Me, myself, and Liza

Jennifer Sirianni
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ME, MYSELF AND LIZA:
AN ORIGINAL ONE-WOMAN SHOW

by

JENNIFER LYNNE SIRIANNI
B.A., Point Park University, 2004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Acting
in the Department of Theatre
in the College of Arts and Humanities
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ABSTRACT

This master’s thesis project focuses on the life and music of Liza Minnelli, the research of which culminated in the development of a one-woman performance piece and monograph. Using song, dance, and dramatic dialogue, this presentation reveals the many aspects of Liza’s heart and soul, her relationship with her famous mother, and her own personal struggles. Through the eyes of Liza, this piece will explore the duality of her life—the underlining turmoil that fluctuated between her personal life and professional career.

My methodology includes studying biographies, articles, and interviews written about Liza Minnelli, as well as watching films and performances of her work. The performance piece is a compilation of my research. I will also explore the relationship and influence that Liza’s famous mother had on her, and see if other adversaries in her personal life affected her choices as a singer, actress, and entertainer.

People have often told me I look like Liza Minnelli. Walking down Lexington and 47th Street was one of the many times; I was approached by excited Liza Minnelli fans wanting an autograph and snapshot of me. The reaction I received in letting them know I was in the same business was just a precursor to daydreaming of one day portraying Liza on stage. I always loved Judy Garland’s and Liza’s musicals and movies. They inspired me at a young age. Never once did I try to emulate Liza’s style or copy her personality, because like her, I am determined to be my own “me.”

Ultimately, I would like this to be the beginning of something that I can continue to develop and workshop with the intent to produce for other professional theaters.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Liza Minnelli says, “You put what you go through in life up there on the stage. That’s part of my job. If there is any truth in your life in art, you might as well put it up there” (Schechter, 2004, p. 5).

My interest in writing and performing a cabaret began in April 2002, when I got my first job working on the Hudson River in a showboat production of Joe Corcoran’s off-off Broadway production of *Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding*. At the 60th performance, I was asked to perform with the original cast, off Broadway at 47th Street.

The settings were a bit different. On the Hudson River, the actual ceremony and wedding reception took place right on the showboat. At the off Broadway show, we met the guests (the audience) at St. Lukes’ Church where the wedding ceremony was performed. After the bride and groom were married, all the guests and bridal party walked to a restaurant.

In both venues, the guests were greeted as family members. The magical transition instantly occurred as the audience became part of the show. The success of the show did not depend on the venue—it was the power of interactive theater, as the audience became the stars. The audience wanted to know how the various family members were related and what their life experiences were. Ultimately it allowed them to use their own imagination and insert themselves in the experience.

When I chose to perform my thesis project and develop a one-woman show, I knew that I wanted to draw on the magic of an interactive experience—I wanted to take the audience on a journey that would be memorable for them. With this in mind, I started researching the cabaret art form before I began the process of writing the show.
In *The Cabaret Artist's Handbook: Creating Your Own Act in Today's Liveliest Theater Setting* (2000), editor Sherry Eaker compiled the words of Bob Harrington, a notable columnist that educated and inspired the cabaret scene in the 1980s. This book in particular contained many quotations that began my inspiration to create *Me, Myself and Liza*. Harrington stated:

- “Cabaret is a kind of theater in which there’s no typecasting, where there’s no role to play except yourself” (p. 12).
- “Cabaret is unique performance style designed to engage the audience intensely in the performance itself, be it comedy, singing, or a combination of both” (p. 16).
- “Singers and comics in cabaret are not just performing, they’re relating” (p. 15).
- “In theater, a performer must make any audience believe in a character. In cabaret, the audience must buy the performer” (p. 15).

**Overview of the Project**

The project has many different academic and artistic dimensions. It is first and foremost the experience of creating and writing a one-woman cabaret show. The project then evolves into the experience of rehearsing and producing the show.

**Scope of the Research**

My research began with finding biographies and books using the public library. I didn’t realize the scope of this research and how much time it would take. The most interesting aspect of my research was discovering new and unusual resources and realizing the vast amount of information available.
Aside from the obvious sources such as the Orlando Public Library and the University of Central Florida Library, I contacted the Library of Congress in search of unavailable songs and books. They were very helpful and answered me in person. My research also included the New York Library for the Performing Arts, Amazon, and Ebay. I found every song I was looking for and in the end, unfortunately, some of the songs didn't fit the structure of the piece. I made a wonderful discovery in my research, in that I now know how to find and search for music that is out of print. I also utilized visual resources that included videos of Minnelli performances, movies, and interviews. I found the most helpful resource was YouTube. As an actress, it was one of the most useful resources in developing the character of Liza and my interpretations and presentations of the songs.

The scope of my research also involved studying myself and my family. The most helpful research tool was creating a list of defining moments in my life and Liza’s life. It was from this list that the structure and shape of the piece evolved.

**End Result of Research**

The project culminates in a final performance that includes the following experiences: Rehearsing and performing a one-woman cabaret, acting as producer and production director for a one-woman cabaret, and coordinating front-of-house activities, including public relations, program and tickets, and organizing a reception for patrons.
CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IS A CABARET?

Description and Definition

Cabaret is a descriptive term for a show designed to promote the talents of a single well-known performer, usually a singer. Such diverse performers as Billy Holiday, Maurice Chevalier, Frank Sinatra, Noel Coward, Elaine Stritch, Lena Horne, and countless other singers and entertainers are associated with the cabaret form.

Cabaret is a form of entertainment that incorporates song, dance, comedy, and theater. Although its venue began at restaurants and nightclubs with a stage, a cabaret can be performed anywhere. What makes it different from other artistic genres is that even though other genres acknowledge the audience, cabaret actually involves the audience.

A cabaret often includes personal anecdotes and stories and does not require any set, costume props, or special effects. It all comes down to storytelling and the way the stories are told. Cabarets are successful when a performer knows how to break down the imaginary wall at the front of the stage (the fourth wall) and let the audience energy affect the performance. In fact, a cabaret’s audience affects it far more than in any other art form.

Lastly, cabaret is very personal. Performers are not just performing, they are relating. The intimate communication is between the performer and the audience. A cabaret performer takes huge risks as they are the very essence of the performance and this risk is the performer’s reason for being on the stage.

Brief History

It began in Paris, in or around the 1880s. It was a place where artistic types—poets, musicians and artists—would come together to share ideas at Le Chat Noir, which was the first
nightclub. Often subjects would include politics. Performers had the opportunity to try out new material and the audience got to enjoy a show for the cost of a few drinks. Around 1900 similar nightclubs began popping up in several other French and German cities. As time went by, the entertainment became a scheduled event that included everything from a few performers to a full-fledged floorshow such as the Moulin Rouge, home of the famous Can-Can.

As the audience sat at comfortable chairs and tables sipping their drinks, the performers created a new and intimate venue. Eventually the audience became involved in the show and would often interact with the performers and, sometimes, other audience members.

After World War I, the cabaret venue flourished and spread throughout Europe, especially in Germany, and Berlin became an artistic magnet that attracted performers from across the rest of Germany. Cabarets were often located in cellars and would delve into political and social satire; they would eventually become the centers of leftist opposition to the rise of the German Nazi party. Bob Fosse’s film version of Kander and Ebb’s musical *Cabaret* gives a startling view of what life was like in Berlin in the 1930s.

In the United States, cabarets were more glamorous than intellectual. Often known as nightclubs, cabarets provided venues for performers to improvise and try out new comedy material. In the post World War II era, a few performers ventured into the realm of political satire, but for commercial reasons, most of the nightclubs relied on well-known established artists and catered to adult entertainment, unlike Vaudeville, which catered more to families. However, because there were no social or racial barriers within the nightclubs, cabaret was criticized by journalists as establishments of moral decay.

In New York City from the 1940s through the mid-1960s, it seemed there was a cabaret on almost every city block, and it was the cabaret that saw the career debuts of such American
performing icons as Judy Holliday, Harry Belafonte, Barbara Streisand, Woody Allen, Lily Tomlin, and Bette Midler.

Today the term cabaret encompasses a broad range of meanings. It is a form that allows for freedom of concept, structure, and material, and provides artists a place to express their individuality without having to fit a preconceived notion of what they should be.

We can still see cabarets at work in our theatrical communities and venues, including the world-famous Don’t Tell Mama Cabaret and Piano Bar in New York City, where I would go to hear more elaborate shows such as *Always . . . Patsy Cline*, a musical play that tells the story of the famous country singer. I believe it was this production that first began my quest to write a cabaret show.

**Inspiration: Always . . . Patsy Cline, 7-26-07 Pittsburgh Cabaret Theater**

My initial feeling about *Always . . . Patsy Cline* was that the piece was too long. Personally speaking, every song I’ve heard of Patsy’s has a very similar musical style and I find that I can’t listen to her for long before the songs start to sound repetitive. Prior to this show, I had never seen Patsy perform, but I felt like the actress portraying her did a good job. Her vocal quality sounded just like the real thing; however, I can’t imagine Patsy being that technical. The performance of the actor portraying Patsy was very vocally specific and technical—there was no rawness in her performance as there was with Patsy.

Although I thought the piece was too long, I loved the reflective quality of the storytelling and its movement into song: Louise would tell a story remembering Patsy, then there would be a change in light and Patsy would come out and sing a song. It was told in chronological order.
The show is based on a true story about a woman named Louise Seger who loved Patsy’s music. After hearing her on the “Arthur Godfrey Show” in 1957, Louise became enamored of Patsy’s music and would call into the local radio station every day to request her songs. Louise finally got to see Patsy perform live in 1961 and the two of them struck up a friendship, remaining friends until Patsy died in a plane crash at the age of thirty.
CHAPTER THREE: LIZA MINNELLI PERSONAL HISTORY

It began in New York City at the 1998 Tony Awards, across from the world-renowned Radio City Music hall. As I moved to the front of the grandstand to see the Tony Award nominees on the red carpet, the crowd, thinking I was Liza Minnelli, began shouting and chanting “Liza, Liza!” Rising to the occasion, I lifted my head, smiled, and in less than a New York minute, made my singing debut. The excitement heightened. The cheers grew louder. I received my first standing ovation, a memory that will last a lifetime!

This was not the first time that spectators or Liza fans thought that I was Liza Minnelli, and it was not the last. Fans were so excited to see someone who they thought was Liza that they even asked me for my autograph. I was intrigued by this phenomena and decided to learn more about this legendary performer.

Liza May Minnelli was born March 12, 1946 to the legendary entertainer Judy Garland and the famous director Vincente Minnelli. Liza was raised in Beverly Hills and enjoyed the celebrated life of the stars and their families. In fact, her godfather (and the best man in her parents’ wedding) was none other than songwriter Ira Gershwin, so it seems inevitable that Liza would go on to become a successful entertainer.

Her career began in 1949 at the age of three, when she appeared in the film *In the Good Old Summertime* starring her mother and directed by Robert Z. Leonard. When she was five, her parents divorced. Between the age of 9 and 16 Liza, had been in 14 different schools.

At the age of 17, Liza made her professional debut in the off-Broadway revival *Best Foot Forward*, for which she won a Theater World Award. At age 19, she became the youngest performer to win a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical for *Flora, the Red Menace.*
It was the film *Cabaret*, however, that really made Liza a star. Oddly enough, though the original Broadway play had been written for her by composers John Kander and Frank Ebb, director Harold Prince rejected her for this version because he “considered her too inexperienced to play Sally Bowles” (Buckley, 2006, para. 5). The role went to Jill Haworth instead. However, “by the time Bob Fosse's screen version of Cabaret (1972) was ready to go, Jill's star had dimmed considerably. The movie was now geared up as a showcase for the fast-rising Liza Minnelli” (Brumburgh, para. 1). *Cabaret* turned out to be a smash success, and “within a week after the *Cabaret* premiere, Liza’s face graced the covers of both Time and Newsweek” (Buckley, 2006, para. 10). The movie garnered numerous award nominations, and in 1973, was awarded 8 Oscars and 3 Golden Globes. Of those, Liza won both an Oscar and a Golden Globe for Best Actress for her portrayal of Sally Bowles. Liza considers Sally her dream role.

1973 continued to be a great year for Liza, as she also won an Emmy for *Liza with a Z*, again directed by Bob Fosse. In 1977, she won another Tony for the Broadway musical, *The Act*, and is one of only a handful of people to have won all four major entertainment awards. Since 1963, she has appeared in 24 films, 14 stage shows, and 250 television shows, and has recorded 34 albums.

Unfortunately, Liza’s mother did not survive to see all of her successes. Early in Liza’s life, Judy was already addicted to amphetamines and barbiturates, and she went through a series of marriages and affairs. Liza would often take care of Judy and even saved her from many suicide attempts. Many of Judy’s friends feel that the studio contributed to her addiction to drugs and alcohol, as it was they who provided the pills to keep her energetic and slim, and, when those kept her awake, provided her the pills to help her sleep, all to make sure she kept up with the hectic demands of show business. When Judy inevitably died of an overdose at the age of 47, Liza was in New York.
In her personal life, Liza admits to being a poor judge of men—she has had four husbands. Minnelli's first husband (1967-1972) was entertainer Peter Allen; she was next married to Jack Haley, Jr. (1974-1979), son of actor Jack Haley, who played the Tin Man opposite Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz*. Her third husband was sculptor Mark Gero (1979-1992), and her fourth was producer David Gest (2002-2003), who prior to their divorce filed a lawsuit for $10 million, claiming she had physically abused him during their marriage. The case was later thrown out.

