

BLACK CATS, BERLIN, BROADWAY AND BEYOND:  
THE GENRE OF CABARET

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

Music and Theatre have always captivated me. As a child, my parents would take me to live performances and cinematic shows and I would sit rapt, watching the theatrical events and emotional moments unfold before my eyes. Movie musicals and live shows that combined music and theatre were my favorite, especially theatrical banter and improvisation or sketch comedy. Some of my favorite youthful memories were my annual family summer trips to Las Vegas to visit my grandparents for six weeks. As a youngster, I got to experience the “old school” Las Vegas, replete with extravaganza, spectacle, cabaret, circus, lounge and nightclub acts, stand-up comedy, intimate revues, and all things marketed under the guise of entertainment, art, or both. Those summers, while not overtly planned as academic or educational in nature, proved, in retrospect, to be the training ground for what was to become my passion: the art of the cabaret genre.

As a person who has always loved theatrical diversity, I am drawn to cabaret as an art form. Anything that fuses other forms interests me, and cabaret amalgamates many of the artistic forms I have grown to love. I come from a unique background of classical, jazz, musical theatre and pop styles, and have studied these styles in both the piano and vocal arena. The cabaret genre allows me to realize fully the stylistic variety of performance techniques with which I excel. My mother is a classical singer and my father a jazz pianist; during my youth they would perform at the piano, “meeting in the middle” so to speak in the world of Musical Theatre, through the fusion of cabaret, classical, jazz, and pop. Growing up hearing a song like “Summertime,” from Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*, equally artistically rendered as both a classical aria and a jazz tune in my home was rich fodder for the vital informal education I received by being the offspring of musicians. It is due to this musical legacy that was passed on to me

through my parents that I learned to explore the myriad of possibilities one can achieve through artistic musical and theatrical interpretation.

Beyond the freedom of stylistic variety, cabaret performance also allows conventions such as direct interaction in the form of the proverbial “lowered fourth wall,” allowing me to use my improvisational acting and interactive skill set as well as my musical skills. Cabaret is generally more intimate and personal in nature and I enjoy the camaraderie cabaret affords. Cabaret is interactive and intellectual and I am drawn to those aspects; I like the fusion of interactive banter and intellectual artistry. Also appealing to me is the “insider” sense cabaret not only allows but also encourages. Recalling my youthful memories of the Vegas shows in which the performer spoke directly to audience members, I remember the sense of belonging I felt at the recognition of some of the inside jokes. I knew I wanted to be involved with any aspect of music and theatre that would allow me the freedom to go with the moment, to reach people differently on any given day, to change with the times, and adapt to my audience and to the shifting world around me. I knew I had found a home in this intimate, insular, interactive, and intellectual art form known as cabaret. For these reasons and more I have chosen the genre of cabaret to be my intended thesis research project. I will produce, direct, and perform in a cabaret show, which will be the thesis performance.

For the performance aspect of my thesis, in collaboration with my thesis partner, Josephine Leffner, I will perform a one-act chronological, historical, and stylistically varied cabaret show. The show will include material garnered from historical research of the cabaret genre, specifically settling on some of the famous women, songs, stories, lives, and important contributions. The cabaret will cover information, music, and spoken-word art from cabaret’s inception in the Paris Montmartre district in 1881 to its height in Germany during the Weimar

Republic. The show will culminate with cabaret's insurgence into American culture up to and including the state of American cabaret today. While my performance will focus mainly on American cabaret, a portion of the show will explore cabaret's European roots.

Creating and performing this show will educate me further on the genre itself, as well as expand my performing skills through the varied styles in which I will perform within the realm of a single evening's entertainment. Creating and performing the show will also challenge me as a producer, director, promotional and administrative coordinator, music director, arranger, vocal director, collaborator, vocalist, pianist, actor, and writer.

The show is intended as a kind of "Cabaret 101," in that the intended audience is treated to a night of variety entertainment with some historical background on the genre of cabaret. The audience is not expected to have any prior academic or experiential knowledge of cabaret in order to understand or enjoy the show. The cabaret intellectual will also be able to enjoy the show, as the songs, poems, skits, and sketches are intended to amuse and delight both the novice and the experienced cabaretist.

For the research and analysis portion of my thesis monograph document I will provide information on cabaret's roots in France and Germany, as well as include informative research on American cabaret, its history and its current trends. I will have several chapters dedicated to the historical research and to other items such as the formatted libretto, documentation of a performance report from my thesis committee head, and a list of references used throughout the research and libretto chapters. I will include a structural and role analysis of the show itself and my contributions to it as outlined by the parameters of my graduate studies program. Several chapters of appendices will be included as information pertinent to the show such as costume, props, lighting lists as well as band and technical needs for the show itself. An introduction and

conclusion will be created to bookend my document solidly and reveal myself as a person as well as a performer. This section will include reflective information on my intentions, triumphs, and tribulations, and will be codified through the opening and concluding perspectives.

Through the process of writing the thesis monograph document I will create a public and personal record of the process, research, performance challenges, and decisions made throughout this journey. This document will be used as historical help to me should I need to refer to my thesis for later personal or professional use. The document will also be on record for the UCF theatre department, as I apply not only my performance training (as exhibited through the show itself) but also the research and critical thinking skills required of a masters degree candidate at a conservatory training program such as this one. Beyond its use for myself or for the department, I write this monograph document for others whose love and interest in studying the genre of cabaret match my own.

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## INTRODUCTION

The word cabaret conjures different images for everyone. For Americans unfamiliar with its European roots, the word cabaret may conjure up nothing more than the thought of an upscale evening spent listening to a concert of the American Musical Theatre songbooks of old. Some may see images of a retrospective homage concert of Rodgers and Hart's music sung by an iconic (often female) performer of yesteryear. For the average American, words such as "lounge singer," "concert," "dinner theatre," or "nostalgia" come to mind when one brings to mind the image of American cabaret.

For those people familiar with the current trend of cabaret as home to Broadway up-and-comers or self-titled Broadway misfits (those talented but frustrated singers who are in search of their Broadway casting niche), an evening at the cabaret may conjure images of watching the journey of a soon-to-be-star. Using cabaret, these young singers market their way up the name recognition ladder. They use the genre as a stepping stone, a stool to try to reach the top, to be taken seriously, or to try to be heard over the din of all the other performers out there belting out their audition songs in the ears of anyone who will listen.

Still, there may be others who are aware of cabaret's European roots and realize the buzzwords of the original cabaret genre would read more like the words of America's spoken-word movements. Political and social satirists, comedians, and other artists that lampoon or comment on society are most closely related to cabaret's European roots. European cabaret aligns itself most keenly to American cabaret not through the lounge scene or the American Songbook Concerts, but through the Beat Generation, The Second City, Saturday Night Live, and stand-up comedy, sketch comedy, the avant-garde, and anything intellectual, insular,

intimate, and interactive. These are the true buzzwords of cabaret, though cabaret can also inhabit the concert, lounge, or other music and theatrical forms.

The genre itself is as elusive as it is tenacious and I have much respect for any entity that can call itself a survivor. The genre of cabaret certainly wears its survivor label proudly, as it redefines itself with each passing generation. Cabaret has always been the underdog in many ways; however, its members comprise a faction that has made marks on mainstream society from time to time, especially in the areas of social and political reform and ideological upheaval. The genre of cabaret is a haven and a creative outlet for those who consider themselves artistic rebels.

The genre of cabaret began in France in 1881 as an insular “members only” meeting of artists performing for other artists, commenting on life through the arts and poking fun at bourgeois life. As cabaret traveled to Germany it morphed into a more hedonistic, and less insular art form during the Weimar Era, culminating in the Nazi regime’s attempt at annihilation of the art form, which forced many great cabaretists to flee to the safety of other countries such as America. As cabaret was enveloped into American culture, it has taken traits from its European predecessors and amalgamated itself to survive in America amidst serious American cultural upheaval such as Prohibition, the Beat Generation, the Stonewall Riots, and the Gay Liberation Movement. The rise of indigenous Musical Theatre culture at the turn of the century distinctly parallels cabaret’s American existence. Cabaret morphed, attached, and reinvented itself, extrapolating itself from its European origins to stand strong alongside Musical Theatre’s growing popularity.

Cabaret has become not only an offshoot of the American Musical Theatre genre, but it parallels a wide variety of other genres as well, and, therefore, the genre itself is often extremely hard to define. Cabaret often aligns with other European and American art forms and movements

such as Avant-Garde, Performance Art, Music Hall, Vaudeville, Burlesque, Circus, Revue, Sketch, Improvisation, Pastiche, Experimental Jazz, Blues, Pop, Beatnik, Stand-up Comedy, and the list goes on. Throughout history, cabaret's normal state is an insular subculture of sorts, and one that is generally intellectual, intimate, and interactive in nature. Cabaret usually only surfaces and aligns with mainstream art during times of political and social unrest, making statements and shaking up the cultural norms, challenging ideologies, and then returning to its former state of insular subculture.

Cabaret is and has always been the underdog that has survived throughout time, the proverbial chameleon of the artistic world. It is this chameleon-like quality which detractors use for their convincing arguments against the title of cabaret as a genre unto itself, purporting that cabaret is not a separate category, but yet a sub-category of the other genres to which it aligns. I purport that this underdog, this chameleon *is* a separate entity, an entity that has used adaptation as a means of survival, but nevertheless a unique individual as well, with intimate, insular, intellectual, and interactive characteristics as its core persona.

As a non-traditional student, returning mid-career to academia to complete my Master of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre, I understand the essence of feeling different, being the underdog, or at least feeling outside the mainstream. In fact, I relish my non-traditional status. I gave up much to come back to school, leaving a thriving theatrical business, performance, and teaching career and moving out of state to pursue my goals with focus and conviction. I knew exactly what I wanted and I tenaciously went after it, as I navigated my own unique graduate degree path. I do not regret a moment of my scholastic tenure, nor count the cost as exorbitant. Rather, I consider it all gain, as the unique challenges I faced as a non-traditional student forced me to adapt and grow in many ways. Much like the cabaret genre itself, I adapted and redefined

myself, wore my survivor hat, and took my creative skills underground as I voraciously devoured all the opportunities academia offered. Ultimately, I never knew a moment's doubt about what I was doing, why I was doing it, what I was planning to get out of it, or what I would do once I was done.

It is this artistic and personal parallel that draws me to the study of the genre of cabaret. I align myself with the cabaret genre because in this field I feel at home. The genre itself is much like my personality. It is eclectic, elusive, tenacious, intelligent, and resourceful, in that it adapts to its surroundings, and fills the marketing void of the moment, be that musical, political, satirical, comedic, or social. It reinvents itself using stylistic nuances from other forms, and yet amalgamates them in a unique way, creating an individuality I find fascinating. I have also had to adapt, reinvent, and, in the midst, find my unique artistry throughout my career. I have not only survived, but thrived as a full time artist in a career many say is one of the hardest in which to stay employed. I love what I do and I enjoy the fact that I am less mainstream than most, but that I still align myself with the mainstream often enough to relate, heading back to my sub-cultural bohemian home in cabaret when I'm done with my mainstream sabbatical.

This thesis project, then, is truly the culmination and codification of what has essentially been my life's work thus far. I have worked in the genre of cabaret, improvisational, and interactive theatre for much of my life, throughout my musical and theatrical career. It is my privilege to teach, through this monograph document, some of the history of this exciting art form. It is my pleasure also to share some of the process and product of a specific cabaret production, as it rose from its inception as a collaborative two-woman show in Fall 2004, to its fruition in May of 2006 as a fully realized cabaret production.

This document is meant to be reflective, personal, and academic, and is meant specifically for use by the average theatergoer to learn more about the genre of cabaret. This document is not meant to be overly stuffy, overly academic, pious, or preachy with regard to ideology or a penchant for lauding one specific theatrical convention or artistic style over another. In fact, it is meant to be quite the opposite. Just as the genre of cabaret itself aligns with other forms of music, theatre, and art, so this document is meant to help the aspiring cabaret artist see the many music and theatrical possibilities for programming within this limitless spectrum. Though cabaret tends to be insular, in that it was and is meant for members entertaining members rather than artists performing in mainstream entertainment, it has always eventually allowed others inside its intellectual and artistic walls, which is my intention here.

This monograph document contains both historical information, as well as pertinent production particulars, including the libretto for the final thesis performances of *Black Cats*, *Berlin*, *Broadway*, and *Beyond*. These chapters include the introductory and concluding items such as the abstract of the work itself, the introduction, the concluding ideas regarding the product, the process, as well as the thesis chair's performance report. The main thrust of the document is the chapters that include the libretto, a chapter on historical research of the genre, a structural analysis of the show, and a role analysis of the production process.

The research portion of the document contains an overview of the cabaret genre from its inception in the Montmartre district of Paris, France in 1881, to German cabaret of the Weimar Republic, and culminating in the insurgence of cabaret in American culture, up to and including American cabaret today. This research began early, as I accumulated a substantive cabaret book and CD library before re-entering graduate school. There is so much more to be learned and I hope the reader will take the time to peruse the reference section at the end for further study.

Researching and deciding on what to include for this documented information (which spans over a century and includes information on three countries) was quite a task, and it is for this reason the resources chapter is extensive.

The libretto shows evidence of the formally applied research, as researched items such as events and names are highlighted in the thesis libretto. The libretto further explores some specifics of any era of the genre. The libretto distinguishes certain portions of the genre by decade, whereas the research chapter illumines the genre overview and generalities. The research chapter covers more ground, but focuses less specifically in any one area than the libretto. The research chapter is fairly academic but still supposes the audience as a cabaret novice, laying the foundation as an impetus for further study.

The structural and role analysis sections are both meant to be informative as well as slightly less formal in stylistic delivery than the research section. These chapters pertain specifically to process and product and are meant to be reader-friendly for the cabaret novice. The sub-section headings deal with topics pertinent to the main subject and flesh out the structural arc, devices, roles, and particulars of process that we employed.

Finally, as an ancillary benefit to the reader, I have included several appendices regarding both process and product. These items include information on the following: props, costumes, lighting, band list, press release information, the show run order, the historical *Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life*, the French lyrics and English translation to the French song “Le Chapelier” by Erik Satie, which I sang from the show. Finally, the appendices contain a list of cabaret cliché songs gathered from friends and faculty members to round out the cliché section of the production. Since an aspect of American cabaret *is* concerned with continuing the great American Musical Theater Songbooks, we felt it was important to do some of this beloved

standard material. These songs, described as overdone standards, songs cabaretists love or loathe, are nevertheless important in the cabaretist's theatrical canon, and we did not want to overlook this aspect of American cabaret culture.

As the genre of cabaret is not easily defined or categorized, so this document could have been fleshed out in many different directions to accommodate the genre's breadth of scope. My goal is not to determine *the way* to view the genre, but instead, delineate *one way* to view this unique art form. The monograph document is meant to inform and inspire, as there are so many more facets of this fascinating genre to be explored. Think of this document as a course entitled "Cabaret 101." Those who are inspired may one day become one of the members of this faction of artistic rebels in this intimate, insular, intellectual, and interactive art form. And so, welcome to the cabaret!



**BLACK CATS, BERLIN, BROADWAY AND BEYOND**

An Original Two-Woman Cabaret Show

by

Josephine Leffner  
and  
Debbie Tedrick

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BLACK CATS, BERLIN, BROADWAY AND BEYOND

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Written permission is required for live performance of any sort. This includes readings, cuttings, scenes, and excerpts.

ORIGINAL CAST

Debbie.....Debbie Tedrick  
Josie.....Josephine Leffner

ORIGINAL CREATIVE TEAM

Direction, Music Direction, Vocal Direction, Staging.....Debbie Tedrick  
Direction, Choreography, Technical Direction, Staging.....Josephine Leffner  
Sound Design.....Kevin Rose  
Scenic Design/Set Construction/Stage Management.....Barkley Finsterbush  
Lighting Designer.....George Jackson  
Costumes.....Michaelleen Melita & the UCF Theatre Department  
Program Design and Layout.....A2 Creative  
Band Personnel.....Scott Montgomerie, Piano  
Bob “Rabbit” Simmons, Bass  
Barry James, Drums

BLACK CATS, BERLIN, BROADWAY AND BEYOND had its first public performance on 3 May 2006 at the University of Central Florida Black Box Theatre in Orlando, Florida. This performance was the collaborative thesis project of Josephine Leffner and Debbie Tedrick, to complete their Master of Fine Arts Degrees in Musical Theatre from the University of Central Florida. Nicholas Wuehrmann served as committee chair.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**JOSEPHINE LEFFNER** is a musical theatre performer and teacher. As a teacher, she has privately tutored students in reading, art, and theatre, as well as created workshops and taught at summer theatre camps. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Arts with Minors in Musical Theatre and Graphic Design from San Jose State University in California. As a performer, Josephine has performed in shows such as *Cabaret*, *Some Like it Hot!*, *The World Goes 'Round*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*. Josephine will graduate with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre from the University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre in Orlando, Florida in Fall 2006.

**DEBBIE TEDRICK** teaches musical theatre at the University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre in Orlando, Florida. She is a voice, piano, and theatre teacher and director, as well as a performer. Debbie has performed in shows ranging from *The Sound of Music* to *Hair*. Since its origination in 1998, Debbie has played the part of Celeste Romano, and is also the Musical Director, keyboardist, and vocalist in the off-Broadway hit *Tony n' Tina's Wedding* in Detroit, Michigan. Debbie is a National Anthem singer for the Detroit Pistons and the Grand Prix Races. She is a voice-over artist, and sings jingles in local Detroit commercials, as well as performing as a jazz, pop, and cabaret singer. Debbie owns an entertainment agency, InterACT Entertainment, which books corporate and private theatrical and musical events including her own band, First Impression. Debbie also directs, choreographs, and performs in musical theatre and cabaret shows. Previously, Debbie lived and worked in Los Angeles, California and Austin, Texas. She holds a Bachelors degree in Music and a Minor in Theatre from California State University at Los Angeles. She has done post-baccalaureate work in theatre and music at the University of Texas in Austin and has partially completed a Masters degree in Music Education from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. In 2006, Debbie will graduate with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre from the University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre in Orlando, Florida.

## CAST

Debbie.....Debbie Tedrick  
Josie.....Josephine Leffner

## PLACE

Present Day, Current Location

## NOTES FROM THE AUTHORS

This libretto is an outline of our thesis cabaret production. The nature of cabaret involves interaction with the audience, resulting in a different show every night. We did our utmost to capture the essence of our performances through the following libretto, but nothing on paper can truly capture an interactive performance such as this. We gave ourselves freedom in our libretto to allow for improvisation and audience interaction.

We used the device of a professor teaching an introductory lecture on cabaret history to link the educational elements of our show. As the professor, we were stern and occasionally comedic instructors of cabaret wisdom – we put on glasses, stood behind the podium, and read our lecture notes. When we sang the songs, we were no longer professors, but performers striving to capture the essence of the time period and the mood of the piece. Overall, the show should run like a concert, with a three-piece band, intermittent dialogue, banter, and a whole lot of fun.

(Before the show, Debbie and Josie mingle with the audience, thanking them for coming and inviting them to share the art they have brought.)

JOSIE:

Friends, Artists, Lovers, Drunkards  
Lend me your ears

I will now read you my poem...whether you like it or not.

(Josie clears her throat, "Ahem")

Bienvenue a Le Chat Noir  
The birthplace of modern cabaret  
The year is 1881  
And it's time for us to play

We embrace the rabble  
We welcome those we invite  
If you are part of the Bourgeoisie  
You might here out of spite

Our razor tongues love satire  
Of social-political news  
Our Montmartre location  
Is perfect for airing our views

Be ready for our poetry  
Be prepared to think  
If you brought your art  
Help yourself to a drink

(Josie walks to the podium, dons the professor glasses, and reads)

JOSIE:

The Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life

1. Come if possible, late, so that the guests already there know that you *do* have something else to do.
2. Give your coat to the woman in the Cloakroom. You're a friendly man and your coat is new.
3. Sit down haphazardly and noisily. Then change your seat often until you find one with the right shape.
4. Read the menu and wine list loudly and emphatically to your companion. Learn it if possible off by heart, and then order a portion of 'later.'

5. When everything concerning your material welfare has been looked after, take part-even if at first only unwillingly-in the artistic presentation. Look upon the conférencier with contempt right from the start. He's an ass and because of that, let him feel your spiritual superiority.
6. Time your noisy interjections so that they erupt precisely where they don't fit. This contributes enormously to enlivening the programme.
7. If you're a woman, then criticize the dress of the performing artiste boldly and with wit. (Don't forget your lorgnette as a prop for this.)
8. During song presentations, aim your cigarette smoke casually toward the podium. The singer will inhale it willingly. It makes his voice soft and supple.
9. During acts, use your cutlery and glasses in an unbothered fashion. Their sound does one good and replaces the band.
10. When you have been bored long enough by the programme and have gotten angry over the bill, leave as noisily as you came in with the consciousness of having spent a most enjoyable evening.

(Josie takes off the glasses, and resumes her character as the host of Le Chat Noir)

Thank you. And now, I open the floor to any of you artists who wish to share your work.

(Debbie indicates that she would like to perform)

Ah, I see our beautiful chanteuse, Debbie would like to sing for us.

DEBBIE:

This is called Le Chapelier.

LE CHAPELIER S'ÉTTONE  
DE CONSTATER QUE SA MONTRE  
RETARDE DE TROIS JOURS,  
BIEN QU'IL AIT EU SOIN DE LA GRAISSER TOUJOURS  
AVEC DU BEURRE DE PREMIÈRE QUALITÉ.

MAIS IL A LAISSÉ TOMBER DES MIETTES DE PAIN  
DANS LES ROUAGES,  
ET IL A BEAU PLONGER SA MONTRE DANS LE THÉ,  
ÇA NE LA FERA PAS AVANCER D'AVANTAGE.

(After singing the song, Debbie goes to the podium, dons the professor glasses, and reads. While Debbie is reading, Josie sets up the microphone stand with microphone, center stage.)

DEBBIE:

And so Cabaret begins – a turncoat art form that molds and shapes itself with the times. Its true expression is based on innovation; a form where risks are taken, new works are showcased, old works are revised, interaction with the audience is mandatory, and the performer always remains a performer.

The tradition of the French chanteuse carried over into the United States with Edith Piaf's arrival in America. Already popular in France, her French chansons were not initially well received by the American public. It was not until she translated this song to English and left the title phrase in French that American audiences came to enjoy her. I now give you Piaf's "La Vie En Rose."

(Josie stands behind the microphone stand and sings.)

JOSIE:

HOLD ME CLOSE AND HOLD ME FAST,  
THE MAGIC SPELL YOU CAST,  
THIS IS LA VIE EN ROSE.

WHEN YOU KISS ME HEAVEN SIGHS,  
AND THO' I CLOSE MY EYES  
I SEE LA VIE EN ROSE.

WHEN YOU PRESS ME TO YOUR HEART  
I'M IN A WORLD APART,  
A WORLD WHERE ROSES BLOOM;

AND WHEN YOU SPEAK ANGELS SING FROM ABOVE;  
EV'RYDAY WORDS SEEM TO TURN INTO LOVE SONGS.

