

CABARET
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GUIDELINES
FOR
CABARET PRODUCTION

HISTORICAL FORMS OF THE CABARET

"There needs must be a mighty minute/When a crowd has but one soul within it."

Conan Doyle, of a performance at the Palace Theatre Music Hall.

Assuming that the Cabaret is a dynamic which in any period engages masses of people in the civilizational process by enticing them with the creative possibilities in their own lives through intensive group experiences, one sees that this dynamic has taken different forms in history. The twentieth-century form of the Cabaret can be traced back to the courts of Renaissance Italy, described by Castiglione in The Courtier, and beyond to the Provençal creation of chivalry in the late Middle Ages. These courtly gatherings evolved in the eighteenth century in France and England into salons, literary cafes and clubs, in many cases hosted and dominated by talented women concerned with bringing political and cultural forces into touch with one another. A parallel development in both countries was the growth of popular musical clubs. The upsurge of democracy in the nineteenth-century ended the aristocratic salons, and shifted the form of the cabaret from political concern to the sheer entertainment and socializing of the masses in the English music halls and French night clubs. Both streams of edge political commentary and musical entertainment merged in the twentieth-century Cabarets of the Weimar Republic. The shift in live musical entertainment to the plotted musical comedy and the domination of entertainment by television have combined in the latter part of this century to make identity of the Cabaret dynamic in our time more difficult.

Introduction

The Cabaret, as a central secular focus of society's value scheme can be seen in the West as an outgrowth of the Medieval codes of chivalry and the ethic of courtly love. The courtly love ethic, though it had its origins in sacred symbolism, became a secular statement of the existence of meaning beyond itself in the everyday life. With the formation of towns and the inception of large-scale, non-agrarian society, the ideals of courtly love were appropriated as a theme of secular art and music. As even the aristocracy lost its intimate contact with religious symbolism, the courts of Europe became the seedbed of a new secular symbology. Subjects for renaissance ballads and madrigals moved from classical bacchanalism mythology to contemporary scenes of common life. An eventual manifestation of this development in society was the emergence of the seventeenth-century salon. Here, in a setting of bourgeois sophistication, men met women for the first time on equal intellectual footing. The intellectual breakloose that took place as these salons moved into the major cities, affected the formation of poets and novelists, and thus directly influenced the intellectual and spiritual development of western secularism.

Origins

Eighteenth
Century

Salons were started in France in 1614 with the Hotel de Rambouillet for the discussion of political issues. They were presided over by a hostess whose job it was to see that the conversation flowed smoothly (without arguments and not letting her own personal views overpower the conversation). In France women were politically oppressed but intellectually free. The salons had their own code of conduct which was rigidly adhered to but what was done outside the salon was not questioned. There were also literary cafes and music clubs.

In England, women were politically free, but intellectually oppressed and although the salon was tried there, it did not work. They had male clubs which began as a leisurly passtime and developed into intellectual and then political gatherings. Later on music houses and musical clubs were formed.

Nineteenth
Century

These musical clubs and music houses became theaters in the 1800's and, in doing so, created a vacume in which the music halls of England came into being. These music halls provided variety shows with singing comedians. They carried on the tradition of having a chairman, who was part of the audience, but kept them quiet enough to hear the performance. Each performer had his own songs and no one else could use them. By the 1870's there were 500 of these halls in London, and they were in all classes of society; each one geared to its own clientele. The leveling of society after the French Revolution destroyed the aristocratic base of the salon movement. This democratic trend within society found its full development in the frontier society of the United States. As life became centered around river transportation, the development of the showboat carried forward the genteel secular style which expressed the existance of transcendence within everyday life. The minstrel show was a romanticized attempt to capture the meaning of the suffering and struggle on the lowest level of society. This development even in its infancy, looked back to a golden era of "genteel master and happy slave." The tradition of nostalgia developed in the minstrel show and carried over into the popular musicals of Gilbert and Sullivan and others.

The approach of the twentieth century, with its economic and technological gains, showed up on local man's entertainment as relaxed manners and wild participation. Burlesque theaters and vaudeville troops became available to a large portion of the population. Cabarets, as we now know them, showed up in the 1920's but were less evident during the depression. Changing sexual mores and political satire were topics of interest for jokes, conversation and music. During the years after the depression, the nightclub served somewhat the same functions, but with less participation by the audiences. The question now is how the technological advances in entertainment are used to increase the involvement of the "quests" rather than furnishing "canned art." Also, how it will turn into a spiritizing leaven of society.

