

The dances in *The Beggar's Opera*

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This paper presents musical, textual and contextual information on the three dances *The Beggar's Opera*. I embarked on the project hoping that the evidence would provide a basis for historically informed reconstructions of the dances, but it has to be said that more questions have been raised than answered. I am extremely grateful to Anne Daye, Barbara Segal and Jennifer Thorp for choreographic information. Publication details of works and dances mentioned are given at the end.

The Beggar's Opera and its original production

The poet and playwright John Gay (1685–1732) conceived the *The Beggar's Opera* as an antithesis to the Italian operas which had taken pride of place in London's musical theatre since the staging of Handel's *Rinaldo* in 1711. The title itself satirises Italian opera. It has been pointed out that the expression 'Beggar's Opera' is an oxymoron – beggars can have nothing to do with the subject matter, performance or audiences for such an expensive form of entertainment. In the work itself, Gay replaced the recitatives of Italian opera with spoken dialogue in English, and instead of lengthy arias, had 69 short songs set to familiar tunes. Rather than choosing as chief protagonist a heroic figure from the past such as Julius Caesar, he substituted a womanising criminal, the highwayman Captain Macheath.

The Beggar's Opera, a new type of show in England, was accepted for production by John Rich (c.1692–1761), the manager of the Theatre Royal at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Rich had developed another novel form of English musical theatre, the sung and danced pantomime put on as an afterpiece entertainment following a play. He was known, under the name Lun, for his Harlequin roles in the pantomimes he staged at Lincoln's Inn Fields. *The Beggar's Opera* opened on 29 January 1728. It broke theatrical records by running for 62 nights without a break.

The context of the dances within the plot

The opera is introduced by a conversation between a beggar who has written the piece, and a player who has agreed to stage it. There are two main threads to the story that follows: Macheath's relationships with Polly Peachum and Lucy Lockit on the one hand, and his arrest and imprisonment by their respective fathers on the other. In the first act, Polly's parents learn that their daughter has secretly married Macheath. Although Peachum is a criminal, he does not want his daughter marrying one, and so he plans to have Macheath arrested. In Act II, Macheath is in a tavern, where he orders the porter to bring him eight 'free-hearted ladies'. One of them, Jenny Diver, is to betray him to Peachum, but before she does so, Macheath orders a dance for the assembled company. His arrest follows shortly after, and in jail he finds himself beset by the jailer Lockit's daughter Lucy. She is pregnant by him. Macheath agrees to marry her and she helps him to escape from jail. Act III sees Macheath re-arrested, and we come to the scene painted several times by William Hogarth, in which Polly and Lucy, both married to Macheath, plead in Newgate Jail with their respective fathers for his release. But Macheath is taken off to the Old Bailey for trial, and it is at that point that the second dance takes place, of prisoners in chains. The dance is followed by Macheath on his own, now in the condemned cell. Polly and Lucy enter for a farewell song

before he is hanged. The song ends, and the jailer promptly announces ‘Four Women more, Captain, with a Child a-piece!’ To which Macheath replies ‘What – four Wives more! – This is too much. – Here – tell the Sheriffs Officers I am ready.’ The player who introduced the show then halts the performance. He tells the beggar that he cannot make the show end with Macheath’s execution, because ‘an Opera must end happily’ (a reference to the contrived happy endings of some Italian operas). The beggar replies ‘Your Objection, Sir, is very just; and is easily remov’d. For you must allow, that in this kind of Drama, ’tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about. – So – you Rabble there – run and cry a Reprieve – let the Prisoner be brought back to his Wives in Triumph’. We come then to the song and dance finale, initiated by the reprieved Macheath.

