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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## Die Dreigroschenoper at Theater Bonn

Theater Bonn, 22.06.2025 [ENA]

The current production of *Die Dreigroschenoper* at Theater Bonn offers a fresh yet faithful interpretation of Brecht and Weill's classic, staged in the Opernhaus Bonn through July. With a singular, ensemble-driven approach, it explores the intersecting worlds of crime and bourgeois hypocrisy without resorting to overt modern parallels. The production retains the story's originals—set in its historical London milieu—eschewing modern adaptations in favor of timeless resonance.

A touring troupe within the narrative frames the action, lending a meta-theatrical dimension that punctuates events without overwhelming them. The scaffolding-heavy set fosters fluid actor movement and encourages visual engagement, though occasionally scenes lean toward static “parked” delivery amid a richly detailed environment. This directorial path highlights the text's structural clarity and social critique, avoiding overt didacticism. While the pacing in some secondary scenes in the second act appears slightly subdued, the staging consistently supports the musical and dramatic tension of key moments.

The cast's strong theatrical instincts emerge through a unified ensemble of singing actors. The lead as a street-wise criminal delivers a character full of charm and moral ambiguity—his portrayal draws on charisma and slight menace, creating a layered figure. The sentimental daughter and her steadfast father bring nuanced counterpoints: tenderness, distrust, and paternal authority, respectively. An underground chanteuse adds emotional depth with a richly textured presence in her scenes.

Supporting roles—the police chief, his daughter, and other figures—are portrayed with clarity and conviction.

A notable feature is the integration of a compact musical ensemble: the resident Beethoven Orchestra Bonn is complemented by a pit-band comprising voices from within the cast. This choice reinforces Brecht's idea of accessible, popular theater and delivers stylistically varied renditions—jazz-inflected, blues-tinged, and dance-hall energized.

Musical direction is precise and enthusiastic, propelling the score's rhythmic vivacity. Songs like the famous “Moritat” and ensemble numbers emerge organically, reinforcing their function within the drama rather than dominating it.

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Scenic and costume design employ a restrained, yet evocative palette—grayed urban textures and period-appropriate garb blend seamlessly. Lighting accentuates mood shifts and anchors key scenes without excessive spectacle.

The multi-level framework allows dynamic movement: chase sequences, clandestine meetings, and spontaneous solidarities find natural expression in this live set. As the production evolves from central London streets to backroom deals, the environment adapts subtly yet effectively.

The production zeroes in on the corrupting parallels between legitimate power and criminal enterprise. The proclamation, “What’s a bank robbery compared to founding a bank?” underscores this theme, highlighting ironic universality. The company’s decision to situate the drama in its original context permits timeless examination of class, commerce, and moral compromise, without temporal clutter. The carnival-like atmosphere is present—but tempered by moral ambiguity. Law enforcement and crime co-exist, driven by self-interest rather than clear ethics. Structural storytelling—such as the embedded performance within the narrative—maintains Brechtian layers, inviting reflection on theatricality and manipulation.

This staging of Die Dreigroschenoper succeeds as a thoughtful, theatrically vibrant interpretation. It maintains Brecht and Weill’s satirical core and musical vitality, presented through coherent storytelling, engaging performances, and effective design. Its focus on the timeless cynicism of economic power—and the fine line between capitalist enterprise and criminal schemes—retains relevance without overreaching for novelty. This staging of Die Dreigroschenoper at Theater Bonn is a considered, well-crafted interpretation of a classic piece of political theatre. It offers a Musil-like precision—neither forcedly modern nor nostalgically dated—letting the Brecht–Weill text speak with renewed force.

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