GIVE YOUR HEART AND SOUL TO ME,  
AND LIFE WILL ALWAYS BE  
LA VIE EN ROSE

(Josie finishes the song and takes the microphone. She begins to talk to and flirt with the audience. She suddenly remembers her professorial duty, rushes to the podium, puts on the glasses, and assumes a stern character to read.)

JOSIE:

The Weimar Republic in Germany from 1919 – 1933 was the height of hedonism in German cabaret. In response to the end of censorship laws, cabaret thrived in an atmosphere of experimentation. Berlin was the center of this new cosmopolitan world and cabaret clubs grew in abundance. In the midst of political and economic hardship, cabaret offered patrons an escape from the harsh reality of daily life. Drugs, alcohol, sex, and decadent living were all part of the entertainment. Transvestites, burlesque dancers, singers, and political satirists all infused the subculture of Berlin cabaret. The advent of the master of ceremonies gave cabaret a character who could improvise, comment on the show, and generally handle the crowd when things went awry.

(After finishing reading, Josie takes off the glasses. She then turns away from the audience and removes her dress to reveal her basic cabaret outfit. She dons a vest, as she steps away from the podium to become a German cabaret master of ceremonies.)

Willkommen a Berlin!

SPIELST DU SUDERMANN ODER MAETERLINCK,  
ODER SPIELST DU MIEZE STUKKERT,  
DANN DENK ES IST EIN EIGEN DING,  
DAS HERZ, DAS UNTEN PUKKERT!  
ES ATMET KLAMM DAS PUBLIKUM,  
ES GÄB VAS DRUM, ES GÄB VAS DRUM,  
ER HÖRE NUR SEIN FLEHEN  
DAS PUBLIKUM WILL SEHEN.

ZIEH DICH AUS, PETRONELLA, ZIEH DICH AUS!

(Sometime during the German verse, Josie realizes Debbie, as Petronella, has not emerged. Josie and Petronella call back and forth to each other, while Josie improvises with the audience. Eventually, Debbie, as Petronella, appears in balloon outfit and interacts with the audience)

JOSIE:

SHE IS ALL THE RAGE OF THE GERMAN STAGE  
PLAYING WEDERKIND OR GOETHE.  
WE ALL LOVE HER SO, SHE PLAYS S.R.O.  
SO THE CRITIC'S BARBS DON'T HURT HER.  
IT'S REALLY A PHENOMENON  
WHEN SHE COMES ON ALL CARES ARE GONE.  
SHE BARES HER SOUL AND SHOULDER.  
WE GASP AND PANT AND START TO CHANT.

TAKE IT OFF, PETRONELLA, TAKE IT OFF.  
OF YOUR TALENTS WE'RE ADORING,  
BUT WE FIND THE THEATRE BORING  
IF YOU DON'T WANT US TO YAWN OR SNORE OR COUGH.  
TAKE IT OFF, PETRONELLA, TAKE IT OFF!

I ACT MAETERLINCK WEARING ONLY MINK  
AND I PLAY IPHIGENIA.  
WEARING NOT A SWATCH, JUST A DIAMOND WATCH,  
AND A GLITTERING TIARA.  
I BRING CLASSICS TO THE PRESENT TENSE  
WITH ELEGANCE AND RELEVANCE.  
AND YOU'LL LOVE MY LOVE'S LABOR,  
MY JULIET'S THE BEST YOU'LL GET.



AHHHHHHH...  
AS MY COSTUMES GET LESS AND LESSER  
THEY THINK I AM QUITE THE DRESSER  
AND OF COURSE THEY ALL ADMIRE MY SCHOLARSHIP.  
WHEN I STRIP, DONCHA FELLAS, WHEN I STRIP!

(When the song has ended, Debbie finishes popping the balloons and poses to show her scantily clad figure. Debbie exits offstage. Josie returns to the podium, dons the glasses, and reads.)

JOSIE:

The insurgence of the Nazi regime squelched the decadence of the Weimar Era. Some cabaret artists were arrested and put in concentration camps; others fled to the safety of other countries. The spirit of the era could not be crushed and some of the cabaret art created during the Weimar Republic is still present today. The movie, *The Blue Angel*, starring Marlene Dietrich, captures the aesthetic of the era. The artwork of German Expressionist Otto Dix presents hauntingly beautiful reflections of cabaret life. And the songs of Friedrich Hollaender and Kurt Weill continue to be performed.

(Josie takes off the glasses and walks offstage. During Josie's reading, Debbie positions herself by the piano to sing. While Debbie is singing, Josie comes on and offstage to dance her portrayal of Jenny.)

DEBBIE:

THERE ONCE WAS A GIRL NAMED JENNY,  
WHOSE VIRTUES WERE VARIED AND MANY,  
EXCEPTING THAT SHE WAS INCLINED  
ALWAYS TO MAKE UP HER MIND,  
AND JENNY POINTS A MORAL  
WITH WHICH YOU CANNOT QUARREL,  
AS YOU WILL FIND.

JENNY MADE HER MIND UP WHEN SHE WAS THREE,  
SHE, HERSELF, WAS GOING TO TRIM THE CHRISTMAS TREE;  
CHRISTMAS EVE SHE LIT THE CANDLES,  
TOSSED THE TAPERS AWAY.  
LITTLE JENNY WAS AN ORPHAN ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

POOR JENNY! BRIGHT AS A PENNY!  
HER EQUAL WOULD BE HARD TO FIND.  
SHE LOST ONE DAD AND MOTHER, A SISTER AND A BROTHER,  
BUT SHE WOULD MAKE UP HER MIND.

JENNY MADE HER MIND UP WHEN SHE WAS TWELVE,  
THAT INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES SHE WOULD DELVE,

BUT AT SEVENTEEN TO VASSAR IT WAS QUITE A BLOW  
THAT IN TWENTY-SEVEN LANGUAGES  
SHE COULDN'T SAY NO.

POOR JENNY! BRIGHT AS A PENNY!  
HER EQUAL WOULD BE HARD TO FIND.  
TO JENNY I'M BEHOLDEN, HER HEART WAS BIG AND GOLDEN,  
BUT SHE WOULD MAKE UP HER MIND.

JENNY MADE HER MIND UP AT TWENTY-TWO,  
TO GET HERSELF A HUSBAND WAS THE THING TO DO,  
SHE GOT HERSELF ALL DOLLED UP IN HER SATINS AND FURS,  
AND SHE GOT HERSELF A HUSBAND,  
BUT HE WASN'T HERS.

POOR JENNY! BRIGHT AS A PENNY!  
HER EQUAL WOULD BE HARD TO FIND.  
DESERVED A BED OF ROSES, BUT HISTORY DISCLOSES,  
THAT SHE WOULD MAKE UP HER MIND.

JENNY MADE HER MIND UP AT THIRTY-NINE,  
SHE WOULD TAKE A TRIP TO THE ARGENTINE.  
SHE WAS ONLY ON VACATION, BUT THE LATINS AGREE,  
JENNY WAS THE ONE WHO STARTED  
THE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY.

POOR JENNY! BRIGHT AS A PENNY!  
HER EQUAL WOULD BE HARD TO FIND.  
OH, PASSION DOESN'T VANISH, IN PORTUGUESE OR SPANISH,  
BUT SHE WOULD MAKE UP HER MIND.

JENNY MADE HER MIND UP AT FIFTY-ONE,  
SHE WOULD WRITE HER MEMOIRS BEFORE SHE WAS DONE,  
THE VERY DAY HER BOOK WAS PUBLISHED HIST'RY RELATES  
THERE WERE WIVES WHO SHOT THEIR HUSBANDS  
IN SOME THIRTY-THREE STATES.

POOR JENNY! BRIGHT AS A PENNY!  
HER EQUAL WOULD BE HARD TO FIND.  
SHE COULD GIVE CARDS AND SPADIES, TO MANY OTHER LADIES,  
BUT SHE WOULD MAKE UP HER MIND.

JENNY MADE HER MIND UP AT SEVENTY-FIVE,  
SHE WOULD LIVE TO BE THE OLDEST WOMAN ALIVE,  
BUT GIN AND RUM AND DESTINY PLAY FUNNY TRICKS

AND POOR JENNY KICKED THE BUCKET  
AT SEVENTY-SIX.

JENNY POINTS A MORAL,  
WITH WHICH YOU CANNOT QUARREL,  
MAKES A LOT OF COMMON SENSE.  
JENNY AND HER SAGA, PROVE THAT YOU ARE GAGA,  
IF YOU DON'T KEEP SITTING ON THE FENCE.  
JENNY AND HER STORY POINT THE WAY TO GLORY,  
TO ALL MEN AND WOMANKIND.  
ANYONE WITH VISION, COMES TO THIS DECISION,  
DON'T MAKE UP, YOU SHOULDN'T MAKE UP,  
YOU MUSTN'T MAKE UP, OH NEVER MAKE UP  
ANYONE WITH VISION, COMES TO THIS DECISION,  
DON'T MAKE UP YOUR MIND.

(Debbie exits offstage. Josie emerges from backstage, goes to the podium, dons the professor glasses, and reads.)

JOSIE:

Americans were far less interested in political satire than Europeans, and consequently, during the Prohibition Era from 1920-1933, cabaret morphed, becoming more of a torch song singers' art. During the lawless decade, many cabarets either closed or went underground. These underground cabaret-speakeasies flourished, and audiences sipped their bootleg hooch as they flocked to hear sad songs sung by torch song artists. One of the most popular singers of the era was Helen Morgan. Her club, Chez Morgan, survived even as many others closed due to raids and loss of income from Prohibition constraints. Helen Morgan, popularly known for her portrayal of Julie in the musical, *Showboat*, shared her theatrical counterpart's struggles with alcoholism. Though an expressive and adept singer, she was often drunk onstage. She lived a life of desperation, and ultimately, liver damage cut short her life, a life that was as rich in talent as it was in troubles. "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" is the song that made her famous.

(While Josie reads, Debbie sits on top of the piano dressed as Helen Morgan to prepare for her next song)

DEBBIE:

FISH GOT TO SWIM AND BIRDS GOT TO FLY.  
I GOT TO LOVE ONE MAN TILL I DIE.  
CAN'T HELP LOVIN' DAT MAN OF MINE.

TELL ME HE'S LAZY, TELL ME HE'S SLOW.  
TELL ME I'M CRAZY, MAYBE, I KNOW.  
CAN'T HELP LOVIN' DAT MAN OF MINE.

WHEN HE GOES AWAY, DAT'S A RAINY DAY.

AND WHEN HE COMES BACK DAT DAY IS FINE,  
DE SUN WILL SHINE.

HE CAN COME HOME AS LATE AS CAN BE;  
HOME WIDOUT HIM AIN'T NO HOME TO ME.  
CAN'T HELP LOVIN' DAT MAN OF MINE.

(Debbie finishes singing, crosses to the podium, puts on the professor glasses, and reads)

DEBBIE:

Underground speakeasy-cabarets and club life weren't the only things going on during Prohibition. The 20s and 30s saw changes and crazes of many kinds. The dance craze was the rage and Vernon and Irene Castle were the king and queen. They owned the San Souci nightclub, America's first Parisian-style cabaret. Even the hairstyle known as "the bob" was originally called the "Castle Bob" after the way Irene Castle wore her hair. Dancing and dining were "in" and flappers were the frenzy. Women began to attend nightclubs and went out unaccompanied for the first time ever in American history. Besides Irene Castle's influence on women and social dance, a major leader of change in America's vocal and visual image of women came in a five-foot pint-sized form through a woman named Helen Kane, popularly known as the Boop-boop-a-doop girl. Born in 1903, she trained and performed in the vaudeville circuit in the 20s. Her big break came in 1927 at the Paramount Theater in a flop entitled "A Night in Spain" when she added her famous scat lyrics (boop-boop-a-doop) into the song "That's My Weakness Now." The flapper culture loved it, loved her, and four days later she became a star, with her name up in lights. In 1928 she was featured in Oscar Hammerstein's show "Good Boy" with her most famous song, "I Wanna Be Loved by You." Her coquettish style, distinct vibrato, and round, lush doe eyes stamped her signature firmly on American culture.

(After reading, Debbie takes the glasses off and exits offstage. Josie comes out from backstage, dressed as Helen Kane, and sings.)

JOSIE:

I'M NOT ONE OF THE GREEDY KIND,  
ALL OF MY WANTS ARE SIMPLE;  
I KNOW WHAT'S ON MY MIND,

I'M NOT RESTING UNTIL I FIND  
WHAT WOULD MAKE YOUR EYES GLISTEN  
LIKE MINE, WITH LOVE DIVINE:

I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU,  
JUST YOU, AND NOBODY ELSE BUT YOU.  
I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU ALONE,  
POO POO PA DOOP.

I WANNA BE KISSED BY YOU,

JUST YOU AND NOBODY ELSE BUT YOU.  
I WANNA BE KISSED BY YOU ALONE,  
POO POO PA DOOP.

I COULDN'T ASPIRE TO ANYTHING HIGHER  
THAN FILL A DESIRE TO MAKE YOU MY OWN;  
PA PA PADRA, POO POO PA DOOP.

I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU  
JUST YOU AND NOBODY ELSE BUT YOU;  
I WANNA BE LOVED BY YOU ALONE,  
PA DAP PA, DAP PA DAB, POO POO PA DOOP.

LISTEN, BIG BOY! NOW THAT I'VE GOT YOU MADE,  
GOODNESS, BUT I'M AFRAID  
SOMETHING'S GONNA HAPPEN TO YOU.

LISTEN, BIG BOY! YOU'VE GOT ME HOOKED AND HOW!  
I WOULD DIE IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU NOW.

BUTTON UP YOUR OVERCOAT  
WHEN THE WIND IS FREE  
TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF  
YOU BELONG TO ME!

EAT AN APPLE EVERYDAY;  
GET TO BED BY THREE  
TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF  
YOU BELONG TO ME!

BE CAREFUL CROSSING STREETS, OO-OO!  
DON'T EAT MEATS, OO-OO!  
CUT OUT SWEETS, OO-OO!  
YOU'LL GET A PAIN AND RUIN YOUR TUM-TUM!

KEEP AWAY FROM BOOTLEG HOOCH  
WHEN YOU'RE ON A SPREE  
TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF  
YOU BELONG TO ME.

(Debbie emerges from backstage, dons the glasses, and reads)

DEBBIE:

Crazes come and go, and as quickly as Helen Kane's fame skyrocketed, just as quickly came its descent. Elegance and refinement now captured the look and sound of the 40s. Swing was in and

Big-Bands led the day with front singers making their mark. Crooners and jazz divas held America's attention rapt. Singers strutted and scatted rather than sweated, and the energy was in the sound on the bandstand rather than in the frenzy of the singer. Many of the Broadway greats such as Gershwin and Porter were immortalized during this Big-Band and jazz era as their tunes were reinvented over and over to America's continued delight.

(Josie emerges from backstage in a 1940's costume and sings)

JOSIE:

THE WAY YOU WEAR YOUR HAT,  
THE WAY YOU SIP YOUR TEA,  
THE MEM'RY OF ALL THAT  
NO, NO! THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME!

THE WAY YOUR SMILE JUST BEAMS,  
THE WAY YOU SING OFF KEY,  
THE WAY YOU HAUNT MY DREAMS,  
NO, NO! THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME!

WE MAY NEVER, NEVER MEET AGAIN  
ON THE BUMPY ROAD TO LOVE,  
STILL I'LL ALWAYS, ALWAYS KEEP THE MEM'RY OF

THE WAY YOU HOLD YOUR KNIFE,  
THE WAY WE DANCED 'TIL THREE,  
THE WAY YOU'VE CHANGED MY LIFE.  
NO, NO! THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME!

(Debbie enters from backstage wearing a feather boa and a bird beak on her head. She hands a wrap-around toy monkey to Josie who puts it on. Debbie and Josie sing)

DEBBIE:

A BUZZARD TOOK THE MONKEY FOR A RIDE IN THE AIR,  
THE MONKEY THOUGHT THAT EV'RYTHING WAS ON THE SQUARE.  
THE BUZZARD TRIED TO THROW THE MONKEY OFF HIS BACK,  
BUT THE MONKEY GRABBED HIS NECK AND SAID,

JOSIE:

"NOW, LISTEN JACK,"

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT!  
STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT!  
STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT!  
COOL DOWN, PAPA, DON'T YOU BLOW YOUR TOP.

DEBBIE:

AIN'T NO USE IN DIVIN',  
WHAT'S THE USE IN DIVIN'?

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT  
COOL DOWN, PAPA, DON'T YOU BLOW YOUR TOP

JOSIE:

THE BUZZARD TOLD THE MONKEY,

DEBBIE:

"YOU ARE CHOKIN' ME,  
RELEASE YOUR HOLD AND I WILL SET YOU FREE,"  
THE MONKEY LOOKED THE BUZZARD RIGHT DEAD IN THE EYE,  
AND SAID,

JOSIE:

"YOUR STORY'S SO TOUCHING, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A LIE."

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT!  
STRAIGHTEN UP AND STAY RIGHT.  
STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT!  
COOL DOWN, PAPA, DON'T YOU BLOW YOUR TOP.

(Debbie exits, taking Josie's monkey with her. Josie stays to sing stage center)

JOSIE:

I GOT RHYTHM,  
I GOT MUSIC,  
I GOT MY MAN  
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE?

I GOT DAISIES  
IN GREEN PASTURES,  
I GOT MY MAN  
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE?

OLD MAN TROUBLE,  
I DON'T MIND HIM,  
YOU WON'T FIND HIM  
'ROUND MY DOOR.

I GOT STARLIGHT,  
I GOT SWEET DREAMS,  
I GOT MY MAN  
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE,  
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE?

(Josie exits. Debbie enters to sing)

DEBBIE:

MISSED THE SATURDAY DANCE  
HEARD THEY CROWDED THE FLOOR  
COULDN'T BEAR IT WITHOUT YOU  
DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE

THOUGHT I'D VISIT THE CLUB  
GOT AS FAR AS THE DOOR  
THEY'D HAVE ASKED ME ABOUT YOU  
DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE

DARLING I GUESS  
MY MIND'S MORE AT EASE  
BUT NEVERTHELESS  
WHY STIR UP MEMORIES

BEEN INVITED ON DATES  
MIGHT HAVE GONE BUT WHAT FOR  
AWF'LLY DIFF'RENT WITHOUT YOU  
DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE

(Debbie exits backstage. The music changes and Debbie then encourages the audience to snap on the off-beats of the next song. Josie comes out to make sure the audience is doing it correctly.

When assured by Josie, Debbie comes onstage. Both ladies sing)

JOSIE:

NEVER KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU,  
NEVER KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE.  
WHEN YOU PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME,  
I GET A FEVER THAT'S SO HARD TO BEAR.

YOU GIVE ME FEVER, WHEN YOU KISS ME,  
FEVER WHEN YOU HOLD ME TIGHT.  
FEVER IN THE MORNING,  
AND FEVER ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT.

DEBBIE:



SUN LIGHTS UP THE DAYTIME,  
MOON LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT.  
I LIGHT UP WHEN YOU CALL MY NAME,  
AND YOU KNOW I'M GONNA TREAT YOU RIGHT.

YOU GIVE ME FEVER, WHEN YOU KISS ME,  
FEVER WHEN YOU HOLD ME TIGHT.  
FEVER IN THE MORNING,  
AND FEVER ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT.

JOSIE:

ROMEO LOVED JULIET  
JULIET SHE FELT THE SAME,  
WHEN HE PUT HIS ARMS AROUND HER, HE SAID,  
"JULIE, BABY, YOU'RE MY FLAME."

THOU GIVEST FEVER, WHEN WE KISSETH  
FEVER WITH MY FLAMING YOUTH,  
FEVER - I'M AFIRE  
FEVER, YEA I BURN FORSOOTH.

DEBBIE:

CAPTAIN SMITH AND POCAHONTAS  
HAD A VERY MAD AFFAIR,  
WHEN HER DADDY TRIED TO KILL HIM, SHE SAID,  
"DADDY-O DON'T YOU DARE."

HE GIVES ME FEVER, WITH HIS KISSES,  
FEVER WHEN HE HOLDS ME TIGHT.  
FEVER - I'M HIS MISSUS  
OH DADDY WON'T YOU TREAT HIM RIGHT.

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

NOW YOU'VE LISTENED TO OUR STORY  
HERE'S THE POINT THAT WE HAVE MADE:  
CHICKS WERE BORN TO GIVE YOU FEVER  
BE IT FARENHEIT OR CENTIGRADE

THEY GIVE YOU FEVER WHEN YOU KISS THEM,  
FEVER IF YOU LIVE AND LEARN.  
FEVER - TILL YOU SIZZLE  
WHAT A LOVELY WAY TO BURN.

(Debbie and Josie exit. Debbie re-enters to sing)

DEBBIE:

I WAS WALKIN' ALONG  
MINDIN' MY BUSINESS  
WHEN OUT OF AN ORANGE COLORED SKY  
FLASH! BAM! ALAKAZAM!  
WONDERFUL YOU CAME BY.

I WAS HUMMIN' A TUNE  
DRINKIN' IN SUNSHINE  
WHEN OUT OF THAT ORANGE COLORED VIEW  
FLASH! BAM! ALAKAZAM!  
I GOT A LOOK AT YOU.

ONE LOOK AND I YELLED "TIMBER,  
WATCH OUT FOR FLYING GLASS"  
'CAUSE THE CEILING FELL IN, AND THE BOTTOM FELL OUT,  
I WENT INTO A SPIN, AND I STARTED TO SHOUT  
"I'VE BEEN HIT! THIS IS IT! THIS IS IT!"

I WAS WALKIN' ALONG  
MINDIN' MY BUSINESS  
WHEN LOVE CAME AND HIT ME IN THE EYE.  
FLASH! BAM! ALAKAZAM!  
OUT OF AN ORANGE COLORED SKY.

OUR OF AN ORANGE COLORED, PURPLE STRIPED,  
PRETTY GREEN POLKA DOTTED SKY  
FLASH! BAM! ALAKAZAM!  
AND GOODBYE.

(Debbie exits. Josie goes to the podium, puts on the glasses, and reads)

JOSIE:

While greats such as Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Nat King Cole, and Peggy Lee dominated the swing scene in the 40s with their smart style and Big-Band sound, the darker side of jazz echoed the underground torch songs of earlier times. Helen Morgan and the Prohibition speakeasies had a counterpart in singers such as Billie Holiday and instrumentalists such as Charlie "Bird" Parker. The smiling and dapper Duke Ellington and members of his entourage wrote biting and complex songs that were worlds apart from the frivolous musical candy such as "A Tisket A Tasket." Billy Strayhorn was one such composer to whom jazz purists give their respect and from which cabaret artists find rich theatrical and musical fodder. "Lush Life" is one of Strayhorn's most bitter and beautiful masterpieces...