Although the dances are unevenly spaced – one in Act II, and two near the end of Act III – there is symmetry and variety in their relationship to each other, and to the plot. Dances one and three both take place when Macheath is a free man – the first occurs as he is about to lose his freedom, and the third when he has finally gained it. In between comes the dance that marks his trial. As a ‘Dance of Prisoners in Chains’, it may be said to symbolise his loss of freedom at that point. The first and third dances display Macheath with a number of women – the first dance, with prostitutes, celebrates sex without responsibility, the third, which includes four of his wives with children, demonstrates the outcome of that irresponsible behaviour, yet also, through the lyrics of the song, shows Macheath at last making a commitment: ‘Though willing to all; with but one he retires.’ The second dance appears to have been for men alone in the original production. The first and third dances involve singing within the same number; the second does not. There is variety in the choice of tunes and dances: French, English and Scottish tunes, and three dance types, Cotillon, Hornpipe and Country Dance.

The Cotillon (Example 1)

After flirtatious greetings to his ‘free-hearted ladies’ in Act II Scene IV, Macheath tells a harper who has just entered to ‘play the French tune, that Mrs. Slammekin was so fond of’. It seems reasonable to assume this is the tune titled ‘Cotillon’ that follows for the dance and song. The stage directions state ‘A Dance a la ronde in the French manner’ and then, ‘near the end of it this Song and Chorus’. The instruction raises a question: did the performers continue to dance while they sang? Jennifer Thorp and Ken Pierce, in their paper ‘Dance for Deities in Lully’s *Persée*’ give several examples of numbers in early 18th century revivals of that opera which include both dancing and singing, but it seems impossible to reach a firm conclusion as to whether the two activities ever took place simultaneously, or were executed by the same performers.

The general opinion of dance and music historians, from Philip Richardson in 1960 to the entry in the 2001 edition of *New Grove*, is that this particular cotillon was the source of the name for the popular 18th century social dance. ‘Cotillon’ is an obsolete French word for petticoat, and ‘courir le cotillon’ an obsolete expression for ‘to flirt with the girls’. The tune was apparently much used in French *comédies en vaudeville*, and was known by the title ‘Ma commère quand je danse.’ That lyric continues ‘Mon cotillon va-t-il bien?’ The two lines translate roughly as ‘My gossip friend, does my petticoat look good when I dance?’ Gay had visited Paris twice, and it has been proposed that the use of familiar tunes in *comédies en vaudeville* gave him the idea for a similar procedure in *The Beggar’s Opera*. Gay may well have chosen a tune associated with the word ‘Cotillon’ for a dance of prostitutes be-

cause of the word's meaning. In his lyrics for *The Beggar's Opera*, Gay sometimes alludes to previous titles and lyrics for the tunes that he used. An example comes in Macheath's song before the cotillon, which he sings while waiting for the ladies to arrive at the tavern. Gay's lyric for Macheath begins 'If the heart of a man is depressed with cares, The mist is dispell'd when a woman appears; Like the notes of a fiddle, she sweetly, sweetly raises the spirits, and charms our ears'. Gay had used a tune that had originally been written by Thomas D'Urfey. The latter wrote the original words too, and they begin 'Would you have a young Virgin of fifteen years, You must tickle her Fancy with sweets and dears, Ever toying, and playing, and sweetly, sweetly, Sing a Love Sonnet, and charm her Ears'.

I have found two contemporary country dances choreographed to the tune. The first is from Vol. III of *The Dancing Master*, published c.1728. There, a slight variant of the tune is called 'Toney's Rant'. The second comes from *Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1732*. There the tune is printed almost exactly as it is in the first and second editions of *The Beggar's Opera* and it has the title 'Cotillon' too. A French dance to the same tune and title (subtitled a branle) comes in Feuillet's *4e Recueil de danses de Bal pour l'année 1706* (Paris 1705). At first sight, one might assume that the expression 'Dance a la ronde' in *The Beggar's Opera* implies a round or circle dance, but in this choreography one may apply the term to the structure of the dance, which is akin to a rondo in music. The tune (in AA|BA form) is repeated a number of times; whenever the opening section (AA) comes back, it has a new choreography, but the BA part of the tune acts as a refrain in dance terms, and is always danced to the same choreography. So it is possible that the dance for the cotillon in *The Beggar's Opera* may have followed the structure, if not the detail, of the Feuillet cotillon. One problem in using almost any existing choreography as a basis for the dance is the gender imbalance and uneven number of participants: one man dances with eight women, making nine in all (although one may not conclude with certainty from Macheath's question 'E'er you seat yourselves, Ladies, what think you of a Dance?' that he actually dances with them). A rare example of a dance for nine (a minuet) comes in Pemberton's *Collection of Figure Dances, of Several Numbers* (1711). All the dancers are female, but the opening set-up of the dance might be adapted to *The Beggar's Opera*. Four face three, while between them the remaining pair dance (Macheath and one lady?).

