

# Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway And Beyond: Cabaret History In The Making

2006

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BLACK CATS, BERLIN, BROADWAY AND BEYOND:  
CABARET HISTORY IN THE MAKING

by

JOSEPHINE MARIE LEFFNER  
B.A., San Jose State University, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
in the Department of Theatre  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term  
2006

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## ABSTRACT

Cabaret as a genre has influenced and is influenced by musical theatre. As cabaret has evolved throughout history, musical theatre has often paralleled its journey. Cabaret thrived before the term “musical theatre” was coined and suffered hard times during the Golden Age of Musical Theatre. The correlation of the two genres cannot be denied, and exploring cabaret history will reveal how deeply the connection lies.

My collaborator Debbie Tedrick and I will attempt to define cabaret through a two-woman cabaret show we will write, produce, and perform together. The show, *Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway and Beyond*, will be a one-act historical look at the genre of cabaret. It will include material garnered from historical research of the cabaret genre, specifically focusing on some of the famous women, songs, stories, lives, and important contributions. The cabaret show will cover information and art from cabaret’s inception in the Paris Montmartre district in 1881 to its height in Germany during the Weimar Republic and will culminate with cabaret’s insurgence into American culture up to, and including, the state of American cabaret today. American cabaret will be emphasized, but a portion of the show will explore American cabaret’s European roots.

My thesis will explore the triumphs and tribulations of putting together the show. As the culmination of my UCF studies, this project will test my abilities as a librettist, performer, creative artist, director, and collaborator. This thesis will include the actual show performances as well as a written monograph document recording the project’s journey from its inception to conclusion.

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## INTRODUCTION

This monograph document outlines a journey of collaboration, creation, and performance. For my Master of Fine Arts Musical Theatre thesis project, I joined forces with Debbie Tedrick to write a two-woman historical cabaret show called *Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway and Beyond*. Since the show is essential to this monograph document, I have inserted the libretto after this introduction. The sections following the libretto deal with process and performance.

The research section delineates research on important cabaret eras throughout history. As an accumulation of source material, the research section denotes the social mores, political upheavals, and economic factors responsible for the rise and fall of cabaret. The research was not geared for presenting cabaret history in its entirety, but instead provides an overview of the cabaret eras pertinent to our show. In our libretto, the research is used by a professor character teaching an Introduction to Cabaret History class. American cabaret is the main focus of the research, although French and German roots are explored.

The next section is a structural analysis of the show, specifically pertaining to style, convention, historical arc, and structural arc. This section reveals the planning behind the show – Debbie’s and my intentions are examined and expounded throughout this section.

The following section focuses on a role analysis. As collaborators, Debbie and I divided roles amongst ourselves. This section reviews the different roles I undertook and my success or struggle with each. This section involves creative process, problem-solving, and individual responsibility.

As the final project of my Masters degree program, this thesis has challenged me to utilize all the skills I have garnered during my academic coursework at the University of Central

Florida. This document is evidence of the accumulation of my creative and academic skills as shaped by my program of study.

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

An Original Two-Woman Cabaret Show

by

Josephine Leffner  
and  
Debbie Tedrick

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BLACK CATS, BERLIN, BROADWAY AND BEYOND

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

ORIGINAL CAST

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

ORIGINAL CREATIVE TEAM

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

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

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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

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

## CAST

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

## PLACE

Present Day, Current Location

## NOTES FROM THE AUTHORS

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

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

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

JOSIE:

Friends, Artists, Lovers, Drunkards  
Lend me your ears

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

(Josie clears her throat, "Ahem.")

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE:

The Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life

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

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

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

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

(Debbie indicates that she would like to perform.)

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

DEBBIE:

This is called "Le Chapelier."

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

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

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

Debbie:

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

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

(Josie stands behind the microphone stand and sings.)

JOSIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

Willkommen a Berlin!

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

ZIEH DICH AUS, PETRONELLA, ZIEH DICH AUS!

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

JOSIE:

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AND POOR JENNY KICKED THE BUCKET  
AT SEVENTY-SIX.

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

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

I WANNA BE KISSED BY YOU,

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

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

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

(Music transitions to next song. Josie sings.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

Crazes come and go, and as quickly as Helen Kane's fame skyrocketed, just as quickly came its descent. Elegance and refinement now captured the look and sound of the 40s. Swing was in and Big Bands led the day with front singers making their mark. Crooners and jazz divas held America's attention rapt. Singers strutted and scatted rather than sweated, and the energy was in the sound on the bandstand rather than in the frenzy of the singer. Many of the Broadway greats such as Gershwin and Porter were immortalized during this Big Band and jazz era as their tunes were reinvented over and over to America's continued delight.

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

JOSIE:

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

JOSIE:

"NOW, LISTEN JACK,"

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:  
STRAIGHTEN UP AND FLY RIGHT!

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

DEBBIE:

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

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

JOSIE:

THE BUZZARD TOLD THE MONKEY,

DEBBIE:

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

JOSIE:

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

OLD MAN TROUBLE,  
I DON'T MIND HIM,

YOU WON'T FIND HIM  
'ROUND MY DOOR.

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

(Josie exits. Debbie enters to sing.)

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE:

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

YOU GIVE ME FEVER, WHEN YOU KISS ME,  
FEVER WHEN YOU HOLD ME TIGHT.  
FEVER IN THE MORNING,

AND FEVER ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT.

DEBBIE:

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

JOSIE:

Friends  
Artists  
Lovers  
Drunkards  
Lend me your ears

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

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

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

It's the 1950s,  
Relax...

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:  
WHEN THE MOON IS IN THE SEVENTH HOUSE,  
AND JUPITER ALIGNS WITH MARS,

THEN PEACE WILL GUIDE THE PLANETS,  
AND LOVE WILL STEER THE STARS;

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

JOSIE:

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

THEY WERE YOUNG AND THEY HAD EACH OTHER,  
WHO COULD ASK FOR MORE.

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:

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

JOSIE:

THEY FELL IN LOVE.

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

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:

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

JOSIE:

SHE LOST HER LOVE.

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

AND DRINKS HERSELF HALF BLIND.  
SHE LOST HER YOUTH AND SHE LOST HER TONY,  
NOW SHE'S LOST HER MIND!

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

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

DEBBIE:  
COPACABANA  
COPACABANA

JOSIE AND DEBBIE:  
COPACABANA.

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

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

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

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

BYE, BYE, MEIN LIEBER HERR,  
FAREWELL MEIN LIEBER HERR.  
IT WAS A FINE AFFAIR, BUT NOW IT'S OVER.

AND THOUGH I USED TO CARE, I NEED THE OPEN AIR  
YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME, MEIN HERR.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

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

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

JOSIE:

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

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

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

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

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

(Josie exits. Debbie enters and sings upstage center.)

DEBBIE:

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

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

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

NOW, YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME,  
WELL, JUST TO PROVE YOU DO,

COME ON, AN' CRY ME A RIVER,  
CRY ME A RIVER,  
I CRIED A RIVER OVER YOU.

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

JOSIE:

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

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

DEBBIE:

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

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

YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT,  
BUT BUDDY, I'M A KIND OF POET,  
AND I'VE GOT A LOT OF THINGS TO SAY.  
AND WHEN I'M GLOOMY,  
YOU GOTTA LISTEN TO ME  
UNTIL IT'S TALKED AWAY.

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

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

JOSIE:

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

(Josie looks at Debbie.)

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

JOSIE:

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

OF WAITING FAR TOO LONG.

DEBBIE:

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

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

JOSIE:

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

DEBBIE:

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

(During piano solo interlude.)

DEBBIE:

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

DEBBIE AND JOSIE:

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

PLAY OFF MUSIC: I GOT RHYTHM

THE END

## RESEARCH

### Introduction

History necessitates retrospect. In order to fully understand the social, political, and economic impact of a specific event, one must have time and distance to observe its aftermath. To understand cabaret history, it is important to first explore what the cabaret genre encompasses. In her book *The Cabaret*, Lisa Appignanesi describes cabaret as:

Walking the tightrope between the stage proper and the variety show, the cabaret defined an independent territory for itself. A flexible medium, with its impromptu stage, setting and programme, it shifted its focus with the times, without ever on the whole losing its rebellious wit or dissident, innovative nature. Indeed, dissent – whether of the kind that champions formal ruptures with artistic tradition, or the kind that urges social or sexual rebellion – was the essence of cabaret.<sup>1</sup>

Outlining cabaret history is akin to tracking a creature whose evolution has not ceased. As a survivor of time and hardship, cabaret morphs to maintain its existence. It gravitates towards subcultures and often represents those artists ostracized from mainstream society creating a community of peers. As a result, cabaret history should be explorative, rather than definitive. Below are important eras in cabaret history where cabaret flourished or decayed due to political, economic, or social upheaval.

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Research Notes

<sup>1</sup> Lisa Appignanesi, *The Cabaret* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004) 6.

### **Le Chat Noir 1881: Cabernet or Cabaret?**

The French wine cellar gave cabaret its name.<sup>2</sup> These cellars, taverns, or cafés often featured a performance element due to either inebriated guests' impromptu singing or the owner allowing entertainers to use the venue to promote business. In the mid-to-late 1800s, the French *chanson* (song) became the primary form of entertainment in these cafés. Love songs were delightful frivolity, but the *chanson* also became an important political vehicle. The *chanson* was an oral newspaper shared by the people – satire, wit, and rebellion became the essence of many of these songs.

The popularity of a solitary singer in a café or tavern evolved into the café-concert, later to become the French music-hall. The café-concert was often an elaborate affair with costumes and full bands. Usually held outdoors, these concerts focused on entertaining large audiences.<sup>3</sup> The political and economic state of Paris played an important part in the transition from the café-concert to the advent of modern cabaret. Lisa Appignanesi aptly describes 1881 Paris:

It is 1881. The Commune is ten years dead. Baron Haussmann's mammoth feat of reconstructing the face of Paris is complete, apart from his own ironically unfinished Boulevard Haussman. Spacious boulevards and magnificent squares have replaced winding cobbled streets. The reason for this grand architectural surgery – to hinder the building of insurrectionist barricades, to facilitate the movement of state troops and the firing of canons – are all but forgotten. Paris stands transformed, a glittering world capital, and the Third Republic, with its

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<sup>2</sup> Appignanesi 1.