(While Josie reads, Debbie sits at the bar to sing)

DEBBIE:

I USED TO VISIT ALL THE VERY GAY PLACES,  
THOSE COME WHAT MAY PLACES,  
WHERE ONE RELAXES ON THE AXIS OF THE WHEEL OF LIFE,  
TO GET THE FEEL OF LIFE FROM JAZZ AND COCKTAILS.

THE GIRLS I KNEW HAD SAD AND SULLEN GRAY FACES,  
WITH DISTINGUE TRACES,  
THAT USED TO BE THERE YOU COULD SEE WHERE THEY'D BEEN WASHED  
AWAY BY TOO MANY THROUGH THE DAY  
TWELVE O'CLOCK TALES.

THEN YOU CAME ALONG WITH YOUR SIREN SONG,  
TO TEMPT ME TO MADNESS.  
I THOUGHT FOR AWHILE THAT YOUR POIGNANT SMILE  
WAS TINGED WITH THE SADNESS OF A GREAT LOVE FOR ME,  
OH, YES, I WAS WRONG, AGAIN I WAS WRONG!

LIFE IS LONELY AGAIN, AND ONLY LAST YEAR  
EVERYTHING SEEMED SO SURE.  
NOW LIFE IS AWFUL AGAIN, A TROUGHFUL OF HEARTS  
COULD ONLY BE A BORE.

A WEEK IN PARIS COULD EASE THE BITE OF IT,  
ALL I CARE IS TO SMILE IN SPITE OF IT,

I'LL FORGET YOU, I WILL,  
WHILE YET YOU ARE STILL BURNING INSIDE MY BRAIN.  
ROMANCE IS MUSH, STIFLING THOSE WHO STRIVE,  
SO I'LL LIVE A LUSH LIFE IN SOME SMALL DIVE,  
AND THERE I'LL BE, WHILE I ROT WITH THE REST  
OF THOSE WHOSE LIVES ARE LONELY TOO.

(When Debbie finishes singing, she goes to the podium, puts on the glasses, and reads)

DEBBIE:

The 1950's Beat Generation that rose up in protest against middle-class morality melded into the hippie generation of the 1960s. Sex, drugs, and Rock n' Roll became an escapist form of protest against the Vietnam War and the strict culture of conservatism. The fight for civil rights, women's liberation, the draft, and the wide availability of the birth control pill all contributed to a young generation who promoted non-violence and free-thinking. Their fight against "The Establishment" was expressed by flower children wearing and distributing flowers, and "Be-ins" – gatherings where the new culture of rebellion, drugs, and music could be shared.

(After Debbie finishes reading, she removes the glasses. Josie enters wearing a beret and asks Debbie if she can play the piano. Josie puts a beret on Debbie's head. Debbie and Josie banter back and forth and Debbie agrees to back up Josie's poem on the piano. Josie gets the audience to practice snapping their fingers in beatnik fashion. Josie sits behind the mike stand, Debbie sits at the piano. The poem filters into the song which follows.)

JOSIE:

Friends  
Artists  
Lovers  
Drunkards  
Lend me your ears

I call this poem, "My Mother Beat Me for Being a Beatnik"

We are beat,  
Beat like the drum,  
Beat like the native on the tom-tom,  
Beat from a night  
Of working too hard.

"Cool down, cats" I say.  
We are beatific,  
So come share a poem,  
Come share a joint.

It's the 1950s,  
Relax...

What do we need?  
What are we missing?  
What, what, what ...?

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS LOVE, SWEET LOVE.  
IT'S THE ONLY THING  
THAT THERE'S JUST TOO LITTLE OF.

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS LOVE, SWEET LOVE  
NO, NOT JUST FOR SOME,  
BUT FOR EV'RYONE.

DEBBIE:

LORD, WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER MOUNTAIN;  
THERE ARE MOUNTAINS AND HILLSIDES  
ENOUGH TO CLIMB.  
THERE ARE OCEANS AND RIVERS  
ENOUGH TO CROSS, ENOUGH TO LAST  
'TIL THE END OF TIME.

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS LOVE, SWEET LOVE.  
IT'S THE ONLY THING  
THAT THERE'S JUST TOO LITTLE OF.

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS LOVE, SWEET LOVE.  
NO, NOT JUST FOR SOME,  
BUT FOR EV'RYONE.

JOSIE:

LORD, WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER MEADOW;  
THERE ARE CORN FIELDS AND WHEAT FIELDS  
ENOUGH TO GROW.  
THERE ARE SUNBEAMS AND MOONBEAMS ENOUGH  
TO SHINE. OH, LISTEN, LORD,  
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW.

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS LOVE, SWEET LOVE.  
IT'S THE ONLY THING  
THAT THERE'S JUST TOO LITTLE OF.

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW  
IS LOVE, SWEET LOVE.  
NO, NOT JUST FOR SOME,  
OH, BUT JUST FOR EV'RY, EV'RY, EV'RYONE.

(Josie exits. Debbie tells the band she liked the song and asks them if they know another one. They begin playing the intro to "Aquarius." Debbie "finds" hippie accessories to wear, Josie re-enters wearing hippie accessories. Both sing)

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

WHEN THE MOON IS IN THE SEVENTH HOUSE,  
AND JUPITER ALIGNS WITH MARS,  
THEN PEACE WILL GUIDE THE PLANETS,

AND LOVE WILL STEER THE STARS;

THIS IS THE DAWNING OF THE AGE OF AQUARIUS,  
THE AGE OF AQUARIUS,  
AQUARIUS, AQUARIUS.

HARMONY AND UNDERSTANDING,  
SYMPATHY AND TRUST ABOUNDING.  
NO MORE FALSEHOODS OR DERISIONS,  
GOLDEN LIVING DREAMS OF VISIONS,  
MYSTIC CRYSTAL REVELATION,  
AND THE MIND'S TRUE LIBERATION.  
AQUARIUS, AQUARIUS.

LET THE SUNSHINE IN.  
LET THE SUNSHINE IN,  
THE SUNSHINE IN.

OH, LET THE SUNSHINE IN.  
LET THE SUNSHINE IN,  
THE SUNSHINE IN.

(While singing, Josie and Debbie encourage the audience to sing and dance with them. As the song is ending, Josie goes backstage. Debbie finishes with the audience then crosses over to the podium, puts on the glasses, and reads)

DEBBIE:

No one thought a movement could take America by storm the way Rock n' Roll and the Beat Generation had. No one knew Disco was just around the corner....

(Josie enters wearing her Lola outfit. Debbie sneaks behind the bar, ready to play the roles of Tony and Rico. Josie and Debbie sing and act out their roles)

JOSIE:

HER NAME WAS LOLA;  
SHE WAS A SHOWGIRL,  
WITH YELLOW FEATHERS IN HER HAIR  
AND A DRESS CUT DOWN TO THERE.  
SHE WOULD MERENGUE  
AND DO THE CHA-CHA,  
AND WHILE SHE TRIED TO BE A STAR,  
TONY ALWAYS TENDED BAR,  
ACROSS THE CROWDED FLOOR.  
THEY WORKED FROM EIGHT TO FOUR.  
THEY WERE YOUNG AND THEY HAD EACH OTHER,

WHO COULD ASK FOR MORE.

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:

AT THE COPA, COPACABANA,  
THE HOTTEST SPOT NORTH OF HAVANA.  
AT THE COPA, COPACABANA,  
MUSIC AND PASSION WERE ALWAYS THE FASHION,  
AT THE COPA

JOSIE:

THEY FELL IN LOVE.

HIS NAME WAS RICO;  
HE WORE A DIAMOND,  
HE WAS ESCORTED TO HIS CHAIR,  
HE SAW LOLA DANCING THERE.  
AND WHEN SHE FINISHED,  
HE CALLED HER OVER.  
BUT RICO WENT A BIT TOO FAR,  
TONY SAILED ACROSS THE BAR.  
AND THEN THE PUNCHES FLEW  
AND CHAIRS WERE SMASHED IN TWO.  
THERE WAS BLOOD AND A SINGLE GUNSHOT,  
BUT JUST WHO SHOT WHO?

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:

AT THE COPA, COPACABANA,  
THE HOTTEST SPOT NORTH OF HAVANA.  
AT THE COPA, COPACABANA,  
MUSIC AND PASSION WERE ALWAYS THE FASHION,  
AT THE COPA

JOSIE:

SHE LOST HER LOVE.

HER NAME WAS LOLA;  
SHE WAS A SHOWGIRL,  
BUT THAT WAS THIRTY YEARS AGO  
WHEN THEY USED TO HAVE A SHOW.  
NOW IT'S A DISCO,  
BUT NOT FOR LOLA.  
STILL IN THE DRESS SHE USED TO WEAR,  
FADED FEATHERS IN HER HAIR,  
SHE SITS THERE SO REFINED  
AND DRINKS HERSELF HALF BLIND.

SHE LOST HER YOUTH AND SHE LOST HER TONY,  
NOW SHE'S LOST HER MIND!

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:

AT THE COPA, COPACABANA,  
THE HOTTEST SPOT NORTH OF HAVANA.  
AT THE COPA, COPACABANA,  
MUSIC AND PASSION WERE ALWAYS THE FASHION,  
AT THE COPA

JOSIE:  
DON'T FALL IN LOVE  
DON'T FALL IN LOVE

DEBBIE:  
COPACABANA  
COPACABANA

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:  
COPACABANA.

(Josie exits. Debbie returns to the podium, dons the glasses, and reads)

DEBBIE:

Singers dominated the scene in the 70s and 80s, as cabaret divas such as Barbra Streisand, Liza Minnelli, Bette Midler, and others led cabaret in a variety of directions, all according to their own unique strengths. Midler earned the title of "Bathhouse Betty" when she starred at the Continental Baths, a gay bathhouse in New York City. She forged her own style through her bawdy humor and outrageous costumes. Barbra Streisand, "Babs," was known for her impeccable pitch, incredibly smooth and powerful range, as well as her classy New York style. Liza Minnelli belted her way to stardom and was forever immortalized in the Bob Fosse film, *Cabaret*, as Sally Bowles, a cabaret singer from the Weimar German era. Many songs these singers sang became part of the standard cabaret musical canon. We'd like to do a few of our favorites for you tonight...Ladies and Gentlemen...Miss Josephine Leffner as the immortal Sally Bowles...

(Josie enters, drags a chair stage center, and sings)

JOSIE:

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE WAY I AM, MEIN HERR.  
A TIGER IS A TIGER, NOT A LAMB, MEIN HERR.  
YOU'LL NEVER TURN THE VINEGAR TO JAM, MEIN HERR.  
SO I DO, WHAT I DO. WHEN I'M THROUGH, THEN I'M THROUGH  
AND I'M THROUGH. TOODALOO!

BYE, BYE, MEIN LIEBER HERR,  
FAREWELL MEIN LIEBER HERR.  
IT WAS A FINE AFFAIR, BUT NOW IT'S OVER.  
AND THOUGH I USED TO CARE, I NEED THE OPEN AIR



YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME, MEIN HERR.

DON'T DAB YOUR EYE, MEIN HERR,  
OR WONDER WHY, MEIN HERR.  
I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT I WAS A ROVER.  
YOU MUSTN'T KNIT YOUR BROW.  
YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN BY NOW  
YOU'D EVERY CAUSE TO DOUBT ME, MEIN HERR.

THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE IS SO WIDE, MEIN HERR.  
NOT ONLY UP AND DOWN, BUT SIDE TO SIDE, MEIN HERR.  
I COULDN'T EVER CROSS IT IF I TRIED, MEIN HERR.  
BUT I DO, WHAT I CAN, INCH BY INCH, STEP BY STEP,  
MILE BY MILE, MAN BY MAN.

BYE, BYE, MEIN LIEBER HERR,  
FAREWELL MEIN LIEBER HERR.  
IT WAS A FINE AFFAIR, BUT NOW IT'S OVER.  
AND THOUGH I USED TO CARE, I NEED THE OPEN AIR  
YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME, MEIN HERR.

DON'T DAB YOUR EYE, MEIN HERR,  
OR WONDER WHY, MEIN HERR.  
I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT I WAS A ROVER.  
YOU MUSTN'T KNIT YOUR BROW.  
YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN BY NOW  
YOU'D EVERY CAUSE TO DOUBT ME, MEIN HERR.

BYE, BYE, MEIN LIEBER HERR  
AUF WEIDER SEHEN, MEIN HERR.  
ES WAR SEHR GUT, MEIN HERR,  
UND VORBEI. DU KENNST MICH WOHL, MEIN HERR.  
ACH, LEBE WOHL, MEIN HERR.  
DU SOLLST MICH NIE MEHR SEHEN, MEIN HERR

BYE, BYE, MEIN LIEBER HERR,  
FAREWELL, MEIN LIEBER HERR.  
IT WAS A FINE AFFAIR, BUT NOW IT'S OVER.  
AND THOUGH I USED TO CARE, I NEED THE OPEN AIR  
YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME,  
YOU'LL GET ON WITHOUT ME,  
MEIN HERR.

(Josie exits. Debbie enters, sits on top of the bar, and sings)

DEBBIE:

SOME FOLKS LIKE TO GET AWAY  
TAKE A HOLIDAY  
FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD  
HOP A FLIGHT TO MIAMI BEACH  
OR TO HOLLYWOOD  
BUT I'M TAKIN' A GREYHOUND  
ON THE HUDSON RIVERLINE  
I'M IN A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND.

I'VE SEEN ALL THE MOVIE STARS  
IN THEIR FANCY CARS  
AND THEIR LIMOUSINES  
BEEN HIGH IN THE ROCKIES  
UNDER THE EVERGREENS.  
BUT I KNOW WHAT I'M NEEDIN'  
AND I DON'T WANT TO WASTE MORE TIME  
I'M IN A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND.

IT WAS SO EASY LIVIN' DAY BY DAY,  
OUT OF TOUCH  
WITH THE RHYTHM AND BLUES  
AND NOW I NEED A LITTLE  
GIVE AND TAKE  
THE NEW YORK TIMES  
THE DAILY NEWS

COMES DOWN TO REALITY  
AND IT'S FINE WITH ME,  
'CAUSE I LET IT SLIDE  
DON'T CARE IF IT'S CHINATOWN  
OR ON RIVERSIDE  
I DON'T HAVE ANY REASONS  
I'VE LEFT THEM ALL BEHIND  
I'M IN A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND.

(Debbie exits. Josie enters, sits in the chair she left behind, and sings)

JOSIE:

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW  
WAY UP HIGH,  
THERE'S A LAND THAT I HEARD OF  
ONCE IN A LULLABY.

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

SKIES ARE BLUE,  
AND THE DREAMS THAT YOU DARE TO DREAM  
REALLY DO COME TRUE.

SOMEDAY I'LL WISH UPON A STAR  
AND WAKE UP WHERE THE CLOUDS ARE FAR BEHIND ME.  
WHERE TROUBLES MELT LIKE LEMON DROPS,  
AWAY, ABOVE THE CHIMNEY TOPS;  
THAT'S WHERE YOU'LL FIND ME.

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW  
BLUEBIRDS FLY.  
BIRDS FLY OVER THE RAINBOW;  
WHY THEN, OH WHY CAN'T I?

IF HAPPY LITTLE BLUEBIRDS FLY  
BEYOND THE RAINBOW,  
WHY OH WHY CAN'T I?

(Josie exits. Debbie enters and sings upstage center)

DEBBIE:

NOW YOU SAY YOU'RE LONELY  
YOU CRY THE WHOLE NIGHT THRU,  
WELL, YOU CAN CRY ME A RIVER,  
CRY ME A RIVER,  
I CRIED A RIVER OVER YOU.

NOW YOU SAY YOU'RE SORRY  
FOR BEIN' SO UNTRUE,  
WELL, YOU CAN CRY ME A RIVER,  
CRY ME A RIVER,  
I CRIED A RIVER OVER YOU.

YOU DROVE, NEARLY DROVE ME  
OUT OF MY HEAD,  
WHILE YOU NEVER SHED A TEAR,  
REMEMBER? I REMEMBER  
ALL THAT YOU SAID;  
TOLD ME LOVE WAS TOO PLEBEIAN,  
TOLD ME YOU WERE THRU WITH ME, AN'

NOW, YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME,  
WELL, JUST TO PROVE YOU DO,  
COME ON, AN' CRY ME A RIVER,

CRY ME A RIVER,  
I CRIED A RIVER OVER YOU.

(Debbie exits. Josie enters, crosses to the podium, dons the glasses, and reads)

JOSIE:

Cabaret has entertained many people in many different ways since its inception in France at Le Chat Noir in 1881. Then, as today, it continues to musically and theatrically express the needs of each nation, people, or subculture's political and social climate. Ultimately cabaret, no matter what else it is or isn't, is always an event that creates a rapport with the audience through intimacy and/or interaction with the artist. It will be interesting to see what influence today's cabaret stars such as Ann Hampton Callaway, Michael Feinstein, Linda Eder, Barbara Cook, KT Sullivan, and others will ultimately have on the genre when we look back twenty years from now. Until then, we'll continue to pay homage to the leaders who got us this far, and we'll do our best to navigate our own road ahead...

(Josie crosses to the bar and puts on an apron. Debbie sits at the bar and asks for a drink. As Debbie sings, Josie cleans the stage as if she's closing the bar for the night. The floor is swept and the candles on the tables are blown out)

DEBBIE:

IT'S A QUARTER TO THREE;  
THERE'S NO ONE IN THE PLACE  
EXCEPT YOU AND ME.  
SO SET 'EM UP, JOE,  
I'VE GOT A LITTLE STORY  
YOU OUGHTA KNOW.  
WE'RE DRINKIN' MY FRIEND  
TO THE END OF A BRIEF EPISODE.  
MAKE IT ONE FOR MY BABY  
AND ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD.

I GOT THE ROUTINE,  
SO DROP ANOTHER NICKEL  
IN THE MACHINE.  
I'M FEELING SO BAD  
I WISH YOU'D MAKE THE MUSIC  
DREAMY AND SAD.  
COULD TELL YOU A LOT  
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE  
TRUE TO YOUR CODE.  
MAKE IT ONE FOR MY BABY  
AND ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD.

YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT,

BUT BUDDY, I'M A KIND OF POET,  
AND I'VE GOT A LOT OF THINGS TO SAY.  
AND WHEN I'M GLOOMY,  
YOU GOTTA LISTEN TO ME  
UNTIL IT'S TALKED AWAY.

WELL, THAT'S HOW IT GOES.  
AND JOE, I KNOW YOU'RE GETTING  
ANXIOUS TO CLOSE.  
SO THANKS FOR THE CHEER.  
I HOPE YOU DIDN'T MIND MY  
BENDING YOUR EAR.  
THIS TORCH THAT I FOUND  
MUST BE DROWNED  
OR IT SOON WILL EXPLODE.  
MAKE IT ONE FOR MY BABY  
AND ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD.  
MAKE IT ONE FOR MY BABY  
AND ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD,  
THAT LONG, LONG ROAD.

(As the song finishes, Josie hands Debbie a feather boa. Josie puts one on, too, and both ladies stand stage center. Josie thanks the audience, before she and Debbie sing)

JOSIE:

As our thesis performance comes to a close, we want to thank everyone for their support along the way. This has been an incredible journey and we wouldn't have been able to make it through without the help of the wonderful UCF faculty and staff, and our classmates, friends, and family. We thank UCF for all the lessons that we will take with us as we take the next step towards our future.

(Josie looks at Debbie)

JOSIE:

Well, D, I think it's time...

JOSIE:

IT'S TIME TO HOLD MY HAND  
AND TAKE A CHANCE;  
IT'S TIME TO PAY THE BAND  
AND START THE DANCE.  
WE HEAR THE MELODY,  
WE KNOW THE SONG.  
IT'S TIME, I THINK  
WE'RE ON THE BRINK

OF WAITING FAR TOO LONG.

DEBBIE:

WHY NOT BELIEVE OUR EYES  
AND CROSS OUR HEARTS,  
DISPENSE WITH ALIBIS,  
ENOUGH FALSE STARTS.  
IT'S TIME TO PUT AWAY  
OUR CHILDISH THINGS,  
AND TIME TO TRUST IN US  
AND WHAT TOMORROW BRINGS.

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

IT'S TIME TO RISK IT ALL  
AND SHOOT THE MOON;  
SO JUST LET GO AND FALL,  
IT'S NOT SOON.  
BEFORE THE CLOCK STRIKES ONE MORE CHIME,  
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN MOVE LIFE OFF THIS DIME.  
'CAUSE I BELIEVE FOR YOU AND ME  
IT'S TIME.

JOSIE:

IT'S GETTING TOO LATE FOR A LENGTHY DEBATE,  
SO LET'S GO FOR THE WIN;

DEBBIE:

LET'S GIVE FOREVER A SHOVE  
SO THAT LIFE CAN BEGIN.

(Piano solo interlude)

DEBBIE:

There is one entity we still have yet to thank. Please put your hands together for our band. Scott Montgomerie on piano, Bob "Rabbit" Simmons on bass, and Barry James on drums.

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

IT'S TIME TO LET IT RIDE,  
'CAUSE TIME WON'T WAIT;  
IF LUCK IS ON OUR SIDE,  
IT'S NOT TOO LATE.  
BEFORE WE STUMBLE PAST OUR PRIME,  
I KNOW TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE THIS CLIMB.  
'CAUSE I BELIEVE FOR YOU AND ME,  
IT'S TIME.

PLAY OFF MUSIC: I GOT RHYTHM

THE END

## **THESIS CABARET RESEARCH**

### **Introduction: The Cabaret Genre**

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word “cabaret” in three ways: 1. A restaurant providing short programs of live entertainment. 2. A floor show in a cabaret. 3. A shop selling liquor. While these three definitions illumine small elements of the cabaret genre, the definitions do not illustrate the myriad of elements that make up the genre. Nor do the definitions show the metamorphosis that has occurred through time and culture culminating in how we define cabaret today.

In my search for a more complete understanding of the genre I will start with an overview and narrow our horizons from that vantage point. Since the breadth of scope of this genre is quite large, this research is meant to be cursory and introductory information regarding cabaret in France, Germany, and America. It is intended as a “Cabaret 101” overview of the three main countries which have done the most to incorporate and innovate the cabaret genre. The research is intended to inspire and educate the cabaret novice, though the text will be sprinkled with ancillary information the true cabaretist will appreciate as well. It is my hope that the reader will be intrigued to study further and it is for that reason that the resource section at the end of the document is quite extensive. I’d like the reader to keep in mind some of the main buzzwords that define or clarify the genre itself: intellectual, insular, intimate, and interactive. It is with these qualities in mind that we push off into a further exploration of this enigmatic genre.

Though the thrust of the research is on American cabaret, I will explore the origins of cabaret and its European influences on the American cabaret culture, starting with its inception in Paris, France at Le Chat Noir (The Black Cat) in 1881. Next, I will include research regarding



the Weimar Era in Germany from 1919-1933 culminating in the attempted annihilation of the cabaret genre by the Nazi regime. I will end with an assessment of cabaret today, its literary advocate, the Cabaret Scenes Journal and its unique awards ceremony, the MAC awards. I will highlight a few of the prime cabaret performers and venues. I will discuss the state of cabaret as it stands in America today and speculate about the future for this unique and tenacious genre.