Like her mother, she too had problems with alcohol and drugs, and has been in rehab for substance abuse numerous times. However, through it all, she has maintained an incredibly successful career, and was honored for her achievements in the theatre when she received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on September 30, 1991.

**Artistic Influences**

Liza first met John Kander and Fred Ebb in 1965 when they chose her to star in *Flora, The Red Menace*, their first show. As the longest-running partnership on Broadway, Kander and Ebb wrote the lyrics and music to 17 musicals, including *Cabaret, Chicago, Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and *Fosse*, as well as the movies *Cabaret, Chicago, Funny Lady*, and *New York, New York*, and it was they who helped launch Liza’s career. In the book *Colored Lights*, Liza states, “I was like a person in the desert looking for a glass of water and finding a well. They [Kander and Ebb] gave voice to everything that I felt, and they still do with every song that they write for me.” (Kander and Ebb, 2003, p. x). Another person who had a great deal of influence in Liza's career was Charles Aznavour, a French singer, who has composed over 1000 songs and appeared in over 60 movies. He helped Liza better understand her relationship with her music. Liza said, “You find that as you get older you do things differently—Aznavour taught me that himself. He was a huge influence in my life. He said that as you
grow, the song will change; you'll find a whole different point of view so that you never try to repeat what you did before, you are always moving forward” (Rice, 2006).
CHAPTER FOUR: THE SCRIPT

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JENNIE SIRIANNI is a proud member of the Actors Equity Association (AEA). She made her Off-Broadway debut in Tony n' Tina's Wedding performing with the original cast. She appeared in the Broadway series presentation of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Her stage credits include plays and musicals, as well as engagements with The Orlando Opera, The Pittsburgh Playhouse Repertory, The Pittsburgh Playhouse Conservatory, The Pittsburgh Playhouse Theater, The Orlando Shakespeare Theater, and the Orlando Repertory Theater.

In addition to performing on the stage, Jennie has directed and choreographed children's theater in New York at Camp Broadway. Her kids' creative production was recognized by Chita Rivera and other Broadway judges as the “best Overall Musical Presentation for Camp Broadway 2003.” She trained Broadway Babies with an upper-east side team, working with babies and their mothers, focusing on pre-K development of motor skills, color and letter recognition, socialization, etc. to prepare these future Broadway stars.

Jennie completed her undergraduate degree in Musical Theater at Point Park University. She studied at the New York University's CAP 21 Studio Program and looks forward to receiving her MFA in Acting from the University of Central Florida in May 2008.

ORIGINAL CAST

Jennie ..........................................................Jennie Sirianni
Liza Minnelli...............................................Jennie Sirianni

ORIGINAL CREATIVE AND TECHNICAL TEAM

Concept and Script.................................Jennie Sirianni
Music Selection.................................Jennie Sirianni
Music and Stage Director..................Robin Jensen
Sound Design.................................Matthew Given
Me, Myself and Liza had its first public performances on February 24th and 25th, 2008 at the Mandell Theater at the Orlando Shakespeare Company in Orlando, Florida. These performances fulfilled the requirement as the thesis project of Jennie Sirianni to complete the Masters of Fine Arts Degree in Acting from the University of Central Florida. J.J. Ruscella served as committee chair. The other members of her thesis committee were Chris Niess and Jim Brown.

NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

The show is presented in a cabaret style and provides the artist the flexibility of modifying the script and the music to the various audiences viewing the show.

The show is written as a tribute to Liza Minnelli and her fans that chased me around New York, thinking that I was Liza. The audience catches a closer glimpse of who Liza is by way of her personal “quotes,” the songs she sang, and my personal anecdotes about her life looking like Liza.

ME, MYSELF AND LIZA

Intro Slide:

Preset: SR projector screen, USC hat stand with Liza's hat, tuxedo jacket, and boa. USL bentwood chair, USR black stool.

Slide 1: Liza in White

(Jennie enters USR and crosses between projector screen and hat stand. Underscore music vamp “Wherever We Go.” Jennie focus shifts between screen and hat stand to establish the costume items on the hat stand will represent Liza. Jennie crosses to other side of hat stand.)

JENNIE: (SL of hat stand)

WHEREVER WE GO, WHATEVER WE DO,
WE’RE GONNA GO THROUGH IT TOGETHER,

LIZA: (SR of hat stand with hat)
WE MAY NOT GO FAR, BUT SURE AS A STAR, WHEREVER WE ARE, IT’S TOGETHER,

JENNIE: (cross SL of hat stand)

WHEREVER I GO I KNOW SHE GOES.

LIZA: (cross SR of hat stand with hat)

WHEREVER I GO I KNOW SHE GOES.

JENNIE: (cross SL of hat stand)

NO FITS, NO FIGHTS, NO FEUDS AND NO EGOS,

LIZA: (cross SR of hat stand with hat)

AMIGOS,

JENNIE: (cross SL of hat stand)

TOGETHER!

LIZA: (cross SR of hat stand with hat)

THROUGH THICK AND THROUGH THIN, ALL OUT OR ALL IN. AND WHETHER IT’S WIN, PLACE, OR SHOW.

JENNIE: (cross SL of hat stand)

WITH YOU FOR ME AND ME FOR YOU, WE’LL MUDDLE THROUGH WHATEVER WE DO TOGETHER, WHEREVER WE GO!

Slide Three: Judy and Liza 1963

JENNIE:

In 1963, Liza Minnelli made her first television performance debut with her legendary mother, Judy Garland, singing this timeless duet. The words to this song remind me of the relationship that I have with my own mother. “Through thick and through thin” we are always there for each other. Thank you for coming and being a part of Me, Myself and Liza.

THROUGH THICK AND THROUGH THIN,
ALL OUT OR ALL IN.
AND WHETHER IT’S WIN, PLACE, OR SHOW,
WITH YOU FOR ME AND ME FOR YOU,
WE’LL MUDDLE THROUGH WHATEVER WE DO
TOGETHER WHEREVER WE GO!
TOGETHER, WHEREVER, WE GO!

JENNIE:

In June of 1998, I took summer classes at New York University. Mom came up to visit me, and we decided to catch a glimpse of the Tony Nominees as they walked the Red Carpet in front of Radio City Music Hall. The grandstands were getting crowded, but we got lucky and a New York City cop let us in.

As we walked up the steps to find a seat, someone in the bleachers shouted, “Hey, Liza Minnelli!” I smiled and gave a shy nod and wave. I became accustomed to people greeting me like that…thinking that I was Liza Minnelli.

Within seconds, the energy of the crowd heightened and they began chanting: “Liza! Liza!” I realized that this time a simple nod of my head and smile was not working.

I tried to fade into the grandstand, but my mother, who had a tendency to push me beyond my comfort zone, rose to the occasion! This was a “through thick or through thin” moment, and quite frankly, I’m not sure which one it was. She pushed me…she physically pushed me down the steps and said, “Go for it—this is your big chance!”

(begins to sing)

START SPREADING THE NEWS,
I’M LEAVING TODAY.

THE CROWD WENT CRAZY!
I WANT TO BE A PART OF IT—
NEW YORK, NEW YORK.
THESE VAGABOND SHOES
ARE LONGING TO STRAY

THEY’RE UP ON THEIR FEET!

AND STEP AROUND THE HEART OF IT
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

(crosses to piano and puts down the megaphone.
continues to sing, cross back to DSC)
I WANT TO WAKE UP IN A CITY,
THAT DOESN'T SLEEP,
TO FIND I'M KING OF THE HILL,
HEAD OF THE LIST,
CREAM OF THE CROP
AT THE TOP OF THE HEAP.

(cross USC using Liza-inspired choreography)

MY LITTLE TOWN BLUES
ARE MELTING AWAY
I'M GONNA MAKE A BRAND NEW START OF IT.
IN OLD NEW YORK.
IF I CAN MAKE IT THERE
I'D MAKE IT ANYWHERE.
COME ON, COME THROUGH,
NEW YORK, NEW YORK.

JENNIE:

Inspired by this experience and the Liza fans who chased me throughout NYC wanting my autograph, I became interested in Liza’s life. I found out we have more in common then just our looks. For example, everyone misspells our names. They call me Jeanine, or Ginny. They spell my name with a “y” at the end not an “ie.”

As far as my last name is concerned… Sirianni… well, let’s not even talk about that!!

In 1972, Kander and Ebb found a solution to Liza’s dilemma—they put it to music.

(cross to hat stand and put on tuxedo jacket and become Liza)

LIZA: (slow cross DSC while singing)

IT’S LIZA WITH A Z
NOT LISA WITH AN S
‘CAUSE LISA WITH AN S
GOES “SSS” NOT “ZZZ”
IT’S Z INSTEAD OF S
LI INSTEAD OF LEE
IT’S SIMPLE AS CAN BE
SEE LIZA!
LIZA:

“See I have a problem… my name. I find it still that a lot of people call me Lisa. Wrong. My name is Liza—it has a ‘z’ in it. For instance, somebody will come up to me on the street and say ‘Hello Lisa, how are you?’ And I say fine thank you, but it’s Liza. Or, somebody will say, ‘Lisa, what a nice hat.’ And I’ll say thank you very much but that’s my hair and my name is Liza, so you can see what I mean.”

(cross DSL)

OH! THAT IS ONLY HALF OF IT
THERE’S ANOTHER WAY
THEY TREAT ME CRUELLY.
HOW OFTEN I REMEMBER SOMEONE SAYING
“THERE SHE GOES, LISA MINOOLI!”
OR MINOLI, OR MINIOLA, OR MINILI, OR MINELIE
SO IS IT A WONDER, I VERY OFTEN CRY?

(cross CS)

IT’S M-I-DOUBLE N,
THEN –E-DOUBLE-L-I,
YOU DOUBLE UP THE N, THAT’S “NN,” NOT “MM”
THEN E, DOUBLE THE L, END IT WITH AN I,
THAT’S THE WAY YOU SAY …MINNELLI…
IT’S ITALIAN,
BLAME IT ON PAPA,
WHAT CAN I DO?

(cross DSR)

EVERY SANDRA
WHO’S A SONDRA,
EVERY MARY WHO’D REALLY MARIE
EVERY JOAN
WHO IS A JOANNE

(back US in rhythm)

HAS GOT TO AGREE WITH ME
WHEN I’VE ANNOUNCED
I DON’T MIND BEING PUMMELED
OR TRAMPLED OR TROUNCED
BUT IT DOES DRIVE YOU BATS
TO BE MISS, MISS PRONOUNCED…”
IT’S LIZA WITH A Z
NOT LISA WITH AN S
‘CAUSE LISA WITH AN S
GOES “SSS” NOT “ZZZ”
IT’S Z INSTEAD OF S
LI INSTEAD OF LEE
IT’S SIMPLE AS CAN BE
SEE LIZA!

THEN M-I-DOUBLE N,
THEN –E-DOUBLE-L-I,
YOU DOUBLE UP THE N, THAT’S “NN,” NOT “LL”
THEN E, DOUBLE THE L, END IT WITH AN I,
THAT’S THE WAY YOU SAY …MINNELLI…
LIZA MINNELLI!!
IT’S EASY!
IT’S EASY! SEE, IT’S LEEZY!
NO! LIZA……!

(cross US to hat stand and place tuxedo jacket back on the stand)

Slide 4: Liza as a baby with Judy

JENNIE:

Liza was born March 12, 1946. Her career began in 1949 at the age of three when she appeared in the film In the Good Old Summertime starring her mother and directed by Robert Z. Leonard.

Slide 5: Photo of Liza on set with Vincente Minnelli

When she was five, her parents divorced.

Slide 6: Liza and family with Desi Arnaz

She first appeared on stage with her mother at the age of ten, and by her teens she decided she wanted to be an entertainer.

Slide 7: Liza as a toddler hugging her Mother

Liza spent a good deal of her adolescence taking care of her mother. Judy would often wake up Liza in the middle of the night and talk. As a result Liza hated school and didn’t do well. Within a few years, she was moved in and out of schools. She didn’t have time to warm up to people.

Slide 8: Liza as a teen with her mother
Between the ages of 9 and 16 Liza was in 14 different schools. She helped save her mom from several suicide attempts and because of the uncertainty in her family life, Liza developed a survival concept that she calls *wafting*.

(cross to hat stand and pick up the boa)

**Slide 9: Liza as a teen with her mother in a portrait**

LIZA:

“Wafting is when you pretend that you’re not really you; you’re like a cork bobbing down the ocean—no matter how rough the water is the cork stays afloat. Nothing can stop it.”

(drop boa on “troubles” SR of hat stand)

**Slide 10: Judy Garland in “Get Happy”**

JENNIE:

FORGET YOUR TROUBLES AND JUST GET HAPPY
YOU BETTER CHASE ALL YOUR CARES AWAY
SING HALLELUJAH, COME ON, GET HAPPY
GET READY FOR THE JUDGMENT DAY

THE SUN IS SHINING COME ON GET HAPPY
THE LORD IS WAITING TO TAKE YOUR HAND
SHOUT HALLELUJAH, COME ON, GET HAPPY
WE’RE GOIN TO THE PROMISED LAND.

**Slide 11: Peaceful Judy close up**

WE’RE HEADIN’ CROSS THE RIVER
GONNA WASH OUT SINS IN THE TIDE
IT’S ALL SO PEACEFUL
ON THE OTHER SIDE

FORGET YOUR TROUBLES AND JUST GET HAPPY
YOU BETTER CHASE ALL YOUR CARES AWAY
SHOUT HALLELUJAH, COME ON, GET HAPPY,
GET READY FOR THE JUDGMENT DAY!