<sup>3</sup> Appignanesi 1-5.

high democratic hopes, enjoys peace and economic prosperity. Anarchist bombs, political scandals and internal dissent are not to threaten its foundations for several years.<sup>4</sup>

Modern cabaret arose from the need to find truth beyond Paris's "glittering" façade. Rudolph Salis, a member of the Hydropathes literary society, saw the need for an artistic forum where art and beliefs were shared. While middle class Parisian society was able to enjoy their material wealth and lofty ideals, the lower class starved in the gutter. Paris newspapers sought profitable advantage by expounding naturalistic, moral tales of lower class degradation while the bourgeoisie devoured every written word. Disgusted with the hypocrisy of comfort taking pleasure from tales of impoverished misery, Salis sought to shock the middle-class out of their comfortable existence. Satire was the chosen mirror to reveal the bourgeoisie's inner ugliness.<sup>5</sup>

No longer able to pay the increasing rent of the Latin Quarter, Salis moved to the Montmartre district of Paris. At the time, many Parisian artists moved to this seedy area for its affordability. This influx became a bohemian society and the perfect backdrop for Salis's Le Chat Noir (The Black Cat) which he opened in 1881 and became the first modern cabaret. It began as a modest gathering of Salis's artist friends – writers, poets, painters, and composers – who would discuss, perform, and share their work. The exclusivity of the gatherings quickly made them notorious, and people began to clamor for admittance. Salis soon added alcohol for those who shared their art and he allowed a select public entrance once a week. Le Chat Noir gained immense popularity for its unstructured entertainments. Audiences were enthralled by

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<sup>4</sup> Appignanesi 9.

<sup>5</sup> Appignanesi 10-11.

cabaret creators performing in an evening of spontaneity and improvisation.<sup>6</sup> Appignanesi describes a typical evening at Le Chat Noir:

On any given night Emile Goudeau might be there reciting from his *Fluors du Bitume*, asphalt flowers which reeked of city streets, or the quasi-symbolist poet and piano improviser of genius, Maurice Rollinat, friend of George Sand and applauded by Gounod and Massenet. Wielding a spoon rather than a baton, Claude Debussy might be directing a choir....When the members of the Paris establishment ventured...through the doors of the Chat Noir, they knew they were coming to be insulted....Many of the songs or poems performed would be based on a parody of middle-brow culture. Subjects might be similar, which precluded any possibility of sentimental effusion or self-righteous moralistic captioning.<sup>7</sup>

Le Chat Noir set the standard for modern cabaret: cabaret as a place of experimentation for avant-garde artists; cabaret as a political forum encouraging social reform and candor; and cabaret as a representation of a subculture's values and desires. Salis and the Hydropathes society created this standard by empowering artists through a forum where their art could be shared; their mutual desire of exposing the lower class's struggle and the bourgeoisie's hypocrisy was expressed through the cabaret entertainment at Le Chat Noir; and, by living in Montmartre, Salis and his friends created a new community amidst the low class people they wished to represent. As word of Le Chat Noir's success spread, cabarets began spreading throughout

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<sup>6</sup> Appignanesi 9-13.

<sup>7</sup> Appignanesi 13-15.

Europe. The next great manifestation of cabaret would be during the Weimar Republic in Germany.

### **Weimar Republic 1919 – 1933: Sex, Drugs, and Hedonism**

According to Ruth Henig, at the onset of the First World War the “...German Empire was Europe’s most dynamic and rapidly growing industrial power.”<sup>8</sup> The German Empire was unified and experienced great economic and population growth. However, underlying political unrest would result in a difficult war. Conservative elites were threatened with the rise of Social Democrats and their plans for revolutionary social and political reform. The financial cost of the war increased taxes and created inflation – by 1919, Germany was impoverished and millions of German people were starving. However, a small portion of the population was able to maintain material wealth. Henig quotes author J. Kocka’s description of this disparity as “the ‘visible luxury of a few contrasted sharply with the increasing hardship of the masses.’”<sup>9</sup>

Germany was exhausted, and the time for war had come to an end. A newly elected Chancellor, Max of Baden, began negotiating a peace treaty with United States’ president Woodrow Wilson. The Chancellor coerced the Kaiser to leave Germany and placed Frederick Ebert (a Social Democrat) in power. A new assembly of delegates was formed. The assembly gathered in the German town of Weimar where they created a new republic and elected Ebert their first president.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ruth Henig, The Weimar Republic: 1919 – 1933 (London: Routledge, 1998) 1.

<sup>9</sup> Henig 6.

<sup>10</sup> Henig 12.

According to Henig:

The [Weimar] republic was to be a parliamentary democracy, with its ministers chosen from elected representatives to form a government based on party strength. All men and women over the age of 20 were eligible to vote, thus making Germany one of the first countries in Europe to allow votes for women....Every German had the right to work, and the new state would provide for those citizens not able to find a job. Every German had the right to a decent home. Workers could not be dismissed on the grounds of sex, religion or political persuasion....The welfare of the population was placed at the top of the new political agenda.<sup>11</sup>

This atmosphere of newfound freedom and the end of censorship laws in 1918 caused the Weimar Republic in Germany from 1919 – 1933 to be the height of hedonism in German cabaret. Exhausted from political upheaval and financial woes, the German people craved titillation as a form of distraction. The people wanted leisure full of pleasure and German cabaretists aimed to please. Despite the lofty goals of the new republic, Germany existed in a state of political and economic hardship. Cabaret thrived by offering patrons an escape from the harsh reality of daily life. Berlin was the center of this new cosmopolitan world and cabaret clubs grew in abundance. Appignanesi describes the bohemian subculture of Berlin during this time:

For an all too brief moment, Berlin democratically embraced all comers:

Expressionist artists and comintern agents, nudist dancers and sexologists,

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<sup>11</sup> Henig 13-14.

embezzlers and black marketers, drug addicts, transvestites, pimps, courtesans, homosexuals, prophets vegetarian, magical, and apocalyptic.<sup>12</sup>

Cabaret appealed to this diverse population through entertainment ranging from literary cabarets, where intellectual artists showcased their work, to raunchy strip clubs where profanity and nudity prevailed. These literary cabarets were the German equivalent of 1881 Le Chat Noir in France. With a strong satirical bent and the desire for political reform, these cabarets embraced intellectualism similar to the Hydropathes society. However, the literary cabarets comprised only a portion of overall German cabaret entertainment. Most people were trying to forget about their struggles, turning away from intellectualism and choosing diverting entertainments where nudity, obscenity, and vulgarity prevailed.<sup>13</sup> The rise of the conf rencier, or master of ceremonies, in the 1930s provided continuity for the evening’s entertainment and gave cabaret a character who could improvise, comment on the show, and generally handle the crowd when things went awry.<sup>14</sup>

The insurgence of the Nazi regime squelched the decadence of the Weimar Era. Some cabaret artists were arrested and put in concentration camps; others fled to the safety of other countries.<sup>15</sup> However, the spirit of the era could not be crushed and some of the cabaret art created during the Weimar Republic is still present today. The movie, *The Blue Angel*, captures the aesthetic of the era through Friedrich Hollaender’s music and Marlene Dietrich’s performance as Lola-Lola. The artwork of German Expressionist Otto Dix presents hauntingly

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<sup>12</sup> Appinanesi 125.

<sup>13</sup> Alan Lareau, *The Wild Stage: Literary Cabarets of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia: Camden, 1995) 12-15.

<sup>14</sup> Lareau 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> Appignanesi 206.

beautiful reflections of cabaret life; his use of color and deformed prettiness capture the decadence and depravity of the era. And songs composed by Kurt Weill have become part of the American musical theatre canon through shows such as *Lady in the Dark* and *The Threepenny Opera*.<sup>16</sup> Like the Weimar art that survived the test of time, the tenacious spirit of cabaret would morph to survive in American culture in the 1900s.

### **The Advent of American Cabaret 1900s – 1930s: Dance and Repression**

Whereas European cabaret often centered on political satire, early 1900s American cabaret focused on torch song singers and the dance craze. American cabaret began in New York City. The 1900s – 1930s were decades of change. Victorian values were swiftly being replaced with modern ideals, granting women significant freedoms. Prior to the advent of vaudeville, theatre entertainment was geared strictly towards male audiences. The respectability of the theatre was gaining ground, and vaudeville furthered this progress by including women. Vaudeville was the ultimate variety show ranging from minstrel performers to circus acts, and it employed censorship to encourage female audiences. Vulgarity, alcohol, smoking, and other disreputable vices were banned, creating a more family-oriented environment. Tony Pastor and his famous Tony Pastor's Theater on Fourteenth Street set the trend, and other vaudeville managers followed suit. According to Lewis A. Erenberg, "By the turn of the century, vaudeville had become an acceptable family entertainment for the middle and working class."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Appignanesi 164-170.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis A. Erenberg, Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890 – 1930 (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1981) 67.

Enterprising business owners soon saw the marketability and potential financial gain of including women. Cabaret embraced this change and after 1911 was an established form of urban entertainment. Unlike vaudeville, cabaret did not censor its acts nor purport itself as family entertainment. Despite its disparity with vaudeville's squeaky clean entertainment, cabaret found new respectability through upper class patrons. Expensive venues with European décor enticed the rich to enjoy low class bawdiness. Erenberg denotes this value shift by the way patrons could enter cabarets:

After 1911 when men and women visited a cabaret, they entered at street level or went up atop hotels or theatres. Indulging in these pleasures no longer required venturing beneath the street. That which had been permitted only in the dark now did not seem quite so wicked. The cabaret had made a symbolic evolution from a hidden aspect of life to one accepted as a phenomenon of human existence.<sup>18</sup>

Cabarets became a public forum where the sexes, races, and classes mingled. Cabaret was about men and women finding pleasure on a more equal level.<sup>19</sup> This concept was threatening to cabaret critics who believed the entertainments were dangerously leading young women and men down the path of degradation.<sup>20</sup> People wanting to reform cabaret began to cause political unrest. In 1913 and 1914, Mayor Gaynor and Mayor Mitchel of New York tried to pass curfew laws. One reform agency – The Committee of Fourteen – tried to eradicate

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<sup>18</sup> Erenberg 76.

<sup>19</sup> Erenberg 114.