### **Origins and European Influence on American Cabaret Culture: France**

Historians do not agree on many items regarding the “who,” “where,” “what,” “why,” and “how” of the cabaret genre. However, they all seem to agree on one thing: the date, place, and people that catapulted cabaret into the history books. The place was France in the Montmartre district of Paris. The year was 1881, and the venue was a place called Le Chat Noir, or The Black Cat. A man named Rodolphe Salis was a member of a literary intellectual artistic group called the Hydropathes.

The Hydropathes society met weekly so that writers, poets, and musicians could perform their work for one another, through poetry, sung lyric, monologue, or sketch. Bistros and cafés at the time were the home of what were called café-concerts. These concerts featured costumed singers using props and singing *chansons*, which were love lyrics or mood pieces that not only entertained the public but also were an alternative way of reporting daily history and voicing reactions to current events. The Hydropathes society took the café-concert idea a step further in adopting the *chanson* into a popular satirical or protest song, using it as a vehicle for the initial elements of cabaret. At Le Chat Noir, cabaret began to hone the elements that marked its early inceptive qualities. Lisa Appignanesi describes the early cabaret thus:

It emerged either as a laboratory, a testing ground for young artists who often deliberately advertised themselves as an avant-garde, or as the satirical stage of contemporaneity, a critically reflective mirror of topical events, morals, politics and culture. In the best instances, it was both. Walking the tightrope between the stage proper and the variety show, the cabaret defined an independent territory for itself. A flexible medium, with its impromptu stage, setting and programme, it shifted its focus with the times, without ever on the whole losing its rebellious wit or dissident, innovative nature. Indeed, dissent-whether of the kind that champions formal ruptures with artistic tradition, or the kind that urges social or sexual rebellion-was the essence of cabaret. (5)

The beginnings of cabaret at Le Chat Noir was a programme of unstructured events, as the Hydropathes gathered to perform for each other, creating a club that consisted of the Hydropathes society and their friends in a 'closed' atmosphere. The evening was conducted by the conférencier, an emcee. Due to the nature of the exclusivity of patrons, word spread quickly and soon many were curious, due not only to the exclusivity of the event but also due to the bizarre reports that circulated about events from within Le Chat Noir's walls. Cabaret gets its name from a French wine cellar or tavern. At first, there was no cover charge for these meetings. Salis decided to serve drink to those who earned their keep artistically, and later decided to open up his doors to an extended select public every week.

The combination of exclusivity, drink, food, and entertainment by the very creators themselves added to the popularity and prompted the development of cabaret as a new art form onto the artistic map. Soon cabarets were popping up all over Paris, and this artistic, bohemian,

politically satirical variety show took root as it took wing. Lisa Appignanesi describes the elusive, sometimes borderless quality which makes cabaret difficult to define:

Given its flexibility and insistence on the contemporary, it is difficult to generalize about the actual content of a typical cabaret programme. If the given is said to be a largely unrelated series of, say, fifteen acts-including song, monologue, sketches, poetry and dance-then this standard can be contradicted by cabarets which emphasized one form over another; or had no formal programme and consisted of improvised acts by participant members; or others which concentrated on, say, hour-length plays preceded and followed by song or satirical monologue. Apart from its satirical and avant-garde emphasis what remains more or less consistent in cabaret and allows it to be defined as a distinct form, are its structural elements: a small stage and smallish audience and an ambience of talk and smoke, where the relationship between performer and spectator is one of both intimacy and hostility, the nodal points of participation and provocation. The cabaret performer plays directly to his audience, breaking down the illusory fourth wall of traditional theatre. There is never any pretence made of an identity between actor and role. Rather, as in Brechtian drama, the performer remains a performer, no matter what is enacted. (6)

French cabaret at the time offered up a contemporary “slice of life” for its members as they, at first, amused themselves as a “members only” gathering, and later, allowed others to enter their artistic circle. Much of the poetry was aimed at political lampooning or social commentary, especially against the bourgeois society. Visual artists such as Henri Toulouse-Lautrec created poster lithographs specifically lampooning the government and society at large.

The cabaret's confrencier, or master of ceremonies for the evening would come up with much of the banter for the night's entertainment simply by scanning the local papers of the day. It is this extemporaneousness and elasticity that causes cabaret to be difficult to define, as it varied from day to day, and was not usually codified through use of a "program" as we know it today.

Le Chat Noir lasted for eight years, four in its original intimate location from 1881-1885 and then in a new, larger, lavish location from 1885-1889 where Salis broke with his colleague Ariste Bruant, who accused him of selling out to commercialism. Ariste took over the former Le Chat Noir and renamed it Le Mirliton. They both ran successful though quite different cabarets during the early French cabaret era. Salis' cabaret was considered the highbrow cabaret, Salis himself wearing formal attire and treating his guests like kings and queens at court. Bruant, in contrast, kept to the original more lowbrow style, entertaining his guests by insulting them. This dichotomy of highbrow and lowbrow cabaret can be seen paralleled in American cabaret today in eclectically different venues such as the Hotel Algonquin's Oak Room and Don't Tell Mama's Downstairs Cabaret in New York City.

### **Origins and European Influence on American Cabaret Culture: German Weimar Era**

Tracing the origins of cabaret is much easier than defining it. By the turn of the century, cabaret's popularity had spread to Germany and similar venues appeared throughout Germany and other neighboring countries. Changes in programme and structure began to appear as the cabaret genre morphed when it crossed continental borders. Rooms began to feature scheduled entertainment, employ musicians, and add floor shows. The interactive nature of the show, along with food and drink made cabaret's popularity blossom. The element of political satire and current event commentary created the atmosphere of intellectual camaraderie that the turn of the

century European public loved. Cabaret came to the forefront of society and paralleled mainstream entertainment during this era, as its openly gay clientele and artisans were a fascinating feature for tourists during this era of decadence.

Cabaret enjoyed one of the most popularized booms of its existence in post-World War I Germany. As the Weimar Republic came to power, it ended most forms of censorship and cabaret (kabarett) was to enjoy a time of unmitigated freedom and success. Berlin and Munich in particular took advantage of the lift on censorship and broadened cabaret's horizons, often adding burlesque elements such as partial or full nudity. Bob Fosse's 1972 film version of *Cabaret* provides a fairly accurate view of cabaret life in 1932 Berlin. The German film, *The Blue Angel*, starring Marlene Dietrich, also provides an accurate depiction of what cabaret life was like during the Weimar-era.

German cabaret of the Weimar Era was decadent, lascivious, and lewd, as it integrated all the lack of censorship freedoms offered by the government. Paralleling its counterparts in France, German cabaret remained topical, and usually dealt with contemporary society and political and social commentary. However, German cabaret was also enamored with sexual content, particularly homosexual themes. German cabaret paralleled burlesque in that the humor was lewd and the performances bawdy. It was an "anything goes" atmosphere in German cabaret during the Weimar Era. Whereas the original French cabarets featured intellectual and insular clientele, concerned with "slice of life" performances that lampooned society at large, German cabaret during the Weimar Era bit harder at the establishment. German cabaret got bolder and more politically satirical, warning its public of the demon that was to come as the Nazis came to power.

### **Origins and European Influence on American Cabaret Culture: Post-Weimar Germany**

With an immediacy that took the cabaret subculture of Germany by storm, Hitler's rise to power relatively squashed the genre. Many provocative, politically satirical cabaret performers were sent to concentration camps and many cabaret artists committed suicide or fled the country. America ended up becoming home for these Third Reich refugees. It was a difficult change for these German transplants, as American cabaret at the time was much more sugarcoated than its European counterparts, and these immigrants had to adapt or perish. Peter Jelanovich describes the Post-Weimar climate:

While the Nazis systematically muzzled cabaret in Berlin after 1933, some of the entertainers who had fled the Third Reich attempted to perform in exile. They had some, albeit limited, success in cities like Zurich, Vienna, Prague, Paris, and London. But in the United States there was no demand for their style of cabaret....America was inhospitable territory for Berlin-style cabaret, but at least it provided the exiles with a safe haven for the duration of the Third Reich. (258)

Along with America, Switzerland and the Netherlands became home to many Post-Weimar artists. Since America was not receptive at the time to the traditional European style political or satirical cabaret format, these transplanted cabaret artists adapted and amalgamated the American cabaret art form if they wished to continue their art.

### **Early American Cabaret Culture**

At the turn of the century, America was becoming more and more invested in free wheeling, romantic, frivolous entertainment. Dancing was the craze, and America was caught in its whirlwind. The overtly intellectual bent of the French and politically satirical bite of the

German cabarets did not appeal to American audiences. As cabaret spread to America (more specifically, to New York City) at the turn of the century, America took the genre, and, as America is prone to do, bent it to the American will, plying it until the product was palatable for the American public. Less intellectual at first than its European counterparts, American cabaret centered on adult evening and after-hours entertainment. Political and social satire was not prominent in early American cabaret, but was replaced with torch songs and risqué, saucy, or sexually flirtatious musical and theatrical bill of fare, though much more tame than its German predecessor. Much like its counterpart in the European avant-garde movement, the early American cabaret movement was experimental and was considered “art for art’s sake,” with less concern for overt social or political reform than for performance and enjoyment of the art itself.

Cabaret performances were held in a variety of venues such as nightclubs, supper clubs, dinner clubs, night spots, cafés, restaurants, and rathskellars. Each venue had its own unique flair, catering to its constituency through décor and ambience, aesthetically enhancing the kind of cabaret acts it contracted. Dance floors were added around 1910 to accommodate the ever-growing dance craze. Lewis Erenberg states:

Despite their diversity in other matters, cabarets were distinguished from other forms of amusements by their combination of floor show and tables....Dancing not only offered diners the opportunity to participate in their own entertainment but also enshrined the dance floor as a central part of the entertainment style of the cabaret. (122-3)

In 1915 Vernon and Irene Castle, two of the most famous dancers of that era opened a Parisian cabaret nightclub throwback called San Souci. Elimination of the fourth wall is a

common characteristic of cabaret performance, but in the Castle's cabaret they took this element even further and combined it with dance in the following way. Lewis Erenberg writes:

In removing theatrical boundaries, the cabaret removed this sacredness of the stage area and encouraged the audience to share it....Several acts exemplified this sharing of the performance area. Irene and Vernon Castle...began their numbers by coming out of the audience. Before the performance began, they could be found leisurely dining at a table near the floor. When it was time for their act, they stood up, walked to the floor, and began to dance. According to Irene, the Castles "started the custom of performers sitting at café tables like guests." (126)

As the dance floors were being added to cabarets early in the twentieth century, crowds were staying out later and later, dancing and drinking and generally causing a disturbance according to some. In 1913, a city ordinance by Mayor William J. Gaynor ordered Manhattan's nightclubs to close at 2:00 A.M. to combat the noise and general mayhem. Besides Mayor Gaynor, the Committee of Fourteen and other reform agencies were suspicious of the goings on at cabarets and kept a close watch on the establishments and the clientele.

In the wake of the 1913 ordinance, cabarets began to spring up after hours as "members-only" clubs. A precursor to the speakeasies of Prohibition, these after-hours cabaret clubs often featured a pianist and singer in a small, smoky, intimate environment. The clientele was as diverse as the artists themselves. During this time of change in mores and socio-economic change for the sexes, ethnic groups, and social classes, the cabaret atmosphere provided escape and camaraderie for all.



### **Sex, Ethnicity, and Social Classes Mix within the Walls of the Cabaret**

Sophie Tucker, well known as a vaudeville star, was one of the first cabaret performers in New York's German Village. Cabaret provided a wonderfully intimate contrast to vaudeville in the way of intimate and interactive entertainment. Sophie's independent, powerful persona appealed to the cabaret crowd. Cabarets of the early twentieth century in New York began to see the public mixing of sexes, races, and social classes, most notably unaccompanied women who frequented the cabaret rooms. These women were not ladies of ill-repute but were women who not only went out unaccompanied, but who drank alcohol out in public and without the presence of a chaperone. This cabaret climate provided and indeed propelled the perception of women as autonomous beings. In describing the early twentieth century New York cabaret setting, Lewis Erenberg writes:

Instead of mirroring the values of the private home, the public world represented a new openness and a new passion.... In this dangerously open environment...respectable women could mix promiscuously with people of unspecified moral character from whom they had been rigidly separated from since the 1850's.... As "people of position have taken to frequenting the restaurants where dancing is the attraction," claimed author, Julian Street, they created a social mixture never before seen in the United States, a "hodge-podge of people in which respectable young married and unmarried women, and even debutantes dance, not only under the same roof, but in the same room with women of the town."...Reformers saw in the cabaret a challenge to respectable amusements and their conception of the proper role of women. (77)

As cabaret developed its stage show and allowed its patrons to embrace the dance craze that had swept the nation, it also inadvertently helped propel the social forces of change and community, specifically for women, but also between the sexes, races, and classes of American culture.

### **Cultural Events that Influenced Early American Cabaret**

As cabaret began to provide women, gender relations, ethnic, and class relations connection in the progressive atmosphere of the cabaret rooms, American culture as a whole was headed toward one of the biggest polarizing road bumps of its history: the advent of Prohibition. The ordinance of 1913 was just a precursor to what was to become both devastating and liberating for the cabaret genre. As the ordinance of 1913 moved the non-restaurant, non-hotel late-night cabarets toward after-hours establishments, the onset of Prohibition pushed the cabarets out or underground even further. Almost completely paralleling the years of the Weimar Republic's lift of censorship for Germany, America did the opposite by imposing one of the most severe censors on American cultural life: taking away its choice to drink.

The Prohibition years from 1920-1933 forced many cabarets out of business altogether. The choice seemed to be a choice between two evils: go out of business and stay out of jail or continue your business as an illegal enterprise. The people who chose to continue their livelihood, albeit illegally, became owners of what became known as the "speakeasy." Even though many cabaret houses closed, cabaret itself flourished in this atmosphere. With colorful characters prominent in this underground cabaret scene, a nation with highly polarized opinions and an atmosphere of rebellion as the rippling undertow, cabaret couldn't help but thrive.

During the Prohibition years, cabaret reverted back somewhat to its roots where songs and sketches became more biting, more satirical, more political, and darker in nature than they had earlier. This was due to the fact that there was so much unrest in the nation. Commenting on contemporary life when contemporary life is difficult creates a darker philosophical bent, which plays itself out in the extemporaneous cabaret of the Prohibition Era.

During the time of Prohibition, there was an exclusivity in patronage that existed within the speakeasies that was reminiscent of the cabaret of Paris' Le Chat Noir. However, the patron exclusivity of the American speakeasy cabaret consisted of minimal credentials: firstly, not being a police officer, and secondly, upon entering, saying that "Joe sent me." Card-carrying speakeasy "membership" consisted of little more than writing a name on a napkin kept behind the bar. As James Gavin writes:

A distinctly American influence came from speakeasies, an industry unto themselves. At first, Prohibition had a deadly effect upon the New York nightlife, wiping out...famous cafés and restaurants. But within six months, their chefs relocated to speakeasies, making them the best places to drink *and* dine. To circumvent the law, these establishments called themselves "nightclubs" and issued membership cards. If you didn't have one, all you had to do was "knock three times and ask for Joe." (8)

Speakeasies and cabarets became somewhat synonymous. Helen Morgan, immortalized for her performance as "Julie" in the original musical theatre version of *Showboat*, was known not only as a cabaret singer, but as the owner of a cabaret speakeasy. Her lifelong struggles with alcoholism were likely exacerbated by the fact that, as an owner of a liquor selling establishment,

she had twenty-four hour access to the substance that ultimately was a large cause of her demise both professionally and personally. As James Gavin writes:

Morgan distilled the pain of these misfortunes into a singing style that remains moving today...It was at the Backstage Club that author Ring Lardner lifted her to the top of the piano, allegedly because she was too drunk to stand up.

Thereafter it became her trademark perch in about forty speakeasies and saloons. Four were even named for her: Helen Morgan's 54<sup>th</sup> Street Club, Chez Morgan, the House of Morgan, and Helen Morgan's Summer Home. Federal agents raided the last of these in 1928, and Morgan was arrested and charged as an accessory to the illegal sale of liquor. (8-9)

Morgan continued singing in cabarets throughout the majority of her life. In 1940, one year before her death of kidney failure, she was quoted as saying in the New York World-Telegram (March 9, 1940), "I want to finish with nightclubs. I hate the smoky tiny places. There's no excitement in it anymore."

By the mid-20s New Yorker's had had enough of Prohibition. They voted to suspend enforcement of Prohibition by their own officials. This vote left the Federal officers with all the work and no help. The Federal officers were, for the most part, unsuccessful at closing down the speakeasies. The Federal officers were undermanned for the task at hand. Speakeasies continued to flourish throughout Prohibition in New York City. The cabaret shows themselves were as diverse as the clientele and ambience, although the cabaret of the Prohibition and speakeasy era lent itself to a more intimate, torch song style, with its small, smoky atmosphere and severe focus on drink as a means to an end.

After flourishing primarily underground for the thirteen years of the Prohibition Era, cabaret had to find its footing among the legitimate theatrical landscape again, carving a new niche for itself in the post-Prohibition American culture. Although the Great Depression had descended on American culture, nightclub cabarets were again rampant as they moved back upstairs into the legal cultural arena. The visual style of cabaret morphed to a more showy, Vegas-style just after Prohibition, a nod to spectacle and vaudeville as Americans celebrated the end of the Prohibition Era. The over-the-top craze died down though as Americans settled into life post-Prohibition. Due to exorbitant costs and other factors, cabaret settled back before World War II into its standard, more intimate evening of entertainment. With its roots stemming from so many different sources, cabaret could, and would, attach itself to whatever style would keep it alive as it morphed from spectacle to intimacy within the span of a decade.

The years of the 30s saw a continued cabaret style that was alternately a combination of intimate revue sprinkled with lavish spectacle. Innovations in cabaret at this time nowhere near paralleled what was happening on Broadway, although the song material from the blossoming Broadway shows found its way back to the cabaret stage on occasion. The bittersweet songs of Rodgers and Hart and the jazzy syncopated rhythms of Gershwin lent themselves well to the cabaret stage. This was the era of the Great American Songbooks, which even today cabaret artists celebrate through composer, lyricist, and performer homage and retrospective cabaret revues.

### **The 40s to 60s: From Bliss to Bite**

The 1940s-1960s saw radical shifts in the cabaret scene. The early 40s continued the popularity of the risqué cabaret song, but that fashion began to change with the advent of war. As James Gavin states:

To most of 1940's America, nightlife in New York City was synonymous with grandeur, audience participation, and-most of all-money....It reflects the wartime need for escape. The formula for success: make it big, loud, lavish and, if possible, Latin. Dozens of rooms brought all four qualities splashily to life...All were places to eat and drink heartily, dance, and forget your wartime trouble by watching floor shows that often rivaled Busby Berkeley. (47)

During the mid-1940s to mid-1960s, one famous club, The Blue Angel, named in honor of the 1930 German film by director Josef von Sternberg featuring Marlene Deitrich and Emil Jannings, came to prominence. Regarding The Blue Angel, James Gavin states:

From 1943-1964 dozens of performers began their careers at its red-carpeted entrance, including Barbra Streisand, Mike Nichols and Elaine May, Carol Burnett, Johnny Mathis, Tom Lehrer, Phyllis Diller, Shelley Berman, Pearl Bailey, Harry Belafonte and Woody Allen....The all black décor was considered the height of 40's and 50's New York chic...Some found the décor morbid. "I never liked that room," says Bobby Short, who played and sang in the lounge during the early 60's. "It was long and somewhat narrow-and madly upholstered. It was decorated within an inch of its life. I used to call it the Coffin Room." (57)

With reference to performance styles and performers, cabaret again ran the gamut in terms of an eclectic mix of performers and an array of performance styles. Cabaret performance

at this time gravitated toward light comedic banter and torch songs in the 1940s and early 1950s, making a radical shift to a biting, politically satirical intellectual force as American culture moved into the 1950s and 1960s. Oftentimes people think of the 1940s as the Big-Band era of the front singer, the “canaries” of the war era. This holds true of the cabaret culture as well, as 1940s American cabaret was and still is dominated by female singers, rather than poets, artists, or other types of entertainers, male or female.

The 1950s and 1960s was a different time for cabaret, and cabaret enjoyed a return in form to its early European format. Getting back to its poetic and intellectual roots, cabaret had a wide range of poets, political satirists, comedians, and vocalists during this era. In fact, Lisa Appignanesi’s book relates the advent of the cabaret genre as paralleling the Beat scene in America, not starting before the Beat scene:

For the first time since the birth of cabaret, English language satirists launched a full-scale assault on their societies and their ruling powers from the small stage. If one wants to venture into the heady areas of origins, it could be argued that it all began with the Beat scene in America.... For the next decade American cabaret flourished under the aegis of the ‘Sickniks’, Mort Sahl, Shelley Berman, the sketch-team Mike Nichols and Elaine May, and the inimitable Lenny Bruce, ‘American’s Number 1 Vomic’, as he was dubbed by a leading columnist. (229)

Though Lisa Appignanesi’s book purports the advent of cabaret as paralleling the Beat scene, I beg to differ. I understand her point, and with regard to a “purists” stance I agree with her. Cabaret in its purist form of contemporary political satire and social commentary did not occur in America frequently until the Beat Generation. However, many of the other aspects of cabaret *can* be seen at the turn of the century and the onset of Prohibition. Though admittedly

less intellectual than its European predecessors, early American cabaret was still insular (the Prohibition “members only” status), and was still intimate (most clubs were small), and it was interactive (the singer was expected to entertain as well as interact with the audience). My stance is that the cabaret scene began to come into its own at the advent of Prohibition, though its American heritage started earlier. I do not purport a specific time and place of origin for American cabaret as neatly as one can pinpoint the onset of French cabaret at Le Chat Noir in Paris in 1881, nevertheless, the parallels to the genre with regard to its French roots are too great for me to ignore completely.

