

ARTS

MTG production gives more than three pennyworth

THE THREEPENNY OPERA
 Written by Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill.
 MIT Musical Theatre Guild.
 Kresge Little Theatre,
 September 4,5,6,10,11 & 12 at 8pm.

By JONATHAN RICHMOND

MITG's "Threepenny Opera" is a winner. The music is terrific, singing above par and acting energetic. Several MIT students, moreover, are counted among the lead performers, and they do a professional job.



The Peachums are not exactly the nicest people — they rent out licenses-to-beg to London's unfortunates in return for "protection," but then Mac—the knife—Heath, chief rogue of all territory within the sound of Bow Bells is, even less savoury. When he falls for the Peachums' daughter, Polly, we have a plot.

In MTG's production, the two arch-baddies are deliciously nasty. Erik Schwartz '86 played Macheath and stole the show. His Macheath is a dark character, sinister thought and through. His self-confidence is assured, singing incisive and strongly-projected. Schwartz gave Macheath the image of a loner, but not of an individual who would care about loneliness, so long as his more basic desires were satisfied.

At the same time, though, this Macheath was effective in relationships, convincing others to do as he willed. His dealings with the insecure and confused Tiger Brown — wittily played by F. Burris Jackes '90 — were very entertaining.

While Macheath is a clean-cut baddie, David Magill made Peachum a rogue of the nasty-icky variety, oozing grease and guile.

With Michael Elkins '88 as the nebbishy Filch (whom Peachum's strongmen have just beaten up for begging without a license), the opening scene was hilarious, Peachum playing stern schoolmaster to his unwilling but obedient apprentice-in-beggary.

Lydia Bielski played Mrs. Peachum, a calculating, irredeemably wicked complement to her husband. I loved the matter-of-fact way she instructs her daughter Polly to "change your clothes: you're husband's going to be hanged."

Leslie G. Melcer '88 provided some of the finest singing, coming closest of all the cast to mastering the Brecht/Weill idiom. Her pungent "Solomon's Song" was exciting listening.

Linda Dulany, as Polly Peachum, showed vocal flexibility too. She was a convincing actress also, equally at home being stubborn with Polly's parents as under the manipulative glance of the lecherous Macheath.

Macheath's gang — Matt, Jake, Saw and Dreary — was a trifle on the innocent side, but provided a bundle of laughs. His "ladies," on the other hand, were beautifully sleazy, not forgetting a nice touch of humor.

James Lopata's direction was generally adept and observant, but there were passages that lagged and which would have benefitted from a swifter pace. Perhaps

they will have been tightened up by this weekend. Deepto Chakrabarty '88, on the other hand, never let his band lose sparkle, drawing virtuosity and drive from his talented and imaginative collection of musicians. The music set the stage, filling out the parts of each of the characters.

The quality of both singing and musicianship apparent in this production suggests that MTG should consider staging a real opera. They have the potential to do a good job on one of the comic Mozarts. For the time being, though, you're invited to take a trip to Kresge Little Theatre tonight or tomorrow: you'll get much more than three pennyworth in return.

His piano is his forte: inspired chamber music at MIT

MUSIC AT MIT
 Concert by Philip Hsu,
 Nehemiah Richardson and
 Patrick Yacono.
 Kresge Auditorium.
 September 5.

By JONATHAN RICHMOND

THOSE NOT IN THE KNOW would be advised to quickly learn that the many chamber concerts distributed in the spatial and temporal nooks and crannies of MIT provide one of the most effective sources of mental relaxation and spiritual refreshment to be found at the Institute. The concerts and generally small-scale and intimate; and, they are almost invariably of great musical interest.

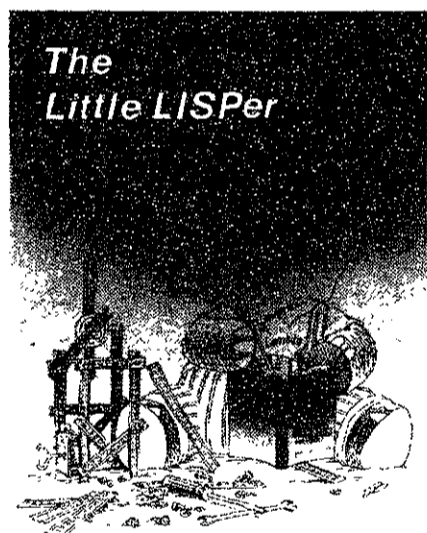
Such was the recital provided by violinist Philip Hsu '87, cellist Nehemiah Richardson '90 and pianist Patrick Yacono '85 in Kresge Auditorium last Saturday evening.

They began with Beethoven's *Trio No. 1*, Op. 70, the "Ghost." Yacono's melting piano part quickly captured and gently massaged the imagination during

the first movement. Richardson's cello anchored the *Largo assai ed espressivo*, its opening melody grabbing the attention through its simple beauty. The piano here was briefly perhaps a little too strident: *piano* appears to be Yacono's forte. But there were more than enough soft passages to be enjoyed, and combining with Richardson's extraordinarily pure, silky *legato* and consummated in Hsu's pivotal violin, they were done to great effect.

Tensions were carefully developed and traded off; there was the air of the mysterious, of the adventurous, and of three players each intent on leaving his mark on the piece while being bound organically into a cohesive, life-breathing ensemble.

The evening ended with Tchaikovsky's *Trio*, Op. 50. This is a challenging work, but the trio kept up their stamina through the elaborate set of variations that makes up the second movement, with only momentary lapses of energy. There was much variety to be enjoyed, from poetic lyricism to the spark of drama that brought the work to a close. Look out for the next chamber concert on offer at MIT: it will brighten your day.



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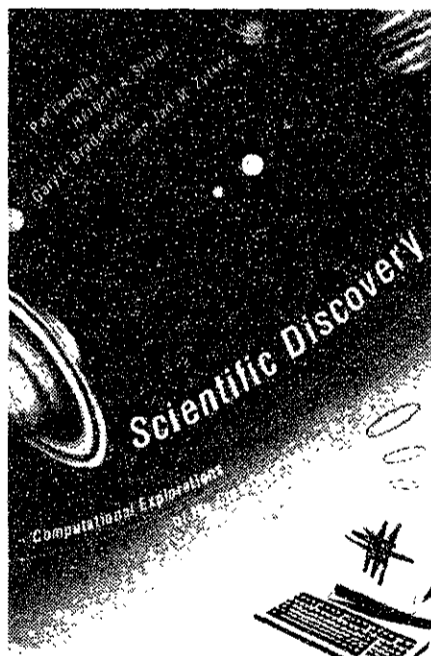
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