<sup>20</sup> Erenberg 82-83.

prostitution. These initial attempts were unsuccessful, and cabaret flourished with the onset of the dance craze.<sup>21</sup>

The dance craze of the era offered forms of sexual liberation through new dances with close partner contact and risqué new moves. Vernon and Irene Castle were the dancers to emulate during this era. Both young, attractive, and graceful, the Castles embodied the essence of the dance craze. In December 1913, they opened the Sans Souci nightclub on Forty-Second Street, offering America its first Parisian-style cabaret.<sup>22</sup> Irene Castle describes naming the nightclub and opening night in her book *Castles in the Air*:

We christened our new enterprise “Sans Souci,” which means, freely translated, “Without Worry.” A more inappropriate name I have never heard. Opening night was a glittering success. Tickets sold for a hundred dollars apiece, which notified the wandering ladies of Times Square that we were looking for a different clientele.<sup>23</sup> (92)

Irene Castle changed society’s view of wholesome women. As the height of female fashion of the era, the origin of the bob haircut is linked to her – women copied her haircut and called it the “Castle Clip.”<sup>24</sup> Irene Castle did away with restrictive clothing, encouraged women to exercise, and allowed women a wider range of behavior through her duality of virgin and vamp. She broke sexual barriers by attending male-dominated sporting events while maintaining her image of elegance and class.

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<sup>21</sup> Erenberg 77.

<sup>22</sup> Erenberg 122.

<sup>23</sup> Irene Castle, *Castles in the Air* (New York: Da Capo P, 1958) 92.

<sup>24</sup> Erenberg 167.

Dinner and dancing was a large part of flapper culture, and the Castles' cabaret was an ideal location for both. Cabarets of the era were defined by their floor show and table combination. The dance floor became the central form of entertainment which invited guests to be involved in the evening activities. This seating environment created greater intimacy between the patrons and performers as both the audience and the performers were on the same level. Vernon and Irene Castle used to dine at a table near the dance floor. When it was time to perform, they would come out from the audience. This trend caught on quickly and spread amongst other performers.<sup>25</sup>

The San Souci nightclub closed in 1914. Irene Castle explains its short existence in her book: "We kept 'San Souci' open until hot weather set in and it became a bake oven. It was soon to be closed down anyway by the New York City Fire Department because it had absolutely no fire exits and was a really dangerous place."<sup>26</sup>

Fire hazards were not the only problem with cabarets. Critics and conservatives were increasingly opposed to this counterculture of sexual freedom and implied immorality. Wanting to restore the traditional values of earlier years, politicians passed the Eighteenth Amendment: Prohibition.<sup>27</sup> Erenberg explains how Prohibition Era's (1920 – 1933) restrictions on alcohol produced less than the desired result:

By establishing the forces of morality against already won urban pleasures, prohibition encouraged further individual rebellion from society. The cabaret already represented freedom from institutional roles that were comprised by a

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<sup>25</sup> Erenberg 126.

<sup>26</sup> Castle 94.

<sup>27</sup> Erenberg 236.

new view of public success and status....Prohibition exacerbated this trend.

Discontent with the Eighteenth Amendment led to increased emphasis on drinking and sexual styles as private rights that were not the business of the state or the society.<sup>28</sup>

The illegalization of alcohol forced cabarets to go underground. Known as “speakeasies” in the underground world, these establishments were called “nightclubs” in the general public. These cabarets offered an irresistible combination of bootleg liquor, food, and sad torch songs.

As an iconic speakeasy torch song singer, Helen Morgan was an important cabaret figure of this time. Morgan became popular in the mainstream for her stage and film career and, most notably, for her portrayal of the alcoholic character Julie in the Broadway musical *Showboat* in 1927. Yet, it was her association with speakeasies that made her famous. Her personal struggle with alcoholism made speakeasies the perfect backdrop for her talent and addiction.<sup>29</sup>

James Gavin discusses Morgan’s signature perch and her speakeasy association when he writes:

It was at the Backstage Club that author Ring Lardner lifted her to the top of the piano, allegedly because she was too drunk to stand up. Thereafter it became her trademark perch in about forty speakeasies and saloons. Four were even named for her: Helen Morgan’s 54<sup>th</sup> Street Club, Chez Morgan, the House of Morgan, and Helen Morgan’s Summer Home. The last of these was raided by federal

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<sup>28</sup> Erenberg 236.

<sup>29</sup> James Gavin, Intimate Nights: The Golden Age of New York Cabaret (New York: Limelight, 1992) 8-9.

agents in 1928, and Morgan was arrested and charged as an accessory to the illegal sale of liquor.<sup>30</sup>

Morgan's life was ruled by her alcoholism and was full of both success and struggle. It is unfortunate that what made her famous also led to her demise when a kidney ailment ended her life at the age of forty-one. However short her life was, Helen Morgan will forever represent both the allure and downfall of speakeasy living.<sup>31</sup>

The stock market crash on October 24, 1929 temporarily put an end to nightclub life. Money disappeared overnight and millions faced enormous debt. A pleasure-seeking population was now destitute and nightclubs were unable to sustain themselves. Prior to the crash, over seventy nightclubs thrived in New York City. By 1933, almost none remained.<sup>32</sup> Cabaret would need an influx of money to reemerge and this influx would come in the form of World War II.

### **Mid 1930s – 1940s: Jazz, Swing, and Wartime**

World War II brought about a change in New York nightlife. The war created a booming economy where jobs were plentiful and money flowed. Audiences were looking for wartime escapism and nightclubs provided the perfect fodder. Clubs offered a variety of entertainments during this time: they produced large reviews featuring chorus girls and musical numbers; they hired Latin dance teams to entertain patrons caught up in the Latin craze; and they hired wandering fortune tellers and “mystics” to offer guests glimpses into their future. The biggest draw during this time was swing music. The 1940s was the era of swing, and audiences craved

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<sup>30</sup> Gavin 9.

<sup>31</sup> Gavin 8.

<sup>32</sup> Susan Waggoner, Nightclub Nights: Art, Legend, and Style 1920 – 1960 (New York: Rizzoli, 2001) 10.

that Big Band sound. The dance craze swept New York again, and bands and orchestras were in demand.<sup>33</sup> In their book *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV*, Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman describe the swing phenomenon:

Between 1935 and 1945 hundreds of large dance orchestras – the best-known of them directed by celebrity bandleaders such as Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Glenn Miller – dominated the national hit parade....Swing music was part of a broader cultural and aesthetic movement that included dance styles, modes of dress, and even architecture. Gradually supplanting the intimate cabarets of the 1920s, huge ballrooms, designed to cater to a larger and more diverse audience, sprang up during the 1930s.<sup>34</sup>

Swing music crossed racial boundaries between blacks and whites. It invigorated a nation dealing with war and the aftermath of a depression. It inspired the nation's youth and revitalized American popular music.

The end of World War II brought the revival of intimate nightclubs and cabarets. Tired from the war and the swing era, New Yorkers craved smaller clubs and solo acts. Audiences liked the feeling that singers were performing only for them. This intimate trend launched the careers of greats such as Frank Sinatra and Doris Day. The music of Cole Porter and other Broadway composers began their cabaret legacy during this era.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Waggoner 13-15.

<sup>34</sup> Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, *American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV* (New York: Oxford UP, 2003) 122.

<sup>35</sup> Gavin 63-73.

World War II also helped propel a new style of jazz music. The bebop, or bop, revolution at the end of the 1940s wrought a division between jazz traditionalists and modernists. According to David Dicaire:

The bop revolution, spearheaded by Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Max Roach, Charlie Mingus, Miles Davis, Kenny Clarke, and others, would take jazz to uncharted territories. The creation of cool jazz, hard bop, soul jazz, Latin jazz, free jazz, avant-garde, jazz-rock fusion, world fusion, contemporary funk, new age, third stream, and universalism were all direct or indirect outgrowths of that bop pool. That the music has continued to develop and evolve is a tribute to the power and individual creativity of its practitioners.<sup>36</sup>

Young artists sought a new direction away from the Big Band style. Similar to Big Bands, bebop volleyed musical ideas among the players. However, bebop involved smaller groups which enabled superior improvisational techniques. This new style was not geared towards the masses; rather, it was designed for young, curious, music lovers who wanted to break away from tradition. This jazz became the mantra of the upcoming Beat Generation.<sup>37</sup>

### **1950s-1960s: From Beatniks to Hippies**

The 1950s Beat Generation was mainly comprised of American writers such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. Their writing influenced the cultural change of the 1960s. Dicaire sums up Beat culture:

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<sup>36</sup> David Dicaire, Jazz Musicians, 1945 to the Present (London: McFarland, 1963) 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> Dicaire 2-3.

In the 1950s, a new subculture emerged, dubbed “beatniks” by the press. They were antithetical to the mainstream during the bland, conformist Eisenhower years, when middle-class America established itself as the dominant cultural force in the country. The beatniks, with their dark clothing, love of poetry, bongo drums, bohemian lifestyle, and “anti-stance” to traditional values, embraced the new styles of jazz as the soundtrack of their generation. It was this group that heralded Charlie Parker as the new musical messiah and adopted the Gillespie look complete with goatee, French beret, horn-rimmed glasses, and cool, finger snapping attitude.<sup>38</sup>

These ‘beatniks’ were a literary society much like the Hydropathes in the days of Montmartre cabaret. As a circle of friends brought together by their ideals and art, the Beats wanted to create a new society. Their bohemia involved communal living, uncensored creativity, drug use, and artistic consciousness. The Beat Generation would meet in cabaret settings to showcase their art.<sup>39</sup>

The 1950s Beat Generation that rose up in protest against middle-class morality melded into the hippie generation of the 1960s. From New York to San Francisco, the 1960s era of sex, drugs, and Rock n’ Roll became an escapist form of protest against the Vietnam War and the strict culture of conservatism. The fight for civil rights, women’s liberation, the draft, and the wide availability of the birth control pill all contributed to a young generation who promoted non-violence and free-thinking. Their fight against “The Establishment” was expressed by

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<sup>38</sup> Dicaire 3.

