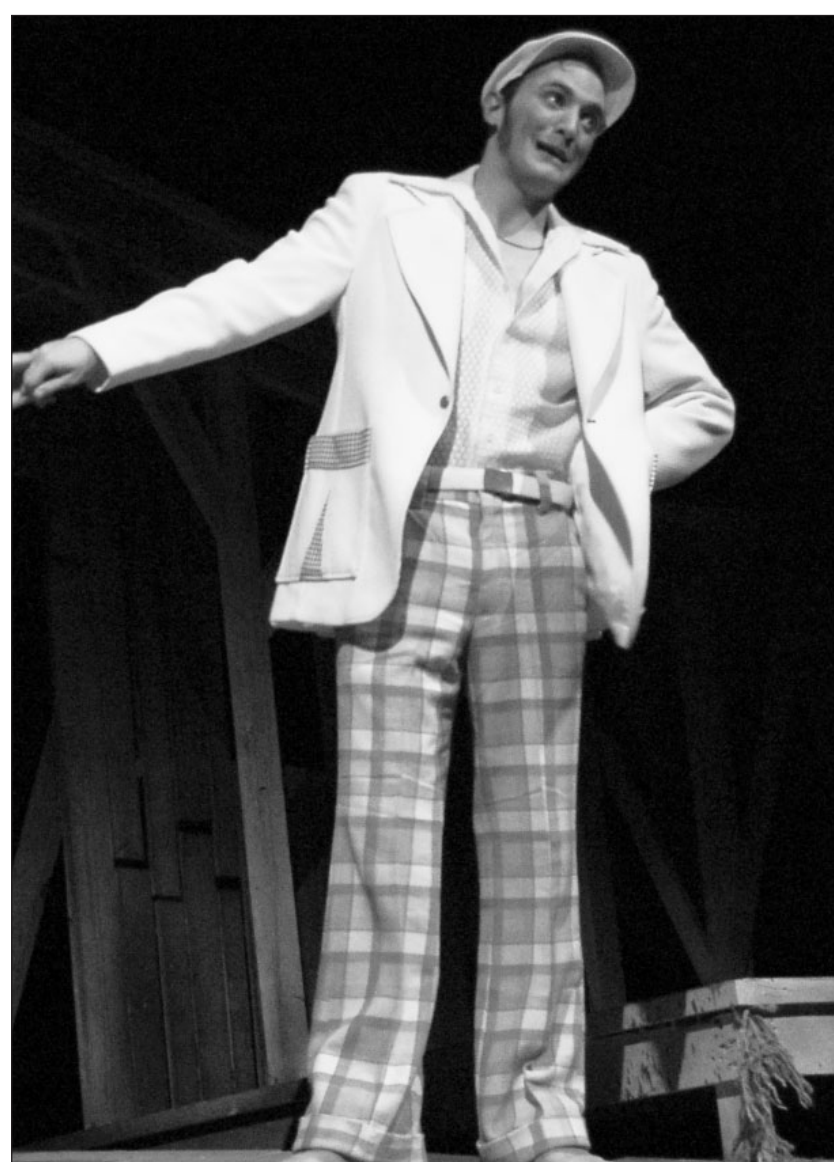


# Opera mixes bizarre with fun and music



Senior Jason Qualls plays preacher Mr. Peachum in "The Threepenny Opera." The supporting cast performed memorable numbers, including "Love Duet."

BY FRANKLIN CLINE  
Reviewer

The theatre department's choice to perform "The Threepenny Opera" was a good one — it's a strange, demented, cruel, offensive and fun musical. Although not as sexy as it tried to be, the University's production was amusingly tasteless.

"The Threepenny Opera" is a dirty play, featuring characters who live and revel in squalor, morally and otherwise. The characters exhibit an impressive lack of concern that rarely extends beyond themselves or their gang. This is best exemplified by MacHeath, a.k.a. Mack The Knife (Senior Clint Worthington), a thieving, raping, murdering leader of a gang in London. He's also the anti-hero, as the play centers on his fall from head honcho of the punks to an apologetic, whimpering shell of a man — think Richard Nixon (or Bush, in a perfect world). Although a talented actor, Worthington ultimately lacked the conniving, vicious charisma necessary to fit comfortably into the role.

Or perhaps his skills were overshadowed by the incredible dexterity of the supporting cast, who played off of one another with an intensity and unity rarely seen at a university production, despite the somewhat awkward, blocky choreography featured in the handful of company numbers.

Every member of the cast deserves accolades for his or her performance, but Senior Jason Qualls — who as perverted preacher Mr. Peachum squirmed around the stage in a '70s leisure suit, dropping Bible verses like turds — stole the spotlight every time he lurched onto the stage.

A strange play should be staged strangely, and Ron Rybkowski, scene and lighting designer, did a nice job capturing the destitution of "Threepenny" with a jagged wooden set featuring parallel stairways leading to a split arch.

The ugly and barren set was the first sign to the audience that this play was about gleefully relinquishing beauty and embracing the disconnect that only the hideous can provide.

Of course, a play about a bunch of disconnected characters is all well and good, but it must create a connection between the audience and the actors, and in that respect this production did not disappoint.

