of opera, but without recitative. The lyrics of the airs in the piece are set to popular broadsheet ballads, opera arias, church hymns and folk tunes of the time. The Beggar's Opera premiered at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre on 29 January 1728 and ran for 62 consecutive performances, the longest run in theatre history up to that time (after 146 performances of Rober Cambert's "Pomone" in 1671). The work became Gay's greatest success and has been played ever since; it has been called "the most popular play of the eighteenth century."4] In 1920, The Beggar's Opera began an astonishing revival run of 1,463 performances at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith, London, which was one of the longest runs in history for any piece of musical theatre at that time. Peachum, a fence and thief-catcher, justifies his actions. Mrs. Peachum, overhearing her husband's blacklisting of unproductive thieves, protests regarding one of them, Bob Booty (the nickname of Robert Walpole). The Peachums discover that Polly, their daughter, has secretly married Macheath, the famous highwayman, who is Peachum's principal client. Upset to find out that he will no longer be able to use Polly in his business, Peachum and his wife ask how Polly will support such a husband "in Gaming, Drinking and Whoring." Nevertheless, they conclude that the match may make sense if the husband can be killed for his money. They leave to carry out this errand. However, Polly has hidden Macheath. Macheath goes to a tavern where he is surrounded by women of dubious virtue who, despite their class, compete in displaying perfect drawing-room manners, although the subject of their conversation is their success in picking pockets and shoplifting. Macheath discovers, too late, that two of them (Jenny Diver, Suky Tawdry) have contracted with Peachum to capture him, and he becomes a prisoner in Newgate prison. The prison is run by Peachum's associate, the corrupt jailer Lockit. His daughter, Lucy Lockit, has the opportunity to scold Macheath for having agreed to marry her and then broken this promise. She tells him that to see him tortured would give her pleasure. Macheath pacifies her, but Polly arrives and claims him as her husband. Macheath tells Lucy that Polly is crazy. Lucy helps Macheath to escape by stealing her father's keys. Her father learns of Macheath's promise to marry her and worries that if Macheath is recaptured and hanged, his fortune might be subject to Peachum's claims. Lockit and Peachum discover Macheath's hiding place. They decide to split his fortune.

A comprehensive study guide offering in-depth explanation, essay, and test prep for John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, without a doubt the most popular drama written during the hundred years between 1700 and 1800. As a comedy of the Restoration period of British drama, the humor in The Beggar's Opera serves as a medium for carrying the author's meaning - social satire - which is applicable in all countries at all times. Moreover, the basis of the play's success rests on three factors: its artistic merit; its originality (this is in part measured by the number of later dramas which clearly display the influence of its innovations); and its pervasive humor. This Bright Notes Study Guide explores the context and history of Gay's classic work, helping students to thoroughly explore the reasons it has stood the literary test of time. Each Bright Notes Study Guide contains:
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Life and Letters of John Gay

John Gay's the Beggar's Opera

Music Book

An Opera. Being the Second Part of The Beggar's Opera. Written by Mr. Gay

the beggar's opera

The Music of John Gay's The Beggar's Opera

With The Beggar's Opera (1728), Gay invented the ballad opera. It is here published for the first time with its sequel, Polly, in which Macheath and Polly Peachum are transplanted to the West Indies. Together the plays offer a scathing and ebullient portrait of a society in which statesmen and outlaws are impossible to tell apart.

A harsh satire of Eighteenth Century London life, John Gay's The Beggar's Opera is a piece well known by students of literature and music. Gay's composition spawned a new genre of musical works called "ballad opera" whose popularity rapidly caused the decline of Italian opera in London. These well-received ballad operas dominated London's musical theatre from 1728 until the middle of the Eighteenth Century. No other author has looked beyond The Beggar's Opera to analyze the plots of any of these imitative works and their music. The book concentrates on these 'children', or descendants. The author describes a number of ballad operas which proliferated on the heels of the success of The Beggar's Opera. Ballad opera gradually matured into a pastoral, bucolic form (comic opera) and eventually into a highly sophisticated type of musical work (buletta). Several samples of each type of work chosen from the performances most frequently given in London are discussed in depth. These analyses include musical examples from the original scores and evaluations of the dramatic and musical aspects of each work. With the exception of The Beggar's Opera, none of these works or similar ones has previously been the subject of detailed analysis and evaluation. "How John Gay Changed the Course of England's Musical Theatre" sheds fresh light on the less familiar ballad operas of the Eighteenth Century. Gay's The Beggar's Opera created such a demand for musical satire that original music began to be composed for English comic works. ...Edmund Miller, Chairman of the English Department, C. W. Post Campus of Long Island University This is an engaging and unique look at a piece of operatic history out of the mainstream. It invites the reader to explore works that he may not know, along with the milieu in which these musical gems became popular. ...Kathryn Smith, General Director, Tacoma Opera Dr. Atkins provides an insightful study of Eighteenth Century ballad opera ranging from John Gay's The Beggar's Opera with its political satire and burlesque of Italian opera to the comic operas and burlettas which rounded out the century. This highly readable exposition includes examples of the tuneful airs, and explains the plots of the most popular works of the period. It will delight both musical and literary scholars. ...Patricia Azar, Associate Editor, Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton Madeline Atkins has given us a thorough and intelligent study of Eighteenth Century popular English musical theater, and the seminal role of The Beggar's Opera in its development. With the inclusion of numerous musical examples, abundant historical details, and deft, clear analyses, this book is an excellent introduction to a delightful musical genre and period. Atkins successfully accomplishes both of her aims: she informs us about an overlooked yet important era of musical history and she convinces us to want to hear it again for ourselves, and she does it artfully and skillfully. ...Barry Sherman, Associate Professor of Communications, St. John's University