<sup>39</sup> Fernanda Pivano and Allen Ginsberg, Beat & Pieces: A Complete Story of the Beat Generation (Milan: Photology, 2005) 106.

flower children wearing and distributing flowers and “Be-ins” – gatherings where the new culture of rebellion, drugs, and music could be shared. Helen Swick Perry describes the Haight-Ashbury hippie culture of San Francisco, California in her book *The Human Be-In*:

...the seekers in the Haight-Ashbury were not simply trying to escape from the sick values of a central society – they wanted to build a new world....they venerated the innocence of children, they abhorred brute force, they withdrew from materialistic values, they wanted to do something about the lot of oppressed peoples, they wanted to change the education of the young, they wanted a leveling of society and an end to status, and above all they cherished Nature and the peaceful life.<sup>40</sup>

The innocence of the 1960s was shattered by the ramifications of the Vietnam War and the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. A new set of values would be embraced in the society of the 1970s.

### **1970s-Today: Disco and Deterioration**

In the 1970s, youthful idealism changed to hardened cynicism. The hippie youth of the 1960s had grown-up in an environment of Post-WWII prosperity. Once the economy began to falter and disillusionment set-in, peace-loving protestors quickly turned to anger and violence. Peter Shapiro illuminates this change from the 1960s to the 1970s in his book *Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco*:

Gone were the beloved communities of the civil rights marchers, protest singers, antiwar activists, and Woodstock nation, and their spirit of inclusion,

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<sup>40</sup> Helen Swick Perry, *The Human Be-In* (New York: Basic Books, 1970) 7.

participation, and democracy in action. Instead, the onset of the 1970s brought identity politics, special interest groups, EST retreats, armed street gangs, “corporate rock,” tax revolts, and a politics of resentment, and attendant with all of this feelings of alienation, resignation, defensiveness, frustration, and betrayal.<sup>41</sup>

The 1970s disco era arose as a form of escapism from a crumbling society. This subculture could be linked back to the final days of Weimar Germany for its parallel of decadence in the face of despair. The shiny prettiness of disco and its happy upbeat music were havens for cocaine use, sexual addictions, and anything that would numb the pain of the outside world.<sup>42</sup>

The upside of disco was that it paved the way for the gay right’s movement. The open sexuality of the disco era promoted a rise in gay bathhouses. According to Shapiro, Steve Ostrow’s Continental Baths (opened in 1968) was the catalyst for this trend:

Gay-oriented bathhouses had existed in New York since at least the turn of the twentieth century...but the Continental Baths marked the beginning of a new era. Instead of the secretiveness and seediness usually associated with the bathhouses, Ostrow was relatively open about his baths and aimed them at an upmarket crowd...the Continental Baths marked the first defiant steps of an out and proud *gay sexuality*.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Shapiro, Turn the Beat Around: The Secret History of Disco (New York: Faber, 2005) 5.

<sup>42</sup> Shapiro 13.

<sup>43</sup> Shapiro 58.

Ostrow organized entertainment at the Continental Baths in the form of performers and a dance floor. The Baths quickly gained fame amongst homosexuals and heterosexuals alike and women were permitted into the club on Saturday nights in 1972. Disco music became the spirit of the gay rights movement, and this bathhouse became a springboard for the careers of performers such as Barry Manilow and Bette Midler. Kevin Winkler describes what it was like to watch Bette Midler perform in the bathhouse:

*Her unruly body onstage (female, outrageous, blatantly sexual) made a liberating connection with my all-too-ruly, in-the-closet body in the audience. Midler troubled the conventional notions of theater, cabaret, and rock-and-roll, and what it meant to be a female entertainer in these arenas. Her ability to translate her early performance style, which appropriated the language, lingo, and libido of gay men, to mainstream “show biz” venues endeared her to men like me, who saw *her* breakthrough as *our* breakthrough.<sup>44</sup>*

The Reagan era of the 1980s squelched the decadence of the disco era. Whereas sexuality was a form of hedonism in the 1970s, the discovery of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and the debate over abortion rights curtailed blatant sexuality. Punk became the new music rage and conservatism began to spread.<sup>45</sup>

The New York cabaret scene was on its deathbed by 1980. Hollywood’s move to California, harsh city club policies, disco, inflation, and public safety fears all contributed to cabaret’s near demise. However, the spirit of cabaret could not be extinguished, and slowly the

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<sup>44</sup> Kevin Winkler, “The Divine Mr. K: Reclaiming My “Unruly” Past with Bette Midler and the Baths,” ed. Robin Bernstein, Cast Out: Queer Lives in Theater (Ann Arbor: The U of Michigan P, 2006) 61.

<sup>45</sup> Shapiro 252-253.

genre began to gain strength and momentum. The survival of the club scene was the main reason for cabaret's revival. The cabaret clubs that managed to survive began to gain notice, and clubs such as The Duplex and The Algonquin Hotel's Oak Room reopened. By 1984, cabaret was making a comeback. To add to the hype, the Manhattan Association of Cabarets (MAC) and The Mabel Mercer Foundation created cabaret events to provoke public interest such as the International Cabaret Convention in 1989. Television actually helped the cabaret cause by showing comedy and cabaret-oriented programs such as HBO comedy specials and the weekly Manhattan cable show "Cabaret Beat."<sup>46</sup>

MAC and the Musician's Union Local 802 fought New York City's restrictive cabaret laws and won. Cabaret began to prove itself as a profitable venture by launching such shows as *Nonsense*, *Forbidden Broadway*, and *Tony n' Tina's Wedding*. Many cabaret stars gained film and television fame such as Whoopie Goldberg, Pee Wee Herman, Harry Connick, Jr., and Michael Feinstein.<sup>47</sup>

The revival of the New York cabaret scene in the 1980s is responsible for the survival of the genre today. Cabaret is a valuable vehicle for young stars to get noticed and older stars to revive their careers. As long as people continue to perform in and support cabaret, this industrious art form will continue to exist.

### **Conclusion**

Cabaret has a long and diverse history due to its amalgamation of trends and new ideas. As a survivor, cabaret occasionally leeches off other art forms for sustenance. Cabaret may seem

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<sup>46</sup> Bob Harrington, *The Cabaret Artist's Handbook*, ed. Sherry Eaker (New York: Back Stage, 2000) 22-23.

<sup>47</sup> Harrington 25.

parasitic to other genres of the performing arts such as musical theatre, burlesque, vaudeville, and stand-up comedy. However, cabaret has distinguishable characteristics. Lisa Appignanesi describes what identifies the cabaret genre:

Apart from its satirical and avant-garde emphasis what remains more or less consistent in cabaret and allows it to be defined as a distinct form, are its structural elements: a small stage and smallish audience and an ambience of talk and smoke, where the relationship between performer and spectator is one of both intimacy and hostility, the nodal points of participation and provocation. The cabaret performer plays directly to his audience, breaking the illusory fourth wall of traditional theatre. There is never any pretence made of an identity between actor and role. Rather, as in Brechtian drama, the performer remains a performer, no matter what is enacted.<sup>48</sup>

Only time will tell what the next great incarnation of cabaret will be. With the gift of retrospect, society will be able to look back on the next hundred years of cabaret and see how this art form has morphed. Until then, may cabaret continue to empower artists to show their work, create community, and stand up for their beliefs.

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<sup>48</sup> Appignanesi 6.

## STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The genre of cabaret is a spectrum ranging from unstructured, improvised entertainment to themed solo concerts. Debbie and I recreated this spectrum through a historically diverse cabaret show with the fourth wall down and inherent flexibility. Flexibility is deceptive – as any dancer knows, it is difficult to achieve and even more difficult to retain. Our show, therefore, required diligent planning and a skeletal structure that would allow for freedom within continuity. Debbie and I meticulously planned our stylistic elements, conventions, and the arcs of the show to grant us this flexibility.

### Style

#### **Goodbye, Fourth Wall. Hello, Audience.**

There is no hiding in cabaret. Although, the performer may layer on characters, the audience should never doubt the performer is performing. With the fourth wall down, audience participation becomes a mandatory element. The audience can either enhance or detract from the show – it is the performer's responsibility to aid the former. Our mutual passion for the cabaret genre made this interactive element necessary. Debbie and I both enjoy quick-witted banter and the freedom to play with the audience. It was, therefore, crucial for us to weave improvisational and interactive elements into the fabric of our show.

Debbie and I wanted to start our show with the fourth wall down. We wanted to acclimate the audience immediately to the type of show we were performing. We accomplished this goal by entering the house five minutes prior to the start of the show. Debbie and I greeted the audience as new guests and old friends. We invited them to participate in the evening's

entertainment and share their art. When it was time to start, Debbie and I nodded to each other and I stepped stage center, called the audience to attention, and read my poem.

From the beginning, Debbie and I addressed each other by our own names. We did not pretend we were anyone other than ourselves. When we changed into characters, it was “Debbie” and “Josie” playing characters. We had no intention of hiding our identity from the audience and wanted them to share in our playful charades.

One example of this identity retention was during my performance as the conférencier of the Weimar Republic. I took off my professor glasses, turned my back to the audience, and removed my dress to reveal my basic cabaret outfit. I then took a vest hidden in the podium, and put it on. All this was done in full view of the audience – I allowed them to watch my character transformation to remind them of the interactive nature of our cabaret show.

Another important interactive and improvisational element happened during this section. As the German conférencier, I began singing the song “Take It Off, Petronella.” Partway through the first German verse, I realized that Petronella was running late. My job as the conférencier was to keep the audience entertained while Petronella finished getting ready. This section became a great comic bit because the spectators were entertained by both my yelling at Petronella and my attempts to distract and amuse them.

Although the fourth wall was consistently down, there were certain moments in the show that necessitated audience participation. During the song “Fever,” Debbie got the audience to snap on the off-beats of the music. We both emerged from backstage and did our best to seduce the audience. “Come hither” looks and a mini-chair dance to a lucky audience member were moments where the fourth wall was explicitly down. In the 1950s beatnik section, I got the audience to snap their fingers in a beatnik fashion and asked the audience for a joint during my

poem. This section merged into the 1960s, where Debbie and I encouraged audience members to sing the song “Aquarius” and dance with us. And, as Lola in the disco era, I warned the audience “don’t fall in love” as I showed them my dead lover’s hat.

### **Stylized Locations and Time**

Due to the wide range of locations and time periods represented, Debbie and I sought to distinguish them as much as possible. This delineation was mainly achieved through lighting, sound, music, and costumes.