(pick up boa, music underscore)

**Slide 12: Judy singing**
LIZA:

“Life with mama was like the theater of the absurd... You see, I was remembering the times my mother laughed and was happy, and then later I’d see her crying. And that was something I did not want to do—cry.

I remember once I asked my mother if maybe sometimes a person couldn’t cry first—I meant pay for one’s happiness before it came. Mother looked at me for a moment and her face was full of sadness. ‘Why should we have to cry at all?’”

(drop boa)

Slide 13: Dorothy and Toto

JENNIE:

FORGET YOUR TROUBLES AND JUST GET HAPPY
YOU BETTER CHASE ALL YOUR CARES AWAY
SHOUT HALLELUJAH, COME ON, GET HAPPY,
GET READY, GET READY, GET READY
FOR THE JUDGMENT DAY!

Slide 14: Red Shoes

(cross US of boa)

At age 47, Judy Garland died of an overdose of sleeping pills. It was June 22, 1969 when her fifth husband Mickey Deans found dead her in a locked bathroom.

Slide 15: Blank

(pick up the boa)

LIZA:

“When momma died I first went through shock. Then I felt a strange exultation….as if mama’s death had suddenly freed her spirit… and her spirit was really with me… I know mama was a great star and a great talent. But I am not thinking about those things today. What I am thinking about is the woman, my mother, and what a lovely, vital, and extraordinary woman she was. If she was happy, she just wasn’t happy, she was ecstatic, and when she was sad, she was sadder then anybody. For the rest of my life I will be glad to be Judy Garland’s daughter.”

(place boa back on the hat stand, cross DSC)
JENNIE:

SOMETIMES YOU’RE HAPPY, SOMETIMES YOU’RE SAD
BUT THE WORLD GOES ROUND
SOMETIMES YOU LOSE EVERY NICKEL YOU HAD
BUT THE WORLD GOES ROUND

SOMETIMES YOUR DREAMS GET BROKEN IN PIECES
BUT THAT DOESN’T ALTER A THING
TAKE IT FROM ME, THERE’S STILL GONNA BE
A SUMMER, A WINTER, A FALL, AND A SPRING

AND SOMETIMES A FRIEND STARTS TREATING YOU BAD
BUT THE WORLD GOES ROUND
AND SOMETIMES YOUR HEART BREAKS WITH A
DEAFENING SOUND

SOMEBODY LOSES AND SOMEBODY WINS
THEN ONE DAY IT KICKS, THEN IT KICKS IN THE SHINS
BUT THE PLANET SPINS, AND THE WORLD GOES ROUND
AND ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND
THE WORLD GOES ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND
AND ROUND!

Slide 16: Liza arms outstretched singing

JENNIE:

At the age of 17, Liza made her professional debut in the off-Broadway revival Best Foot Forward, for which she won a Theater World Award. At age 19, she became the youngest performer to win a Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical for Flora, the Red Menace. Liza still holds the record for youngest person to receive a Tony for a lead in a musical.

(cross to bentwood chair and place DSC)

Slide 17: Liza in Cabaret

In 1972, at the age of 26, Liza won a Golden Globe and an Oscar for her performance as Sally Bowles in the film adaptation of Kander and Ebb’s Cabaret

(cross to hat stand and take the hat)

Liza considers this role her dream role

(hold hat)
LIZA:

“I think she was eternal and that’s what attracted me to her. There will always be a Sally Bowles somewhere. I saw her as a reflection of many tragic figures: I think she is the kind of person you look at and say, ‘Oh, I remember doing that in MY life.’ You know she’s going to say something terrible every minute, but you understand her in a strange, crazy way. I never found Sally admirable… but I do find her understandable. And I’ve wanted to play her forever…”

(sit in chair holding hat to the left)

MAYBE THIS TIME, I’LL BE LUCKY
MAYBE THIS TIME HE’LL STAY
MAYBE THIS TIME, FOR THE FIRST TIME
LOVE WON’T HURRY AWAY

HE WILL HOLD ME FAST
AND I’LL BE HOME AT LAST
NOT A LOSER, ANYMORE,
LIKE THE LAST TIME AND THE TIME BEFORE.

EVERYBODY LOVES A WINNER
SO NOBODY LOVED ME
LADY PEACEFUL, LADY HAPPY.
THAT’S WHAT I LONG TO BE.

(cross to hat stand and replace hat, backup SL)

JENNIE:

ALL THE ODDS ARE IN MY FAVOR
SOMETHING’S BOUND TO BEGIN.
IT’S GONNA HAPPEN, HAPPEN SOMETIME
MAYBE THIS TIME I’LL WIN.

(cross DSL)

EVERYBODY LOVES A WINNER
SO NOBODY LOVED ME
LADY PEACEFUL, LADY HAPPY.
THAT’S WHAT I LONG TO BE.

(cross DSC)

ALL THE ODDS ARE IN MY FAVOR
SOMETHING’S BOUND TO BEGIN.
IT’S GONNA HAPPEN, HAPPEN SOMETIME
MAYBE THIS TIME, MAYBE THIS TIME I’LL WIN.

JENNIE:

Maybe this time… is exactly what I hoped for when I moved to New York City.

I moved to New York on March 1, 2002. I wanted to be a professional actor and perform on Broadway. I lived in a beautiful high rise on 57th and 2nd on the 18th floor.

The very first words that the doorman said to me was, “woo Liza.” I smiled and he said, “You know she lived across the street years ago.” I could not believe it. Later, I found out that not only did she live across the street, but Liza lived on the 18th floor, too.

I knew I wanted to be an entertainer since my teens, just like Liza. While I didn’t have the connections that she had, with a mom and dad in the business, I do have the drive. And drive is what it takes, along with stamina, to live and audition in New York.

I remember shortly after I arrived in New York (in fact, it was my 15th audition), I was super excited to see that Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding had posted an audition. I saw the show in 1996, when my family made a trip to New York, and had an uncanny feeling that one day, I would be in it.

I prepared for the audition and adapted a family story told by my Aunt Antoinette. Since the show was improvisational, I thought it was a perfect choice.

(cross USR as if leaving, then turns to address audience)

Hi, my name is Jennie Sirianni and I would like to do a piece called “Miss Kitty.” Do you mind if I use a chair?

(sit DSC in chair)

I lived in the inner city of Pittsburgh. We had a close-knit, large, extended family that lived close by. My Aunt Rose, Uncle John, Big John, and Baby John all lived next door to us.

One day, I heard my Aunt Rose screaming at the top of her lungs for someone to help. I jumped over the cyclone fence and found her at the top of the cellar steps, frantic.

She grabbed me and we went down steps, toward the long freezer, the kind that looks like a casket. She opened it and began to cry. There it was Miss Kitty, the family cat. You see, Baby John had put the cat in the freezer.

I hurried up and called the veterinarian, who gave me a remedy that might revive Miss Kitty. He told me to find an ointment or lubricant that would warm up the spinal cord. He said that if I rubbed it in a circular motion up and down the spinal cord, Miss Kitty might come back to us. The only thing I could find was the gasoline from the lawn mower.
I poured it out and began to apply it to Miss Kitty’s back, starting from the top of the spinal cord, and in a rotating motion, moving down to the end of her back.

Miss Kitty flinched. Then her tail started to swirl, she jumped away, and started drinking her milk. We were so excited and Aunt Rose, who is highly emotional, began to cry with joy.

We went back up to the kitchen to have some tea, but at that point, I thought I would have to revive Aunt Rose. She just would not stop crying.

All of sudden, we heard something happening in the basement. We looked down and there was Miss Kitty, running up the steps, down the steps, back up and down, like something was driving her to keep moving.

All of a sudden, thump….she stops…. (pause.)

ROBIN:

What happened?

JENNIE:

She ran out of gas!

The producer and the director looked at me just the way you are looking at me now!

The director looked at the producer and said, “Is she for real?” And then, the producer looked at me and said, “That was sooo not funny!”

I responded, “Are you kidding? It’s freakin’ hilarious!”

I flung the chair.

(fling chair USL)

and walked out…

(cross USR, stop and turn downstage)

Before I got to the door, they called me back and said yes, they said yes. I got the job, my first off-Broadway show performing with the original cast of *Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding*. For the next year and half, I performed off-Broadway.

They said yes. Just three little letters was all it took . . . Y-E-S

YES,
SAY “YES.”
LIFE KEEPS HAPPENING EV’RY DAY,
SAY “YES.”

WHEN POSSIBILITIES COME YOUR WAY,
YOU CAN’T START WONDERING WHAT TO SAY
YOU NEVER WIN IF YOU NEVER PLAY—
SAY “YES.”

THERE’S MINK AND MARIGOLD RIGHT OUTSIDE
AND LONG WHITE CADILLACS YOU CAN RIDE
BUT NOTHING’S GAINED WHEN THERE’S NOTHING TRIED
SAY “YES.”

(cross DSL)

DON’T SAY “WHY,”
SAY “WHY NOT?”
WHAT LIES BEYOND WHAT IS,
IS NOT.
SO WHAT?

SAY “YES.” YES.

(sit on audience member's lap)

YES, I CAN, YES I WILL,
YES, I’LL TAKE A SIP, YES I’LL TOUCH.
YES, OF COURSE, YES HOW NICE,
YES, I’D HAPPILY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH,
YES.
OH YES.

(cross to CS)

THERE’S LOTS OF CHAFF BUT THERE’S LOTS OF WHEAT
SAY “YES.”
YOU MIGHT GET MUGGED AS YOU WALK THE STREET.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND YOU MIGHT GREET
THAT HANDSOME STRANGER YOU’VE LONGED TO MEET
SAY “YES”

(sit on another audience member's lap)

YES, I’LL WALK, YES I’LL LOOK.
YES, I’D LOVE TO DO SUCH AND SUCH.
YES I’LL TRY, YES, I’LL DARE
YES, I’LL FLY.
YES, I’LL SHARE.
YES, I’D HAPPILY THANK YOU VERY MUCH

(cross to UCS)

YES
OH, YES!
OH, YES.

(dance to DSC)

YOU CAN’T LOOK BACK ON A CHANCE THAT’S LOST.
SAY ‘YES’
THE DICE MEAN NOTHING UNLESS THEY’RE TOSSED.
THE THROW IS USUALLY WORTH THE TOSS.
THE HOPE OF SUMMER DENIES THE FROST.
SAY “YES.”
YES, I AM.
YES, I’LL BE.
YES, I’LL GO.
OH, YES
YES!
YES

JENNIE:

Here are some more of the amazing things Liza accomplished as an artist.

**Slide 18: Liza wearing red dress**

In 1973, she won an Emmy for *Liza with a Z.*

**Slide 19: Liza receiving Academy Award**

In 1977, Liza won another Tony for the Broadway musical *The Act.* And in 1989, she won a Grammy Legend Award for *Liza with a Z.* She has performed in over 24 films.

**Slide 20: Liza with microphone**

Liza has never stopped recording albums; as a matter of fact, there are 34, most of them being recordings of her concerts.
Figure 1: Slide 21—Hollywood Star

She was honored for her career in theater when she received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

**Slide 22: Ira Gershwin**

Her godfather is Ira Gershwin. In fact, she is named after a song he wrote: “Liza (All The Clouds'll Roll Away)”

**Slide 23: Blank**

Liza’s love life is public information. She has had many relationships, some of them good, and some of them bad, like all of us. We all can relate to the desire of wanting to be loved and how magical that can be and then how hard it is to let go. We all have our love stories. This next song could be one of my love stories.

(cross US to get stool and place DSC)

Sometimes all we need to deal with matters of the heart is our own space, and time with our own thoughts.

I WON’T NEED MUCH
JUST MY OWN SPACE
A LITTLE TIME
WITH MY OWN THOUGHTS
AND MY OWN SPACE
SOMEPLACE TO HIDE
WHERE THERE IS NO ONE ELSE
BUT ME, TO MEET INSIDE

I LOVE YOU MORE
THAN I CAN EVER SAY
I LOVE YOU MORE, AND MORE, AND MORE
WITH EVERY PASSING DAY

ALLOW ME LIGHT
A BREATH OF AIR
LEAVE ME THE ONLY THING
I OWN WE CANNOT SHARE

JUST LEAVE ME THAT
SWEET LOVE OF MINE

JUST LEAVE ME THAT
JUST MY OWN SPACE AND WE’LL BE FINE

I LOVE YOU MORE
THAN I CAN EVER SAY
I LOVE YOU MORE, AND MORE, AND MORE
WITH EVERY PASSING DAY

ALLOW ME LIGHT
A BREATH OF AIR
LEAVE ME THE ONLY THING
I OWN WE CANNOT SHARE

JUST LEAVE ME THAT
SWEET LOVE OF MINE
JUST LEAVE ME THAT
JUST MY OWN SPACE AND WE’LL BE FINE

When I look back at my YES moment in New York, I thought that was all I ever wanted. I made a dream come true. But something changed in me while I was performing in New York—walking down Broadway every day to my show wasn’t all I thought it would be. Something was missing. It wasn’t until I moved back to Orlando that I understood what that quiet whisper was.

WHEN IT ALL COMES TRUE
JUST THE WAY YOU PLANNED
IT’S FUNNY BUT THE BELLS DON’T RING
IT’S A QUIET THING
WHEN YOU HOLD THE WORLD
IN YOUR TREMBLING HAND
YOU THINK YOU’D HEAR A CHOIR SING
This past November, I flew out to Palm Springs, California with my mom to see Liza Minnelli perform. In order to get tickets to Liza’s performance, I had to buy tickets to the McCallum Theatre’s 20th Anniversary Gala Event. As part of the Gala event, we were assigned to dine at a French restaurant, one of the finest restaurants Palm Dessert.