Plays Written by Mr. John Gay

The Beggar's Opera, as Written by John Gay, Distinguishing Also the Variations of the Theatre, as Performed at the Theatre-royal in Drury-Lane...

adaptations and re-writings

The Beggar's Opera. By John Gay. As Performed at the Theatre-Royal Drury-Lane. Regulated from the Prompt-book, by Permission of the Managers ...

A Ballad-opera by John Gay (1728) in a New Musical Version Realised from the Original Airs : Op. 43

A Comic Opera. By John Gay. Adapted for Theatrical Representation, as Performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane. Regulated from the Prompt-book, ...

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The Poetical Works of John Gay

Study Guide to The Beggar's Opera by John Gay

The beggar's opera, as written by john gay

Die Bettler- Oper : A Ballard-Opera by John Gay

Containing John Gay and the ballad opera (The Beggar's Opera). 91h

A Ballad Opera in Three Acts

How is this book unique? Font adjustments & biography included Unabridged (100% Original content) Illustrated About The Beggar's Opera by John Gay The Beggar's Opera is a ballad opera in three acts written in 1728 by John Gay. It is one of the watershed plays in Augustan drama and is the only example of the once thriving genre of satirical ballad opera to remain popular today. Ballad operas were satiric musical plays that used some of the conventions of opera, but without recitative. The lyrics of the airs in the piece are set to popular broadsheet ballads, opera arias, church hymns and folk tunes of the time. The Beggar's Opera premiered at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre on 29 January 1728 and ran for 62 consecutive performances, the longest run in theatr history up to that time (after 146 performances of Robert Cambert's Pomone in Paris in 1671). The work became Gay's greatest success and has been played ever since; it has been called "the most popular play of the eighteenth century." In 1920, The Beggar's Opera began an astonishing revival run of 1,463 performances at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith, London, which was one of the longest runs in history for any piece of musical theatre at that time.

Mr. and Mrs. Peachum are horrified when they learn of their daughter Polly's secret marriage to the rebellious and notorious highwayman, Macheath. However, their fear is soon mitigated when they decide to kill him for his money. When Macheath is in the tavern, surrounded by women of 'ill repute', he discovers that he has been rumbled: two of these women are in cahoots with the Peachums and plan to kill him. He finds himself in Newgate and, worse than that, in the company of the jailer's daughter, Lucy, to whom he is also betrothed. Although Macheath is captured and destined to be hanged, Gay's action-packed and entertaining play subverts audience expectations by letting Macheath off the hook and not punishing its villains. John Gay's satirical opera, written in 1728, was revolutionary because it took poverty and corruption as its subject, and paupers and villains as its characters. The lyrics were set to famous songs of the day making it hugely popular with audiences and a radical departure from traditional opera. The introduction puts the play in its historical and theatrical contexts and details its stage history in modern times too. David Lindley is an expert on theatrical music and the new dramatic form of ballad opera this play created. The music for the songs is included in the text, making this an edition to be used for performance as well as for study.

John Gay

The Villains' Opera

Including 'Polly,' 'The Beggar's Opera' and Selections from the Other Dramatic Work

John Gay and the London Theatre

a Ballad-Opera, by J. Gay, . . . New Musical Version. . . by B. Britten

Devonshire courtship [by M. Palmer].

Under the cover of his South London pub, Peachum plies a successful trade in small-time scams. But his world is shattered when the charismatic villain, Macheath, not only plans to marry his daughter, Polly, but to move into dangerous levels of criminal activity. In Nick Dear's contemporary version of Gay's The Beggar's Opera, we are shown a modern London teeming with petty thieves, gangland hoods, corrupt politicians and bent coppers.

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The Beggar's Opera and Polly

The Life of John Gay, Author of the Beggar's Opera, &c. [The Author's Dedication Signed: E. C., I.e. Edmund Curll.]

Gale Researcher Guide for: John Gay and The Beggar's Opera

And Other Eighteenth-century Plays

How John Gay Changed The Course Of England's Musical Theatre

Author of the Beggar's Opera

Gale Researcher Guide for: John Gay and The Beggar's Opera is selected from Gale's academic platform Gale Researcher. These study guides provide peer-reviewed articles that allow students early success in finding scholarly materials and to gain the confidence and vocabulary needed to pursue deeper research.

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The beggar's opera

a ballad-opera by John Gay (1728)

The Beggar's Opera [by] John Gay

John Gay and the Ballad Opera

The Beggar's Opera. By John Gay. As it is Now Performed at the Theatres Royal

The Beggar's Opera, by John Gay