Lighting was an important element of our show. Debbie and I wanted the lighting to create ambience, texture, and mood. Both French and German cabarets had minimal lighting, so we requested the same from our lighting designer George Jackson during those sections. He complied and created a dimly lit, smoky feel. We used candles on our cabaret tables to create the glow of an actual cabaret club. As we entered the 1920s and the Big Band era section, the spotlight became an important element to showcase us as stage performers. For the disco number “Copacabana,” we had track lighting on the pillars to mimic a “Vegas” feel.

We used sound to further express time and location. Microphones were not available in 1881 France nor the Weimar Republic. Debbie and I chose to sing “Le Chapelier” and “Take It Off, Petronella” with piano accompaniment and no microphones. As cabaret emerged in American culture in the 1920s and beyond, we used microphones and added the bass and drums accordingly.

Music was a major stylistic element. Debbie and I chose songs that would showcase our talent as well as represent the era. Debbie sang “Le Chapelier” in a classical style, as it would have been sung originally. I sang the “I Wanna Be Loved By You/Button Up Your Overcoat” medley in my best imitation of Helen Kane’s fluttery voice. However, an important element of a

cabaret show is the right to change and rearrange music. At times we chose songs from the era, but sang them stylistically different. This choice was made to maintain the arc of the show and the audience's rapt attention. For example, Debbie sang a Big Band version of "The Saga of Jenny." This change allowed me to insert appropriate musical theatre choreography for my dance as the character of Jenny. Since both Debbie and I have a passion for musical theatre, we used certain arrangements of music to have a "Broadway" feel. Our performances of "The Saga of Jenny" from Weill's *Lady in the Dark* and "Copacabana" from Manilow's musical *Copacabana* alluded to big Broadway production numbers.

Costumes further indicated time and location. Despite our limited budget, Debbie and I did our utmost to wear clothing that would best suggest each era. For the Weimar Republic, Debbie wore a burlesque style balloon outfit to titillate the audience. I wore a sequined flapper-style dress for my rendition of Helen Kane. Debbie and I both wore berets for our beatnik stint. And we used feather boas to indicate class and style as much as possible.

## **Conventions**

### **A Professorial Convention**

We guaranteed our show's flexibility and maintained our through line with the convention of a college professor. Debbie and I took turns playing a lecturing professor whose appearance keeps the audience inline. The professor teaches an Introduction to Cabaret History class where the audience can learn important tidbits of cabaret history. The professor's class is equivalent to a general education elective geared for the common student; the class offers a historical overview as opposed to an in-depth study.

The professor is formal and businesslike, imparting wisdom while squelching fun. The audience is coerced, reprimanded, entertained, and enlightened. Despite the stern façade, the

professor actually enables more play. The character of the professor becomes the “straight man” to Debbie and Josie’s saucy ways.

The professor’s lectures serve as counterpoints for our songs. They are important segues for the audience to follow the transitions through time and music. The professor is a bit of a dictator but maintains importance through consistency. The audience soon feels comfortable with this character and learns a lot in the process.

### **“Friends, Artists, Lovers, Drunkards...”**

When discussing the varied elements of cabaret, Debbie and I considered how we wanted to open the show. I thought it would be a great idea to recreate the atmosphere of Le Chat Noir by writing a poem. The poem would serve two functions: 1) it would create the setting of a group of artists coming together to show their work; and 2) it would give information on the location and time period in a fun way. Debbie agreed to let me pursue this creative endeavor and I threw myself into writing.

In the midst of writing and continued libretto planning, I noticed the parallel between Beat culture and early French cabaret. The importance of a social-political forum was evident in both, and I thought it would be a great opportunity to demonstrate that parallel by writing a beatnik poem. Both poems were stylistically different. The Chat Noir poem contained a rhyme scheme, while the beatnik poem was free verse. I linked the two poems by giving them the same introduction, “Friends, Artists, Lovers, Drunkards. Lend me your ears.” I created this introduction by modifying Mark Antony’s line in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me you ears.” I wanted this introduction to show the strong literary element of both Le Chat Noir *Hydropathes* and the Beat Generation, while still being amusing

and catchy. Both poems worked well in the scheme of the show. They gave the professor a lecture break and the audience variety and entertainment.

### **Historical Arc**

It was important for us to do our show in chronological order. This arc allowed for continuity and historical demarcation. We wrote our show according to the major eras in cabaret history relating to American cabaret, beginning with modern cabaret's inception in 1881 France and ending with present-day American cabaret.

### **France**

Debbie and I wanted to recreate the ambience of Le Chat Noir in 1881. Its location in the Montmartre section of Paris was the perfect bohemian setting. Le Chat Noir was the meeting place where a variety of artists – painters, poets, and performers – met to share their work. We wanted the audience to feel part of an artistic society and welcomed them to share their art. We set up candlelit cabaret tables around the stage to mimic the setting of the early cabaret.

I read a poem to set the mood and relay information. Once finished, I invited anyone to come and share their art. Debbie volunteered and sang the French song “Le Chapelier” to orient the audience to the musical style and language.

From there, Debbie introduced the famous French chanteuse Edith Piaf to show one instance of French cabaret's influence on American cabaret. I sang Piaf's famous song “La Vie En Rose” to give the audience a taste of her music.

### **Germany**

The Weimar Era in Germany was laced with decadence. Overt sexuality in all forms was rampant during this time. In order to capture this hedonistic subculture, Debbie and I decided to incorporate a burlesque number. I sang the German song “Take It Off, Petronella” and kept the

first verse in German. Debbie emerged scantily-clad in a balloon outfit and encouraged the audience to pop the balloons. The sauciness of the song and striptease encapsulated the feel of the Weimar Republic.

To show the lasting effect of the Weimar Republic on American cabaret, Debbie sang Kurt Weill's "The Saga of Jenny." Weill was a famous composer during the Weimar Republic and he is known in America for his contributions to musical theatre. I incorporated musical theatre dance into this song as a tribute to him.

### **American Cabaret through the Decades**

Cabaret evolved in America during the Prohibition Era. Speakeasies emerged to offer bootleg hooch and entertainment to their clientele. Helen Morgan was a famous speakeasy proprietor and performer and Debbie sang "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" in honor of her. Our next stop was the flapper and dance era of the 1920s and 30s. Vernon and Irene Castle played key roles as club owners and performers, and Helen Kane wowed audiences with her flapper style and sexy scats. I imitate this era through my portrayal of Helen Kane.

From there emerged swing and the advent of the Big Band sound in the 1930s and 1940s. Musicians such as Billy Strayhorn furthered jazz music and singers like Ella Fitzgerald enraptured audiences with their golden pipes. Debbie and I depicted this era in a concert-style section of songs with no intermittent dialogue. I started the section with "They Can't Take That Away From Me" and Debbie finished with "Orange Colored Sky." I then introduced the darker side of jazz and Debbie sang Strayhorn's "Lush Life."

The Beat Generation was next in line, and I solicited Debbie to accompany my poem on the piano. I gave her a beret and she improvised music to my Beat poem. The poem led us into the songs "What the World Needs Now" and "Aquarius," demonstrating the feel of this era.

Disco followed suit, and Debbie and I did a small scale Vegas production number. We incorporated drama and dance into the Barry Manilow song “Copacabana.”

In our cabaret cliché section, Debbie and I chose songs from lists we compiled from our classmates and teachers. This section captured an aspect of cabaret today as a venue for old standards. I sang the songs “Mein Herr” and “Over the Rainbow.” These songs are classic cabaret tunes made famous by Liza Minnelli and Judy Garland, respectively, and were effective as part of our cabaret cliché section.

We concluded our show by singing “It’s Time.” This song was originally performed by current cabaret and musical theatre performer Linda Eder and written by Jack Murphy and musical theatre composer Frank Wildhorn. It indicates the completion our journey as MFA students by wrapping up our thesis show. The song is about saying goodbye and trusting in our future. It is the mark of looking for what’s next in our future as well as pondering the possibility of the next big era of cabaret history.

### **Structural Arc**

#### **Exposition**

The professor convention and poems contain the exposition of the show. Due to the interactive and improvisational nature of our cabaret show, we wanted to regulate the professor and poem exposition to historical information. This exposition was not to define characters as in a book musical (such as *Showboat*, which relies on plot and dialogue), but to delineate locations, time periods, and important cabaret figures pertinent to our cabaret show.

#### **Inciting Incident**

As a non-plotted piece of musical theatre, there is no single inciting incident in our show. Our cabaret show relies on variety, as opposed to traditional Aristotelian playwriting. The

inciting incident is meant to introduce the major conflict of the play, whereas our show is an informative and interactive cabaret.

Since our show was set up as mainly a series of songs and vignettes, the inciting incident was specific to each section. The inciting incident of our Weimar Republic section was Petronella's failure to emerge on time. The conflict then became the conférencier's attempt to admonish errant Petronella, while distracting the audience. An overarching inciting incident was Debbie's and Josie's initial attempt to get the audience to misbehave. As a result, the lecturing professor then has the conflict of battling for the audience's attention.

### **Rising Action**

As with the inciting incident, the rising action pertained to each section or song in our show. The rising action of "Copacabana" was Tony and Rico fighting over Lola. The violence of their encounter and unpredictability of outcome became a source of tension for the audience and created a dramatic build.

Although there is no comprehensive rising action of our non-plotted show, one may again look to the professor convention for possible rising action. If the conflict was the professor's need to maintain the audience's attention, then the rising action was the increasingly difficult task of keeping her "class" in line as Josie or Debbie led them further into mischief.

### **Climax**

Each section bore its own climax, as each song had an explicit high point. The overarching musical climax of our show was the cabaret cliché section. This section was set up like a concert with four songs back-to-back. I began this section with "Mein Herr," an unapologetic song of good riddance to my lover. Debbie sang "New York State of Mind" next. Her passionate rendition pulled in the audience. Before they could recover, I sang "Somewhere

Over the Rainbow,” a poignant song of yearning. Debbie wrapped up the section with the bittersweet song “Cry Me a River,” taking the audience to an emotional high.

### **Denouement**

The musical denouement of the show was the song “One for My Baby.” Debbie played a lingering bar patron and I played the bartender closing down for the evening. We liked the symbolism of simultaneously closing the bar and concluding our show. We also thought it was appropriate that the singer refers to the person as “Joe” in the song (an apt nickname for Josie), and Debbie was singing to me. As Debbie’s character tried to talk with me, I swept the stage clean of show remnants. I went to each table and blew out its candle before I headed back to the bar. I gave Debbie one more drink “for the road” and handed her a final feather boa. This led us to say our final goodbyes and finish with our closing song “It’s Time.”