The Beat Generation returned America to its European cabaret roots with both emphasis on the spoken-word forms mixed with musical styling, as well as the propensity toward political and social lampooning of the contemporary officials and society at large. There was a “calm before the storm” season in the 1950s just before the Beat Generation came to roost; a time where even comedians were fairly tame with regard to artistic material. James Gavin describes the difference in 1950’s cabaret style before the beatnik scene as such:

Yes, it was a less complicated time, a safer, more romantic time, a more innocent time-and intimate clubs reflected this. Rarely did comics try to enlighten you politically or sociologically; their goal was to entertain. Phyllis Diller bemoaned her inadequacies as a cook: “I was making a pudding and I knew something was wrong. I couldn’t get the spoon out.”... Mike Nichols and Elaine May depicted a pretentious couple talking in bed after their first meeting in a bar: “Too many people think of Adler as a man who made mice neurotic. He was more. *Much* more.” This was the stuff of the 50’s life, interpreted with a sophistication that few comics before them had shown. (15)



The 1950s started out mildly, and then radical shifts in politics and social climate took over in the late 1950s and 1960s. This era was a trying time for the whole nation and the polarity of the nation was depicted in the cabaret art of the time. The cabaret genre went back to its European roots and used its intellectually artistic force to make its will and its hostility toward the atrocities it saw as reprehensible known. This era was a time where the cabaret genre aligned itself with mainstream art, as mainstream art of the time was aimed at puncturing the social and political fabric of society. Mainstream art at this time became more hostile, more topical, more satirical in nature, and cabaret artists attached themselves to the movement, using their artistry to make the necessary political and social statements. This era is the most angst-ridden and darkest of American cabaret's history. As Lisa Appignanesi points out:

Several features distinguish these figures ...and make them stand out as genuine satirical cabaretists. All of them wrote their own routines and did not rely on professional 'comic' writers. They adopted a casual manner on stage, acting as if the stage did not exist and speaking directly to their audience. Their attitude to this audience was half intimate, half hostile, for like the original cabaretists they were breaking down the mystique of the stage and simultaneously provoking or insulting their audience into reaction of participation. Finally, they leapt over the political taboo and deliberately engaged in topical political satire, something no American performer had dared to do on the small stage, despite the laxity of American libel laws. By the sheer outlandishness of their quips and the daring vituperative quality of their monologues, they rose beyond entertainment and professionalism into the area of satirical art. (229)

It is interesting to note that even during the milder 1950s, the improvisational group known as *The Second City* was forged through a University of Chicago theatre group in 1953. *The Second City*, with its humor, poetry and musicality began to prick holes in the fabric of American cultural society that were considered sacrosanct. Meanwhile, the advent of Rock 'n Roll on the American scene caused a downturn in cabaret ticket sales and after the 1960's Beat scene surge, cabaret led a somewhat withered existence.

### **Cabaret in the 70s and Beyond**

The end of the 1960s saw the cabaret genre in a bit of a tailspin. This era saw a split between those who wanted the elegance and musical joviality to return to the cabaret stage and those who championed the angst-ridden social and political topical biting commentary of the cabaret comedians. James Gavin describes the cabaret genre:

...[The cabaret scene was trying to be] heard above the deafening roar of Vietnam-era protest and to keep alive a certain brand of studied elegance long after the country had decided it no longer mattered....in a decade characterized by violence, blood had to be drawn in order to gain attention.... The topics of importance in the 60's required nothing less. The small voices that remained were snuffed out rather harshly. (295-6)

During the 1970s, with the prevailing importance of radio, and especially television as a means of communication for the American people, cabaret artists who didn't utilize the mainstream media lost out to the people and shows that were on the air. Once again, cabaret had to adapt to survive. Some cabaretists jumped into the mainstream, using radio, television, and film as their cabaret vehicle of choice. Many performers found cabaret style homes in Vegas

shows rooms, dinner clubs, and other venues reminiscent of the clubs of yesteryear. In many ways, though, the mainstay core group of cabaret artists went underground once again, only to re-emerge among new venues and with a decidedly new clientele, at least a new clientele in America's cabaret history. Previously, cabaret clientele was decidedly heterosexual, and now, during the 1970's the subculture turned decidedly and overtly gay.

The gay movement, and one particular American event and its fallout, kept cabaret alive during this period. To hear James Gavin describe it, "New York City might never have experienced a nightclub renaissance in the 70's were it not for the famous Stonewall riot of 1969 and the advent of gay liberation." (297) Gavin continues with, "As the 1970's began, the night held greater promise for gays than ever before, encouraging them to go out more often and, by necessity, to create new places to go. Among these were intimate night clubs." (297)

A place called The Tubs, a gay bathhouse owned by Stephen Ostrow, located beneath the Ansonia Hotel, was the cabaret start of the legendary Bette Midler. Midler's success at The Tubs is quoted as a primary reason for cabaret's continued existence in New York during this time. James Gavin states, "Between 1972 and 1982 at least forty intimate clubs opened and closed, along with a multitude of bars and discos." (302) And then, "The vogue that followed gained a lot of its momentum from the motion picture *Cabaret*, released in February 1972." (303) In that same year, Lewis Friedman, a Columbia University graduate, opened what was to become "perhaps the most celebrated of these rooms" (Gavin 304). The room was called Reno Sweeney, named after the character in Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*. Notably, Cab Calloway, Barbara Cook, Blossom Dearie, and Steve Allen played at Reno Sweeney.

Unfortunately, Reno Sweeney didn't have a long run. Friedman sold the club in 1975. Meanwhile, in the late 1970s and into the 1980s a major downturn happened for the cabaret

genre. Cabarets began to adopt a “pay to play” format, which put all the burden of promotion, tickets and marketing on the performer. James Gavin describes it

Female impersonator Gypsy (Jim Haake), the flamboyant and frequently hilarious host of the East Side club Gypsy’s, summed it up more humorously than most.

“How, you may ask, does it feel to be a star in a cabaret? How would I know? But I think it would be like being a social director on the *Titanic*. You know you’re going down, but you don’t know when. (327)

The “pay to play” atmosphere of the late 1970’s produced an interesting cabaret phenomenon. Many of the cabaret shows that did survive did so on an ego-concert basis. Those with the means could now buy themselves a cabaret run and fill the house for a day or two with friends, regardless of whether the cabaret “artist” actually had the talent to attract returning customers. This was described by James Gavin in his summation of the 1970s era in that “the combination of rising costs, diminished chances for exposure, and sinking performance standards made the future of intimate clubs seem less encouraging than ever.” (335)

As production and overhead costs escalated, the 1980s and 1990s continued to be bleak. “Going out for its own sake extended mainly to movies, bars, restaurants, or the homes of friends. Most people undertook an evening at the theatre or a nightclub only when they wanted to see a show badly enough to bear the high cost.” (Gavin, 336) A few venues such as the Hotel Algonquin’s Oak Room and the Café Carlyle seemed to garner all the business available, and thus, remained stable as beacons of hope for this generation of cabaretists and patrons.

A few cabaret convention gatherings, cabaret journals, and cities with thriving cabaret houses speckle the American scene with hope. Most notably, *Cabaret Scenes* magazine has a listing of cities that are home to viable cabaret venues in the United States such as New York,

Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Palm Springs, and Philadelphia/New Hope. Also, some conventions of note include the Orlando Cabaret Festival (going into its third year this summer in Downtown Orlando) and the Cabaret Convention at Town Hall in New York City that is now an annual event started in 1989.

The cabaret genre is often seen today as the last bastion for aging singers from other musical arenas, especially Broadway. Even its purported advocate, the Manhattan Association of Cabarets (MAC) which hosts the MAC Awards, the highest honor for a cabaret artist in America, has its detractors. MAC membership has been accused of being inbred, as many people have never even heard of a MAC Award. James Gavin carps at the MAC Association thus:

Another organization, the Manhattan Association of Cabarets (MAC) announced its goal “to promote cabaret as a viable art form and as an alternative to a night at the theatre,” but so far has merely furthered the business’s reputation as a self-contained, incestuous subculture. Most of MAC’s memberships came from the local amateur circuit, who gathered for meetings and seminars on such topics as “How to Choose a Musical Director,” “How to Do Your Own Publicity,” and “Videotaping Your Show.” MAC’s annual award ceremonies exposed every reason why the business *should* expire. Between the presentation of a group of ludicrously chosen awards were performances by a parade of transvestites, epicene male singers, and female self-parodies, who received thunderous applause from their assembled clagues. During a mid-song ovation given to a tortured Colombian female vocalist, one veteran singer-pianist whispered to another, “I think we’re a little too old for this.” (357)

Besides the concert or lounge style cabaret, which is not currently in a financially stable state in America, piano bars are one of the only other forms of the American cabaret genre to be thriving at this point. The primary reason is that after the heyday of the Karaoke bars passed, patrons wanted to once again hear live music, did not want the heavy overhead of a full band, and liked the aspect of the sing-a-long interaction Karaoke provides. Thus, piano bars filled the void. Full of intellectual wit or bawdy humor, interaction, and confined to an intimate space, these piano bars act as one of the only thriving offshoots of cabaret today.

### **Tomorrow's Cabaret: Where are we Going and Who's Taking us There?**

As for tomorrow's cabaret, what will it look like and who will take us there? There are candidates in the industry now who give every indication of continuing their leadership well into the future. Diehards such as Barbara Cook and Elaine Stritch continue to grace cabaret stages, adding elegance (Cook), sass (Stritch), and historical backbone to the cabaret concert scene. Michael Feinstein has infused the cabaret scene most notably with his careful and loving treatment of Gershwin pieces and his extensive archival work of the Gershwin legacy through his relationship with the late Ira Gershwin. As a pianist and singer, his cabarets create a lounge-jazz style that is intelligent and intimate for his insular audience of Gershwin lovers.

Cabaret artists that seem to cross over into mainstream are artists that use cabaret as a fill-in between other Broadway, film and TV jobs such as Rebecca Luker, Liz Callaway, and Judy Kuhn. The mainstays of traditional cabaret continue to be artists such as Ann Hampton Callaway (sister to Broadway's famous Liz Callaway), Jason Graae, KT Sullivan, Mary Cleere Haran, and Andrea Marcovicci to name a few. These mainstay artists are the ones who cultivate

relationships with up-and-coming cabaretists and who mentor them and actively help keep the genre alive.

As for spoken-word cabaretists, political satirists are sprouting up more and more since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack. As we become more and more frustrated by our political system's loopholes, legal system, or voting catastrophes, we create a ripe environment for a resurgence of the traditional European cabaret model to assert itself in the near future. Knowing what artists will lead us there, should cabaret once again turn overtly political or satirical is uncertain, but the cabaret genre seems to find a way to live despite all the obstacles history has put in its path.

### **The Many Faces and Many Names of Cabaret**

American cabaret, similar to European cabaret is hard to define and can often be labeled, or mislabeled, as its very nature is chameleon-like, blurring the lines of distinction between other genres and still daring to call itself cabaret. Historically, cabaret has similarities to and differences from many other forms of musical theatre.

Similar to early Greek comedy, cabaret was originally an innovative art form, as artists performed for other artists in an originally exclusive setting, performing their own work. Like early Roman theatre, cabaret incorporates comedy and variety entertainment, utilizing improvisational elements, sexual innuendo, music, dance, sketch, pantomime, as well as thoughts and ideas that mostly concern domestic subjects. Like theatre from the Middle Ages, cabaret promotes passionate and intellectual thought regarding mores and moral ideologies, though the Middle Ages' proponent was primarily advocating passion and thoughts geared toward theatrical performance of sacred texts. Cabaret's original intent was to use art, music, and theatre to

illuminate the hypocrisies of society, which, in its own way is an espousal to a sacred philosophy of illuminating “truth,” however nebulous that pursuit may be. Cabaret also has similarities to the intermezzi of the Renaissance in that poetry and prose are prominent in the artistic culture and also the advent of the ruling class and working classes beginning to mix in the arts.

Compared to a variety of American genres, like Minstrelsy and Vaudeville, Cabaret is usually non-plotted, although a program may be themed or not. Like Minstrelsy, Cabaret was brought forth as a lampooning of certain people, in the case of the original Cabaret, the bourgeoisie. Like Minstrelsy’s *Olio*, which was the precursor to Vaudeville, the variety element, as well as the element of dance was prominent, especially as we move to Cabaret in America. Like the Minstrelsy’s *Fantasia*, which was the precursor to *Revue*, Cabaret often features specialty acts that were of a more serious and humanistic nature. Most notably, Cabaret aligns itself with Minstrelsy’s *Burlesque* in the way that it is designed to sharpen the razor, to bite, to be satirical (in Cabaret’s case, also political) as it comments on life and current issues. Like Vaudeville, Cabaret is “the voice of the city” in that it morphs itself to trumpet the voice of the people who utilize its form and structure. Often non-themed and non-plotted, Cabaret and Vaudeville strive to entertain, Vaudeville with nine acts (usually of greater length than Cabaret acts) and Cabaret with approximately fifteen acts per show (an act usually constituting one song or a sketch).

Regarding social and political likeness, Vaudeville, like Cabaret, gave its women performers equal opportunity to star in the shows, although unlike Vaudeville, Cabaret embraced its female patrons to arrive with or without chaperone, to imbibe at one’s own discretion, for better or for worse. Like Vaudeville, Cabaret doesn’t intrinsically cater to class, sex, or race discrimination within its audience or its artists. Like *Burlesque* rather than Vaudeville, Cabaret is



satirical and biting, including bawdy, raunchy, and sexual comedy, replete with double entendre and sometimes partial or full nudity. Like Burlesque, Cabaret uses comedy as a means to entertain and a means to provoke. Like Revue, Cabaret has, at various times in history, added much spectacle to the program. More often than not, Cabaret has pulled back in restraint, like an intimate Revue, which may celebrate a lyricist, composer, or performer in a simple, artistic, nondescript, and minimalist manner.

Overall, the most common thread of cabaret performance throughout history is breaking the fourth wall. William Taylor writes:

Cabaret operators...encouraged audience participation and provided new arenas for the expansion of both theatricality and personality....As a result, performers and patrons could interact together in the “sacred” areas of performance....In all, the cabaret offered audiences opportunities to express their personalities along with the performers....stimulating patrons to “act” and take risks. (163)

Of course, breaking the fourth wall, as well as lowering the stage, eliminating it altogether, and having the stage part of the dance floor, causes unique problems with regard to keeping the audiences attention. As James Gavin states:

The glamour of these clubs was something of an illusion, however. They were hard work, offering less money and exposure than television, theatre, or recordings....During her run in the 1961 Broadway musical *Carnival!* Kaye Ballard told *Theatre* magazine, “...Clubs are the most heartbreaking field for a performer. You’ve got to be made of steel to combat all those warring elements: booze, food, chatter, clamorous china, smoke billowing down your throat as you

open your mouth to sing! It's not only a battle for attention, it's a struggle for survival!" (15)

Cabaret, therefore, historically has its roots in so many genres, while at the same time tenaciously struggling to survive, or more accurately, thrive by adapting itself to its surroundings, courageously handling its wily constituency, while remaining true to itself and its message, whatever that may be. As it tips its hat to history, it thrusts its face forward toward the tomorrow it will help to create.

Cabaret has meant many things to many nations since its inception in France in 1881. From its origins as an exclusive club where artists performed for other artists, cabaret has inadvertently come full circle; cabaret is once again a small group of artists performing for other artists and insiders. Though cabaret had a resurgence of its 1881 French purist form of political and social satire and bite in the 1950s and 1960s, cabaret in America today is still decidedly less political and satirical than its European counterparts.

Whatever the differences are between European and American Cabaret, the cabaret artists themselves share a kindred spirit. American cabaret artists have the same rebellious, independent, intellectual spirit their European pioneers had. Though critics often call the genre and its advocates a dying breed, one could argue that the genre is again in another state of metamorphosis, lying dormant, someday to re-emerge with a vengeance that will once more exacerbate or titillate the American sensibility as it chooses.

The cabaret genre has proved and reinvented itself time and time again, defying extinction whilst going over, under or through any obstacle that tries to extinguish its existence or diminish its indomitable spirit. Tenacity and resourcefulness are at the core of the genre and its people. The genre will realign its essence with any culture or political climate to which it is

affixed as surely as its artists will surface, carrying the torch of an art form that by design is pliable to the needs of the people. Cabaret fills a unique human need, the need for community, the need for belonging. Cabaret artists have four main objectives at their core, and they have a deep need to allow their art to find its freedom within these objectives. The objectives of a true cabaretist are these: the artistry of intellectual thought, the belonging of an insular spirit, the camaraderie of an interactive persona, and the unity of an intimate environment. When these objectives are met, the true cabaretist will lead, transporting the audience to its proper artistic place. Therefore, the question, “Where are we going?” can be answered simply thus: anywhere we desire.

## **STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS**

### **Structural Analysis Introduction**

Ultimately, Josie and I wanted to create a night's entertainment that didn't feel overly stuffy or academic; we wanted the content to have academic fortitude, yet create an experience that felt spontaneous, light-hearted, and exciting for the audience. Structurally we wanted our show to run chronologically. We began with cabaret's inception at Le Chat Noir in the Montmartre district of France in 1881. We transitioned to Germany in the Weimar Era 1919-1933. The thrust of our show centered on American cabaret at the turn of the twentieth century and we chronicled American cabaret by decade up to the present state of cabaret. Our goal was to create an overview, a "Cabaret 101" history narrative combined with songs both familiar and new to both the cabaret novice and the more advanced cabaret-goer.

### **Structural Style**

#### **Improvisational and Interactive Elements**

The stylistic choice of a show in which from beginning to end the proverbial fourth wall is down was of utmost importance to both of us. Not only is this true to cabaret's historical roots, it is a stylistic feature both of us have a great affinity with and talent for. We wanted the audience to get the feel of personal interaction immediately. We decided, therefore, to come out of our dressing rooms five minutes before "showtime" so that we might enter unannounced from the back of the house and walk around informally greeting our guests and putting last minute touches on the décor in full view of the audience. This stylistic decision gave the audience an idea of what to expect for the evening's entertainment, as there was never a formal introduction or song to announce us. When we were ready to start, Josie and I nodded to each other and Josie

called for everyone's attention as she read the "Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life" (see appendix F). Interacting in this way and reading the Ten Commandments clearly let the audience know our stylistic intentions.

Other points of obvious improvisational and interactive elements included my turn as Petronella in "Take It Off, Petronella." I did a strip-tease for the audience wearing a purple bustier covered with purple balloons that were popped by audience members and I interacted with them to encourage them to take my pin and pop the balloons. During "Fever," I entreated the audience to snap on the off beats of the song and did some small interaction as I cajoled them to participate. Also, during that song, we flirted with audience members as we sang one of the verses, actually touching them slightly as we caressed their hair and cooed our song in their ear. During the beatnik section of our show, Josie talked to the audience as she got them to snap beatnik style for her poem. During "Aquarius," we cajoled audience members to come up and dance with us, and with each other.

As far as music, our show was representative of a variety of differing styles including classical, musical theatre, jazz, and pop. We took a lot of time and energy creating the mood for each song, as seen in the outline of my role analysis as music director as well as in Appendix C, which is the band list of instrumentation and rhythmic feel changes. We began the show with the older musical styles and modernized as the chronology advanced.

With regard to the segue text, the style was written to denote a stern professor giving a class lecture. Many of the sentences were clipped and most of them read like a textbook reading you might hear at a lecture series given by such a professor. The text was meant to be stylistically even so that the songs were the texture points of the piece, and the text would become the grounding item, a point of departure for each section or song.

## **Stylistic Eras of France, Germany, and America**

Stylistically, we wanted to re-create some historic accuracy with regard to performance style, although we didn't want the show to be burdened with that responsibility the entire time. There were some decidedly accurate moments, especially early in the show, such as my classical style of vocal delivery for "Le Chapelier," as well as Josie's musically and historically accurate rendition of "La Vie en Rose," made famous by Edith Piaf. "Take It Off, Petronella" was also decidedly "Weimar-esque" in delivery (dark and edgy), as well as Josie's medley rendition of Helen Kane's numbers "I Wanna Be Loved By You/Button Up Your Overcoat," (done in the Betty Boop style of Helen Kane).

A noted stylistically accurate departure included my rendition Big-Band style of the Kurt Weill song, "The Saga of Jenny." The beginning numbers of the show were fairly traditional with regard to limited rhythm section interaction. I wanted to have a song close to the beginning that would "pop" and give the audience a lift, as well as show a song in a non-traditional format, foreshadowing some of the other stylistic changes ahead. I chose "The Saga of Jenny" to kickstart the audience, and add a thicker underpinning to the overly strophic Weill song. The changes in Big-Band rhythms underneath the story added percussive and melodic changes for Josie to create her dance behind me which told the saga of the character of Jenny.

Also, though still sung in a pop style, our rendition of "What the World Needs Now" was a big departure in that we used it as the end of a beatnik poem rather than having it be its own solo pop number. The beatnik element changed the feel of the song, although the text of the song was conducive to this type of change. We chose this beatnik style, moving into the song straight from the poem to show the parallels between the original French Hydropathes society that gathered at Le Chat Noir in 1881 and the Beat Generation's use of spoken word and song

delivery. It worked very well and rearranging this song to a more recitative-style propelled the speak-singing element the Beat poem needed.

“Copacabana” is often done as a disco dance number, although Josie used it stylistically as a theatrical look at Lola’s life. Josie showed Lola’s ultimate alcoholic and psychological demise as she pines for Tony, the man she loved, who died due to his jealous anger and Rico’s well aimed bullet.

### **Structural Conventions**

#### **The Opening Cabaret Poem and Beatnik Section**

Josie, having a penchant for creative writing, wanted to write the two poems in the show, the opening cabaret poem and the beatnik poem, which parallels the opening poem by showing how closely the Beat Generation style was to the original French cabaret style. Josie crafted exposition into her poetry to teach the audience about the history of both Paris, France in 1881 and the Beat Generation of the 1950s and 1960s. Josie used both humor and wit as she wove the poetry into the textual and musical tableau, creating a convention of a poetess as a teacher.

#### **The Professor Persona**

Another teacher persona is the character convention we created in our conférencier, or “emcee” character, the serious and stern professor lecturing at the podium. We showed this convention visually by donning or removing eyeglasses to morph into and out of this character while reading the text that was both expositional and engaging for the audience. We chose for this professor character to be a stage convention, anchor, or crux of our show, a vantage point for the audience to see inside, out, and around our cabaret world. We also used this convention as a crux point, bringing us back to center as we look to the professor for more information on

history, where we are in the chronological process of the evening, as well as “cleansing the palate” for the next course of events in our varietal musical and theatrical “meal.”

This character worked very well in our show and we were quite pleased with the results, however, the challenge we had with regard to the character was twofold. Firstly, we often had handheld props or other items, which created a cumbersome transition. Dealing with props, handling the microphone on the podium, and putting the professor glasses on every time the professor role occurred had to be rehearsed in order to look organic. Also, the transitional time from center stage to stage left as we finished singing and went to the podium created a bit of “dead time” that we had to handle adeptly. We used this time as interactive or stage business time. We either talked to the audience on our way to the podium, or did some kind of stage business such as clean a nearby table on our walk to the podium, thus lessening the dead space aspect of the transition. Ultimately, we adroitly handled the challenges of creating the professor persona and we were very pleased with the results.

### **Historical Arc**

#### **France**

We began the show at the beginning, with the start of the cabaret genre in the Montmartre district of Paris, France in 1881. Poets, artists, musicians, and all kinds of people peppered the audience at Le Chat Noir (the Black Cat) in the late 1800s. We wanted to give our audience the retrospective feel of what it might be like to have been at Le Chat Noir in that era. We took care in setting up the tables as might have been back then, creating a jocular and friendly pub atmosphere. Josie started our show informally with announcements and continued with a cabaret poem and I culminated the French section with “Le Chapelier,” a *chanson* of the era sung in French.



## **Germany**

As fitting for the Weimar Era, we decided to do a decadent song. Censorship was lifted during this era in Germany and, as such, lascivious entertainment was rampant during this time. Josie and I chose the song, “Take It Off, Petronella” to embody the saucy spirit of the times. Josie sang in German, though she interjected spoken English dialogue to me as I prepared backstage for my strip-tease entrance. I wore an outfit embodying the hedonistic feel of the era, a purple bustier adorned with purple balloons, which the audience popped on my command. This bawdy strip matched the song’s randy lyrics and created a performance high in verisimilitude.