The 'Dance of Prisoners in Chains, &c.' (Example 2)

The dance comes at the end of Act III Scene XII, following the stage direction 'Exeunt' for Polly and Lucy. No music is given for the dance in any of the early editions, but Roger Fiske noticed that in Gay's third ballad opera *Achilles*, the tune for Air 34 is titled 'Beggars Opera. Hornpipe'. That title alone might not be quite enough to nail it as the tune for the Dance of Prisoners in Chains, but in 1769 an edition of the music for *The Beggar's Opera* was published with a new hornpipe by Arne included at that point in the show. Various editions of the text throughout the 18th century indicate the dance as for prisoners in chains, and in the early 19th century for prisoners in fetters, but it seems a hornpipe also accompanied a solo dance in at least one production of the show. In 1759 the dancer Nancy Dawson achieved overnight fame when she replaced an ill male dancer, Mr Miles, in the hornpipe from a revival of *The Beggar's Opera*. That was at Covent Garden, the theatre built by John Rich from the proceeds of *The Beggar's Opera*. He was still the manager there in 1759. It is not known who composed the original hornpipe, though Fiske assumes that it was Pepusch, the composer of the overture and of the basses for the tunes in *The Beggar's Opera*. Another

tune with a title that relates to the scene occurs in Walsh's *The Third Book of the Most Celebrated Jiggs* ... (1730); it is called 'Polly Peachum's Hornpipe'. It may be that the composer was just exploiting a familiar name from a popular show, or, possibly, the title indicates that the tradition of a solo hornpipe in *The Beggar's Opera* dates back to the original production or an early revival. Note that the stage direction in the first three editions states 'A Dance of Prisoners in chains, &c.' What might the '&c.' signify?

A theatrical scene which may have given Gay the idea for the dance came in John Thurmond's unsuccessful pantomime *Harlequin Sheppard*, which had been put on at Drury Lane, the rival theatre to John Rich's Lincoln's Inn Fields, in November 1724. The pantomime was based on the exploits of a real life burglar Jack Sheppard, who had achieved notoriety through escaping four times from Newgate. It was staged a fortnight after his eventual execution, and a libretto was published. The third scene of the show is set in the street, between Newgate and the Old Bailey. The libretto simply reads: 'Several Prisoners pass over the Stage with the Keepers of Newgate'. We are told that they are on their way to the Old Bailey to stand trial, so they would of course have been chained to prevent escape, and, this being a pantomime, would have been moving to music. Incidentally, there is also a scene in the same pantomime which foreshadows in some respects the context for the cotillon dance in *The Beggar's Opera*. It takes place in a tavern, just before Sheppard's arrest, and is danced by Sheppard and his partner Frisky Moll. The subtitle to *Harlequin Sheppard*, 'A Night Scene in Grotesque Characters', corroborates opinions that both the cotillon and the prisoners' dance should have a grotesque character.

Despite the one-line stage direction on the page for the prisoners' dance in *The Beggar's Opera* and the lack of any music in the score, the dance must have created a real break between Macheath's departure from Newgate to stand trial at the Old Bailey and his next appearance in the condemned hold.