As the maître d’ escorted us to our table, he offered the following information:

(Step SL)

“We need to let you know that Mr. and Mrs. Fessier, the couple who will be joining you, are known to be notoriously late, so we suggest that you get started on your dinner without them.”

(Step CS)

I said,

(Step SR)

“Who’s he?”

(Step CS)

He said:

(Step SL)

“He is Bruce Fessier from The Desert Sun.”

(Step CS)

I said:

(Step SR)

“No that’s okay—we don’t have to wait.”
I instantly felt my mother’s foot kick me under the table. She knew that *The Desert Sun* is a prestigious newspaper in Palm Springs and Bruce Fessier is the entertainment editor! To be honest with you, I thought that the *Desert Sun* was a local Bar!

I instantly became a believer in the saying that “everything happens for a reason.”

![Figure 2: Slide 24—Jennie with Bruce Fessier](image)

After dinner, Bruce and I exchanged cards and he told me that if he got a press interview with Liza, he would call me to meet her.

Well, the performance went by and I did not receive a call.

**Slide 25: Blank**

Still determined to meet Liza, I stood at the stage door.

As she approached her van, I politely asked her for a photo. I placed my arm around her shoulder, as if I knew her my whole life. My mom snapped the picture.

On my way home the next day, I picked up *The Desert Sun* to read the review.
As I read it out loud, I couldn’t believe it. It was a magical time. One of mine just came true. I met Liza Minnelli and I got an unexpected treat when my name appeared in the same review as Liza Minnelli, Bob Hope, Tony Bennett, and Barry Manilow.

This will only happen just once in my lifetime!

JUST ONCE IN A LIFETIME, A MAN KNOWS A MOMENT.
ONE WONDERFUL MOMENT WHEN FATE TAKES HIS HAND.
AND THIS IS MY MOMENT, MY ONCE IN A LIFETIME.
WHEN I CAN EXPLORE A NEW AND EXCITING LAND.
FOR ONCE IN MY LIFETIME, I FEEL LIKE A GIANT. I SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE AS THOUGH I HAD WINGS. FOR THIS IS MY MOMENT, MY ONCE IN A LIFETIME AND THOUGH IT MAY BE JUST ONCE IN MY LIFETIME. I’M GONNA DO GREAT THINGS. JUST ONCE IN MY LIFETIME, I FEEL LIKE A GIANT
I SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE AS THOUGH I HAD WINGS.
FOR THIS IS MY MOMENT, MY DESTINY CALLS ME
AND THOUGH IT MAY BE JUST ONCE IN MY LIFETIME
I’M GOING TO DO GREAT THINGS

I want to thank you for taking this journey with me tonight! What a memory! Wherever I go, I know I know this is another defining moment of my life.

Slide 29: Blank

Liza said, “It doesn’t matter how you feel when you come into the theater—it’s how you feel when you leave.”

I say forget your troubles for an hour and remember the quiet things, being alone in your own space, but also keep going, keep trying new things. Liza’s performances have been a celebration of life. She says yes to so many things and has opened herself up to all of us. Her passion for performing is contagious. I understand now why people get so excited when they think that I am Liza.

I can’t keep comparing myself to Liza, but I am grateful for the connections I’ve made with her. It has given me new insights. Someone once said, “The highest expression of art in the most perfect form is the teaching of the human heart something about itself.”

Thank you Liza, for not only filling my heart with your songs, but also with your words.

(cross to the hat stand and put on the hat, tuxedo jacket, and boa)

Liza says:

“You put what you go through in life up there on stage. That’s part of my job. If there is any truth in your life in art, you might as well put it up there”

LIZA:

WHAT GOOD IS SITTING ALONE IN YOUR ROOM?
COME HEAR THE MUSIC PLAY.
LIFE IS A CABARET, OLD CHUM,
COME TO THE CABARET.

PUT DOWN THE KNOTTING,
THE BOOK, AND THE BROOM.
TIME FOR A HOLIDAY.
LIFE IS CABARET, OLD CHUM,
COME TO THE CABARET.

(gradually take off the hat, jacket, and boa and drop it DSC)
COME TASTE THE WINE,
COME HEAR THE BAND.
COME BLOW YOUR HORN,
START CELEBRATING;
RIGHT THIS WAY,
YOUR TABLE’S WAITING

JENNIE:

NO USE PERMITTING
SOME PROPHET OF DOOM
TO WIPE EVERY SMILE AWAY.
LIFE IS A CABARET, OLD CHUM,
COME TO THE CABARET!

(introduce the band)

BOBBY BRENNAN ON THE BASS
MATT NEFF ON THE DRUMS
AND MY SPECIAL FRIEND ROBIN JENSEN ON THE PIANO

COME TASTE THE WINE,
COME HEAR THE BAND.
COME BLOW YOUR HORN,
START CELEBRATING;
RIGHT THIS WAY,
YOUR TABLE’S WAITING

START BY ADMITTING
FROM CRADLE TO TOMB
ISN’T THAT LONG A STAY.
LIFE IS A CABARET, OLD CHUM,
ONLY A CABARET, OLD CHUM,
AND I LOVE A CABARET!
Figure 6: Slide 30—Jennie Sirianni and Liza Minnelli

(bow and exit USR)
CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF THE SCRIPT

Development of the Concept

When I first began to visualize the concept of the show, I imagined starting with Judy’s voice singing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” then as it fades, my voice singing over “if happy little bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow/why oh why can’t I?” I thought it would be great to also end with “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and then black out. Or, maybe black out, then have a big number where I start with a quote about Judy Garland as “mama,” then use a Liza pose when the lights come up—an encore of a big showstopper.

It all began with a lot of reading. I read everything I could about Liza and her mother, and then I watched all of the videos and movies I could find. After I did all my research, I started to figure out what main ideas of her as a person interested me, what quotes moved me to think about parallels in my own life. From there, I focused on finding main ideas for the script: What about Liza and Judy did I find really interesting for me as a person?

As I read about quotes or certain incidents, I started to categorize them, and found that they began to span two or three major phases of Minnelli’s personal life and career. I filled boxes with these files. After a couple of months, I sat down and sorted through all of the information and began to develop a storyboard. I choose three ideas to focus on to see if I had enough material that really represented that particular idea enough to take it and make it part of the script.

The first section I called “Liza and Judy,” which would give insight to their relationship when Judy was alive. The second section I called “Liza's Lovers,” and had personal quotes and biographical events that focused on her relationships with other people in her adult life. The third section I called “My Own Personal, Defining Moment.” It was in this section that I went
through my own past and compiled a very personal list of events that defined my life. This section also included lists of Liza and our similarities and differences. Then I started to put the quotes in their appropriate section. It was at this point that I started to look at Minnelli’s repertoire, and I came to realize the final shape of the piece. I began writing and got an early draft of the first third of the show. The first section came fast and easy.

It was when I started writing the second section on Liza and her relationships that I hit a wall. I didn't like where it was going, so I decided to stop writing, pick the rest of the songs, and come back to these sections later. It wasn't until several months after that I started to put the final two sections together, which was prompted by my trip to see Liza Minelli in November. After that, the final two sections fell into place. I found out that my story and life-defining moments became more important to the rest of the piece.

The second section about Liza and her relationships evolved into interesting facts about Liza, which I used in the first section as well. The idea expanded when I decided to add the visual elements of the story by including vintage pictures of Liza as well as my own pictures that helped tell my story.

The third part of the script came after my trip to meet Liza in Palm Springs and my once-in-a-lifetime experience. I decided to tell that story and end with the song “Once In A Lifetime” to show how reading the review (Appendix I) and seeing my name along side those legendary greats moved me.

The last part of the script to be written was the middle, where the songs “Quiet Thing” and “My Own Space” are. Initially, this was to be section about Liza and her relationships, but I was having problems writing it. With the selection of the songs—two of my favorite Liza songs—I decided this would be my most personal section of the entire show.
Developing the Personal Narrative

I began to develop the personal narrative by choosing what defining moments in my life I wanted to include. I definitely knew I wanted my New York Red Carpet story and my New York audition. I thought at first I could just tell these stories off the top of my head. I found out it was hard—I kept getting the stories mixed up and I wasn't enjoying telling them, so I sat down and wrote them out. I then discovered the process of what a draft script is. I found myself rewriting these stories to find the most concise and clear way of telling them without rambling.

Choosing the Songs

I began by creating a list of Liza’s songs that I liked. I then took each song and asked the question, “Do you fit in any of my three sections?”, “Do you help tell the story of any section?”, and “Where would be a good place in the show to put you?” For example, some songs were good opening numbers and others were ballads that would fit well with a poignant story or incident in Liza's and my own “Life Defining Moments.”

Here is the list of songs from the original short list.

1. “I’d Rather Leave While I’m In Love” from Boy From Oz
2. “I Still Believe In Love” from They’re Playing Our Song
3. “Theme from Arthur” from Arthur
4. “Don’t Cry Out Loud” from Evita
5. “Maybe This Time” from Cabaret
6. “Cabaret” from Cabaret
7. “Time Heals Everything” from Mack and Mabel
8. “If He Really Knew Me” from They're Playing Our Song
9. “What Did I Have That I Don't Have” from *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*
10. “Quiet Thing” from *Flora, The Red Menace*
11. “Yes” from *70 Girls 70*
12. “But the World Goes Round” from *New York, New York*
13. “Liza with a Z” from *Liza With A Z*
14. “I’m Going Back” from *Bells Are Ringing*
15. “My Own Space” from *The Act*
16. “Ring Them Bells” by Kander and Ebb
17. “Come Saturday Morning” from the *Come Saturday Morning*
18. “New York, New York” from *New York, New York*
19. “The Man That Got Away” from *A Star Is Born*
20. “Smile”
21. “Arthur” from *Arthur*
22. “Who’s Sorry Now”
23. “The Boy Next Door”
24. “It All Depends On You”
25. “Nearness of You”
26. “Get Happy”
27. “Sing Happy” from *Flora, The Red Menace*
28. “Show Stopper” by Kander and Ebb
29. “Sometimes A Day Goes By” from *Woman Of The Year*
30. “We Can Make It” from *The Rink*
31. “City Lights” from *The Act*
32. “Somewhere Over The Rainbow” from *The Wizard Of Oz*
33. “Seeing Things”

34. “All I Need Is One Good Break” from *Flora, The Red Menace*

35. “Just Once In A Lifetime” by Kander and Ebb

36. “Sorry I Asked” by Kander and Ebb

37. “You Are For Loving Me”

Here is the final list of songs from the *Me, Myself and Liza* program.

1. “Together”


3. “Liza with A Z”

4. “Get Happy”

5. “But The World Goes Round”

6. “Maybe This Time”

7. “Yes”

8. “My Own Space”

9. “A Quiet Thing”

10. “Once In a Lifetime”

11. “Cabaret”

For various reasons, over half of the songs did not make it into the program. For some of them, I couldn't find a connection to the song, and for others, the song had no purpose in forwarding the story in the script. In retrospect, I discovered that almost all of the songs I chose were those by the creative team of Kander and Ebb.
Analysis of the Script

There are three very important quotes that defined the structure of the piece. The script is divided into three sections.

Growing Up Judy’s Daughter

“Mama says, 'What’s it like to be Dorothy’s daughter?’” (Luft, 1998).

Liza grew up under such a monumental mother. Judy Garland’s fame was that of an American icon. A lot of younger people may not know her name, but most of them will recognize the name Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz. This section of the piece uses influences of Judy in many different ways. The opening of the show begins with “Together (Wherever We Go),” a duet sung by mother and daughter for the first time in 1964, on Judy’s short-lived television series. It would become their signature duet up until Judy’s death in 1969. This number was used to set up the idea that I would be playing the parts of both myself and Liza, and I would be using the costume pieces to help delineate the Liza character from my own character.

I also used similarities between Liza and myself to help shape the piece. I am mistaken for her a lot and I used the story of my experience in New York and singing the song “New York, New York” for the crowd waiting at the red carpet of the Tony Awards. I did a shortened version of this song in the script because the song is so famous that I wanted to find a new way to convey it rather than make it seem like I was copying another artist.

Another similarity between us is that people frequently misspell our names, and I found that sometimes a song fit really well into a story or quote that Liza tells about this experience. Liza shares the story of everyone mispronouncing her name in Liza with a Z, followed by the song with the same title, written for her by Kander and Ebb.
“Get Happy” was another Judy Garland number, which I went even further with by using Judy’s famous musical ending that repeats the lyrics “get ready” and takes them up chromatically to the final cadence. I began my first of three different Liza fact sections, listing basic personal history and what it was like to live with Judy Garland from Liza's perspective. I used the description of “wafting,” as Liza puts it, which is her defense mechanism in dealing with the turmoil surrounding her mother. Liza said, “Life with mama was like the theater of the absurd . . . You see, I was remembering the times my mother laughed and was happy, and then later I’d see her crying. And that was something I did not want to do—cry” (Petrucelli, 1983). Liza also said, “I remember once I asked my mother if maybe sometimes a person couldn’t cry first—I meant pay for one’s happiness before it came. Mother looked at me for a moment and her face was full of sadness. ‘Why should we have to cry at all?’” (Spada, 1983). I really like how this quote and the song “Get Happy” fit together since it seemed like they were at the opposite ends of the emotional scale, yet it seemed like the quote and the lyrics fit together.