## **America by Decade**

We began our journey into American cabaret with the era of Prohibition. Helen Morgan owned a speakeasy called “Chez Morgan” and we used that, and her, as a starting point for our American journey. We then ventured into the 1920’s and 1930’s with information about flappers and dance crazes, describing Vernon and Irene Castle as the king and queen of this era and Helen Kane as the prototype of a definitive flapper girl.

Next, we moved to the era of Big-Band and swing, focusing on front singers such as Ella Fitzgerald, who melted the hearts of America through frivolous musical candy numbers such as “A Tisket A Tasket.” In complete opposition to the frivolity of song styles, there were also great strides made in music in the jazz idiom with rich textural and musical pieces such as Billy Strayhorn’s “Lush Life.”

Next, we covered the Beat Generation with poetry by Josie as well as songs from the era of *Hair*. Next, we moved to the disco era. We featured Barry Manilow, Bette Midler’s accompanist during her bathhouse performance days as our composer of choice for this era.

Next we had the cabaret cliché section, where we did numbers chosen from our own lists of songs we love or loathe as well as incorporated song selections from friends and family regarding their likes and dislikes in the cabaret music and theatrical canon. Our reasoning behind doing the cliché section was to show the effect the Great American Songbooks had on the genre of American cabaret. Many people think of cabaret as purely an art form for aging (mostly female) singers, or crooners who sing retrospectives of the American Musical Theatre Songbooks. We were aware of this and know this is part of the American cabaret legacy, like it or not, and we wanted to pay homage to some of the people and some of the songs that have seared the name of cabaret into the hearts and minds of Americans.

We ended with a lesser known song, “It’s Time,” a Frank Wildhorn/Jack Murphy collaboration that textually says what we wanted to say, “It’s time to say goodbye.” We said goodbye to our thesis performance, thanked the band members, and said goodnight to our audience members.

Historically, we tried to embody each decade accurately through our song and character choices, as well as through our segue text. The cabaret cliché section could be seen as the climax to the historical arc in that those songs have become so popular and are so overdone that they create the pinnacle of what is known as cabaret music in America. For better or for worse, the songs in our cliché section seem to be here to stay.

### **Structural Arc**

#### **Exposition**

The exposition of our show was shown by using the convention of the professor character. We created the expositional text to include pertinent historical information as well as biographical information on some of the great performers, composers, lyricist, or other artists

that are integral to the study of the cabaret genre. There was very little exposition in the show, in order that the songs themselves become the primary focus; however, within the small amount of segue text, there is quite a bit of topical information. Therefore, this professor carries the weight of the through line in that the professor proverbially teaches the “Cabaret 101” classroom and the audience members are the pupils.

### **Inciting Incidents**

As for inciting incidents, there were no traditional “incidents” within our show due to the fact that it is not a book musical, and, thus, is a non-plotted theatrical piece. However, there were a few moments of excitement we created within the show to pique the audience’s interest much in the same way inciting incidents might be used in a more traditional plotted format. The beginning poem (as read by Josie) incited laughter and other interactive banter from the audience. “Take It Off, Petronella” with my strip-tease balloon popping incited the audience to laugh and participate. The lyrics to “The Saga of Jenny” tell quite a saucy tale, and with the mimed storytelling and provocative dancing Josie incorporated to bring this piece to life, she created an inciting incident through her portrayal of Jenny. During “Straighten Up and Fly Right” Josie and I wore very silly costumes that added to the visual attraction and spectacle of the piece. The interaction we used in “Fever” was meant to be seductive as we flirted with audience members while singing. The beatnik section of the show was deliberately meant to incite the audience to participate both in the beatnik poem and the dancing during “Aquarius.” All these incidents created a forum for keeping, changing, or increasing the audience’s attention through our carefully interpolated inciting moments.

## **Rising Action**

Much like the inciting moments, the sense of rising action came not through a plotted show, but through the careful planning that went into the song selection, in particular, the decisions made with regard to the run order. For the beginning of the show, we wanted to get the audience's attention through the use of the introductory cabaret poem as read by Josie. This paralleled the early French cabaret performance practices at Le Chat Noir and also established the sense of an emcee, or conférencier, as the host of the evening. The first two songs, "Le Chapelier" in French, and "La Vie En Rose" in English settled the audience, as they were performed without much spectacle, and were done in traditional style for the time period. Doing these songs traditionally gave the audience a sense of history, which was very important to us, as we were generally taking the audience on a chronological journey.

The action rose slightly with the next two songs, "Take It Off, Petronella" and "The Saga of Jenny," creating a more bawdy atmosphere indicative of the Weimar Era. "Take It Off, Petronella" was done musically in a more traditional style in that only the piano was used along with the voice. However, we used a burlesque aspect of spectacle to this number (as I did a striptease in a balloon costume) to show the spectacle and decadence of the Weimar German era. For "The Saga of Jenny" a Big-Band arrangement accompanied me as I sang, allowing Josie a more textured underpinning to her choreographic demonstration of the story of the character, Jenny.

Moving into the arena of American cabaret, the action settled a bit with "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" and "I Wanna Be Loved by You/Button Up Your Overcoat." These were both done in a fairly traditional style, but were contrasting in tone, to show the difference between the torchy and downhearted "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" of the speakeasy Prohibition cabaret and

the up-beat Helen Kane medley, which embodies the happy-go-lucky flapper cabaret and dance craze culture.

Directly after these two pieces, we moved towards more motion, allowing the action to rise with four up-tempo numbers. These numbers were: “They Can’t Take That Away From Me,” “Straighten Up and Fly Right,” (which also added the visual element as mentioned above) and “I Got Rhythm,” (which is a high-energy belt number performed by Josie) and “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore.” These numbers were done in concert Big-Band style to show the movement from the dance craze era to the Big-Band “canary” singers of the 1930s and 1940s. We used the sense of the front singer standing, swaying, and singing as if in front of a microphone stand as the impetus for a more settled vocal sense of action during this song, although the band swung hard underneath the vocals.

The action moved forward in sexual intensity with the song, “Fever,” as we interacted with the audience. “Orange Colored Sky” continued the interaction as I strolled through the front section of the audience and sang a section of the song to each cabaret table. Both songs could have been included in the last set of Big-Band standards, but we wanted to break up the amount of time we would stand still, so we used these two songs to break out of the front singer mold while maintaining the sense of Big-Band swing.

The action diminished at the end of this jazz/Big-Band section as we culminated in the bitter ballad, “Lush Life,” which I sang at the “bar” area we designated stage left. This song was one of the most important to me, and one I picked early on in the process. Its bitter lyrics and combination of jazz, torch, and blues styles captures the essence of what I think great cabaret should be. Many people told me it was their favorite song of mine in the show, which I found quite interesting because I didn’t move during the song, I sat at a bar stool and drank a martini.

The effect this song had on the audience reminded me how important not only good lyrics and melody are, but how much effect a performer can have without extraneous movement, if the performer is fully invested in the piece.

The action rose again, higher than before during the beatnik section songs “What the World Needs Now” and “Aquarius.” The band was quite a bit louder, and our singing more belted. We interacted with the audience more as we brought people to their feet to dance with us during the end of this section. We wanted this section to parallel (but at a higher intensity) the early French and German cabaret section. The use of poetry and spoken word was important here to pontificate and interact with both Josie and the audience.

In keeping with the rising action, we went on to perform “Copacabana,” in which Josie plays Lola, a woman who loses all sense of personal and psychological reality. I played the three characters of Tony, Rico, and the waitress who serves the demented Lola at the height of her psychological despair. This song was used to show the destruction decadence and hedonism can cause, as any good thing, overdone, is prone to do. The freewheeling, cavalier attitude of the sixties, combined with the excess the disco and drug culture perpetuated caused the demise of many personal lives during that era, and we wanted to encapsulate that angst with this sequence of songs.

### **Climax**

The climax of the piece was created by the four song selections in the cabaret cliché portion of the show. The songs were: “Mein Herr,” “New York State of Mind,” “Over the Rainbow,” and “Cry Me a River.” While these songs do not have the visual spectacle, or fancy, witty, ribald lyrics of some of the previous material, they were the climax of the show. They were climactic because the songs themselves have been tried and tested over time, showing them

to be songs that move audiences purely on the basis of their musical, lyrical, and textual dynamic. These cliché songs are considered ripe fodder for a truly meaningful cabaret performance.

The full band played on each of these songs, and each song had its own specific groove, creating an arc to the climax. “Mein Herr” was done in the pulsing Broadway-two feel, the traditional style from Liza Minnelli’s famous performance in the 1972 film, *Cabaret*. “New York State of Mind” was done with the pop/blues style of Billy Joel’s famous rendition, a contemporary feel in direct contrast to the Weimar Era throwback of the previous song. “Over the Rainbow” was done as a jazz arrangement, still a ballad, but with a more contemporary feel, continuing the contemporary thread from the previous song and giving a moment of respite before the final climactic number of the sequence.

“Cry Me a River,” as the tour de force torch song was the cusp of the climax. I used a variety of vocal styles to symbolically indicate the demise of a love relationship and the onset of resolve within the betrayed, as she admonishes her lover to “Cry me a river, cuz I cried a river over you.” The band started with a standard pop/blues/torch song feel in 4/4 time, and then as we went back to the bridge after the first time through the song, the band kicked into a 12/8 blues feel. This change in rhythm pulled the song back and pushed it forward simultaneously, as the groove sat back on its heels, but the melody gained intensity, creating the climax of the show in the final bridge and chorus section of the song.

### **Denouement**

The denouement occurred during the song, “One for My Baby.” We portrayed the denouement both visually and vocally as we created a bar atmosphere that Josie was cleaning up as I sang “I know you’re getting anxious to close.” We also rather enjoyed the truly parallel lyric

as the song refers to “Joe” as the bartender, and we had “Jo” (short for Josephine) play the part of “Joe” the bartender to which the text makes reference. We truly did clean some of the stage as Josie closed up shop during the song, putting on her coat and reminding me that it’s late, it’s time to leave, and she wants to go home. It was a poignant moment and the song fit well with the closing moments of the show. For our final number, “It’s Time,” we came back out from behind the changing curtain and sang our duet center stage straight to the audience, saying goodbye to all as we closed our thesis performance.

### **Structural Analysis Conclusion**

Though our show is a non-plotted cabaret revue, it nevertheless has the same elements of theatrical structure that a plotted play (or musical) needs. As shown by this section of the monograph document, much foresight, awareness, and sensitivity went into arranging and deciding matters of structure and form. We were careful to attend to even the most minor detail as we conscientiously and diligently created the theatrical textures that would make our show come alive in a different, but equally vibrant way as would another form of musical theatre show.

There were many things to consider, some of which were purely (and literally) academic, such as what was going to be logistically realistic given the extremely tight time and rehearsal frame of our show. Considering our limited rehearsal funds, our academic coursework load, our other academic performance schedules, I felt it best to find songs, arrangements, and designs that would fit with realistic goals, but still allow us to realize a high quality show. We knew we wanted to structure the show as one-third European cabaret and two-thirds American cabaret. I wanted to do more than the standard fifteen songs, so I pushed the envelope on that, opting for



less libretto and more songs, to which Josie was also in accord. In the end, we performed twenty-two songs, along with a fairly substantial libretto.

We enjoyed and wanted a variety of songs to be included and so we decided to cut some songs shorter in order to make way for more numbers. This worked to our advantage in that we structured the song run order so that we could each have some down time coupled with some substantive singing time. The structural frame we worked with was the chronological historical cabaret timeline. We made lists of songs that would fit into any category, and we had buzzwords for categories. For example, the Prohibition Era had buzzwords such as “flapper,” “speakeasy,” “torch song,” “dance craze;” we used these buzzwords and categories to help codify our song lists and we let our lists get as long as they needed to as we began the process.

At a certain point near the close of Fall semester 2005 we started to edit the song lists. The editing came easily and very organically. At this point, I think the songs had marinated in our subconscious that we had already done some of the preliminary editing without even trying, as some songs just “stuck” better than others. Josie and I discarded the leftovers without much overt cerebral or analytical artifice. It was the same with the libretto. We had so much information and had bandied about ideas for so long that some just seemed to “stick” better than others. And, as both academicians *and* free-spirits, Josie and I let the sense of organic artistry guide us in this editing endeavor as we chose our final structure, song lists, and libretto selections. Knowing we had done extensive prior work with regard to research and topical talk of structure to get to this point, we relied on instinct to guide us during some of this final structural process.

## **ROLE ANALYSIS**

### **Role Analysis Introduction**

One of my favorite things about a career in the arts is that, if you have the skill as well as the drive, you can mold a fulfilling career out of wearing several different artistic “hats.” As a business owner, teacher, and performer, I find that utilizing an array of talents is a means to stay excited about any given project. I have found in my career that if I do too much of any one thing for any length of time, I find myself restless, longing for some other hill to climb, one different from the one I feel I have already been trudging for too long. Thus, I relished the idea of creating and implementing my own cabaret show.

Wearing the “hats” of producer, promoter, co-director, music director, vocal director, singer, actor, and writer is something I have done often in my career and something I enjoy immensely. Josie and I have different talents, which also helped balance the project. We divvied up the items that needed to be accomplished according to our skills and interests and came up with a fairly equal workload that both challenged and excited us. We both work extremely well independently, we have a high level of trust and respect for one another, and we both highly value and are adept at good interpersonal communications. These things helped us have a successful collaboration with regard to a product we were proud of and a process that was positive, solution-oriented, safe, challenging, and rewarding.

### **Producer**

As far as monies were concerned, Josie and I financed our project completely out of funds we had set aside in previous years. We began talking about collaborating on our thesis the first term at UCF, in the Fall of 2004. It was then that I began to put money away for the project.

Later, as we began to further develop our budget, we agreed that our highest priority and the one we would spend the most money on would be the band members.

While most student cabarets before us had used only a pianist, we both wanted our show to have a rhythm section feel to it and thus would need to spend more money on the extra players. Due to the diversity of our musical styles, we also knew we would need high level players who could not only sight read but improvise, as well as play in a wide variety of styles effectively. The kind of player who would fit our needs would also be the kind of player who would cost top dollar. We ultimately were blessed with three players who played extremely well and who also had a heart for us as students and for our ambitious project, and we ended up securing great players for a reasonable cost.

As for costs, the main other costs were printing, props, costumes, and miscellaneous items such as batteries. Many of our props and costumes were obtained for free thanks to the connections Josie made at UCF and elsewhere. Both of us took charge of the budget within our designated areas of workload, and we reported to each other often regarding any unforeseen overages.

### **Promoter**

Josie did most of the promotion although I wrote the press release and distributed it to the media throughout the Daytona Beach and Orlando areas. Josie and I lived in Daytona at the time and were hoping to bring in some patrons from those areas, though we knew chances were minimal that people would want to make the hour drive to Orlando unless they knew us well. There were many emails sent to me by Josie letting me know when and where she had posted flyers. Josie drove to Orlando more often than I did to secure props, costumes, do promotional items, or meet with Barkley, our stage manager. She was very competent in this area and kept me

informed as well as let me know if there was something I needed to do to help. My other responsibility was creating and designing the press release and the program, including the program printing and distribution for the show itself.

### **Co-Director**

In most of my career thus far I have worked collaboratively with others, but have not co-directed, as I have done more solo directing work than co-directing. I was a bit hesitant at first because I generally feel there needs to be one person in any designated area where the “buck stops.” However, from working with Josie the summer before, I had a great deal of faith that our co-directing collaborative efforts would work well. In every instance, when I spoke with Josie about our cabaret vision, our priorities and process plans seemed to always align, making me feel that in this particular case a co-directorship would work. Josie and I both have a style that is forthright in terms of stating clearly what we would like, but tempered with a give-and-take sense that allows us to withdraw from time to time to accommodate the other for the best show possible.

As Josie and I worked together to co-direct the show, we realized we both saw eye-to-eye on several important items:

- That the show should be flexible in structure, allowing for improvisation and interaction.
- That the show should run chronologically.
- That while we wanted to touch on some of the performers’ lives, we didn’t want to “mimic” them per se, we wanted to do our own renditions that would pay homage to them.

- That the show should center on American cabaret but also take into account cabaret's European roots in the Montmartre district of France in 1881 and in the Weimar Era of Germany.
- That we wanted to have a cabaret cliché section where we did songs that people either loved or loathed. We did this to pay homage to the American cabaret tradition of cabaret singers who have made their careers singing the American Musical Theatre Songbooks. These songs are forever embedded in American culture due to many of the cabaret singers who made them famous and we wanted to honor that legacy.

Due to this perfect parallelism with regard to our priorities of content, Josie and I moved forward quickly in our directing approach. We watched each other and gave each other direction from time to time when asked. We also sought advice from our thesis committee head, Nick, who excitedly gave us feedback and tips, which were quite helpful. We also both have a good sense of how to self-direct, which sped up our process and solidified our product as well. We had several friends critique rehearsals, and this was also a big help for us as we made final decisions with regard to character choices and such.

All in all, the co-direction process was much easier than I had anticipated due to the unity of vision between Josie and me as collaborators. A prevailing thought I had during the whole process, and even after, during the writing, formatting, and editing of the thesis monograph document is what a perfect partner I have had in Josie. As a longtime director myself, I know how important unity of vision is and also how important it is that collaborators are “working on the same show” with regard to all the elements that go into the process as well as the production itself. This co-directing was an experiment for me, and one which I would welcome again, though it would be difficult to find a better complement for a directing partner.

### **Music Director/Vocal Director**

In the music directing realm I was completely on my own, for which I was very glad. As for song choices, Josie gave me a few ideas for songs she would like to do but was completely open to my suggestions, as she does not have as much background in song repertoire or stylistic arrangement ideas as I do. I was like a kid in a candy shop being the music director of this show. One of the first things I did was to go through my personal database of over twenty thousand songs and get songs ideas from that. I have a large music library, and so most of the material were songs I already owned, except for Satie's "Le Chapelier," which I purchased online for the show.

After getting an initial song list from my database, I took a look at some of the famous singers who did each of the songs. I ended up making a five-CD playlist of our songs so we could get a feel for the many singers and the many arrangements of our song choices. We both got very excited to note how much range and diversity there was within the recordings of some of our chosen material. It was like a big playground, and we were running all over it having a good time before we finally had to settle down to our final arrangements, keys, and tempi.

After finalizing the song lists, I copied the sheet music for both of us, and made a master copy, which I used to copy the band members' books. I transposed some songs and made arrangement additions such as fermatas, rallentandos, starts, stops, and percussive or other breaks as needed in the music itself. I sent the music that was now rhythm-section-ready to the band members. I also sent a copy of a finalized run order CD listening example (one arrangement per song) so the band could get the closest listening example to the feel we wanted for each song.

During the first rehearsal with Scott Montgomerie, our pianist, I went over the markings and secured the arrangements further. As he had questions, I answered them accordingly. We

made one or two minor adjustments in keys, tempi, and intros/outros, but otherwise most of the previous work I had done stayed intact. I left it up to Scott to inform the rest of the band of any changes we made during the rehearsal process. Scott was very diligent and thorough, and we worked well together.

During subsequent rehearsals (four total rehearsals before the tech week full band rehearsals), Scott and I solidified all pertinent music, theatrical, and rhythmic items for the show. I told Scott the main thing I wanted was to make sure that variety was at the forefront of the performance of each number. We had so many different styles represented, from classical music, to musical theatre, jazz, and pop, and I wanted them all to have a unique impact on the audience according to the way Josie and I performed them and according to how the band realized each style.

During the two band rehearsals during tech week I focused mainly on tightening the stop-time sections in each song, as well as solidifying proper tempi for any given piece. It is important to note that many of the songs we performed are standards, and, as such, have been done by performers over the years in a dizzying array of keys, styles, and rhythmic arrangements. As such, it was very challenging on my part as music director to create the proper unity with regard to the ensemble since many songs can be done in so many ways. Since I am also a pianist as well as a vocalist and a musician with an undergraduate degree in music, I was able to define clearly and quickly what I wanted with regard to style, form, and feel. As a rhythm band player myself (playing piano and keyboards in combos over the years) I was able to communicate in vernacular musician terminology what needed to happen at any given time. The tech rehearsals went well, the band was enthusiastically embracing my direction, and we were having some good laughs

along the way, as the band members loved watching Josie and I do some of our funnier “stage bits” such as the strip sequence for “Take It Off, Petronella.”

We had band pick-up rehearsals on both nights from 6-8 P.M. before the show. These rehearsals were vital to the success of both shows, as they solidified just prior to performance the items most difficult for the band to execute. Both shows went off without any major or minor train wrecks, and Josie and I were both very pleased. I thanked the band members in the solo interlude during our final song. Afterwards, as both producer and music director, I also paid the band and collected all the music at the end of the run. Josie and I signed cards of thanks, and I handed out checks at the end of the performance closing night.

### **Singer/Actor**

As an actor, Josie and I used the convention of the “professor” to convey the minimal segue text that served the purposes of our libretto. Josie and I both wanted the show to be song-driven and not text-driven, and, as such, we used short segue material and acted it out as a stern, but comical, professor lecturing the class as through notes and readings from a textbook. We used large eyeglasses as the transforming visual element from song performer to professor role as we morphed back and forth from one character to the next.

The main acting characterization besides the professor role was in the improvised “beatnik” section before the song, “What the World Needs Now,” as Josie, in the character of a beatnik, prodded and cajoled me out of my professorial character, entreating me to lighten up and play something at the piano. As I took off my professor glasses and began to “feel it, man,” I morphed visually into a beatnik myself, culminating in the group dance of the song “Aquarius” as Josie and I danced with our patrons in the acting space.



As a singer/actor I was excited to wear many “hats” even within this one realm, as we had such a stylistically diversified show. My songs were the following fourteen selections (nine solos and five duets):

- Le Chapelier (sung in French)
- The Saga of Jenny
- Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man
- Straighten Up and Fly Right (duet with Josie)
- Don't Get Around Much
- Fever (duet with Josie)
- Orange Colored Sky
- Lush Life
- What the World Needs Now (duet with Josie)
- Aquarius (duet with Josie)
- New York State of Mind
- Cry Me a River
- One for my Baby
- It's Time (duet with Josie)

Each song had its own unique acting Beats and we tried to embody different character styles throughout the evening's entertainment. As a singer/actor the “roles” I embodied in the songs were thus:

- Le Chapelier (sung in French). This is a classical piece, although the subject matter is a mad hatter. I used my voice in the classical “bel canto” traditional style; however, my character of the mad hatter was a bit “vaudevillian” in that the hatter was very distressed over the fact that her watch is not working. She paced about and seemed restless, trying various ideas to get the watch to work. The use of classical voice style with frenetic energy in the acting created a pleasing multi-layered effect.
- The Saga of Jenny. This is a Kurt Weill piece, although we did it with a big-band flair, changing feel quite often. During the course of each verse and each feel change, I used different vocal and acting techniques to arrive at the diversity I desired. I created a character

voice that changed slightly in age as “Jenny” aged as well. Jenny’s character goes from age twelve to age seventy-five. I darkened my sound as Jenny got older. I became bawdier in my acting as Jenny aged as well.