The dance finale (Example 3)

The music is similar, but not identical, to that printed in *The Dancing Master*, from the 11th edition of 1701 onwards, for the country dance of the same title, 'Lumps of Pudding'. The version in *The Dancing Master* consists of an 8 bar theme and two variations. In *The Beggar's Opera* the initial theme is sung; there is then an instrumental interlude to the second of the *Dancing Master* variations; a further sung section, to the first of the *Dancing Master* variations; another instrumental interlude to a variation not in *The Dancing Master*; and finally a sung section, with chorus, to the variation used for the second sung section (each section is 8 bars long). The alternation between sung and instrumental sections raises questions. Did the cast dance throughout the number, or only when not singing? It is hard to sing the wordy lyrics at a 2 steps-to-a-bar country dance tempo, so, assuming that the instrumental sections at any rate were danced, then either the dance had a more complex step pattern, or the tempo varied between the sung and instrumental sections. One might also ask if the cast danced in the number at all. The first three editions of *The Beggar's Opera* follow Macheath's final remark and the stage direction 'To Polly' with 'A DANCE', and then the title 'AIR LXIX, Lumps of Pudding, &c.' above the lyrics of the song. Perhaps a dance came first, and then the final song. It seems unlikely though that the cast would have stood doing nothing in the instrumental sections of the song.

Could the choreography in *The Dancing Master* to 'Lumps of Pudding', which includes hands and sides clapping, have been adapted to the musical routine in the finale of *The*

Beggar's Opera, and if so, how many strains of melody would have been played? The music as printed, even with an introduction, makes a short and abrupt finale. A clue to what may have taken place comes in a description of London's opera scene by a visiting Frenchman in 1728. Most of M. Fougereux's description relates to Italian opera in London, but he concludes with a short account of *The Beggar's Opera*. What follows is an English translation.

... it is about a band of highwaymen with their Captain; there were only two good actors, and a girl called Fenton who was quite pretty. The orchestra is as bad as the other [Drury Lane]. It is all ballads and worthless music. People were insisting that the librettist had made references to the present government. They drink all the time, they smoke, and the Captain with eight women who keep him company in prison kisses them a great deal. They were going to hang him in the fifth act, but with money he manages to save himself from the gallows. The opera finishes with that. I would bore you if I told you about the country dances at the end (Je vous ennuyerois de vous parler des contredanses de la fin).

There are inaccuracies in that account of the plot, but if one takes the writer at his word, it seems that the show ended with more than one country dance. Note that '&c.' follows the title 'Lumps of Pudding', as it did with the 'Dance of Prisoners in Chains'.

Knowing that country dances with names of recently staged plays and operas are often to be found in editions of *The Dancing Master*, I wondered if a trawl through country dance books published in the years immediately following *The Beggar's Opera* might yield titles that one could relate to the show, and which therefore might have been danced as part of the finale. My search has not been particularly fruitful. I looked through the titles in Walsh's collections of country dances for the years 1730, 1731 and 1732, and discovered nothing except the cotillon already discussed. In Walsh's *The New Country Dancing Master*, 3rd book, first announced in December 1728, there is a dance called 'Lillys and Roses'. This is a phrase which occurs as 'Roses and Lilies' in Macheath's song about women that I quoted from Act II. Another dance, with the title 'South Sea', has the tune of a song in *The Beggar's Opera*, and another has the title 'Pretty Polly', which are Macheath's first words sung to Polly in Act I (the tune of the country dance is unrelated to Macheath's song).

Who took part in the dance? Going back to Scene XV we see that Macheath, Lucy and Polly are on stage until the jailor announces 'Four Women more, Captain, with a Child apiece!' Are the 'children' babes in arms, or are they old enough to walk and therefore dance? The concluding stage direction for Scene XV reads 'Exit Macheath guarded.' Then at the start of Scene XVI we have 'To them, enter Player and Beggar', and at the start of Scene XVII, 'To them Macheath with rabble, &c.' For the final dance we may therefore have on stage: as men, Macheath, Player, Beggar, Male rabble, and '&c'; and as women, Lucy, Polly, 4 women, Female rabble, and '&c'; plus perhaps four children of indeterminate gender.