### **Conclusion**

Despite the absence of the overarching dramatic structure of a plotted work, our show contained elements of dramatic structure within individual sections. Each song or section was set up like a mini-play with the professorial convention providing cohesion through chronology. The song order was designed to take the audience on a journey and the music used to elicit audience emotion and excitement.

## **ROLE ANALYSIS**

### **Introduction**

Musical theatre is a collaborative art. The nature of musical theatre involves a great many people: directors, choreographers, set designers, and performers are just a few of the positions that form the core of musical theatre collaboration. Cabaret, as a sub-sect of musical theatre, is thereby also a collaborative art. As collaborators, Debbie Tedrick and I excelled at working together and working autonomously on our own tasks. Having established a prior working relationship and friendship, we were familiar with each other's strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge created a unique and seamless collaboration – giving when something was needed, supporting each other's endeavors, and, above all, trusting each other implicitly.

A large part of our collaboration was assigning tasks according to our strengths. Because Debbie has a strong background in music directing, she was assigned to organize the band and find and transpose the music accordingly. Her association with the post-production company A2 Creative enabled us to have a well-designed program and a recording of the show.

With my background in dance, it was the natural choice for me to choreograph the show. My creative arts background enabled me to succeed as costume designer and technical director of the show. Debbie and I divvied up the playwriting and song selection through discussion and preference. We were each responsible for directing our own performance segments and assisted each other as needed.

This section is a breakdown of my duties, what they entailed, and the challenges within each role.

## Playwright

In writing our show, Debbie and I used the history of cabaret as our skeleton. We divided the cabaret genre into historical time periods that we used as markers for our libretto. Since our main focus was American (specifically New York) cabaret, we broke down the twentieth century in America according to decades. Knowing the importance of European cabaret's influence on American cabaret, Debbie and I decided to focus on two major eras: Le Chat Noir in 1881 France and Berlin during the Weimar Republic in Germany. Our initial layout was a list of time periods, locations, and dates. From there we began to research important performers, composers, and songs of each era. We also brainstormed a list of buzz words that captured the essence of each era. For example, the buzzwords for 1920s New York were "speakeasy," "flappers," "Helen Morgan," and "The Castles."

To create our song list, Debbie and I followed a process of brainstorming, research, elimination, and discussion. Brainstorming involved referencing the buzzwords and writing down the performers and songs we associated with each era. We researched our ideas and confirmed or eliminated songs and performers accordingly. We then discussed our choices and figured out which songs were most appropriate for the feel of our show.

When choosing songs, it was important for us to choose standards rather than obscure pieces. Although Debbie and I decided on a specific cabaret cliché section, most of our songs were familiar to our audience members. Since we wanted our show to be accessible to the average person, we wanted people to recognize the majority of the music and have a good time.

As we began to narrow our focus, we divided our lists in half according to preference and ability. For example, Debbie chose to sing "Lush Life" and write the section on jazz due to her passion for and background in jazz. I chose to write the section on the 1950s and 1960s because

the time period fascinates me, and I thought it would be a fun and interesting challenge to write a beatnik poem.

Once the sections were divided, Debbie and I discussed what device would create cohesion in our libretto, joining the music to the historical text. We came up with the idea of a professorial conférencier. This character would wear glasses and take cabaret seriously. Reading from a podium, as though teaching an introductory college course on cabaret history, the conférencier would keep the cabaret lesson on track while Josie and Debbie played with the audience through song, dance, and banter. The professorial character would be a stern character; in contrast, Josie and Debbie would be as playful, sultry, obnoxious, strange, and compelling as they desired.

With this delineation of professor versus performer, Debbie and I went to write our sections. I used the research garnered earlier in the process to write succinct overviews of each era. The overviews were full of interesting historical information and were short enough to maintain the audience's attention. I wanted to have creative as well as academic input and wrote two original poems for the show. I used a poem as the show's opening to elucidate French cabaret as a forum for artists, and mirrored this concept later in the show by using a poem in the beatnik section. Upon completion of our sections, Debbie and I compared and edited each other's sections to create a unified libretto. We added segues where needed and inserted the songs in the appropriate places.

The onus of playwriting was lessened by the nature of our show. Rather than needing to write a strict libretto with heavy dialogue, our show focused on music and audience interaction. This requirement of flexibility and stylization within our libretto led us to create the convention of the professor. Our initial libretto consisted of the professor's lecture paragraphs and song

cues. Debbie and I later added our song lyrics and basic interactive sections to the libretto for posterity in this monograph document. Overall, our main playwriting goal was to create a fun and educational show accessible to the average person. Debbie and I were successful in creating a symbiotic relationship of academic knowledge and cabaret entertainment in our show.

### **Technical Director**

Being technical director of the show involved several challenges for me: 1) I am not a technician; 2) I do not speak in technical terms; 3) I did not know what resources were at my disposal. However, I was armed with several assets: 1) I had Debbie as my fellow collaborator; 2) I am a creative communicator; 3) I am tenacious.

The first challenge of this role was location. Debbie and I needed to determine where we were going to perform the show. My initial thought was to use the Seaside Music Theater Black Box in Daytona Beach, Florida. This location would provide easy rehearsal access since it was in our town of residence. Through the UCF/Seaside affiliation, the venue would be free of charge. Debbie and I had also worked previously with the Seaside technical crew, which would make future collaborations easier. Despite the inherent benefits of using Seaside's Black Box Theater, Debbie and I realized the show might cost us more money due to our band musicians living in the Orlando area and Debbie and I possibly having to pay out-of-town travel costs in addition to the band fee. Also, my plans of using the UCF props and costume shops would make more sense if we had the show in Orlando. Debbie and I ultimately decided to use the UCF Black Box Theatre in Orlando as the location for our show.

Now that a decision had been made, it was my responsibility to secure the venue. I immediately contacted Kevin Rose, the UCF Production Manager. He gave me the paperwork to fill out for renting the Black Box Theatre. He looked at the calendar and saw no conflicts for our

anticipated show dates. I continued to coordinate with him until I received his confirmation that the site was ours for our show dates and two dress rehearsal days prior.

The location was finalized and the next step was finding a technical crew. I drafted a flier advertising for a stage manager, lighting designer, and sound designer. I posted fliers around the UCF Tech Center and also planned to give some to Kevin Rose to distribute. As I was waiting in Kevin Rose's office, I started talking with Barkley Finsterbush. He had assistant stage managed *The World Goes 'Round* and was currently assistant stage managing *Sunday in the Park with George* – Debbie and I worked with him when we performed in both shows. As we were chatting, I mentioned our cabaret show and what assistance we needed. Barkley immediately offered to stage manage if it would fit in his schedule and promised to let us know within a week.

To our great advantage, Barkley accepted the position. He was fantastic to work with and, from there, everything fell into place. Barkley coordinated sound design with Kevin Rose and Martin Wooten. He persuaded his friend George Jackson to be our lighting designer. Both Barkley and George put in hours of work to enhance our show's aesthetic. Barkley and I went to the UCF Prop shop to get our set pieces. I showed him what pieces we wanted, and he transported and set up everything. He let me into the fine props storage to gather tablecloths and small prop pieces. George and Barkley hung lights, built us a private backstage area, and did their utmost to get us what we needed for our show. Our stage manager Barkley Finsterbush, our lighting designer George Jackson, and the help of the UCF Technical Department were invaluable in helping us create the desired aesthetics for our show.

### **Costume Designer**

My role as a costume designer was new for me; I had never costume designed a show previously. I knew we were on a limited budget, so I turned to Michaelleen Melita for assistance. She was the head of the UCF costume shop and gave me free rein of their stock. Due to her busy schedule, she was unable to help me find pieces but allowed me the time and access to all of their storage. This resource was extensive and I spent days rummaging for costume pieces.

Debbie and I had discussed a basic outfit for our show that could be layered or accessorized depending on the aesthetic of each song or section. We determined a long-sleeved black leotard, nude dance tights, a black skirt, and tan character shoes would be our basic outfit. To that, we would add jackets, vests, feather boas, hats, dresses, etc. Debbie and I purchased our basic outfits. For accessories, I pulled everything possible from the UCF costume shop. They had a great selection of feather boas, jackets, hats, glasses, gloves, and overlay dresses. Items I could not find, I borrowed from Debbie, took from my closet, or purchased.

Since I was able to pull most of our costumes, I did not need to do a lot of sewing. The one costume piece I built was Debbie's beak for "Straighten Up and Fly Right." I also made small costume alterations and fixes when necessary.

### **Choreographer**

Although I have been dancing for almost eight years, I have a limited background in choreography. Debbie and I did not want a dance-heavy show, but we wanted to incorporate some choreography. I enjoyed the creative aspect of choreographing dances. The two main dance numbers were "The Saga of Jenny" and "Copacabana." Because of my background in musical theatre, I wanted these two numbers to feel like mini-musicals.

“The Saga of Jenny” is a song that follows the character of Jenny throughout her life. Each verse deals with Jenny at a different age and the consequence of making up her mind. This song was Debbie’s to sing, and I wanted the opportunity to dance the role of Jenny. My challenge as a choreographer was to use movement to show her age and current scenario. Since I was the dancer as well, I needed to make sure I could convey the message.

When I choreograph, I rely on aural, kinesthetic, and visual elements. I begin by listening to the music and allowing my body to dictate movement. This free dance enables me to get in touch with my instincts and impulses. As I refine the choreography, I pay close attention to the feel of the music and the meaning of the lyrics, asking myself:

- 1) What is the message of the song?
- 2) Are there times when the lyrics contradict the feel of the music?
- 3) What things are emphasized in the song?
- 4) What things do I want to emphasize?
- 5) How do I respond to this song?
- 6) How do I want the audience to respond?

Once I know the answers to these questions, I begin mirror work to see what movements convey the message I want. In “The Saga of Jenny,” I wanted to bring out the sensuality and sense of fun. The character of Jenny goes after what she wants, and I wanted to portray a bold and saucy female. I wanted the physicality of Jenny to represent her age and experience. Here is my basic movement breakdown for each of Jenny’s ages:

- Three year-old Jenny skips onstage, lights an imaginary match with a flourish, reacts in horror to her house catching on fire, and runs offstage.