I found a very personal connection to the song “But The World Goes Round” and used the words as a reflective comment on the death of Judy Garland.

Next, I used another section of Liza facts about her early career, including the role that brought Liza her fame: Sally Bowles from Cabaret. The first section of this song I sung as Liza and created the choreography using inspiration from her rendition. I then sang the last half of the song as Jennie and the lyrics segued perfectly into my personal story.

It is here that my second Jennie story lives—another New York story about an audition that got me my first big acting job. I ended this section with the song “Yes,” and made an artistic decision to sing this song totally different from Liza’s style, which is much softer and more relaxed. As an actress, I looked at the words without the music and I discovered I wanted to say them with much more excitement and emotion, especially since I was using this song with my
audition story, so my tempo was different and the approach to the song came from a totally different emotional palate.

The story was followed by another Liza fact section, which focused on her artistic achievements. It was here that I originally intended to put a section on Liza’s personal relationships, but I was fighting with the concept. I had chosen my two favorite songs for this section and I just couldn't pair them with Liza’s personal life. I felt if I did, I would be doing her a disservice. I wanted to have the audience leave smiling for her, not crying for her. So this next section became inspired by two Minnelli quotes and I found myself writing my own words to reflect on what these songs meant to me.

**Follow Your Heart**

Liza said, “I fight to be Liza Minnelli on stage; I fight to be Liza Minnelli off stage. God gave me a talent and I’m not going to spit in his eye. People are trying to prove that history repeats itself, but mama always told me history doesn’t have to repeat itself” (Spada, 1983, pg. 210).

This quote is so meaningful to me, yet I never found a place to use it in my story. It talks about an underlying meaning to her career and really captures one of the most important reasons that I am in theater and pursuing my Master’s degree: God also gave me a talent and I'm not going to turn my back on my it; this whole story is about putting it up there.

Liza also said, “You put what you go through in life up there on the stage. That’s part of my job. If there is any truth in your life in art, you might as well put it up there” (Schechter, 2004, p. 205). Liza's words inspired me to end the section with two of my favorite selections, “My Own Space” and “Quiet Thing.”
Where Does It End?

“When all else fails win them over with a tug of the heart strings, use sympathy, if you can’t make them laugh make them cry” (Petrucelli, 1983, p. 39).

This quote, which I use toward the beginning of my story, is really an inspiration for the final section of the show. I didn't know my story of meeting Liza would affect the piece, but after I got back from Palm Springs, I knew I had the ending to my show. The story leads into a visual portion using the Liza Minnelli review that mentions me attending.

It was serendipity that my journey ends here, and the song “Just Once In A Lifetime” really reflected my experience in Palm Springs. I used the Judy Garland musical version of this song with the modulation up a half-step midway through the song. I also used the bolero rhythm to help drive the intensity of the song to the end.

My encore was “Cabaret.” I finished with my favorite Liza quote about what you put up there on the stage and for the first time I used all three of the Liza costume pieces. Again, this piece is so famous that I wanted to interpret it differently and not use a musical version that blares out Liza. I just sang this piece with a very upbeat feel. The tempo moved and there was no big rallantando before the last section. The song really acted as my encore to the entire performance.

Selecting a Title for the Show

After making the final decision on choosing to write a cabaret program, I decided I would shape the piece using her repertoire. My idea for a title was the one that ended up being the title of show: Me, Myself and Liza. As I brainstormed on the concept and what I would include in my storytelling, other titles would pop up and then disappear as they no longer really applied. Some
of my favorite titles that I didn’t use were Chasing Rainbows, Maybe THIS TIME, and Through the Eyes of Liza.

**Staging and Character Development of Liza and Jennie**

It is important for me to not impersonate but to emulate, especially since Liza is much too complex a performer to truly impersonate. Rather, I wanted to show our similarities. As an actress, I approached portraying Liza by searching for her inner qualities and finding subtle vocal and physical attributes. I didn't want to create a caricature or to have people compare my portrayal to an impersonator, so I made very conscious and selective choices about when and where I was similar to her, and when and where I was different. For example, after the keychange in “New York, New York,” I choreographed the big hold into the final section based on one of Minnelli's concert performances. I thought that was a very appropriate place for such a moment as I was relaying my experience singing for the New York City crowd.

In “Liza with a Z,” I studied her performance, but never copied it. And with “Maybe This Time,” I used the signature chair and hat, but came up with my own choreography, and used the hat symbolically to be the man who maybe this time will stay. In the monologues, I concentrated my characterization vocally and with my choice of focus. I wanted to find the Liza voice without it becoming overdone or noticable. The changes were subtle changes, but again, I didn’t want to become a caricature of Liza.

I found that portraying oneself is harder than one would think. At rehearsals, people would say, “You aren't yourself! Just act natural.” I had a huge acting problem to overcome. Once I created the script, I now had to memorize the words and I found myself talking like I was reading. In my approach to playing Jennie, I had to envision myself as a different character and I was another actress who had to play her. I found out that was the key that opened up the
character of Jennie. I found that there were parts of the script that would trigger very emotional responses from me and there were times when I couldn’t get through the material. By thinking that Jennie was another person, I was able to portray myself without letting the personal nature of the material get in the way. I could then be as emotional as I wanted.

Next, I found myself searching for the right avenue to rehearse the role. I discovered since I was so close to the material that the Stanislavski method didn't work all the time: I didn't need to pull out the experience because it was already a personal experience. I set many of the numbers spatially, but still allowed myself for spontaneous movement if the performance or the audience inspired me.
CHAPTER SIX: PRODUCTION

Visual Use of Storyboard Slides

Originally, I never intended to use any visuals, but the idea for using a storyboard came up over the holiday break. I invited some friends and family to be my audience for my first run-through to see if the show worked. It was after the performance when a couple of my friends asked if I was going to have any pictures of Liza during my narrative. It was then that I began to think about the visual aspects of the show.

I used the slide storyboard three different ways. The first way was to use archival pictures to support the narrative as it chronologically conveys the life of Liza Minnelli. These were quick cues done in a Power Point type of presentation.

Next, I used the slides for dramatic effect. At the end of “Get Happy,” I juxtaposed images of Dorothy and the red shoes, which represented happiness, and then added an artistic slow fade for the death of Judy. I also used a picture of Liza as Sally Bowles, with a dramatic deep blue background color for greater visual effect.

The last method of using the slides was for a big “zing” effect. I creatively used them to individually display the names from the newspaper review and then create a series of fades to show the actual pictures of my singing "New York, New York" in front of Radio City Music Hall. Then, I ended the slides with the photo of me putting my arms around Liza.

Costume, Props, and Set Pieces

After my second run-through at the beginning of January, I was confronted with another question that I had to answer. My adviser inquired how I was going to dramatically define the monologues in which I portray Liza. I thought about a couple of different costumes for me,
including Liza’s signature red dress, white pant outfit, or Cabaret short shorts. I decided on the red dress because it also reflected my personality as well. I decided to have no other main costume changes.

I then saw a picture of Liza in *Flora, the Red Menace* where she is wearing a white pant outfit including a white hat, boa, and jacket, and I chose three similar costume pieces that I would put on when I was Liza: a black hat, a red and black boa, and a tuxedo jacket. I used each of them once during the show. I thought the tuxedo jacket for the first Liza monologue and “Liza with a Z” song was very appropriate since the song reminded me of someone lecturing. I chose the boa when Liza was talking about her mother, and used it as a prop. First, it became a security blanket when Liza was talking about wafting. Then, it became a boa when she was talking about how unstable and flamboyant her mother was, and finally, when Liza talked about her mother’s death, it became her mother. I used the hat as the signature piece for Liza’s “Cabaret” era because it was her most recognizable costume piece from that show.

I added my own leopard stole as I told my story about meeting Liza in Palm Springs, since I bought that stole when I was there. I only used all of the Liza costume pieces together at the end of the show, where I put on each costume piece as I portrayed Liza, talking about putting it up on the stage.

I used a hat rack to display the costume pieces and I wanted them to look like it was Liza underneath. I used a bentwood chair for two pieces, “Maybe This Time” and my New York audition. I chose a black stool and used it only twice. I sat on it downstage for the section where I became more intimate with the audience and sang my two ballads. I also left the Liza costume pieces on it at the end of the show to symbolize that the show was over. My leopard stole ended up draped upon the hat rack. I liked the visual picture and the change of the stage.
I only used two other props: A megaphone for my New York song, during which I turned off my own mic so the audience could imagine they were the audience that June afternoon, and the Palm Springs newspaper with the Liza review that mentioned my name.

**Lighting**

When designing the lights, I kept one aspect in the front of my mind: How can the lights help to tell the story? I knew I wanted a couple of downstage specials for some of the intimate numbers, and I used very closed specials for only three of the numbers: “But the World Goes ‘Round,” “My Own Space,” and “Quiet Thing.” I then used general lighting for the rest. I was very fortunate to have a cyc behind me and I found that I began to think of the show in colors. When discussing lighting possibilities with the lighting designer, the story began to take on even more color.

I chose the color red to be Liza, and whenever I was doing a Liza monologue, red would be on the back cyc. The color would intensify if I sang as Liza. I chose the color blue to represent Jennie, which would also intensify if I sang. If I was speaking, the blue wouldn’t be as intense.

I chose green to represent the sections where I was narrating facts about Liza and had the slide show up. There was also a special time in the opening number when I played both Liza and myself where the lighting designer added a red and a blue gobo for each side of the stage. I used a purple background once, mixing the Jennie and Liza colors for the song, “Get Happy.”

I really felt that these colors helped to delineate my characters as well as reinforce their duality.
Sound and Band

I knew this show could work with just a piano; however, I wanted to have the experience of singing with a larger ensemble. I chose a very standard orchestration of piano, upright bass, and drums. I scheduled four rehearsals with my band. I found out at the first rehearsal that singing with drums was a totally different experience—it was a big distraction. It took me a while to get used to the instrumentation and I found that I needed to use a microphone. The entire sound changed again when we moved into the theater. I positioned the band on stage left as I didn't want to put them behind me because of the lighting on the cyc. I found that the distance between me and the band was extremely distracting and it took a couple of rehearsals to find the right amplification and monitor so I could hear them. I also needed to rely on people in the audience to give me feedback in mixing the sound. I discovered that if we mixed the piano in with my voice, the sound was much better in the audience. It took us a couple of rehearsals to really get the mix right and even then each number had to be adjusted manually.

Public Relations and Promotions

When I decided to do a one-woman show I set a few objectives. One important goal was to create a show, which, after graduation, I could continue to develop, produce, and perform in a variety of different venues. The second goal was to project a professional image with regard to all aspects of the show, from marketing, to telephonic greeting, to Internet messaging, and of course, for the front-of-house activities at the theater.

I created the name Play-A-Part Theater Company, and filed the legal papers to secure a trade name and business entity (see Appendix A). I found a sponsor to assist with any additional

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costs that were required, such as the band, the Evites, signs, and after-show reception. Brownstone P.A. financed this portion of the project.

I set up an Evite (see Appendix B) to notify friends, family, and associates of the event. The Evite included two additional pages, one for the personal response and the second page for the confirmation.

In addition to the Evites, I posted two signs (see Appendix C), one at the University of Central Florida Theater, and the other at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater. I set up a Play-A-Part Theater hotline that accepted calls from guests that had any questions.

The phone message welcomed the guest:

Play-A-Part Theater Company is proud to present a one-woman show starring Jennie Sirianni in *Me, Myself and Liza*, Sunday, February 24th and Monday, February 25th at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater’s Mandell Studio. Reservations are now being taken. Doors open at 6 p.m. and showtime is at 7. Please leave your name, telephone number, and the number of reservations requested and we will return your call with a confirmation. Thank you for calling Play-A-Part Theater Company.

**The Program**

A program (see Appendix D) was an important part of the show, and I created it by modifying the front of the Evite and taking off the dates and times of the show. The inside had the selection of songs, band biographical information, invitation to the after-show party, credits to the behind-the-scene stars, technical and sound personnel, costume designer, and ad agency that developed the marketing materials. I was not able to get the names of the technical crew until the week before the show, thus they were not included in the program. I provided credit for their contribution by announcing their name prior to the show and posting a sign with their names on it in the patron room. I would suggest that a hard copy proof is an important part of the process, as I did not notice an error in the program until it was too late: “Get Happy” was written by Ted Koehler and Harold Arlen, and “Maybe This Time” was written by Kander and Ebb.
With all of the revisions to the program, I did not notice the error until after it was printed. The back of the program extended appreciation to many individuals that assisted with the project.

**Tickets**

The Mandell Studio is a Black Box Theater and it does not have numbered seating. I label each chair and row and assigned tickets (see Appendix E) to the event. I created tickets highlighting Play-A-Party Theater Company, *Me, Myself and Liza*, and the time, date, and seat assignment for the two shows. A friend organized the box office details for me and handed each guest the tickets. The assigned seating provided an organization to the event once the house opened. The sponsor, Robert L. Sirianni Jr. with Brownstone, welcomed the crowd and invited them to the after-show reception.

I chose a colored scheme of red, black, and white, and it was carried through from the Evite to the reception that followed the performance. I adopted the philosophy that perception is reality, and I tried very hard to create a professional image and atmosphere for all that attended the show.