Macheath says 'I am sure she who thinks her self my wife will testifie her joy by a dance'. He then presents a partner to each of them (who are those partners?), but takes Polly as his own: 'And for Life, you Slut, – for we were really marry'd. – As for the rest. – But at present keep your own Secret.' The position on the page of the concluding stage direction 'To Polly' makes it unclear if that final remark is directed at her or, as one might have assumed, at his other wives. From a modern perspective it appears that Gay's sense of bal-

ance and symmetry breaks down here, because Lucy has been rejected unequivocally, even if one assumes that Macheath presents her with a partner too. In editions of the text from the early 19th century, the stage direction ‘To Polly’, is replaced with ‘Lucy cries, and runs off, stage right’.

One factor that might have constricted dancing in the original production was the presence of an onstage audience, a feature of any successful production and portrayed in Hogarth’s sketch and paintings of *The Beggar’s Opera*. The theatre manager Tate Wilkinson wrote of the practice that ‘a performer on a popular night could not step his foot with safety, lest he should thereby hurt or offend, or be thrown down amongst scores of idle tipsey apprentices’. David Garrick’s first biographer Thomas Davies remarked how ‘the battle of Bosworth Field has been fought in a less space than that which is commonly allotted to a cock-match’ (it was Garrick who banned the practice). How could the cotillon or a country dance be performed under such conditions? Macheath’s concluding remark ‘But at present keep your own Secret’ might well be applied to the three dances in *The Beggar’s Opera*.

Notes and examples

Editions of *The Beggar’s Opera*

The first three editions all relate to the original production of 1728, yet differ in format from each other. The first edition was on sale by 14 February 1728, just over a fortnight after the opening night (29 January). The music (tunes only, with no vocal underlay) is printed separately from the text, at the end of the volume. The second edition was available by the beginning of April. Here the tunes (unaltered from the first edition) are placed in the text, above, but separately from, the lyrics to the songs. Pepusch’s overture to the opera is included in all but the first issue of this edition. The larger format third edition (quarto instead of octavo) appeared in 1729. The music for the songs (and the overture) are placed at the end of the volume, but the songs now have vocal underlay, and a bass line. All three editions were produced by the London printer John Watts.

As the 18th century progressed, the tradition arose of re-arranging and adapting both the music and text of *The Beggar’s Opera* to suit changing tastes. My own edition for Oxford University Press, *The Music of John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera* (1990), recreates the simple way in which the music was arranged during the first half century or so following its first performance. Scoring is mostly for unison violins and continuo; orchestral introductions anticipate the opening bars of the song, and codas repeat the concluding bars. Further details of these procedures and their background are given in the hardback version of my edition.

The most reliable modern edition of the text (based on the original first edition) is that by Peter Lewis (Edinburgh, 1973). Other good critical editions include those by Edgar V. Roberts (Nebraska, 1968) and John Fuller (Oxford, 1983). The latter comes in a two volume set of Gay’s dramatic works.

External sources for tunes and dance instructions that may have relevance to dances in *The Beggar’s Opera*

Raoul Auger Feuillet, *4e Recueil de danses de Bal pour l’année 1706*, Paris, 1705. See ‘Le Cotillon, Danse a quatre’, p. 149. Tune without bass; dance instructions (Feuillet notation) included.

