

**PRESS RELEASE**

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Contact: Ido Radon

[radon@societysocietysociety.com](mailto:radon@societysocietysociety.com)



**A Collective Reading of *The Threepenny Opera***

(Portland, OR)— SOCIETY is delighted to invite you to take part in a collective reading of *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. Organized by Ellena Basada and Avery Bloch, the reading will begin on Friday, January 2, 2026 at 6pm and continue until we reach the end.

This is a casual affair, this experience of amateur theater. Readers may rotate through characters frequently. Everybody who wants to read will have the opportunity. One need not read at all.

From Basada and Bloch:

*Weill claimed that “music cannot further the action of the play or create its background, but achieves its proper value when it interrupts the action at the right moments.”*

Similarly, the marathon reading will interrupt the action of our lives. The format of collective reading offers a durational space to encounter a text as amateurs, together.

The word amateur comes from Latin *amator* (lover) via French *amateur*, meaning "one who loves" or "admirer," stemming from *amare* (to love). English adopted it in the 18th century, initially meaning someone passionate for pleasure.

With this reading, perhaps Basada and Bloch also provide SOCIETY with a new motto derived from the Latin phrase with which John Gay opens *The Beggars Opera* (1728) on which *Threepenny* is based. "*Nos haec novimus esse nihil* (We know these things to be nothing)." And yet.

**Ellena Basada** is a Brooklyn-based writer and Axinn Fellow in Nonfiction at NYU. She works as an editor with Fonograf Editions. **Avery Bloch** is a filmmaker living in Brooklyn.

**SOCIETY** is a society for art, its discourses, and its histories. SOCIETY is supported by a Precipice Fund Grant from Portland Institute for Contemporary Art with lead support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

## **SOCIETY**

711 SE Grand Avenue  
Portland, OR, United States  
[society.society.society.com](http://society.society.society.com)  
@society.society.society

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