**The Reception**

I created a venue that provided a cabaret atmosphere. Brownstone P.A. sponsored the event providing a bar prior to the performance, and, after the show, guests were invited to a reception that offered appetizers and beverages. The staging of the event was important, and I kept with the colored theme of red, black and white. Napkins (see Appendix F) were monogrammed with the name of the show, *Me, Myself and Liza*. A friend that raises gardenias donated centerpieces that were place in red pots in the center of each food table. Each of the appetizers (see Appendix G) was named after the various characters or show songs in *Me, Myself*
The date appetizer had a place card that said “Get a New York-New York Date”; the place card for the meatballs said “Vincente Minnelli Meat a’ Balls”; the place card for the crabmeat puffs said “Just Once in a Lifetime Crabmeat Puffs”; and the place card for the chicken puffs said “Judy Garland Over the Rainbow Chicken Puffs.” The dessert table offered “Grandma Spinale’s Italian Cookies,” which the guests loved. A festive image is important to any theater premier presentation, and I wanted to make sure that all guests were appreciated from the moment they entered the theater until they departed.

**Rehearsal Process**

The rehearsal process started last November. I wanted to stretch my cabaret rehearsal time over several months so I could still carry my workload and audition for productions at the Shakespeare Company. I began with music rehearsals only while I finished writing the narrative. Over the holiday break, I did my first run without staging. It was then that I got feedback concerning adding visuals. I then continued to write and revise the script.

During the first weeks of January, I began blocking and choreography rehearsals. I continued to hone the script and then worked on finishing memorizing. I scheduled two rehearsals in the theater with the band. Technical week included meeting with my lighting designer and then scheduling a light cue rehearsal and run cue to cue. I also met with my sound engineer to make sure we had all of our microphones and monitors.

**Performance Observations**

*Me, Myself and Liza* premiered on February 24, 2008, with a second show on February 25, 2008, in the Mandell Studio of the Orlando Shakespeare Theater. Both performances were
filled to capacity in the 95-seat house. The audiences were friendly on both nights and very receptive.

In retrospect, I felt well prepared and extremely happy that I began writing and developing the show eight months ago. The preparation and training helped me overcome the initial stage jitters and technical mishaps that go along with live entertainment.

I felt that I relied more on my vocal, movement, and acting training during the second night’s performance than the first. I was exhausted from playing the demanding star role, the Mouse, in If You Give a Mouse a Cookie. The character voice of the Mouse took its toll on my vocal chords, and I did not have my normal vocal belt.

That is not to say I abandoned using my skills on the first night, but live theater relies on variables and circumstance that can change in a moment. I found that the second night is when the rigorous training of my MFA program kicked into gear and helped me through the crisis.

When the belt was not working, I immediately used vocal training techniques that rely on using the lower abdominal muscles to control and support the breath. By shaping the vowels in the back of the throat and moving them to the front of my mouth, I was able to articulate the consonants with the proper placement of the tongue and allow my mouth to project the words. I then used the resonators located in my head and face to allow my vocal instrument to work as best it could under the circumstances. My voice coach developed imaginative exercises that helped me develop a free, open, and honest voice. I then found the connection between thought, voice, and word through intensive voice sessions and word analysis of the pieces.

The knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet came in handy as well. There was a scene in which I had to mimic the character of a French waiter from the Palm Springs restaurant that I visited. I had the confidence to use the tools and deliver a French accent, which the audience enjoyed.
Perhaps the most challenging work I experienced was when I transitioned into the character of Liza. I made the decision earlier in the thesis project that I did not want to impersonate Liza. However, when I found her actual dialogue—that is, the quotations in her own words about her life and her mother’s life—the task became easier and clearly defined who she was/is. I then personalized her quotes by relating them to my life. Sanford Meisner once said, “Acting is living truthfully in the moment under and imaginary set of circumstances” (“Acting Workshops”). By incorporating some basic Meisner methods, I was able to deepen my emotional connection to the text and to Liza’s life. This process relieved any personal pressure, allowing me to present an honest and open delivery of Liza and her words.

Liza says “there are times in one’s life when one is gripped with a curious bravery, when all your instincts tell you to move in one direction even though it may scare you. When you act on these instincts, despite the fear, that’s stepping out” (Schechter, 2004, p. 205). This became the main idea for my thesis project. However, desire and talent are not enough; I had to apply what I learned over the past three years.

The MFA movement classes were intense, and I really learned what it meant to “take the leap.” This idea was introduced by Jerzy Grotowski. Through mastering the animal behaviors within myself, I learned to experience a heightened physical reality and spiritual awareness. For example, Grotowski’s “tiger leaps” were vivid in the many acrobatic exercises and movements that we performed in class.

Although these techniques and exercises were used in the classroom, I was able to tap into all of them, as well as my emotional senses, the moment I walked on the stage. I felt the surge of energy, as I did in class. The feeling of moving forward translated into confidence and I realized that there was no turning back. I felt at one with the stage and audience and my imagination transcended the moment—I felt I was in a perfect zone.
I used the Grotowski training as the catalyst for preparing my show and during the performance, but as the work evolved, the Meisner methods were required to find the truth about Liza. Finally, it was the words of Peter Brook, who said, “an image was being made real, in answer to the need for something that was not there,” that inspired me during the process itself (Brook, 2006, para. 4).

Last but not least, the Research Methods class in theater prepared me early on in our graduate program to see the big picture. Using the research methods and sources taught in that one semester provided me with the tools to build a solid foundation for my concept, music, selections and stage presentation. *Me, Myself and Liza* is my story. However, it was not until I completed the research process that the script, set, and music all fell into place.

Without question, the past three years of study and training transformed my dream to create and perform into reality.
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

In my humble opinion, and contrary to the common belief, a CABARET SINGER IS MORE SOPHISTICATED AND TRUTHFUL THAN AN OPERA PRIMA DONNNNNNNNA!! For, cabaret is the sincere echo and vibes of human drama, tragedy, mishaps, truthfulness, adventures, expectations, escapades, dreams, fantasies, visions, the sacred and the damned, the sublime and the grotesque of each single second of our lives. The cabaret singer is more than an artist singing romantic songs on stage, leaning against a piano or just sitting on a chair at one corner of the stage dramatically choreographed and positioned. A cabaret singer is a healer, a therapist, a raconteur, a story-teller, a philosopher, a challenger, a confident, a friend, a poet, and a part of the night with all its secrets, magic, mysteries, lights and shadows. So, if you want to decide or select which American cabaret artiste is better than another, you probably should take into consideration all of the above and rethink priorities and visions in your life, in case, you feel that cabaret emanates a part of your life on stage. Honestly, we don't know WHO IS THE BEST SALLY BOWLES? WHO IS THE BEST CABARET STAR IN AMERICA?! (de Lafayette, 2005, p. 2)

Maximillien de Lafayette is a world-renowned entertainment columnist. When I read his article in January 2008, I realized after eight months of research and work that *Me, Myself and Liza* hit the Maximillen mark! I fulfilled my production goals and I was confident that I met the expectations set by my committee. I found that my personal human drama, comedic though it may be, connected with the audience.

I understand that talent alone is not enough to be successful in dancing, acting, and singing—hard work is imperative to reach one’s full potential. I was blessed to be accepted as a graduate student at the University of Central Florida, where my hard work paid off by receiving a Master of Fine Arts in Acting. For years, I sang and danced, but I could not find the key to deliver the song with feelings and meaning. There is no question that the rigors and training in the UCF MFA program developed this skill.

As stated previously, the delivery of the song and its words were always a challenge to me. I found that during *Me, Myself and Liza*, however, I was able to break through the fourth wall and reach my audience. Many of the guests greeted me after the show, expressing how much they
enjoyed the show, and a few even sent me letters. Their messages inspired me to continue to work hard at my craft. I learned that using my God-given abilities, applying the training learned in the UCF MFA program, and surrounding myself with other professionals and mentors will help me create a rich, rewarding life.

After the opening night of *Me, Myself and Liza*, the words of Maximillen de Lafayette resonated with me when I received this note from one of my guests:

Jennie,
I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed your show. After watching your show I felt so refreshed. I felt like everything in life will be okay. I don't cry at many shows, but I cried at yours and it was a good cry… I felt like I was getting rid of all my troubles and a weight was lifted off my shoulder. You were so beautiful up there. I just thought you should know you really inspired someone. I am sure a lot of people felt that way, but I chose to write you. I feel at ease now after your show. I really do. I can't explain it. Like the world is a better place and woke up feeling so good today better then I have in a long time. I just wanted to say thank you and I am so grateful I got to see you perform.
Love,
Danielle

Performers of all ages take the stage with uncertainty and vulnerability. I now believe that it is personally and professionally rewarding to put myself out there and take the risk to reach others in a way that is uplifting, healing, and entertaining.
APPENDIX A: PLAY-A-PART THEATER CORPORATION DOCUMENTS
December 27, 2007

ROBERT SIRIANI, JR., ESQ.
BROWNSTONE, P.A.
400 N. NEW YORK AVE., SUITE 215
WINTER PARK, FL 32789

The mark registration for PLAY-A-PART THEATRE COMPANY was filed on December 13, 2007, and assigned document number 10700001739. Please refer to this number whenever corresponding with this office. Please note if the address of the owner changes, it is the responsibility of the owner to notify this office in writing of such change.

It should be noted that registration of a mark by the Florida Department of State is a ministerial act intended solely to provide public notice of the registrant's ownership rights. The right of ownership of any mark is based on the use of a mark in the ordinary course of trade and is not based on a grant by the Florida Department of State. Further, it is the responsibility of the owners of an existing mark, not the Florida Department of State, to defend it in cases of infringement.

Please be aware if the owner's address changes, it is the responsibility of the owner to notify this office. To facilitate processing, please refer to the trademark's registration number on your change of address notice.

Enclosed please find your certification.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please telephone (850) 245-6911, the Trademark Section.

Brenda Tadlock
Senior Section Administrator
Division of Corporations

Letter number: 207A00071734

P.O. BOX 6327 -Tallahassee, Florida 32314
I certify from the records of this office that JENNIFER SIRIANI, located at 1712 DEMETREE DR., WINTER PARK, FL 32789 has registered PLAY-A-PART THEATRE COMPANY to be used as a mark under class(es) 0041. Said mark was first used anywhere December 12, 2007 and was first used in Florida December 12, 2007.

I further certify the goods and/or services this mark is being used in connection with is PRODUCTION OF THEATER, FILM, MUSIC EVENTS, AND ANY AND ALL EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES, INCLUDING PROVIDING INSTRUCTION FOR CHILDREN A.

I further certify that said mark was registered in this office on December 13, 2007 and its date of expiration is December 13, 2012.

The number of this mark is T07000001739.

Disclaimer for: "THEATRE" AND "COMPANY"

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Florida at Tallahassee, the Capital, this the Twenty-seventh day of December, 2007

[Signature]

Hart H. S. Brawner
Secretary of State
APPENDIX B: EVITE
Presents
Jennie Sirianni
Me, Myself and Liza

It began in New York City at the 1998 Tony Awards across from the renowned Radio City Music Hall. As Jennie moved to the front of the grandstand to see the Tony Award nominees on the Red Carpet, the crowd, thinking she was Liza Minnelli, began shouting and chanting: “Liza, Liza!” Rising to the occasion, Jennie lifted her head, smiled, and in less than a New York minute, made her singing debut. The excitement heightened. The cheers grew louder. Jennie received her first standing ovation, a memory that will last a lifetime!

Me, Myself and Liza is a One-Woman Show, inspired by Liza Minnelli, and her adoring fans who chased Jennie throughout New York City, requesting “Liza’s” autograph. As a tribute to Liza, Jennie performs some of Liza’s favorite songs, catalogues stories of mistaken identity and anecdotes about the famous performer.

“There are times in one’s life when one is gripped with a curious bravery, when all your instincts tell you to go in one direction even though it may scare you, when you act on these instincts and move forward, despite the fear, that’s stepping out.” Liza Minnelli

Reservations are a must to enjoy an evening with Jennie in Me, Myself and Liza

Performances:
- February 24 - Limited Seating Available
- February 25 - Limited Seating Available

Time: Doors open at 6 P.M. Complimentary wine and beverages.
Showtime: 7:00 P.M.
Questions: 407-670-4538

Place: Mandell Theatre Studio
Lowndes Shakespeare Center
812 East Rollins Street
(Orlando’s Loch Haven Park corner of Princeton and US 17/92)

Directions: I-4 to Princeton, left onto 17/92, left on Rollins St.
& first left into parking lot.

**All guests are invited to a VIP Reception after the Show - Sponsored by Browerstone, P.A.**
Member of Actors Equity Association
PLAY-A-PART THEATER

Presents

Me, Myself and Liza

House Opens

6:30

For Reserved Ticket Holders

Standing Room Only

Invited

at 6:55
Many Thanks to:
Orlando Shakespeare Theater
New School Preparatory
The Ontario Philharmonic
and Carl Residek
BROWNSTONE P.A.
and Robert L. Stranam Jr.
Cecell Farms
and Gary Correll
Erica, Chumly, Joe, Sam
My Thesis Committee:
Chis Nies
Assistant Professor in Performance Dance/Movement
Jim Brown
Assistant Professor in Performance Musical Theatre Acting
J.J. Rencella
Assistant Professor in Performance
Jody Connell
Candice Mulligan
My grandmother: Jennie Spinale
My Family
A special thank you to my mentor
and friend: Robin Jensen

PLAY-A-PART
THEATRE COMPANY

Presents

Jennie Stramann

Mr. Myself and Liza

Performances
February 24th & 25th

It began in New York City at the 1998 Tony Awards across from the renowned Radio City Music Hall. Ms. Innocenti moved to the front of the grandstand to see the Tony Award nominees on the Red Carpet. The crowd, thinking she was Lisa Minnelli, began shouting and screaming: “Liza, Liza!” Rising to the occasion, Jennie lifted her head, smiled, and in less than a New York minute, made her singing debut. The excitement heightened. The cheers grew louder. Jennie received her first standing ovation, a memory that will last a lifetime!