- John Gay, *Achilles*, London, 1733. See Air 34, 'Beggar's Opera. Hornpipe'. Tune without bass; no dance instructions.
- E. Pemberton, *An Essay for the Further Improvement of Dancing: Being a Collection of Figure Dances, of Several Numbers, Compos'd by the Most Eminent Masters; Describ'd in Characters After the Newest Manner of Monsieur Feuillet*, London, 1711. See '[Minuet for Nine] By Mr. Couch' (no page numbers). Tune without bass; dance instructions (Feuillet notation) included.
- Henry Playford (publisher), *The Dancing Master*, 11th edition, London, 1701. See 'Lumps of Pudding', p. 251. Tune without bass; dance instructions included (Longways for as many as will).
- John Walsh (publisher), *The New Country Dancing Master*, 3rd book, London, 1728. See 'Pretty Polly', p. 77, 'Lillys and Roses', p. 142, 'South Sea', p. 148. Tunes without basses; dance instructions included.
- John Walsh (publisher), *The Third Book of the most Celebrated Jiggs, Lancashire Hornpipes, Scotch and Highland Lilts, Northern Frisks, Morris's and Cheshire Rounds, with Hornpipes the Bagpipe manner. To which is added the Black Joak, the White Joak, the Brown the Red and the Yellow Joaks. With variety of Whims and Fancies of diff'rent humour, fitted to the genius and use of Publick Performers*, London, 1730. See 'Polly Peachums Hornpipe', p. 5. Tune without bass; no dance instructions.
- John Walsh (publisher), *Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1732*, London, 1732. See 'Cotillon', p. 4. Tune without bass; dance instructions included (Longways for as many as will).
- John Young (publisher), *The Dancing Master*, Vol. III, London, c.1728. See 'Toney's Rant', p. 102. Tune without bass; dance instructions included (Longways for as many as will).

Other works mentioned and consulted

- Georgy Calmus (ed.), *Zwei Opern-Burlesken aus der Rokokozeit (Télémaque and The Beggar's Opera; the former work is a comédie en vaudeville that includes a version of the cotillon)*, Berlin, 1912.
- Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick*, London, 1808, as reprinted (pp. 381–2) in A. M. Nagler's *A Source Book in Theatrical History*, New York, 1959.
- Pierre-Jacques Fougereux, 'Voilage d'Angleterre', fifth letter, as reprinted (Appendix E, pp. 460–2) in Donald Burrows's *Handel*, Oxford, 1994.
- Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1973.
- The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, London, 2001.
- David Nokes, *John Gay: A Profession of Friendship*, Oxford, 1995.
- Philip J. S. Richardson, *The Social Dances of the 19th Century*, London, 1960.
- Jennifer Thorp and Ken Pierce, 'Dance for Deities in Lully's *Persée*', paper for the conference *Gods, Men, and Monsters* at New College, Oxford, 2–4 April 2001.
- John Thurmond, *Harlequin Sheppard. A Night Scene in Grotesque Characters*, London, 1724, reprinted as a facsimile (pp. 21–31) in J. V. Guerinet's and Rodney D. Jilg's *The Beggar's Opera*, Hamden, Connecticut, 1976.
- Tate Wilkinson, *Memoirs of His Own Life*, York, 1790, as reprinted (p. 377–81) in A. M. Nagler's *A Source Book in Theatrical History*, New York, 1959.

Examples

To save space, the following extracts from *The Beggar's Opera* are taken from the second edition (1728), which incorporates the music (tunes only) into the play text (see 'Editions of *The Beggar's Opera*' above).

28 The BEGGAR'S OPERA. ACT II.

*Preſs her,
Careſs her
With bliſſes,
Her kiſſes*

Diſſolve us in Pleaſure, and ſoft Repoſe.

I muſt have Women. There is nothing unbends the Mind like them. Money is not ſo ſtrong a Cordial for the Time. Drawer. — [*Enter Drawer.*] Is the Porter gone for all the Ladies, according to my directions?

Draw. I expect him back every Minute. But you know, Sir, you ſent him as far as *Hockley in the Hole*, for three of the Ladies, for one in *Vinegar Yard*, and for the reſt of them ſomewhere about *Lewkner's Lane*. Sure ſome of them are below, for I hear the Barr Bell. As they come I will ſhow them up. Coming, Coming.

S C E N E IV.