- Twelve year-old Jenny walks onstage with a bounce in her step, reading a French-English dictionary, stands stage center. Jenny turns seventeen, does a fan kick with a hip swivel and runs offstage.
- Twenty-two year-old Jenny saunters onstage with a glamorous satin shawl. She sashays as she walks and twirls to show off her outfit. She demonstrates her ring finger is bare, is facetiously shocked, and sashays offstage.
- Thirty-nine year-old Jenny puts a rose in her teeth and saucily tangos with an invisible partner. She teases the audience with her hip shaking and rose gesticulations before dancing her way offstage.
- Fifty-one year-old Jenny emerges writing her memoirs in a book with a feather pen. She hip grinds to the music and uses her pen to imitate a machine gun. She hip walks and swirls her feather offstage.
- Seventy-five year-old Jenny enters drunk. She stumbles to the bar, grabs a martini glass, and downs its imaginary contents. She haphazardly makes her way up center where she turns seventy-six, crosses her arms, and dies.

“Copacabana” had the additional challenge of my responsibility as both the singer and the dancer. In this song, I wanted to play the character of Lola, a showgirl who loses her love and goes crazy. Debbie would play the male parts of Tony and Rico by switching hats to distinguish characters and would provide the comedic element. “Copacabana” is a song that sounds upbeat and happy, but conveys a sad message. I wanted this number to be a lot of fun, but not lose Lola’s tragic ending. Here is my basic movement breakdown for Lola, Tony, and Rico:

- Lola enters and stands stage center. She strikes her best showgirl pose and begins to sing. As she sings, she does snippets of the dances she mentions. When she says Tony's name, he pops up from behind the bar wearing a hat. Tony and Lola flirt while she continues her showgirl dance number.
- When Lola sings about Rico, she gestures to him sitting at a table wearing a hat. She does a basic salsa step and finishes with a flourish. Rico whistles and Lola goes to him. He grabs at her, she shies away, and Tony and Rico fight behind the bar. Hats fly, a gun is fired, and Tony's hat sails over the bar to lie at Lola's feet. Lola picks up Tony's hat and does a dance of sorrow and mourning.
- Lola goes to the bar, sets Tony's hat next to her, and demands a drink. She is unstable and wilted – a shell of her former self. She gets up to dance with Tony's hat, but has lost her agility and coordination. She approaches the tables to show them Tony's hat as a warning not to fall in love. She sadly turns her back to the audience and stumbles offstage.

### **Director**

Self-direction is always a difficult task. I approached most of my performance sections from the actor's perspective, focusing on intentions and beats. Together, Debbie and I worked segues and blocking into our libretto. Once we had those initial traffic patterns sketched, we sought the assistance of our thesis chair Nicholas Wuehrmann. He gave us helpful pointers and tips that Debbie and I adapted to our show.

The most difficult part of self-direction is the inability to see the product. For this reason, Debbie and I invited Rockford Sansom, Patrick Moran, and Kathleen Lake to come to our final

dress rehearsal. They were an invaluable resource and helped put the final touches on our show. Their positive comments and constructive criticism were an asset to our final product.

Kathleen had great suggestions about when and how to emerge from backstage. She mentioned using backstage as a “time tunnel” during “The Saga of Jenny” where I could enter at different ages and not disconcert the audience. Rockford and Patrick helped us strike ancillary props that were cumbersome and difficult to use. For example, Debbie and I wanted to use a bed during “The Saga of Jenny” as a centerpiece, but it was cumbersome to set and strike. Rockford and Patrick said it was unnecessary for our performance. Debbie also wanted to use a vanity table during “Lush Life,” but this had the same difficulty as the bed. All our visitors helped us to use our stage space to its full advantage by giving us pointers and supporting our suggestions of when to use the bar, piano, podium, center stage, etc. Debbie and I were grateful for their input and incorporated their feedback into our show.

### **Performer**

The Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre is a performance degree. It incorporates the elements of singing, acting, and dancing. The responsibility of the performer is to engage the audience. Our show requires a versatile performer who can navigate time periods, musical styles, a range of characters, audience interaction, and improvisational moments.

Since a cabaret performer maintains her identity throughout the show, I did not need to transform myself into each character. My goal was to layer on characters to create new personas. When I played Helen Kane, the audience still saw me as Josie playing Helen Kane. By maintaining my identity, I established the fourth wall down and created greater intimacy with the audience. Although this identity alleviates the responsibility of accurate impersonations, it heightens the responsibility of carrying the show. If something goes wrong, Helen Kane is not

responsible – Josie is. The brilliance of cabaret is the performer’s vulnerability of being in the moment at all times. Below is the delineation of my thought process to create each character I played in our show.

### **Professor**

The professor is a stern, but mischievous lecturer. Determined to accomplish the task at hand, the professor does her best to wrangle the wayward audience. She will clap her hands, clear her throat, glare at an unwarranted comment, and silence inappropriate laughter. At times she says things that merit bad behavior, but her guileless expression relays nothing. Once the glasses rest upon her nose, playtime is over and work has begun.

### **Song/Scene Characters**

- Le Chat Noir hostess – This character is amiable and welcoming. She encourages her patrons to share their art and participate in the evening’s entertainment. She is knowledgeable on current events and knows how to speak her mind. She can be saucy at times, but most of her words are spoken with good humor.
- “La Vie En Rose” – Edith Piaf was a small woman with a large voice. I chose to sing this song in head voice (Edith often sang in chest), since my vibrato is closer to hers in my upper register. I watched biographical footage of her and tried to imitate some of her gestures. Edith oozed emotion and passion in her singing.
- “Take it off, Petronella” – This character is a master of ceremonies whose ultimate goal is to bring pleasure to the audience. When things don’t go according to plan, it is the emcee’s job to entertain/distract the audience. The emcee is the consummate performer – she can sing, dance, do stand-up comedy, improv, provoke, titillate, and besmirch the audience.

- “I Wanna Be Loved By You/Button Up Your Overcoat” medley - Helen Kane was petite with large doe eyes. Although, I am not her physical twin, my upper voice is a good match for her fluttery vocal styling. I listened to recordings of her and did my best to imitate her sound.
- “They Can’t Take That Away From Me” and “I Got Rhythm” – Since these songs encompassed one of the concert sections of our show, this character is the consummate Big Band performer. This persona is someone who is comfortable with the music and the audience. She allows the music to flow through her to help the audience to feel the music.
- “Straighten Up and Fly Right” – This duet was all about fun. Debbie comes out wearing a silly bird costume and gives me a toy monkey to wear. We use our words, expressions, and movement to tell the tale of the buzzard and the monkey. We play with each other and encourage the audience to have a good time.
- “Fever” – This song was one of our sultry cabaret numbers. Debbie and I emerged to seduce the audience through our music and movement. For me, this song was about audience voyeurism with potential interaction. I wanted the audience to feel titillated and enticed.
- “What the World Needs Now” – This beatnik section evolved through a series of discussions between Debbie and me. We wanted to do a number where Debbie could use her piano skills. I wanted to write a poem and thought it would be funny to have it merge into a song. When we decided to sing this song, Debbie and I created an improvised scene of me asking her to accompany my poem on the piano. I wrote the poem to give exposition on the Beat Generation and flow seamlessly into the song. This section gave

me a great opportunity for audience interaction when I asked them to practice their beatnik snaps.

- “Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In” – Ah, hippies. To me, there are far less enjoyable things in life than playing a drugged-out hippie dancing to music. Debbie and I wanted to have a moment in the show when the audience could dance with us, and the 1960s provided the perfect backdrop. We chose these songs for their familiarity and created characters who could feel the groove and get people to join in the dance.
- “Copacabana” – Lola is a sad figure who loses her love and loses her sanity. I wanted to portray the various stages of Lola – love, loss, grief, and alcoholism. I played with my physicality throughout the choreography to depict these stages, but maintained clear vocal presence to tell the story.
- “Mein Herr” – Sally Bowles is unapologetic in this song. It is designed as a stage number, but has many parallels in her life. I used a chair to allude to the movie musical, but incorporated my own movement within the song. This song is about a woman who refuses to be controlled by men and uses sex to forward her ambitions. I, therefore, incorporated classic sexy chair choreography, such as sitting in the chair backwards with my legs spread.
- “Over the Rainbow” – I wanted to capture desperation and yearning in this song. Judy Garland made this song famous and her life was a tragic struggle with drug addiction and alcoholism. I wanted to show the sadness behind the hopeful lyrics of the unattainable dream that lies beyond the harsh reality.
- “It’s Time” – This song was personal and fit in with Debbie and I ending our time at UCF. For me, this song symbolized the conclusion of my graduate studies and a glimpse

at the future. “It’s time to trust in us and what tomorrow brings” was particularly significant in regards to Debbie and me leaving academic life and entering into our respective careers.

Rather than striving for perfection, I strove for understanding and feel. My main goal was to be true to the people and characters I was playing while entertaining the audience. I wanted to promote diversity and variety in my performance by changing roles and creating different moods.

### **Conclusion**

As the culmination of my Masters degree, this performance project has challenged me in varied and productive ways. Doing this project gave me the opportunity to try on different roles in a low-risk environment while having the support of UCF friends and faculty. It opened my eyes to new possibilities and used my creativity to find solutions to problems. My ideals of collaboration were enforced by the generous and talented people who helped us throughout this project. *Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway and Beyond* is a two-woman cabaret show that could not have been done without the help of many.



## CONCLUSION

When a musical theatre performer is cast in a show, it is her responsibility to memorize her lines, songs, and choreography. She must be a consummate professional who arrives to rehearsal on time and is ready to work. She should perform to her utmost ability and be a positive influence on the rest of the cast. She has to perform at all shows and keep herself in the best possible shape. However, that is where her job ends. Costumes, lighting, props, and sound are all provided for her by other people. She has a director who will guide her in her character choices and a stage manager to organize the technical aspects of the show. Many people whose names she may never know are busy working on the production – she is but one of many collaborators.