Mr. Myself and Liza is a One-Woman Show inspired by Lisa Minnelli, and her adopting fans who cheered Jennie throughout New York City, requesting “Liza’s” autograph. As a tribute to Lisa, Jennie performs some of Lisa’s favorite songs, cataloging stories of mistaken identity and anecdotes about the famous performer.

“Then are times in one’s life when one is gripped with a curious curiosity, when all your instincts tell you to go in one direction even though it may scare you, when you act on those instincts and move forward, despite the fear, that’s suffering out.”  —Lisa Minnelli
A Play-A-Part Theatre Production

Me, Myself and Liza
A One-Woman Show by

Jennie Siriani:

Who's in the Cast

Jennie Siriani

Liza

Vocal Selections

Together Wherever We Go

New York, New York

Life with a "C"

Get Happy

But The World Goes Round

Maybe This Time

Yes

My Own Space

A Quiet Thing

Just Once In A Lifetime

Band

Piano: Debbie Jensen

Bass: BobbyRequest

Drums: Max Reel

JENNIE SIIRIANI (Liza/Jennie)

Jennie is a proud member of the Actors Equity Association (AEA). She made her Off-Broadway debut in "Liza: A Tricia Wedding," playing the original character. She appeared in the Broadway tour of "Joseph: The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Her stage credits encompass plays and musicals, as well as engagements with The Orlando Opera, The Pittsburgh Playhouse, The Orlando Playhouse and the Pittsburgh Musical Theater. Her Orlando Shakespeare Theatre, The Orlando Repertory Theatre, in addition to performing on the stage, Jennie has directed and choreographed children's shows in New York and Camp Bradford. Her "kids' acting" production was recognized by Child Actors and other Broadway judges as the "Best Overall Musical Presentation for Camp Bradford 2005." She taught Broadway shows with an appreciation team, working with theater and music students. Focusing on both development of music skill, vocal and instrument recognition, etc., in prepare these future Broadway Stars.

Jennie completed her undergraduate degree at Musical Theater at Point Park University. She studied at the New York University's CAP 2 Studio Program and walks forward to receiving her MBA in Acting from the University of Central Florida, May 2005.

Meet Jennie

KOWNSTUNE P.A. invites all guests to a Wine and Hors d'oeuvres Reception following the show.

Technical and Creative Team

Concepts and Songs

Jennie Siriani

Music selections

Jennie Siriani

Music and Lyrics

Jennie Siriani

Dance

Robin Jensen

Sound

Mark Cohen

Costumes

Katherine Bingham

StorybookMill Productions

Lynn Eaves

Event Development, Signs, Program

African Design, Vallyne Wolfe

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APPENDIX E: THE TICKETS
PLAY-A-PART
THEATRE COMPANY

Presents
Jennie Sirianni

Me, Myself and Liza

February 25, 2008  Row F – Seat 13

My Sincere appreciation to
Brownstone P.A.
for sponsoring Me, Myself and Liza

Jennie
APPENDIX G: RECEPTION MENU
# Menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken with Allouette Cheese</td>
<td>Chicken diced and sauté in butter and onion and white wine. When done add a pinch of Hot sauce. ONLY SMALL AMOUNT. Put in PASTRY PUFFS. Served in sterno pans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama’s Italian Meatballs</td>
<td>Fran’s Mystery Recipe, Served in Annette’s Round Chafing Dishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruschetta</td>
<td>French Baguettes cut by baker in small rounds. Take Yellow Onions cut round sauté in butter caramelized with brown sugar, add sun dried tomatoes. (NO GARLIC NO BUTTER) Served on WHITE platter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date with Ricotta covered with Bacon</td>
<td>Must be baked for until bacon is done. Served on WHTE platter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Table</td>
<td>Grandma Spinale’s Homemade Italian Cookies Small Italian cannolis’ with Choc. Morsels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starbucks Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each table will have a Gardenia Topiary on it in Red and Black theme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June:

1) Beginning stages:
I’ve been organizing the concept of my show. Answering questions such as
-what is the purpose of a one-woman show
-how many sections do I need (right now I have threeish)
-Am I documenting real events and quotes that happened in the performer’s life personally and professionally
-mothers influence as in Judy to Liza and maybe find the connections between me and my mother
-what happens in my personal life that shapes my artistic voice
-how do I want people to feel when they leave the theater

2) what was the catalyst that inspired Liza
-what was mine?
-how do we choose to be on stage and make art?

3) I know that this is going to be a huge journey. I am excited to start. I love having a million ideas and not knowing where it is going yet.

4) I’ve been reviewing all my materials. Reading tons of books not only on Liza, but Judy Garland and her family. The dynamic between her mother and her is very interesting. I can’t wait to dig further.

I’m not sure what the end result will be yet, however I know that I want to provide the audience with a musical experience that defines the life of Liza.

I’ve been scared in my past to actually “play” Liza. I mean its one thing to have people daily tell me I look like her, but this research is showing me we actually have a lot more in common. What of myself am I going to use?

5) Jim Brown
Jim and I discussed Defining Moments at Starbucks. I decided to make a list of my defining moments and a list of Liza’s. And see what matches up.

I don’t know how much of these personal defining moments I want to use.. or if any? I don’t know if I want to let people know about me.. isn’t it more about Liza?

Tuesday June 19 2007
I wrote Liza, asking for an interview.
Wednesday June 20 2007
Selecting my committee
Sent out letters to Chris Niess, Jim Brown and Jj Ruscella as chair.

Friday June 22 2007
Liza’s website responded.

“Thanks very much for your kind email. Please know that Liza greatly appreciates all the support and love from her fans. As you may know, she repeatedly says that she lives for those who appreciate her art, and she lives to perform.”

Yes, Liza did live on 57\textsuperscript{th} street – Do you recall the exact address of the building that you lived in? How about the exact apartment number?

All the best to you,

How cool is that? I might as well keep sending questions. 😊

Sunday June 24\textsuperscript{th}
Scheduled meeting with Julia to take care of all the forms
My committee is ready, my abstract is waiting approval, I have a bibliography started and beginnings of an outline.
I’m excited to moving forward with this process…

Monday June 25 2007
I am thinking about the main idea of my thesis. What do I really want to say? Should it be chronological? How are my stories going to fit in? What ones do I want to tell?
Do I want to intertwine me and Liza, do the songs introduce words? Or other way?
Today I want to see what stories I am choosing and explore why?
What do I want the audience to walk away with?
My goal is to figure out who I am in this script and how it will be told and why.

Tuesday June 26 2007
I am keeping all the balls in the air, keeping all the options out there and just creating.
I have themes and ideas of a place where I want it to go.

I have some song choices but keep going back and forth. Songs then pick narratives or narratives then songs?? Etc...

Friday June 29 2007
I have always loved this quote, I found it on this woman’s website. I still am not quite sure if she coined it, I don’t think so but it might be…

“The highest expression of art, in the most perfect form is the teaching of the human heart something about itself.”
Kathy Messick

Wednesday August 1 2007
Getting tickets to see Liza perform in Orlando at Hard Rock Live
Got them... wrote Liza another note, asking to meet her when she is in town for her performance October 5th. ☺

Friday August 3 2007
Response from Liza:

Dear Jennie,
Please know how much Liza appreciates your kindness and support, but she will only be in Florida for a short time and will be working, so it doesn’t appear that she will have any time for personal meetings. Feel free to check back as the date gets closer, but for right now things are looking quite hectic for her. Thanks so much for all your understanding, and we send good wishes for your own performance at that time, and for your sure to be successful career.

All best,

I’m not giving up! ☺

Wednesday August 15 2007
Filly…
That is what a young race horse is called. I am a filly. My mom always taught me that! Keep on the blinders, that is what the young racehorses have on to keep themselves from distractions. That is why they look forward and not sideways. Keep the track ahead of me each day. Work on my mind, body, and spirit... all these things are significant for my victory!
Goals, Health and my Destiny to the finish line!!

That is a pep talk to myself LOL

Tuesday August 28 2007
I’m working on why Liza? why me? And finding the connections. I am making a list of Liza quotes. I haven’t collected enough information to start formatting the script. But I have pages of thoughts. How to do this next step? Ok , no worry, just keep creating and putting things down. My first pick for a title is Me, Myself and Liza. I’m not sure I’m married to it yet, but it sure seems fitting. I think I need to see where the script is going and then make that final decision. I am gaining perspective on this as a project for me. Yes it is a requirement for my masters but it is meaning so much more to me then that. I am feeling like it is making me look deeper into myself as an artist and a woman. I am looking inward to myself and testing and searching the limits of what the possibilities of my existence is. This is something that I want to take with me. Not just a one time performance and then thrown in the trash. I want to put it out there and still see where I can take it…

I have learned to honestly explore new things through this process with no pressure but play. I am pretty sure I have been waiting for that moment… I am trusting myself!
Wednesday November 14 2007
I am realizing the impact that this program has had on me. When I first wanted to start this project I was unsure. I have come to realize how much discipline it takes. I decided to take a risk, and the creative experience that I am having is worth every challenge. :0

I am having major eye opening thoughts and ideas. It is hard work, there is no time to be lazy or just breeze through. Every detail is mandatory.

Robin and I are working on transposing some of my songs. I am working hard on rounding out my sound and vocal quality.

I am taking the lyrics and using them as a monologue. It is a challenge to get out of the rhythm that is established through the music, but man does it make sense when I actually say what the words mean. communicate them and say how it makes me feel. I have it inside. I need to not be lazy and drive to great things.

Wednesday November 21
My talk with Michael Andrew

I asked him how he formatted his shows. As I am writing the script. I need to know if there is a program that can just type it in? He mentioned Final Draft, and also recommended using American Stageplay Formatting for the Elements:
- Character names
- Dialog
- Parenthetical
- Stage directions
- Songs

Friday November 23 2007
Tickets to see Liza in CA

I wrote to Mcallum Theater asking Mitchell Gershenfeld, the director of theater operations if I could meet Liza at the met and greet. I fwd the letter to Liza as well.


It is a rough trip to Palm Springs... because it is NOT direct, and you have to change planes. We were exhausted when 5 o'clock hit. We left at 4 AM to catch a 6 AM flight and arrived in Palm Dessert.

As soon as we landed, I was hungry, so I asked the Cab Driver to stop at a restaurant, called the IN and OUT Hamburger. Since it was lunchtime, the Cabbie had to wait 20 minutes for me to run in and get my Hamburger. We bought one for our Cabbie, Giovanni, but that did not make him stop the meter. That was probably the most expensive Hamburger that I ever had.

We took it easy Wed. and went to bed early.
The next day we woke up at 6 Am, had breakfast and had to wait until 8 AM to rent a car, at the hotel, which was a beautiful place to stay. We got the car and decided to figure out where we were going that night. First, we drove to the Restaurant and then to the McCallum Theatre... We decided to look over the landscape to figure out if we could get in early to see the stage area, figure out where the stage door was, to catch a glimpse of Liza going in or coming out. But, as bold as we are, we went right to the front door and the security guard opened it and said, can I help you....I saw a lady standing there, and did not know who she was, but said, OH we are looking for June Bensen....I pretend not to know that it was early and said oh the box office is closed, we can come back...in the mean time, the lady was standing right there....Actually, I had was shocked to meet her, and it was very nice but we wanted to meet Liza.

In any case, we did not get our toe in the door...so we went to the stage door and we were busted again, with the security....wondering what are these two women doing....we said, Hi, we were wondering where Liza's dressing room was? Is that it?

We left disappointed that we could not get anyone to like us or help us. We went on to find a very exclusive Hotel in Palm Springs called the Parker House, we got word from the Concierge that perhaps Liza was staying there....we got lost, and we drove for an hour looking for the Inn. We called and found it, I said that we were planning an event and wanted to check out the facility. We got there and it was awesome...very avant garde, and we could not see Liza anywhere, of course it was 10 AM...so Mom proceeded to take pictures of me around the garden, on the hammock, hear a fire in the lobby, on a chair that swung from the ceiling....but once again NO LIZA sightings.

We were a bit disappointed but decided to eat and think....we thought! I said, we should deliver flowers to the Backstage.....So we went to a florist and put a flower arrangement together and I wrote Liza a note, about how much it would mean to me to meet her. I explained that she was working on my Thesis... I delivered the flowers, mom took a photo of me giving the flowers to the security guard, and we thought surely, Liza would call.

Hours went by and no one called.

We were exhausted with all thinking, driving, conniving and at the end of the day had a big “Zero.” We went back to the Hotel about 2 and kept wondering, when will the phone ring, the phone did not ring, at all.

Mom bought her a Diva Wrap for my shoulders, leopard that buttons in the middle. I thought this would be a great memory from start to finish, even if she I perhaps did not meet Liza. We planned our entry accordingly, making sure that we were fashionably late to enter the fine Restaurant. As we entered the restaurant and approached the table to get our tickets, two women behind us, said, gee you look like Liza Minnelli, I smiled. The women said, I told my partner as we approached the Valet, LOOK there is Liza, and she almost wrecked the Car! Mom and I laughed. As the young women from the McCallum Theater gave us the tickets, she said, OH I know why you wanted to come, and looked at me, in awe!