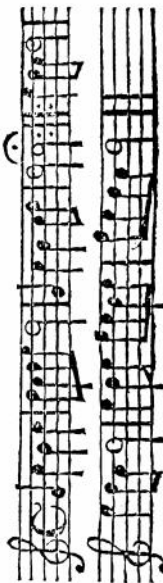
Macheath, Mrs. Coaxer, Dolly Trull, Mrs. Vixen, Betty Doxy, Jenny Diver, Mrs. Slammekin, Suky Tawdry, and Molly Brazen.

Mach. Dear Mrs. Coaxer, you are welcome. You look charmingly to-day. I hope you don't want the Repairs of Quality, and lay on Paint. — *Dolly Trull!* kiſs me, you Slut; are you as amorous as ever, Huffy? You are always ſo taken up with ſtealing Hearts, that you don't allow your ſelf Time to ſteal any thing elſe. — Ah *Dolly*, thou wilt ever be a Coquette! — Mrs. Vixen, I'm yours, I always lov'd a Woman of Wit and Spirit; they make charming Miſtreſſes, but plagny Wives. — *Betty Doxy!* Come hither, Huffy. Do you drink as hard as ever? You had better ſtick to good wholeſome Beer; for in troth, *Betty*, Strong-Waters will in time ruin your Conſtitution. You ſhould leave thoſe to your Betters. — What! and my pretty *Jenny Diver* too! As prim and demure as ever! There is not any Prude, though ever ſo high bred, hath a more fanctify'd Look, with a more miſchievous Heart. Ah! thou art a dear artful Hypocrite. — Mrs. Slammekin! as careleſs and genteel as ever! all you fine Ladies, who know your own Beauty, affect an Undreſs. — But ſee, here's *Suky Tawdry* come to contradict what I was ſaying. Every thing ſhe gets one way the lays out upon her Back. Why, *Suky*, you muſt keep at leaſt a dozen Tally-men. *Molly Brazen!* [*She kiſſes him.*] That's well done. I love

ACT II. The BEGGAR'S OPERA. 29

love a free-hearted Wench. Thou haſt a moſt agreeable Air-furance, Girl, and art as willing as a Turtle. — But haik! I hear muſick. The Harper is at the Door. *If Muſick be the Food of Love, play on.* E'er you feat your ſelves, Ladies, what think you of a Dance? Come in. [*Enter Harper.*] Play the French Tune, that Mrs. Slammekin was ſo fond of. [*A Dance a la ronde in the French Manner, near the End of it this Song and Chorus.*]

AIR XXII. Cotillon.



*Youth's the Season made for Jovs,
Love is then our Duty,
She alone who that employs,
Well deſerves her Beauty.*

Let's be gay,

While we may,

Beauty's a Flower, deſpis'd in decay.

Youth's the Season &c.

Let us drink and ſport to-day,

Ours is not to-morrow.

Love with Youth flies ſwiſt away,

Age is nought but Sorrow.

Dance and ſing,

Time's on the Wing,

Life never knows the return of Spring.

Chorus. Let us drink &c.

Mach. Now, pray Ladies, take your Places. Here Fellow, [*Pays the Harper.*] Bid the Drawer bring us more Wine.

[*Ex. Harper.*] If any of the Ladies chuſe Ginn, I hope they will be ſo free to call for it.

Jenny. You look as if you meant me. Wine is ſtrong enough for me. Indeed, Sir, I never drink Strong-Waters, but when I have the Cholick.

Mach. Juſt the Excute of the fine Ladies! Why, a Lady of Quality is never without the Cholick. I hope, Mrs. Coaxer, you have had good Succes of late in your Viſits among the Mer-

cers. E 3

Example 1. The 'Cotillon' dance and its context in Act II Scene IV

ACT III. The BEGGAR'S OPERA. 69

*Like poor petty Rascals, might hang, hang;
Like poor petty Rascals, might hang.*

Peach. Set your Heart at rest, *Polly*. — Your Husband is to dye to-day. — Therefore, if you are not already provided, 'tis high time to look about for another. There's Comfort for you, you Slut.

Lock. We are ready, Sir, to conduct you to the *Old Baily*.