Conclusion

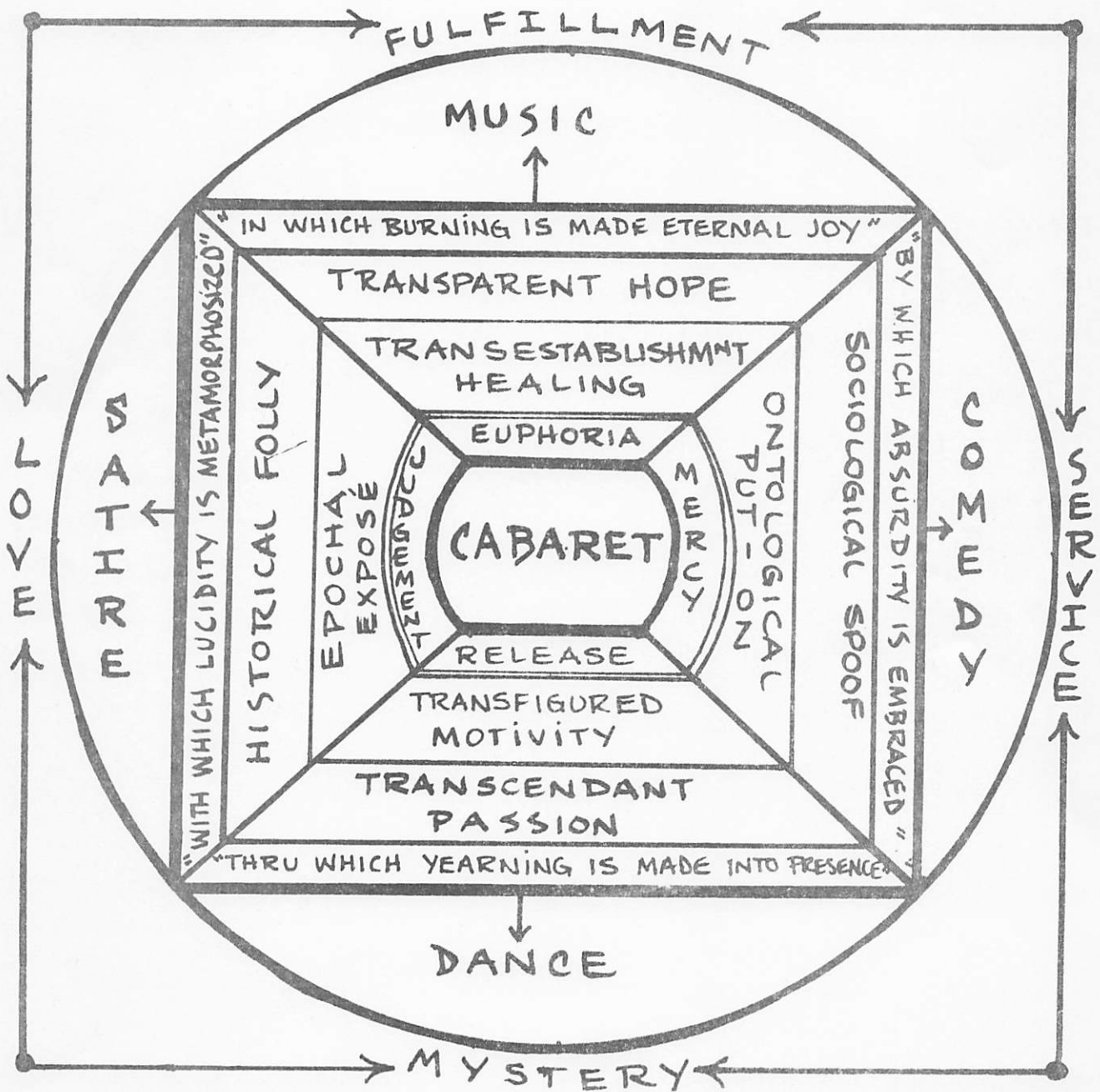
Throughout modern history, the cabaret in its different forms has certain definable functions in the civilizing process. First, the cabaret is out to effect mass education, as in the French salons, which promoted the use of the vernacular and thereby made cultural products of the scholars available outside the small circle of the humanistically educated. Second, the cabaret has revealed the real situation men have on their hands, by penetrating either the government censorship of the Bourbon monarchy, as in the French salons, or Victorian prudery, as in the English music halls. Thirdly, the cabaret has been an effective vehicle of consensus-building in times of paradigm-shift, for example creating a new critical climate relative to the literature of Augustan England in literary salons like that of Samuel Johnson, or easing the acceptance of positive science as did the scientific societies of eighteenth century England. Finally, and underlying the above three functions, the cabaret has disseminated models of sophisticated style, which have allowed men to handle the internal wildness of seriously confronting life as it is and deciding to celebrate it. This function has been embodied in such ways as the geisha style of Japan and the harsh directness of the German cabarets. The key common factor relative to allowing such an authentic response to the times has been the transparent host dynamic, embodied in the French Hostess, British music hall Chairman, Japanese Geisha, and the German Master of Ceremonies.