- **Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man.** This song was done sitting on the piano, as Helen Morgan used to do at her club, Chez Morgan. The blocking of the song paid homage to Helen Morgan, but I sang in a more standard bluesy cabaret style than was indicative of Morgan’s time period. The acting centered on the fact that Morgan had trouble with alcoholism her entire life and often performed while drunk. Helen was known to still perform well while drunk, and I acted that out as I sang the song.
- **Straighten Up and Fly Right (duet with Josie).** This song was acted as a silly parody. I played a buzzard (with a beak made by Josie and a boa for feathers). Josie played a monkey (with a toy monkey wrapped around her neck). We used a more speak-style vocal technique for this song. As actors, we tried to embody the silliness of a mid-air conversation between monkey on the back of a buzzard.
- **Don’t Get Around Much.** This song was done in the traditional jazz swing era style. Vocal styling was much like the Big-Band era singers. As an actor, I chose to stay still, swaying only but not walking around, performing the song as if standing behind one of the old time microphones.
- **Fever (duet with Josie).** This number was done in the sultry style of Peggy Lee. We used cabaret chairs and got the audience to snap on the off beats to participate. Vocally, I used a smoky, dark, throaty quality. As for acting, sex and coy flirtation were front and center as we interacted with the audience from time to time during the course of the song.

- Orange Colored Sky. This number was done as a bouncy traveling number, going from table to table and “walking along” singing, as the lyric suggested. I used a standard jazz Big-Band vocal style and, with regard to acting, just had fun and let the jazz phrasing carry the tune’s effect.
- Lush Life. This song is a vocal tour de force, if done effectively. The bitterness within the text has to come out in the voice, and yet the voice needs to not sound overly constricted for any length of time. Vocally, I interpreted it in a bit of a storytelling speak-singing style, using a more open throaty, deeper sound for the more biting lyrics and using a lighter tone and more standard jazz phrasing for the bridge of the music. As an actor, this song is all about regret and loss and I wanted the audience to feel, not think. I sat on one stool and drank a martini while singing so that the audience would take the journey into the dark bitterness with me.
- What the World Needs Now (duet with Josie). I played piano at the beginning of this song as Josie’s beatnik poem introduced and segued immediately into the piece. This song was uplifting and, as such, I used a lighter vocal quality and sang in a standard pop style. As an actor, coming out of the beatnik character and reacting to Josie’s beatnik poem, the good-natured banter Josie and I truly share was a useable commodity for the acting in this song.
- Aquarius (duet with Josie). Going right from “What the World Needs Now” into this number was fairly easy. Vocally, the mood was the same, and as an actor I further developed my beatnik character as I asked the audience to get up and dance with us.
- New York State of Mind. This song was done in a standard pop style such as Billy Joel’s original rendition. I used pop vocal styling, and acted as a conversational storyteller to the

audience during the piece. The character was revealing her thoughts, telling the audience, and the whole world, how much she thinks of New York City.

- Cry Me a River. Vocally, I used this song as my torch song tour de force, using a multitude of vocal qualities within each verse and chorus as I symbolically showed the myriad of emotions one goes through during the course of a relational break up and the subsequent “bucking up” of one’s resolve.
- One for my Baby. Vocally, I sang this song in a standard jazzy/pop style. Nothing too fancy, just smooth phrasing as the barroom wit and banter flowed between Josie and me as she played “Joe” the bartender which the song references. My acting character was a pub “regular” who regularly is the last to leave the club.
- It’s Time (duet with Josie). This song was done vocally as a standard. Some belt voice was used but mostly a mix of standard pop style with a bit of a jazz flair. As actors, Josie and I played ourselves as we said goodbye to our thesis show, thanked our band members, and said goodbye and good night to our audience members.

### **Writer**

As writers, Josie and I limited our scope for the writing by deciding to do a very short libretto, making the show mostly about the song selection, character, and stylistic variety within the songs than about the text or the segue material. We wanted the thesis performance itself to be mostly vocal music with little libretto. We used the convention of the “professor” to convey text both originally written and culled from textbook quotes as we integrated these ideas into the professor character. The professor character reads from notes and quotes textbooks as part of her classroom lecture. We split the libretto into equal parts, as we each prepared an even amount of

libretto material according to our skills and interest levels for each given section. My sections were the following:

- The Speakeasies and Helen Morgan
- Helen Kane and the Flappers
- The 40's Big-Band era
- Jazz music and Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life"
- Barry Manilow and Disco
- Famous singers and the cabaret clichés
- Cabaret singers and the cabaret genre today

As writers, Josie's writing style and mine matched very well, as there is little change in tone from one segue to the next, creating a cohesive script that could have been written by one person. Some historical facts, figures, dates, and persons were outlined in chronological order according to our timetable. In writing, we chose to start with the insurgence of cabaret in 1881 in the Montmartre district of France. We then wrote about cabaret life during the Weimar Era in German history. We continued by breaking down American cabaret by decade starting with the turn of the century and culminating with information about present day cabaret artists and the state of the genre itself in the libretto.

### **Role Analysis Conclusion**

We accomplished a varied show both theatrically and musically, and I was quite pleased with the outcome. Josie and I created a dynamic team, as we had very different strengths and utilized them well to create a truly cohesive show as well as a fully functional artistic team. Handling the many roles and duties kept me involved in not only the performance aspects of the show, but gave me a sense of ownership of all aspects of the show. In the end, I believe handling all these roles gave me greater passion and fortitude as I took complete ownership of my own product as well as my own process.

As I reflect on the process, I am curious about when artists plot and plan versus running on instinct? For myself, I am extremely analytical, cerebral to the point of exhaustion sometimes. I feel a deep need to know the “why” of almost everything. However, I find myself curiously able to allow instinct to take precedence when I feel the situation warrants such. As an analytical person, I often feel a bit guilty for allowing myself to “wing it” from time to time; for instance, with regard to the easy, organic final selections of song material for the show. However, when I really look at all the work that went before those final “what songs are we finalizing” sessions, I realize the answer was probably there all the time because I had already done so much work prior.

Much like the saying, “luck is merely preparedness meeting opportunity,” I need to realize that my intuition is “merely” my preparation interacting with the opportunity for decision making. Another saying, “when the student is ready, the teacher will appear,” applies to the process and responsibility of the student’s preparation. Had I not diligently prepared for the two years prior to this event, the organic final moments of decision making may never have fallen into place, and certainly would not have fallen into place so organically. I need to own up to the fact that often my “intuition” is just prior effort now finding the right time and opportunity to be useful. I have always been both an analytical and an organic creator, though I have taken my analytical side more seriously than my intuitive side, and, as I reflect on this process, I regret that.

Countless things “fell into place” with regard to our process and product that it can’t be by accident. When I really think about it, we spent two full years in incubation period over this show, so why would not that work “come together” when it needed to? People often fall into the trap of feeling that they have to look like they are working hard all the time for their efforts to be

real. I have reconsidered that opinion and find it lacking. I “work hard” all the time in that I am always looking for opportunities and I am always creating something, and I am open to possibilities and new ideas. However, I have often subordinated the organic to the manufactured, I’m sure to my own detriment. Due to the success of this show, my collaboration with Josie, and the process of reflection this document affords me, I plan to prioritize and put more stock into that which is organic, knowing that all prior work “incubates.” Much like the genre of cabaret, this incubated, dormant work resurfaces to align with the mainstream when needed, going back underground to lie dormant for another time of need.

Ultimately, I realize I do not have to choose between process and product, or between academician and free spirit, or between craftsman and artist. But rather, I need to understand they are all parts of a whole, and I need to integrate them as such, relying on them as needed, and being available to all that the artist’s personal and professional palate offers.

## CONCLUSION

Deciding to embark on the Master of Fine Arts degree program was, at first, a daunting task. As with any journey, one must calculate the cost and the expected benefits derived. Not a day goes by that I regret my decision to move to Florida from Michigan and undertake this challenge. Ultimately, I received so much more than I anticipated, academically, professionally, and socially. When I was interviewed by UCF for admission to the program I remember telling the panel that I understood that ultimately my education is what I make of it. I still believe that, as I believe my life and career will be what I make of them as well.

I have always enjoyed challenges. I enjoy sharing my achievements with others and I take personal responsibility for disappointments or failures as they occur. As with all of theatre, no one creates in a vacuum and there are so many others that truly share in the triumph of this degree program. Rather than name them all here, I plan to personally thank them individually for their contribution and support for what ultimately is a cherished goal of mine and for which I have sacrificed greatly. The collaborative aspect of putting on the thesis show, writing and editing the thesis document, and all the other ancillary details along the way such as administrative paperwork could not be done without the help of the many faculty, family, and friends who supported me every step of the way. I am forever grateful to them all.

The culmination of this thesis will be the final hurdle for a degree I have wanted essentially my whole life. Just as in theatre, timing in life is important, and I couldn't be more in the right place and at the right time than right here, right now. Studying the cabaret genre has given me new respect for myself as a performer as well as respect for my own survival instincts, as I have carved out a career in an arena most say is one from which you can not make a living.



And now, with the academic, research, and performance skills I have acquired and honed throughout my three year conservatory efforts, I will be armed even further to succeed in a field fraught with intelligent, talented, and all-too-often unemployed artisans.

My research and teaching work within the genre of cabaret is far from finished. I am even now revising the historical chapter to use it as a workshop and as a collegiate classroom curriculum, complete with CD listening examples, tests on the sub-chapters, and an outline for how to write, produce, and market your own cabaret. As for performance, I am in the throes of marketing, producing and performing in a one-woman themed cabaret entitled, “Entrances and Exits: The Ins and Outs of Love” which is intended to run in Detroit in the summer of 2007. With regard to my writing goals, I hope to publish articles on the genre of cabaret in some of the more mainstream magazines that do not often feature such work including jazz, classical, pop, and musical theatre journals as well as some of the educational and vocal periodicals.

I have many thoughts regarding this project, the process, the event, the document, and anything in between. These thoughts are difficult to distill into ideas that have any cerebral fortitude, intellectual integrity, or weight given my proximity to my subject matter. That is not to say I am shying away from “concluding,” however, I feel I am still too close to the subject matter for my conclusions to have what I would consider academic merit. In many ways I don’t think I deserve to comment on my own work yet, because it is still so close to me in spirit and in literal time and space. Therefore, I am loathe to put on paper that which I may vehemently disagree with a year from now, and that which I am forever barred from altering in this document.

I do not mean to backpedal nor do I mean to appear without conviction. I mean to appear conflicted, which is my truthful state at this juncture, since I am still filtering conclusions in my head even as I write them out on paper. Nevertheless, I believe one must rise to the occasion, and

this occasion calls for some commitment, at least to what I conclude now, however fleeting or shallow that conclusion may be given the proximity to my subject matter. I will jump into the fray knowing I have at least said my peace ahead of time regarding my apprehensions, and know that anyone who desires to know my conclusions a year from now has but to ask me personally; I am sure I will never be very hard to find.

A prevailing thought for me regarding the thesis project is that I could not have chosen a more perfect partner to work on the project with than Josie. Our personalities, temperaments, artistic priorities, skills, and administrative abilities complemented each other extremely well. I have worked well with many collaborators in my life, but my collaboration with Josie has been one of the easiest and most enjoyable I have known. We seemed to pick up where each other left off on all aspects of production and performance and I will remember this collaboration as a model for the future.

Many things worked well regarding our process and product. Josie and I are very solution-oriented and we therefore did not get bogged down in much of the mire that would have stopped someone with less of a tendency toward continual forward movement. Admittedly, there were many obstacles along the way and many hurdles we had to overcome. We made the choice to do our thesis performance in the final semester of our scholastic tenure, something we were told was acceptable, but not advisable due to the extra pressure of such a formidable task, along with a full course load for the semester. I do not regret the decision I made to do my thesis project during my last academic semester, but I understand why it is not generally advised. I would not recommend taking on a thesis project during the academic semester unless the student is extremely adept at multi-tasking, has exceptional organizational skills, and is highly tenacious and resourceful.

I initially overburdened myself with mental responsibility and pressure, worrying and overcompensating in almost every area of my life. I realized what I was doing and changed my thinking early on to lessen my anxiety and stress. I refocused myself to work within the parameters given and produce the best work I could within my given circumstances. This approach of integrating my hopes and dreams for a project and rooting them in the realities of life has helped me enjoy my work, grounding me in what *is*, and focusing on making it the best it can be, rather than constantly begrudging what cannot be. As I said in my UCF admission interview, my education is what I make it, and I made it as exciting, positive, and artistic a work experience as it could be.

It is my hope that the reader will go away today with the certainty that these pages contain the musings of an obviously passionate and professional artisan, one who loves creating and performing as much as teaching. It is my hope that inspiration has taken place, that information has been gleaned, and that the fusion of this inspiration and information will form a unique artistic idea, hope, or dream in the artist's head. And it is my hope that this idea or this dream becomes a reality in that artist's life and that he or she, in turn, will pass the artistic baton of inspiration and information to others as they seek their unique artistic path. I believe one's mind is like a parachute-it only works when it is open. And so, as we open our minds to new possibilities, we see ourselves, possibly for the first time, entertaining and fusing new artistic ideas as we forge ahead toward the future, amalgamating the past and morphing it into our own creative synthesis of personal artistry.

As I formulate my concluding thoughts, one prevailing theme reoccurs. More than the art itself, I am fascinated with the people of cabaret, the audiences as well as the artisans. I am awestruck by the conviction and passion of the original cabaretists, especially those of the late

Weimar Era at the onset of the Nazi regime, many of whom literally died for their right to perform their artistry. As an American, it is difficult to fathom being put to death over a cabaret performance, yet this travesty occurred.

These European predecessors were artisans who stood for more than a mere stylistic idea, these artisans stood for a way of life, the way of freedom: freedom from repression, freedom of speech, freedom of choice, and freedom from oppression, and they used the cabaret genre as their podium. These people fought with their art; they fought to be free, to live and work in a society in which they outwardly despised certain aspects of its infrastructure, while yet actively loved the country, the land, and many of its people.

It is my hope we all can embrace the kind of polarity the true cabaretist holds, the polarity of loving certain philosophies of our homeland and its people, and yet standing up for, standing up to, and voicing our loathing regarding those aspects of society we find reprehensible. The life of a true cabaretist then is a life of passion personified. It is the life of living with intellectual and cerebral integrity and fortitude. It is the life of standing up and being counted. It is the life of taking a stand and making your mark. It is the life of a true leader.

At the end of Laurence Senelick's book, Cabaret Performance Volume II: Europe 1920-1940, he discusses the seriousness of the Nazi regime against the genre of cabaret. I would like to end with some thoughts regarding cabaret's European roots and their pertinence for today's society. Senelick writes in Volume II:

Nazi newspapers kept protesting more and more loudly against 'artists' license to be fools,' 'mockery by Jewish intellectuals,' even against allusions to proscribed performers. The upshot in 1941 was an official decree from the Ministry of Propaganda, forbidding any performance by conférenciers. In essence, it was a

death sentence for the European cabaret that was carried out over the next four years. (280)

Senelick continues (pages 281-282) by including the Minister of Propoganda's §25 Ordinance One as follows:

By virtue of §25 of Ordinance One for effecting the Reich Chamber of Culture law of 1 November 1933 (Reich Law Bulletin I p. 797) I hereby order:

1. Any and every so-called conférencier performance of commentary is immediately and fundamentally forbidden for the entire public. It makes no difference whether it means to deal with matters of politics, economy, culture, or any other concerns of public or private life.
2. Comments, including the allegedly well-meaning, on personalities, circumstances, or events of public life, are forbidden in theatres, cabarets, variety shows, and any other places of entertainment.
3. The press is most vigorously advised to avoid as punctiliously as possible dealing with questions irrelevant to life, which might trouble or upset the German people unnecessarily.
4. It is forbidden to play one race off against another, one city against another, or one part of the Reich against another, even if in an allegedly well-intentioned manner. All the forces of public life must be directed to the unity of the people. Problems which needlessly inflame emotions and which are of subordinate significance to the victorious carrying-out of the war will be barred from public discussion. This decree represents an ultimate, earnest, and urgent admonition. At the

Fuehrer's behest, transgressions will be punished with the harshest penalties.

Berlin, 30 January 1941.

Signed: Dr. Goebbels

Often, the ultimate penalty was death, as many cabaretists were taken to concentration camps and often died there. Senelick describes one of the conférenciers, Werner Finck, who came to Berlin in 1928 and made his mark as “a subtly witty M.C., who attacked his targets obliquely with evasive humor and innuendo...[and] as a result...the [Nazi] stool pigeons assigned to report on his act were hard put to pinpoint where the offense lay.” (276) Werner would start his act with, “Heil Hitler-and good evening to the other ninety-eight per cent of you!” (276) Later, he began to rankle the Nazis, and as party members in the audience would taunt “You shameless Jew buffoon,” he would reply, “ What can I do? I don't happen to be Jewish. Can I help it if I look that intelligent?” (277)

Werner's passion, perseverance, literary and artistic integrity challenges me as I continue my quest in this ubiquitous art form. Werner paid a high price for his beliefs and his art as noted by Senelick:

The last straw for the authorities was the Tailor sketch, translated here, [see Appendix H for translation] performed in March 1935 by Finck and Ivo Veit. A couple of months later, before the act break, Finck announced, ‘My friends, there will be a fifteen-minute intermission. If I'm not back at the end of that time, you'll know-well, at least you can *guess* where I am.’ This was met with dead silence. A week after that, Finck was ‘transferred’ to Esterwegen concentration camp. (277)

I think it is right to conclude by paying homage to these European artistic rebels who fought for their lives with their art. Leaders like Werner Finck should never be forgotten, and their contributions never taken for granted. American cabaret today is part of that legacy, as we are the recipients of the freedom flight to America many Europeans took to flee the oppression of the Third Reich and other forces that crippled or attempted to annihilate the cabaret artists and their art.

As I purported in the introduction, cabaret is art that at its core is intellectual, insular, intimate, and interactive. It is a subculture that surfaces and aligns itself with mainstream culture during times of political and social unrest, reverting back to its normal subculture state, to amuse itself until it is needed again. In closing, regarding cabaret's tenacious nature and the attempted annihilation by the Nazi regime, I think Senelick says it best:

But the cabaret was not easy to slay; its seeming death was merely dormancy. No sooner had the Germans been defeated than a thriving cabaret sprang up in the American-occupied zone of Berlin. And that was just the beginning. (280)

Yes, it truly was just the beginning, a beginning through loss, a survival through adaptation. As the Germans lost many of their cabaret artists through death or emigration to America and other countries, America gained a great legacy, as those transplants adapted and changed, amalgamating themselves, weaving their artistry into the fabric of American cabaret culture to lead us to where we are today. Political unrest is rampant in America today and I sense a new beginning brewing for the state of American cabaret. As one of its own, I plan to be at the forefront of the movement as I fight with my art, my words, and my teaching, not only to stand *against* social or political atrocities, but more importantly to stand *for* my beliefs of artistic license and cultural propriety. I can only hope to inspire all artisans to use whatever means they

have available to them to do the same. Through our collective artistic fervor and intellectual bravery we pay homage to our predecessors, as we forge a new and better artistic future for ourselves and for society.



**APPENDIX A: LIST OF PERSONAL PROPS AND COSTUMES BY SONG**

These were the props and costumes used for the thesis show. We had these lists posted backstage for our dressers to reference. Our basic outfit for the show was a standard black long sleeved leotard top, black skirt, nude dance tights, and tan character shoes. We added the other costume items on top of this basic outfit.

### **LIST OF PERSONAL PROPS AND COSTUMES BY SONG**

1. Le Chapelier-Debbie  
Vest/bowtie/glasses/watch/hat/handkerchief/tea cup/saucer/spoon/tea bag
2. La Vie en Rose-Josie  
Black dress
3. Take It Off, Petronella-Josie sings. Debbie strips.  
D - Balloon outfit/gloves  
J - Black tux vest
4. The Saga of Jenny-Debbie  
D - Leather jacket/choker/rose  
Long lighter on top of piano  
J - Santa robe/foreign language book/satin stole/feather pen/writing tablet/martini glass
5. Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man-Debbie  
Brown dress/belt/bar set-up
6. I Wanna Be Loved by You/Button Up Your Overcoat-Josie  
Pink flapper dress/white flower headband/white gloves
7. They Can't Take That Away From Me-Josie  
Sparkly long sleeved top/sequin belt
8. Straighten Up and Fly Right-Debbie & Josie Duet  
D - Cream/black feather boa/beak  
J – Attachable monkey
9. I Got Rhythm-Josie  
Sparkly long sleeved top/sequin belt
10. Don't Get Around Much Anymore-Debbie  
Black & white 40s jacket
11. Fever-Debbie & Josie duet  
D - Purple velure vest/chair  
J – Black tux vest/chair

12. Orange Colored Sky-Debbie  
Jacket with orange spots/Burnt orange boa
13. Lush Life-Debbie  
Cigarette/gold lighter/ashtray/bar/black & gold robe/necklace
14. What the World Needs Now-Debbie & Josie Duet (poem/song)  
Beret/ashtray at piano/joint
15. Aquarius-Debbie & Josie duet  
D - Hippie dress/turquoise jewelry/sunglasses/flowers  
J – Leather vest/beaded necklace/flowers
16. Copacabana-Josie lead vocals, Debbie background vocals  
D - For Tony: straw hat/dishtowel  
For Rico:black hat/diamond ring  
For Waitress: Apron  
J-Flower wrap “Lola” skirt/yellow feather hair comb
17. Mein Herr-Josie  
Black tux vest/bowler hat/chair
18. Over the Rainbow-Josie  
Chair
19. New York State of Mind-Debbie  
Black jacket
20. Cry Me a River-Debbie  
Black jacket/bar set-up
21. One for my Baby-Debbie (Josie is bartender)  
Black jacket
22. It’s Time-Debbie & Josie duet  
D - Add red boa to plain black jacket/red necklace  
J – Add yellow and black boa to black jacket/gold necklace

## **APPENDIX B: LIGHTING LIST**

This list was originally sent by Josie to our lighting designer, George, to let him know what we were thinking with regard to lighting needs. Neither of Josie nor myself have much technical expertise in this area, and therefore do not use many fancy industry-standard wording. The document was purely meant to tell George our basic needs in terms of where we were blocked, what kind of light we needed, and what the basic feel should be regarding lighting for each number or sequence of numbers.

## LIGHTING LIST

George: This list is a general idea of what we're looking for in the lighting of each song. When we're not singing, we will be standing at the podium giving exposition on the time period and such. There should be a spot light or an overhead light set to shine on the podium when it is being used. At all other times, the podium area should remain dark.

### Opening Poem

House lights are up as Josie begins show. She catches the attention of the crowd, reads her poem, and then invites Debbie up to sing.