We entered the magnificent Dining Room, and all heads turned...
We took our seats and the maître d' commented about Jennie looking like Liza and we were assigned the “godfather table” Perfect table so everyone could see us! We sat wondering, who will we meet...maybe a huge Trustee who funded the event, and will get us backstage? We had a great glass of California Wine and hors d'oeuvre .....we waited.....Then the maître d' came back and said....oh, Mr. Fessier is notoriously late, he is with the Dessert Sun, so we will start your dinner. I did not know what the Dessert Sun was, she thought it was a Bar and said, OH NO LET'S EAT. Mom said no, honey, we can wait, she said why, I said the couple who are coming is the entertainment editor for the Palm Springs NEWSPAPER!

Bruce Fessier and his wife joined us. They were so kind and nice. Bruce Fessier told us who he was and his wife was a former actress....they met when she performed as Dolcier in Man of LaManche, 23 years ago. He interviewed anyone and everyone in the entertainment business. Jane, his wife, kept saying Bruce if the Press has a pass to meet Liza, you need to take Jennie. They explained that Liza decided, only to meet the Trustees that were associated with the McCallum Theatre and the Press were NOT invited....we exchanged seating areas and they were a few seats in front of us. I left my phone on vibrate in case they got the call to go back to the Green Room.

When we got to the Theatre, heads turned again....it brought back memories from NY when I was bombarded with Liza Fans asking for her autograph.....It was surreal for her to have adults who were at a Gala to see Liza, approach me with all the enthusiasm, as if she were Liza! A 80-year-old man with a oxygen machine asked me to take a photo of him and his friend! During the show, I held my Camera and phone. I got so excited when Liza came on stage, gushing with enthusiasm and clapping, I lost my phone in the dark theatre....Panic set in..

IF Bruce got the Press Pass, I needed to be ready. If Liza’s handlers called, I needed to be ready, but I did not have a phone!

The lesson is always have a PLAN B. Mom ask Bruce where they were sitting and we exchanged Seating area! Also, we photo with Jennie and Bruce and Jane in the Theater

As I, went on all fours to find my lost phone, the show continued.

....Well, God does have a plan, because Bruce appeared and me for my business card! She told him that she lost her phone.....

After the Show, he never came back....we found the Green Room but no one answered. We went to the Stage door OUTSIDE in the COLD and all the groupies were there!

I was a little disappointed to wait outside, and annoyed by Bob a groupie that kept talking to me...in fact, he asked my mother to take a photo with him and Liza.

We went back stage and waited. Mom took a $50.00 bill from her purse and went to the large fellow that was security but in a suit, he owned The limousine service that Liza uses on the East Coast and the West Coast, he owned the cars for the West Coast....his name was David. Mom grabbed his hand and placed the bill in his hand and said, my daughter needs a photo with Liza, can you please run interference and make sure she gets her photo. He said, I will do the best I
can, and tried to get away, giving me back my money, I took his hand in mine and said, THIS IS FOR MY DAUGHTER, keep it and do something for your kids!

I the next 20, 30, 40 minutes, I became friends with the Driver, the Owner, and made sure that if there were any last chance for me meet Liza, I had the BOYS LINED UP!

Finally, David broke the ice and introduced me to his son….who drove the second car of Liza’s entourage…..

We finally started to take photos of Dave and me, and Marco and me, and me with the son…and one wonderful photo of Billy Stritch and me, Liza’s Musical Director and famous Musician and writer,

It came time that the cars were being packed, the anxiety heightened and we turned around and there she was Liza Minnelli, a few feet away from us. Her fans bombarded her, not letting me near her….Mom kept saying, Jennie do not worry, wait, Dave kept telling me to wait, my on site Center was going to run interference and get me a meeting with Liza. He had a mission and at this point, he believed that this was his job!!!! OH MY!

As the crowd continued to get photos and autographs, they would not leave her side. It looked like she was going to be swept away, as she even said: “hey we do not want to stay out here too long in the cold.” As she came about 5 feet from the Suburban, I moved in, David took his arm and moved people away, I stood there cool and took two photos, in order to get Liza’s attention, David said Liza, doesn’t she (Jennie) look like you????? I hugged Liza, I am not sure what she said, but we did it! I woke up the next day and I received top billing in the Dessert Sun article next to Liza!

What a treat that was thanks to Bruce Fessier and his wife Jane….amazingly sensitive people that wanted me to shine!

Saturday December 22 2007
Work Ethic:

I am feeling good vocally. My goal is to be off book by Monday. I know that this cannot be an amateur presentation. With focus and desire I can achieve these things.
Someone told me today “put the fear of failure in the equation, so you start feeling the motivation to transcend mediocrity.”

Sunday December 23 2007
This quote is not something I am going to use in my script but find it encouraging for today…
Liza says: “there came a time in my life I just knew, that I need to be my own person.
When I was offered a position of Cabaret, I was thrilled and had a huge fear about, what if the show failed. There was something about my drive that failure was not an option… I understood that I was not the best singer, but a trained dancer since the age of two, thanks to my mother. My desire to please was the driving force that heightens my energy on the stage. I wonder, did it come from wanting to please my mother or did it come from wanting to be like my mother?”

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This quote coming the day after the sort of inspirational quote from someone I admire... and I have to say for my future, so when I read this I will remember who said that to me on the 22nd of December.. was my mother. LOL. That’s funny to me. I remember reading it thinking... what kind of motivation is that? Then the next day finding this quote by Liza... mmmm just another reason why me and Liza connect. I would like to explore that same idea.. does it come from wanting to please my mother or from wanting to be like my mother? I’ll come back to that.

Thursday January 3 2008
Choosing the bass player.

Bobby and his upright bass. Robin feels good about him. I trust Robin. ☺

Friday January 4 2008
JJ’s magic.

JJ came and watched a very rough run of my show... I was so nervous. Robin and him were two peas in a pod. His critic and excited support behind what I wrote and did with the material is what I needed to leap into a more theatrical aspect of the show. Robin and I took his wisdom and rode the waves! Yahoo... thanks for the wonderful inspiration JJ!

Thursday January 10 2008
Concerns from academia.

All the balls are in the air. The nuts and bolts so to speak are very tight. ☺

Learning how to manage my time and keep good files was key to the success in this endeavor ☺
Details details details… ☻

Tuesday January 22 2008
Peter Alosio: camera man!

Thanks again to Michael Andrew. He is always so willing to offer advice and guidance to me. He gave me contact info for Bobby Brennan on Bass and not for a super camera guy. I want to have this show documented. Even make a promo video for it. Pete is in!! ☻

Friday January 25 2008
Burning the candle? Is that what it is called. I chose to take on the mouse. I am exhausted but I have made adjustments to my life and insulated myself to protect my craft. I can muster up the energy to work the mouse and my show. I have to. I chose to. Normally I wouldn’t have taken on tow shows... especially with one as important as my thesis and a show I wrote. But there was something about the mouse. I fell in love… I can do it!! and not settle for mediocrity. DON’T GET SICK!! ☻ be a filly and get to the finish line!

Saturday January 26 2008
Confidence:
Mom always tried to give me confidence. I am coming to the wire here... Repetition and learning my material backwards and forwards will take care of some anxious energy. I can take the leap, jump over the mat, like in Niess’ class... just GO! Basically step on the stage and say here I come! I have proven to myself that I can do anything I desire.

Sunday January 27 2008
This Business:

It takes so much energy. What an actor gives is emotionally testing… I have a lot on my plate right now. Praying for peace.

Saturday February 16 2008
Adding bobby into the band:

Well matt and robin and I have practiced before. Today was the first day we had bobby with the bass. Rehearsal was cool. Robin and him speak magic. I love watching an hearing musicians talk. He seemed to mesh good with all of us. Naturally the first go is bumpy... but we found our way through. I remember robin telling me I had to have all my stuff in order... be the rehearsal was not about me anymore... but melding the four of us together as musicians and artists. She was right.

Sunday February 17 2008
Second rehearsal with full band.

This is hard. I am not used to singing with a mic or with all these instruments. I feel alone. Not inside... LOL but I am used to just me and robin. I love the piano, and have such a beautiful connection with her. She makes me want to be better. She is so good and making music with her only makes me want to be better. 😊 This is the hardest thing I have ever done. I can do it… I have to trust my voice and myself... and connect to what I am saying... not just sing anymore...

Tuesday February 19 2008
TECH!

We have Amy, Rob, Matt… WOW.. what support. We sat down and talked ideas for lighting. Amy got it! She new exactly what needed to happen in regards to my light and Liza’s… Rob is so supportive. Orlando Shakespeare Theater is so supportive. I am overwhelmed with love.

Wednesday February 20 2008
TECH

First day on MIC.. with band. Wow was this hard. We wanted to fins the mix between me and the band and still enable me to hear what is goin on and myself. 😊
It was definitely hard and frustrating.. but I had to keep my calm and focus. And keep working on confidence. We made it through. Had to find a few adjustments, like another monitor for the band… and a amplifier for me from the piano.. and then matt worked the mix for the audience. I learned how to trust others ears.. and judgment. It’s so weird to put your trust in others.
Thursday February 21 2008
Today the lesson is.. Be in the moment at one time. I can’t be a million places and HAVE FUN!

Saturday February 23 2008
Dress Rehearsal

MAMA MIA! This is crazy. Were here. I felt great. I was focused, I breathed, and more importantly I had fun. My voice was in good shape.. I don’t know what else to say. I am ready.. at least I feel ready now.. scared but ready. I can’t believe it all came together, and I still can’t believe the support that is around me. I am truly blessed.

Sunday February 24 2008
I have cookie this afternoon. A show 4:30 -5:30, autographs and then Me, Myself and Liza.
This helped. I got out all my nerves...

Getting ready was crazy. I am not too thrilled about my dress. But can’t think about that now. I know my words I know my songs.. I know what I have to do technically. Its SHOW TIME.. My brother gave an awesome curtain speech. My family was there.. and basically an audience of 95 people who were there to support me. I still felt sick!

Before going on I was so nervous. But I focused on what I had to do, and from feedback the nerves didn’t show. I calmed down through the show. It’s true. Technique is there for a reason.. I have it! Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh lol who knew. Yes I have it. All these years of training an yes it works! 😊 I believe today that I am a professional. There were times when I would screw up a note or forget my lines as a kid and cry. Or walk away. I didn’t feel that … This show. Yes, I forgot things.. but I kept going.. there was no turning back.. I was out there.. and I couldn’t do anything but give.. what I wrote and say what I have to say. It was so freaky but awesome. I don’t think I have ever been that focused .. and it was so FUN! The applause through me off. From the moment I walked on stage there was applause. After every song.. applause. Now I know how Liza feels. 😊 That has to be rehearsed as well.
APPENDIX I: THE DESERT SUN ARTICLE
Jennifer:

You have my permission, and the permission of The Desert Sun, to use any and all parts of my Dec. 2, 2007 article on Liza Minnelli appearing at the McCallum Theatre.

Respectfully,

Bruce Fessier
Special Projects Writer
The Desert Sun
76- N. Gene Autry Trail
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 202-3234
November 30, 2007  
Section: Local  
Page: B5  
Correction: December 1, 2007 Liza Minnelli sang Al Jolson's "Mammy" in concert Thursday. The title was misspelled in a story headlined "Liza graces the stage at McCallum" on page B5 of the Nov. 30 Desert Sun.

Liza graces the stage at McCallum  
Bruce Fessier

By Bruce Fessier  

The Desert Sun  

Liza Minnelli, who performed at the McCallum Theatre when it was better known as the Bob Hope Cultural Center, helped the theater celebrate its 20th anniversary Thursday as a desert institution all its own.

The performing arts center is in a period of transition. McCallum President and CEO Ted Giatas has said the McCallum will one day - perhaps seven years from now - be part of a multi-facility performing arts center with a 2,500-seat theater, a 300-seat cabaret theater and other amenities.

But board chairman Harold Matzner said before the gala Thursday that his colleagues Jim Houston and Peter Solomon are working on an architectural uses plan so the board can have a price tag on the project before it can begin a capital campaign.

Giatas has said he hopes to have a price tag by January.

Thursday night, said Matzner, was as much a celebration of raising $1.4 million at the gala as it was about the past or the future of the theater. The fundraising total exceeded last year's record by $400,000.

"It's amazing the amount of money that has been raised," Matzner said. "This is the biggest (benefit) I've run into in my stay here."

Tony Bennett performed at last year's gala, which broke the record set the previous year when Barry Manilow was the headliner.

Minnelli had much to live up to, but her rare performance in the desert (she was honored at last February's Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards Gala but only sang one song) generated anticipation from Liza fans and McCallum patrons.

Jennie Siriani, 28, flew from Orlando, Fla., to see the show and have dinner as part of the gala at Cuisinot restaurant, one of four restaurants that patrons dined at as part of the celebration. Siriani, bearing a striking resemblance to Minnelli, said she was doing her master's thesis performance project on Minnelli and this was her first time watching her.

The smile on her face as she watched the performance indicated she wasn't disappointed.

Minnelli, who has undergone numerous hip and knee replacements, came out in all black attire and announced she had lost 33 pounds thanks to Jenny Craig.
She opened with "I Can See Clearly Now," revealing her new optimistic attitude as well as her arrival in the desert, and performed several songs from a television special she's planning dedicated to her late godmother, Kay Thompson.

Minnelli, 61, took a seat after the third song, which she noted was earlier than she had done in her youth, but her energy level was powerful enough to generate big ovations for show stoppers such as "Cabaret," "The Man I Love" and Al Jolson's "Manie."

Just as significantly, she showed the kind of appreciation for the theater the theater board hoped to convey to its supporters.

"God, this theater is beautiful," she said. "(It's) a marvelous place of dreams."

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