During "Love Duet," the (awkwardly un-sexily staged) song about sex between Mack and his latest bride/victim, Polly Peachum (Joanna Bess), the cast threw out condoms, which made the parade-like feel of the show all the more concrete.

Later on, MacHeath's run from the police took him through the crowd — almost every row, actually. Finally, audience members were given questions to shout out at various points. These little touches helped the production to exude its come-join-us-in-our-depravity feel that provided a welcome change from more serious (and therefore uninclusive) fare such as "Uncle Vanya."

Oh, and I haven't even touched on the fact that it was a full-blown musical, featuring 20 songs that ranged from high-tempo celebrations of thuggery to low-key ballads exploring what it means to love ("Pirate Song" and "Pirate Jenny," respectively).

The cast wailed its way through most of the numbers, especially the

more rockin' ones, and it was clear that Director Todd Coulter, who also worked as vocal coach, stressed the importance of energy and enthusiasm over hitting the "right note," per se. It sounds awful on paper, but it worked, and was more fitting anyway — it helped make the play that much rougher, that much dirtier.

The only downside to the musical aspect of this musical was the lack of amplification — I was third row center and could barely hear some of the words on louder numbers and can only imagine how few words the people in the quasi-mezzanine could catch.

Despite its little flaws here and there, "The Threepenny Opera" was unlike anything I've seen from our theatre department. It was angrier and more energetic. Coulter and his cast successfully took an 80-year-old play and made it fresh and relevant. What more could you want from live theatre?

## Play Review

### "The Threepenny Opera"

Presented by the University's Theatre Department  
Written by Bertolt Brecht  
Directed by Todd Coulter

#### Rating



What's on your iPod?

Freshman  
**Amanda Rispoli**  
"No One"  
Alicia Keys

Junior  
**Rebecca Pollock**  
"Before Your Love"  
Kelly Clarkson

Junior  
**Ryan Dietz**  
"Dance with the Devil"  
Breaking Benjamin

Design by Andrea Bailey/Index

# Truman graduate publishes first novel 'Destiny's Wings'

BY MARK COUCH  
Reviewer

Truman alumna Linn Sullivan's debut novel, "Destiny's Wings," follows Sergei Krylova as he escapes a bank robbery along with his criminal life in New York in search of a fresh start. His fate takes him across the continent to the rural Midwest to begin an honest life.

The book begins in 1965, in the moments after a bank robbery as Thomas Brooks (Krylova's alias) stashes the stolen money in a location known only to him. Narrowly escaping arrest with the aid of a mysterious red-headed woman who misdirects pursuing police, Krylova takes the opportunity to begin a new life without crime.

After altering his appearance, Krylova hitches a ride with Jim Simmons, a trucker bound for Illinois, who offers him a job on a farm with a family in rural Illinois.

Troubles are not yet over for Krylova, as the hunt for Thomas Brooks intensifies. Apart from being wanted for his crimes, Krylova is the only person who holds key information that could put crime boss Vincent DeLuka behind bars.

While both the police and DeLuka's men search for Thomas Brooks, Krylova is already far away in rural Illinois beginning a new life, settling in with a family to help with farm work. When the family's daughter, Hannah, returns from college, she and Sergei begin to date, fall

## Book Review

### "Destiny's Wings"

by Linn Sullivan  
Publish America  
197 pages

Rating  
★★★★

in love and become engaged.

Krylova's secret past threatens to destroy his relationship with Hannah and her family, but his dedication to an honest life without crime redeems him.

As the plot progresses, we learn more about Krylova's rough past through flashbacks, revealing his history working for DeLuka in the bank heist and an elaborate jewelry store robbery. Krylova constantly is haunted by his past, worrying that the police or DeLuka will eventually find him, or that Hannah and her family will discover his true identity.

The final chapters skip ahead four decades to the present, where Sergei Krylova is now a grandfather, comfortably settled and no longer worried about his past crimes. He is visited again by the mysterious red-headed woman, Faith, who offers

him a chance to fully redeem himself for his past crimes. Krylova reveals the location of the long-lost, stolen money to an anonymous family in need.

After the missing money is found, Faith brings together Krylova and one of the FBI agents who worked on the case in Illinois to finally meet Thomas Brooks. With the money found and DeLuka dying, Krylova is no longer wanted, and the hunt for Thomas Brooks is officially closed.

Sullivan displays strength as a writer, sustaining suspense throughout the novel.

At times the plot hits a few

speed bumps, like part of a chapter devoted to Krylova and his wife Hannah buying a home. Parts like this

"Narrowly escaping arrest with the aid of a mysterious red-headed woman who misdirects pursuing police, Krylova takes the opportunity to begin a new life without crime."

seem to detract from the novel's main narrative, breaking off from the book's otherwise suspenseful plotline. However, the brief chapters maintain an interesting plot as this slim book develops.

Though far from perfect, "Destiny's Wings" remains suspenseful and interesting

throughout. Linn Sullivan makes a solid effort as a first-time novelist with "Destiny's Wings," with a combination of crime, love and a bit of the supernatural.

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