A I R LVII. *Bonny Dundee.*

Musical score for 'Bonny Dundee' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is a simple, rhythmic tune.

Mach. The Charge is prepar'd; the Lawyers are met,

The Judges all rang'd (a terrible Show!)

I go, undismay'd. — For Death is a Debt,

A Debt on demand. — So, take what I owe.

Then farewell, my Love — Dear Charmer, adieu.

Contented I die — 'Tis the better for you.

Here ends all Dispute the rest of our Lives,

For this way at once I please all my Wives.

Now, Gentlemen, I am ready to attend you.

S C E N E XII.

Lucy, Polly, Filch.

Polly. Follow them, *Filch*, to the Court. And when the Trial is over, bring me a particular Account of his Behaviour, and of every thing that happen'd. — You'll find me here with Miss *Lucy*. [*Ex. Filch.*] But why is all this Musick?

Lucy. The Prisoners, whose Trials are put off till next Session, are diverting themselves.

Polly. Sure there is nothing so charming as Musick! I'm fond of it to distraction! — But alas! — now, all Mirth seems

70 The BEGGAR'S OPERA. ACT III.

seems an Insult upon my Affliction. — Let us retire, my dear *Lucy*, and indulge our Sorrows. — The noisy Crew you see, are coming upon us.

A Dance of Prisoners in Chains, &c.

S C E N E XIII.

The Condemn'd Hold.

Macheath, in a melancholy Posture.

A I R LVIII. *Happy Groves.*

Musical score for 'Happy Groves' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is a simple, rhythmic tune.

O cruel, cruel Case!

Must I suffer this Disgrace?

A I R LIX. Of all the Girls that are so smart.

Musical score for 'Of all the Girls that are so smart' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is a simple, rhythmic tune.

[Drinks.

A I R LX. *Britons strike home.*

Musical score for 'Britons strike home' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is a simple, rhythmic tune.

Since I must swing, — I scorn, I scorn to wince or wince. [Rites.

A I R LXI. *Chevy Chase.*

Musical score for 'Chevy Chase' in G major, 2/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is a simple, rhythmic tune.

But now again my Spirits sink;

I'll raise them high with Wine. [Drinks a Glass of Wine.

A I R

Example 2: The context for the stage direction 'A Dance of Prisoners in Chains, &c' at the end of Act III Scene XII

ACT III. The BEGGAR's OPERA. 75
 imitate the Gentlemen of the Road, or the Gentlemen of the Road the fine Gentlemen.— Had the Play remain'd, as I at first intended, it would have carried a most-excellent Moral: 'T would have shown that the lower Sort of People have their Vices in a degree as well as the Rich: And that they are punish'd for them,

SCENE XVII.

To them, Macheath with Rabble, &c.

Mach. So, it seems, I am not left to my Choice, but must have a Wife at last.— Look ye, my Dears, we will have no Controverſie now. Let us give this Day to Mirth, and I am ſure ſhe who thinks herſelf my Wife will teſtifie her Joy by a Dance.

All. Come, a Dance—a Dance.

Mach. Ladies, I hope you will give me leave to preſent a Partner to each of you. And (if I may without Offence) for this time, I take Polly for mine.— And for Life, you Slut, — for we were really marry'd.— As for the reſt.— but at preſent keep your own Secret. [To Polly.]

A DANCE.



AIR

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AIR LXIX. Lumps of Pudding, &c.

*Thus I ſtand like the Turk, with his Doxies around;
 From all Sides their Glances his Paſſion conſound;
 For black, brown, and fair, his Inconſtancy burns,
 And the different Beauties jubdae him by turns:
 Each calls forth her Charms, to provoke his Deſires:
 'Tough willing to all; with but one he retires.
 But think of this Maxim, and put off your Sorrow,
 The Hetch of To-day, may be happy To-morrow.
 CHORUS. But think of this Maxim, &c.*

F I N I S.

Example 3: The final dance and its context at the end of Act III Scene XVII