A cabaret performer not only has the responsibility of a musical theatre performer, but also must conceive, create, and coordinate her show. If she has the financial means to hire multiple collaborators, her burden of putting on the show will be lessened. However, she is still responsible for integrating her collaborators to her vision, for securing a venue, for marketing and promoting herself, and the responsibility of the show rests solely on her shoulders. She does not hide behind a character as in a play, but interacts with the audience with the fourth wall down.

If the burden of the cabaret performer is so much greater, why would anyone choose to do it? Before this thesis project, I would have pondered my answer. My best response would probably have been a questioning, “Perhaps because they like to do it?” Oftentimes, initial responses are not far off the mark. In my case, my answer post-thesis project would be similar, but more confident. My response now would be, “Because it’s what they love.”

The cabaret artist loves her art. Historically, cabaret artists have risked persecution and even death for their art. Cabaret involves a creativity that will not be stifled. The cabaret artist has complete creative freedom. Cabaret becomes not about hiding, but about finding community. It involves an artistic integrity where the artist reaches out to the audience in hopes of being embraced and accepted. Indeed the burden of cabaret is great for the individual artist, but it is one most would willingly accept again and again.

So how has a Master of Fine Arts degree prepared me for a future in cabaret? As a performance degree, the Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre should provide useful skills for professional work post-graduation. The curriculum succeeded in this manner – auditioning techniques were taught, performance skills were further developed and the advantages of two years of dedicated study were realized. This thesis project, however, has awakened my awareness of creative cabaret possibilities. Not only have I honed my performance skills at UCF, but I have also experimented with the responsibility of putting on a show.

The success of our show was achieved through my collaboration with Debbie. We were well-suited to each other's strengths and weaknesses, and our teamwork brought our vision to fruition. The one thing I would change about the process would be having more money and more time. Debbie and I were inundated with schoolwork and performing in *Sunday in the Park with George* at UCF. As budget-conscious college students, we had to plan carefully to hire our band for the short amount of time we could afford. Although we still managed to pull together a fun show and a solid product, it would have been nice to luxuriate in the process.

However, rarely are the arts a forum for large influxes of cash and free time. A cabaret artist is often the sole producer of her work, and it was a wonderful bonus to have Debbie to lean on throughout this process. The time and money constraints of our Spring semester were

actually a wonderful training ground for future endeavors by forcing Debbie and I to be tenacious and cull our resources.

This thesis experience has been invaluable. Its inherent challenges forced me to find solutions. Though I was not always in my element, I learned the true art of collaboration: asking for help. As a team, Debbie and I managed to pull off what once seemed impossible. In the midst of schoolwork and other performances, our determination secured our dream of a two-woman show. This monograph document will forever record our journey of struggle and triumph.

I hope this document will serve as a thank you to those who helped us achieve our goals. May it be a wonderful remembrance for Debbie and me to look back on for years to come. May it help sustain cabaret through any curious eyes who dare to traipse over these pages. But most of all, may it serve as a reminder to future graduates that anything is possible with fortitude, kindness, resourcefulness, and a little help along the way.

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

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

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF CABARET LIFE

The Ten Commandments of Cabaret Life  
From Simplicissimus-Kunstlerkneipe, ed. Rene Prevot

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

## **APPENDIX B: COSTUME AND PROPS LIST**

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

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

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

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

## **APPENDIX C: LIGHTING WISH LIST**

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

## LIGHTING LIST

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

### Opening Poem

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

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

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

Beatnik Poem (Josie center and Debbie at piano)

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

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

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

## **APPENDIX D: BAND LIST OF INSTRUMENTATION AND RHYTHMIC FEEL**

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

#### BAND LIST FOR INSTRUMENTATION AND RHYTHMIC FEEL

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

8.     Straighten Up and Fly Right  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Medium swing. Watch tag stop time ending. As written but swing the eighths.
9.     I Got Rhythm  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Up swing in Broadway two feel.
10.    Don't Get Around Much Anymore  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Medium swing. Debbie starts a capella. Stop time feel, standard.
11.    Fever  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Med-slow swing. Peggy Lee version. Bass/drums predominant. Audience snaps.
12.    Orange Colored Sky  
Full band. Piano, upright, drumset. Med-up swing. Watch hits, stop time.
13.    Lush Life  
Full band. Piano, upright (bowed) bass, drumset. Slow recitative ballad. Watch quick feel change to waltz midway at "a week in Paris could ease the bite of it.."
14.    What the World Needs Now  
Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. (Switch to electric bass and synth here) Debbie plays piano at beginning. Swing waltz feel. Dionne Warwick standard.
15.    Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In  
Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Bass starts. Watch stop time and accelerando after "and love will steer the stars" stop time...then accelerate on "this is the dawning of the age of Aquarius". Also, watch feel change after Aquarius into "Let the sun shine in"
16.    Copacabana  
Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Standard disco Barry Manilow-ish. There will probably be a gunshot and a scream during the song so please be aware. If we don't have a blank gun, we'll use drum snare crack at that point.
17.    Mein Herr  
Full band. Upright piano, upright bass, drumset. As written in old style Kurt Weill. Watch as each section builds speed and then settles for next verse.
18.    New York State of Mind  
Full band. Upright piano, electric bass, drumset. Billy Joel bluesy ballad groove.
19.    Over the Rainbow  
Full band. Piano, electric bass, drumset. Standard Judy Garland slow ballad.

20. Cry Me a River  
Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. James Bond into groove. Brushes. At second bridge drive to 12/8 blues shuffle with stop time at end of bridges on “told me love was too plebeian” etc.
21. One for my Baby  
Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Standard Frank Sinatra slow bluesy ballad. As written, swing eighths.
22. It’s Time  
Full band. Electric piano, electric bass, drumset. Starts slowly and builds to drive 12/8 blues shuffle at bridge. Keep held back feeling throughout. We will introduce the band during the solo mid-song.
23. Playoff: Reprise “I Got Rhythm,” up double-time jazz feel.

**APPENDIX E: PRESS RELEASE**

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

THESIS PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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

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

Orlando, Florida.

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

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

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

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

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

Cost: Admission is free, donations are appreciated.

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

For additional information and/or promotional materials:

Contact: Debbie Tedrick/InterACT Entertainment.

Telephone Number: Cell: 248/388-2700

Fax Number: 248/546-3610

Email Address: DebbieTedrick@aol.com

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

###

## **APPENDIX F: SHOW RUN ORDER**

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

## THESIS SHOW RUN ORDER

Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway & Beyond

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

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

**APPENDIX G: LE CHAPELIER FRENCH TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

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

#### LE CHAPELIER FRENCH LYRICS AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Le Chapelier (The Mad Hatter)

Music by: Erik Satie

Text by: Rene Chalupt

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

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

**APPENDIX H: CABARET CLICHÉ LIST OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

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

## CABARET CLICHÉ LOVES AND LOATHES LIST

### Lists from fellow students

#### **Joe Kemper:**

Detests - "Someone to Watch Over Me"

Loves - "Fifty Percent" from Ballroom

#### **Janet Raskin:**

Loathes - "Someone to Watch Over Me"

Loves – “Orange-Colored Sky”

#### **Rocky Sansom**

"Maybe This Time"

"The Man I Love"

(Anything that involves laying on the piano)

#### **Becca Johnson**

“Somewhere Over the Rainbow”

“Someone to Watch Over Me”

“The Way We Were”

“I’ll Be Seeing You”

“Don’t Rain on my Parade”

“Being Alive”

“The Man That Got Away”

“Fever”

#### **Courtney Winstead**

“Wind Beneath My Wings”

“Somewhere Over The Rainbow”

“New York, New York”

“What More Do I Need”

“Send In The Clowns”

“The Greatest Love Of All”

“At Last”

“They Can’t Take That Away From Me”

“It Had To Be You”

“Stormy Weather”

**Mark Hardin:**

Hate it:

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

"If I were a Bell"

"I Dreamed a Dream"

"Comedy Tonight"

"But not for me"

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

Basically, anything that comes from a collection book.

Love:

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

**Jennifer Karpel**

"What I Did for Love"

"How are Things in Glocca Morra?"

"I Dreamed a Dream" (Les Mis)

**Tara Snyder**

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

"New York, New York"

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

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow".

Now what cabaret would be complete without

"Maybe this Time" or

"It Had to Be You"?

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

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

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

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

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

"What I Did For Love"

"Killing Me Softly"

**John Bell**

"Pirate Jenny"

"Losing My Mind"

"Ladies Who Lunch"

"Impossible Dream"

"Memory"

## **Jim Brown**

### *Overdone songs:*

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

"Being Alive"

"I'm Still Here"

"Send in the Clowns"

"Not While I'm Around"

"Cabaret"

"Maybe This Time"

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

"Stars & Moon"

any overdone Kander & Ebb songs

"Mack the Knife"

"Ladies who Lunch"

### *Songs I Love:*

"Skylark"

"The Nearness of You"

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

"Witchcraft"

"I Never Do anything Twice"

Anything Rodgers & Hart

Obscure Frank Loesser

Songs by Hoagy Carmichael

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

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

## **Nicholas Wuehrmann**

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

"Somewhere Over the Rainbow"

"My Funny Valentine"

"Johnny One Note"

"Stormy Weather"

"Send in the Clowns"

"Summertime"

"Memory"

## **Dr. Steve Chicurel**

"Misty"

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

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

"The Girl from Ipanema"

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

## THESIS CHAIR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Nicholas Wuehrmann, Assistant Professor and Thesis Committee Chair for:

Josephine Leffner and Deborah Tedrick

University of Central Florida Conservatory Theatre

October 22, 2006

Chair's Report for Rehearsal/Performance of *Black Cats, Berlin, Broadway & Beyond*

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

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

I gave a few suggestions during and after the rehearsal, including where to focus more out to the audience and where to remain more introspective. Focus is paramount in any performance but becomes essential in a cabaret setting, where the 4<sup>th</sup> wall is broken and the audience is included.

I encouraged both Josie and Debbie to “go for it” in their interpretations of such characters as Helen Morgan and Helen Kane. It was confusing at times to know just who they were being from scene to scene, so I encouraged clarity. If they were being themselves, then that should be clearer, as should the transitions. I also suggested that they slow down the cabaret cliché section, as it seemed rushed, and the audience would really enjoy this moment.

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

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

rather small. I wish the rest of the theatre students had been able to catch this highly entertaining, informative, well-thought-out and performed production.

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