1. Le Chapelier  
Follow spot as Debbie enters from audience. Song stays center. Spot only.
2. La Vie en Rose  
Overhead light shines on Josie as she stands near the band. She and band are lit together.
3. Take it off, Petronella  
Follow spot tries to find Debbie for first verse. Finally follows Debbie as she strips. Also Jo needs to be lit at the table as she sits watching Debbie strip. Lighting is dark and seedy. Smoke/fog is good.
4. The Saga of Jenny  
Piano positioning angled down right for Debbie to stand near. Stationary light on Debbie. Spot Josie. Lighting still dark and seedy.
5. Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man  
Debbie on stool at bar drinking during dialogue. Small aperture spot on Debbie. Debbie switches to top of piano for song.
6. I Wanna Be Loved by You/Button Up Your Overcoat  
Soft/colorful "Stage" lighting (think bubblegum moment of the show) – it's supposed to be a cutesy number of the 1920s. Footlights if possible.
7. They Can't Take That Away From Me  
Spot on Josie as she sings behind "Elvis" mic.

8. Straighten Up and Fly Right  
Spot center. 40s lighting... à la Big-Band era.
9. I Got Rhythm  
Same as above. 40s Big-Band lighting.
10. Don't Get Around Much Anymore  
Same. Still 40s Big-Band era lighting.
11. Fever  
Chairs set slight down right and slight down left. Back of chair faces audience. Sexy mood lighting, not too bright. Sultry and hazy.
12. Orange-Colored Sky  
Follow spot on Debbie.
13. Lush Life  
Debbie at bar with Cigarette/gold lighter/ashtray. Very dark desperation lighting. Small aperture spot and/or some gobo texturizing.

Beatnik Poem (Josie center and Debbie at piano)

Spot lights or overhead lights on Josie on stool in front of mic stand and on Debbie at piano.

14. What the World Needs Now  
60s hippie lighting. Psychedelic colors and such. Spots on floor.
15. Aquarius  
Same as above. 60s lighting.
16. Copacabana  
Disco ball. Crazy follow spot as it cascades over audience and such. Vegas showy lighting. Track lights on columns lit.
17. Mein Herr  
Solitary overhead light or spot on Josie as she sings and dances with chair center.
18. Over the Rainbow  
Spot on Josie seated in chair.
19. New York State of Mind  
Follow spot on Debbie.
20. Cry Me a River  
Follow spot on Debbie.

21. One for my Baby  
At the bar. A bit dimmer lighting. Spot on Debbie at bar. Some low stage lighting so bartender/Josie can be seen as she cleans up the space.
22. It's Time  
Spot on Debbie and Jo. Follow spot to go to band during the solo as we introduce and thank the band members.

**APPENDIX C: BAND LIST FOR INSTRUMENTATION AND RHYTHMIC FEEL**



This list was written by Debbie for the band members, specifically the bass player and drummer, with whom we only got to work during our two rehearsals during tech week. The idea was to make sure all band members knew what instrumentation was required for any given number, as well as alert the band to stops and starts, rhythmic feel changes, or other theatrical items they would need to know in order to play the pieces effectively. Our charts were written as standard treble/bass sheet music with chord charted symbols above the staff, and therefore did not include specific drum or bass parts. The players we used were used to working with this style of playing and adapted quickly to any performance requirements that were not specifically laid out in the sheet music itself. As designated below, some songs such as the classical “Le Chapelier” were played exactly as written, while others, such as “The Saga of Jenny” had many rhythmic feel changes underneath that were not specifically designated in the sheet music.

### **BAND LIST FOR INSTRUMENTATION AND RHYTHMIC FEEL**

1. Le Chapelier  
Piano only. As written.
2. La Vie en Rose  
Piano and bowed bass. As written.
3. Take it off, Petronella  
Piano only. As written. Vamp the chorus during Debbie’s strip.
4. The Saga of Jenny  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. À la Big-Band.  
Watch rhythmic feel changes.  
Verses 1, 2, and 3: Swing  
Verse 4: Latin  
Verse 5: Stripper-esque, burlesque feel. Low toms etc....  
Verse 6: Freely, recitative until “Jenny kicked the bucket at 76.” Then “a tempo” swing to end.
5. Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man  
Full band. As written but play jazz standard style slow swing, not straight dotted eighths to sixteenths feel. Slow, bluesy. Brushes. Upright. Piano. 2nd bridge builds.
6. I Wanna Be Loved by You/Button Up Your Overcoat  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. 20s style boop-boop-a-doop straight old style dotted eighths to sixteenths feel. As written.
7. They Can’t Take That Away From Me  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Medium swing à la Basie. As written but swing eighths.
8. Straighten Up and Fly Right  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Medium swing. Watch tag stop time ending. As written but swing the eighths.

9. I Got Rhythm

Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Up swing in Broadway two feel.

10. Don't Get Around Much Anymore

Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Medium swing. Debbie starts a cappella. Stop time feel, standard.

11. Fever

Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Med-slow swing. Peggy Lee version. Bass/drums predominant. Audience snaps.

12. Orange Colored Sky

Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Med-up swing. Watch hits, stop time.

13. Lush Life

Full band. Piano, upright (bowed) bass, drumset. Slow recitative ballad. Watch quick feel change to waltz midway at "a week in Paris could ease the bite of it."

14. What the World Needs Now

Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. (Switch to electric bass and synth here) Debbie plays piano at beginning. Swing waltz feel. Dionne Warwick standard.

15. Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In

Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Bass starts. Watch stop time and accelerando after "and love will steer the stars" stop time...then accelerate on "this is the dawning of the age of Aquarius". Also, watch feel change after Aquarius into "Let the sun shine in."

16. Copacabana

Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Standard disco Barry Manilow-ish. There will probably be a gunshot and a scream during the song so please be aware. If we don't have a blank gun, we'll use drum snare crack at that point.

17. Mein Herr

Full band. Upright piano, upright bass, drumset. As written in old style Kurt Weill. Watch as each section builds speed and then settles for next verse.

18. New York State of Mind

Full band. Upright piano, electric bass, drumset. Billy Joel bluesy ballad groove.

19. Over the Rainbow

Full band. Piano, electric bass, drumset. Standard Judy Garland slow ballad.

20. Cry Me a River

Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. James Bond into groove. Brushes. At second

bridge drive to 12/8 blues shuffle with stop time at end of bridges on “told me love was too plebeian” etc.

21. One for my Baby

Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Standard Frank Sinatra slow bluesy ballad. As written, swing eighths.

22. It's Time

Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Starts slowly and builds to drive 12/8 blues shuffle at bridge. Keep held back feeling throughout. We will introduce the band during the solo mid-song.

Playoff: Reprise “I Got Rhythm,” up double-time jazz feel.

**APPENDIX D: THESIS PRESS RELEASE**

This was the press release that went out to the Orlando and Daytona area media. Noted is the name Rick Richolson on bass, whom we actually had to replace with Bob "Rabbit" Simmons the week before tech week. Rick's father became deathly ill in Alabama and Rick had to leave the state to attend to his father, and thus, we had to find another bass player immediately. We found another bass player through Barry James, our drummer, and Bob ended up playing both shows with us.

## **THESIS PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Debbie Tedrick, Cabaret Artist & Co-Director, Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway & Beyond.  
Telephone Number: Cell: 248/388-2700  
Fax Number: 248/544-3610  
Email Address: DebbieTedrick@aol.com  
Web site address: <http://www.interactentertainment.com>

Two UCF Musical Theatre Graduate Students Present Their Thesis Project  
A Night of Cabaret: Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway & Beyond

Orlando, Florida.

Who: Two UCF Musical Theatre Graduate Students Co-Direct their thesis cabaret.

What: An interactive historical retrospective of the cabaret genre. For mature audiences.

When: Weds/Thurs May 3rd & 4th at 8pm in the UCF Orlando Black Box Theatre.

Where: Orlando Black Box Theatre UCF. Call the UCF Directions Hotline at 407-882-0909.

Why: To fulfill Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre degree performance requirements.

Cost: Admission is free, donations are appreciated.

Graduate Musical Theatre Students from UCF, Debbie Tedrick and Josephine Leffner will perform a one-act historical look at the genre of cabaret. The show will include material garnered from historical research of the cabaret genre. The cabaret will cover information and art from cabaret's inception at "Le Chat Noir" in the Paris Montmartre district in 1881 to its height in Germany during the Weimar Republic and will culminate with cabaret's insurgence into American culture up to and including the state of American cabaret today. Broadway/cabaret favorites such as "Over the Rainbow," "I Got Rhythm," "New York, New York," and jazz/pop/torch songs such as "Fever," "Cry Me a River," "Lush Life," and "New York State of Mind" make the evening memorable for all. A three-piece band featuring Scott Montgomerie on piano, Rick Richolson on bass, and Barry James on drums helps add mood and energy to the evening's entertainment. The show is aimed at mature audiences. Admission is free and donations are appreciated. Come spend an evening with us at the cabaret.

For additional information and/or promotional materials:

Contact: Debbie Tedrick/InterACT Entertainment.

Telephone Number: Cell: 248/388-2700

Fax Number: 248/546-3610

Email Address: DebbieTedrick@aol.com

Re: UCF Graduate Student Thesis Cabaret Show: Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway and Beyond

###

**APPENDIX E: THESIS SHOW RUN ORDER**

This was the run order of our thesis performance. Noted are songs #17-20 which constitute our “Cabaret Cliché” section. These songs were omitted from the program in order to surprise the audience. We had devised several different ways of handling the cliché section and ended up settling on using those four songs for reasons of time constraints, costume changes, and band consistency in performance and with regard to the limited amount of rehearsal time we had with the whole band.

### **THESIS SHOW RUN ORDER**

Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway & Beyond  
Debbie Tedrick and Josephine Leffner  
Wednesday/Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>. 8pm Black Box Theatre  
University of Central Florida, Orlando

1. Le Chapelier
2. La Vie en Rose
3. Take it off, Petronella
4. The Saga of Jenny
5. Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man
6. I Wanna Be Loved by You/Button Up Your Overcoat
7. They Can't Take That Away From Me
8. Straighten Up and Fly Right
9. I Got Rhythm
10. Don't Get Around Much Anymore
11. Fever
12. Orange Colored Sky
13. Lush Life
14. What the World Needs Now
15. Aquarius
16. Copacabana
17. Mein Herr
18. New York State of Mind
19. Over the Rainbow
20. Cry Me a River
21. One for My Baby
22. It's Time

## **APPENDIX F: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF CABARET LIFE**



These Ten Commandments were taken from page 63 of Lisa Appignanesi's book, Cabaret: The First Hundred Years. New York: Grove P, 1984. These Ten Commandments were originally posted at Simplicissimus-Kunstlerkneipe (known simply as Simpl'), a German cabaret owned by Kathi Kabus. For our use, we made card stock table tents of the commandments and put them on each of the round cabaret tables we used for "special seating" during our show. As noted in the libretto, we also read these Ten Commandments at the beginning of our show.

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF CABARET LIFE**

The Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life

From Simplicissimus-Kunstlerkneipe, ed. Rene Prevot

1. Come if possible, late, so that the guests already there know that you do have something else to do.
2. Give your coat to the woman in the Cloakroom. You're a friendly man and your coat is new.
3. Sit down haphazardly and noisily. Then change your seat often until you find one with the right shape.
4. Read the menu and wine list loudly and emphatically to your companion. Learn it if possible off by heart, and then order a portion of 'later'.
5. When everything concerning your material welfare has been looked after, take part-even if at first only unwillingly-in the artistic presentation. Look upon the conf rencier with contempt right from the start. He's an ass and because of that, let him feel your spiritual superiority.
6. Time your noisy interjections so that they erupt precisely where they don't fit. This contributes enormously to enlivening the programme.
7. If you're a woman, then criticize the dress of the performing artiste boldly and with wit. (Don't forget your lorgnette as a prop for this.)
8. During song presentations, aim your cigarette smoke casually toward the podium. The singer will inhale it willingly. It makes his voice soft and supple.
9. During acts, use your cutlery and glasses in an unbothered fashion. Their sound does one good and replaces the band.
10. When you have been bored long enough by the programme and have gotten angry over the bill, leave as noisily as you came in with the consciousness of having spent a most enjoyable evening.

## **APPENDIX G: LE CHAPELIER LYRICS AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

This French song by Satie and Chalupt opened our show and was sung in its original language by Debbie. The English translation is recorded below and was also included in the show program.

### **LE CHAPELIER LYRICS AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

Le Chapelier (The Mad Hatter)

Music by: Erik Satie

Text by: Rene Chalupt

Le chapelier s'étonne de constater que sa montre retarde de trois jours,  
bien qu'il ait eu soin de la graisser toujours avec du beurre de première qualité.  
Mais il a laissé tomber des miettes de pain dans les rouages,  
et il a beau plonger sa montre dans le thé, ça ne la fera pas avancer d'avantage.

The hatter is astonished to find that his watch is going three days slow,  
although he has taken great care to oil it with butter of the best quality.  
But he has allowed some breadcrumbs to fall into the works,  
and even though he dips his watch well in the tea, it will not make it go any faster.

**APPENDIX H: “THE TAILOR FRAGMENT” BY WERNER FINCK**

This sketch was the one that was the final straw for the Nazi regime authorities regarding the famous German conférencier, Werner Finck. He performed this sketch in 1935 with Ivo Veit and was taken away to a concentration camp a few months later during an intermission of his show. I include this cabaret piece to pay homage to the European predecessors who used cabaret as an artistic vehicle for serious social and political reform, and who, very often, paid the ultimate price of their lives to preserve their artistic rights. This selection was taken from Laurence Senelick's Cabaret Performance Volume II: Europe 1920-1940. (278-279)

**The Tailor Fragment**  
(Das Fragment vom Schneider)  
1935  
by  
Werner Finck

*(Werner Finck comes to a tailor as a customer.)*

TAILOR: How can I serve you?

CUSTOMER: *(aside)* He's talking about serving too? *(Aloud)* I'd like to get a suit. Something seasonable...*(Pregnant pause. Then thoughtfully.)* Because I think we're in for a big blow.

TAILOR: Good-

CUSTOMER: Whether it's good or not-Well, I don't know...

TAILOR: *(a bit impatient)*: What would you like then? Sportswear? Something for camping?

CUSTOMER: Everyone's winding up in camps these days.

TAILOR: Would you like it all one color, or with stripes?

CUSTOMER: We've had enough of all one color. But no stripes by any means!

TAILOR: Shawl collar and turn-up cuffs?

CUSTOMER: If you're wearing stripes, it means you've been collared and you get cuffed. *(Resigned.)* I suppose a stripe down the pants can't be helped...

TAILOR: Let's start with the jacket first. How would you like a military tunic with chevrons and shoulder flaps?

CUSTOMER: Oh, you mean a straightjacket.

TAILOR: Whatever you want to call it. First-class material or second-class?

CUSTOMER: I don't care. So long as it's not cheap and natsi,-uh, nasty.

TAILOR: How do you want the lapels?

CUSTOMER: Very wide, with lots of room for medals and don't spare the material. Maybe we'll all be spared. As the Crown Prince used to say: Once more into the breeches!

TAILOR: Then may I size you up now?

CUSTOMER: Sure, sure, we're used to it.

*(The customer strikes a pose; the tailor stands beside him with a tape measure. He takes measurement, while the customer puts his hands along the seams of his trouser legs.)*

TAILOR: *(looking at the tape)*: 14/18-Ah, please, take a stand.

CUSTOMER: Who for?

TAILOR: That's it-fine...And now up with the right arm-fist clenched. 18/19. And now with the hand wide open...33...All right, why don't you put your arm down? What's that supposed to mean?

CUSTOMER: Upholding the right...

#### *Translator's Notes*

*All one color.* Brown, the National Socialist color.

*Cheap and natsi.* In German the tailor asks the customer if he wants it single or double-breasted-*einreihig* or *zweireihig*. Finck answers, "So long as it's not *diesreihig*" pronounced to sound like "This Reich."

*Lots of room for medals.* A reference to Field-Marshal Goering's passion for medals and the general inflation in decorations.

14/18. Service in the Imperial Army during the Great War.

18/19. The years of the Revolution that established the Weimar Republic.

33. The year of Hitler's accession to the Chancellorship.

**APPENDIX I: CABARET CLICHÉ LOVES AND LOATHES LIST**

This cabaret cliché loves and loathes list is culled from emails sent back and forth to Debbie and Josie during the spring semester. Group emails were sent to the UCF faculty and to fellow UCF graduate students asking for song ideas for the show. We asked them to comment on the songs they loved and hated and we thought their feedback was interesting enough to include it here in our monograph document. We thank all the people who helped us finalize that last portion of our show. We ended up including some “overdone” songs in our cabaret cliché section, some of which are songs we got from utilizing this list.

## **CABARET CLICHÉ LOVES AND LOATHES LIST**

### **Lists from fellow students**

#### **Joe Kemper:**

Detests - "Someone to Watch Over Me"

Loves - "Fifty Percent" from Ballroom

#### **Janet Raskin:**

Loathes - "Someone to Watch Over Me"

Loves – “Orange-Colored Sky”

#### **Rocky Sansom**

"Maybe This Time"

"The Man I Love"

(Anything that involves laying on the piano)

#### **Becca Johnson**

“Somewhere Over the Rainbow”

“Someone to Watch Over Me”

“The Way We Were”

“I’ll Be Seeing You”

“Don’t Rain on my Parade”

“Being Alive”

“The Man That Got Away”

“Fever”

#### **Courtney Winstead**

“Wind Beneath My Wings”

“Somewhere Over The Rainbow”

“New York, New York”

“What More Do I Need”

“Send In The Clowns”

“The Greatest Love Of All”

“At Last”

“They Can’t Take That Away From Me”

“It Had To Be You”

“Stormy Weather”



**Mark Hardin:**

Hate it:

#1 without a doubt: "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered"

"If I were a Bell"

"I Dreamed a Dream"

"Comedy Tonight"

"But not for me"

"The Way You Look Tonight" (aka: anything from Rod Stewart Classic Songbook)

Basically, anything that comes from a collection book.

Love:

Anything that is obscure, tells a relevant story and performed well (how's that for non-specific!)

**Jennifer Karpel**

"What I Did for Love"

"How are Things in Glocca Morra?"

"I Dreamed a Dream" (Les Mis)

**Tara Snyder**

Well without getting all the way to the bottom of your e-mail,

"New York, New York"

had already popped into my mind but I quickly rescued its sinking ship with

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow".

Now what cabaret would be complete without

"Maybe this Time" or

"It Had to Be You"?

"Don't. . .(let my answers) Rain on my(your) Parade"

any song popularized by Streisand, Minnelli or Sinatra should be in the cliché category.

I hope my attempts at song humor are helpful and I wish both of you a wonderful

success with your performance. I will be out of the state, so I unfortunately won't be able to attend your show. Break (four) legs and keep in touch!

**Lists from faculty members****Kate Ingram**

"What I Did For Love"

"Killing Me Softly"

**John Bell**

"Pirate Jenny"

"Losing My Mind"

"Ladies Who Lunch"

"Impossible Dream"

"Memory"

**Jim Brown***Overdone songs:*

Have to say it even though you have it on the list... "New York, New York"

"Being Alive"

"I'm Still Here"

"Send in the Clowns"

"Not While I'm Around"

"Cabaret"

"Maybe This Time"

"Sisters" - duet (even though I love it, too)

"Stars & Moon"

any overdone Kander & Ebb songs

"Mack the Knife"

"Ladies who Lunch"

*Songs I Love:*

"Skylark"

"The Nearness of You"

"I've Got Your Number" (love Cy Coleman)

"Witchcraft"

"I Never Do anything Twice"

Anything Rodgers & Hart

Obscure Frank Loesser

Songs by Hoagy Carmichael

"Quiet Thing" (or any UNDERdone Kander & Ebb song)

Love any song that came from a GREAT score from a show that flopped

**Nicholas Wuehrmann**

That's a fun question, Deb. If you're doing any of the songs listed below for REAL, please disregard the fact that I might think it's a cliché... And I love all these songs, even if they are overdone...

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow"

"My Funny Valentine"

"Johnny One Note"

"Stormy Weather"

"Send in the Clowns"

"Summertime"

"Memory"

**Dr. Steve Chicurel**

"Misty"

"Memory"...also called "Memories," from Cats....then, of course, people have referred to

"The Way We Were" as "Memory." VERY CONFUSING

"The Girl from Ipanema"

## **APPENDIX J: THESIS CHAIR PERFORMANCE REPORT**

## THESIS CHAIR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Nicholas Wuehrmann, Assistant Professor and Thesis Committee Chair for:

Josephine Leffner and Deborah Tedrick

University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre

October 22, 2006

Thesis Chair Report for Rehearsal/Performance of *Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway and Beyond*.

It was my pleasure to serve as Thesis Chair for Deborah Tedrick and Josephine Leffner and to help them steer the currents of forming their own two-person show. The credit for the show rests solely on the two students, from conception to formation to rehearsal to performance. I merely gave suggestions and guided them along the way as I saw fit. These two ladies took wonderful control of the entire process and made my job easy.

I attended a rehearsal of their show on April 29, 2006 in Daytona Beach at the News-Journal Center. They were still in the process of assembling props and costumes and used whatever they had assembled. They used a taped accompaniment, which gave me a little bit of concern, as they didn't seem able to really let loose in their performances and seemed to still be finding their way. Knowing their professionalism though, helped to ease my concerns, and their reassurances along the way of "how it will be" guided me to seeing what the final product would be.

I gave a few suggestions during and after the rehearsal, including where to focus more out to the audience and where to remain more introspective. Focus is paramount in any performance but becomes essential in a cabaret setting, where the 4<sup>th</sup> wall is broken and the audience is included. I encouraged both Josie and Debbie to "go for it" in their interpretations of such characters as Helen Morgan and Helen Kane. It was confusing at times to know just who

they were being from scene to scene, so I encouraged clarity. If they were being themselves, then that should be clearer, as should the transitions. I also suggested that they slow down the cabaret cliché section, as it seemed rushed, and the audience would really enjoy this moment.

I had a few more nit-picking suggestions that I thought would help to brighten and clarify a few moments. Both Debbie and Josie were completely open to my thoughts and received them in a professional and positive manner. I told them I thought the show had great potential and was very much looking forward to the performances.

I attended both performances, May 3 and 4, 2006 in the Black Box Theatre at UCF in Orlando. The performances were both adept and highly entertaining. So much work has gone into this production and it has paid off for them. They took the suggestions I made and incorporated them seamlessly. Josie's Helen Kane (Betty Boop) was adorable and Debbie's Helen Morgan was sultry and appropriately disturbing in her drunken haze. Both moments were highlights of the show (among many others). They switched back and forth very well between being themselves on stage and the various personas they undertook. The cabaret cliché section was nicely done. I had a few suggestions after the first performance and they both used those ideas in the second performance. I very much enjoyed the historical aspect of the production and the way in which historical characters came to life. Also interesting to see were the various styles the two performers used to show how cabaret altered from era to era. My only regret was that most of the student body had left for the summer by the time they performed and so the audiences were rather small. I wish the rest of the theatre students had been able to catch this highly entertaining, informative, well-thought-out and performed production.

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