Cabaret Research

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THE CABARET AS A LIFE DYNAMIC

6.23.73
CABARET
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WILKOMN • BIENVENUE • WELCOME

	COMEDY	SATIRE	DANCE	MUSIC
SOCIAL ROLE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relief--take a breath and laugh at yourself. 2. Embrace the tragedy of life. 3. Bursts social form that has lost its life. 4. Issues in conflicting factions. 5. Socializes fallen idols. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illuminate social ills. 2. Objectifies lucidity & cynicism. 3. Occasions deciding social issues. 4. Spotlights one corner of social problem. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social role of dance. 2. Striptease of roles. 3. Everyone participates 4. Polka - Radical unrestrained: like motorcycle. 5. Radical corporateness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Releases passion 2. Rehearses common memory 3. Corporate 4. Pulls you in 5. Heightens emotions as state of being. 6. Articulates passion. 7. Media for recreation 8. Spiritizes mundanity
PRESENT and PAST FORM	<p><u>Present</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don Rickles 2. Bill Cosby 3. Movie M-A-S-H 4. Chech & Chong - Dis-est. 5. Pernuts <p><u>Old comedy</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charlie C. 2. Laurel & Hardy 3. Mark Twain 4. 3 Stooges 5. Marx Bros. 6. Jack Benny 7. Cerino 8. Honeymooners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smothers Bros. 2. Talking Blues (Alice's Rest.) 3. Tobacco Road 4. Gulliver's Travels 5. Alice in Wonderland 6. Nursery Rhymes 7. MAD Magazine 8. "Importance of Being Ernest" 9. Arsenic & Old Lace 10. Mouse that Roared 11. Pop art - Soup cans 12. Pogo - Li'l Abner 13. Science Fiction 14. Political cartoons 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minuet 2. Polka 3. Ballet 4. Pantomime 5. Soft shoe 6. Tap 7. Flamenco 8. Sq. dance 9. Tango 10. Blackbottom 11. Oriental dance 12. Charleston 13. Stick dance 14. War dance 15. Rhumba 16. Samba 17. Twist 18. Rock 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gregorian Chants 2. Moorish Dirges 3. Singing Instrumental 4. Jazz 5. Blues 6. Folk 7. Electronic 8. Raga
HOW OCCASION HEALING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heightens ambiguity - gives permission to live in ambiguity, brokenness 2. Discontinuous nature - it breaks in - can re-enter. 3. Laughter is permissible 4. Society is a possibility to confess. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surprise of exposure 2. Breaks idolatry 3. Makes you deal w/issues 4. Accountability 5. Demands alert decisions re issues 6. Slays moralism 7. Gives nerve to know your knowing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healing & stylizing life tensions 2. Demonstrates possibilities 3. Ritualizes beginnings & endings 4. Allows you to appropriate sensuality and sexuality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harmony affirms the individual in the corporate 2. Expenditure is seen as joyous 3. Untalented are freed to contribute with passion.

ELEMENTS	INTERIOR DYNAMICS		SOCIOLOGICAL ROLE		OTHER WORLD IN THIS WORLD	
	INTERNAL AWARENESS	TRANSPARENT HAPPENING	BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES. . .	BECKONING TO BE. . .	IN THE THEATRE THERE IS. . .	THE ROLES OF. . .
MUSIC · Invitatory	Eternal Joy	Depth Healing	Embodying Ontological Drama	Ceaseless Embodiment	The Embodiment of Mystery	M.C.
DANCE · Utopia	Deep Yearning	Transfigured Motivity	Emerging Social Style	Practical Selfhood	The Reflection of Freedom	Dancer
SATIRE · Expose	Disclosed Absurdity	Esposed Judgment	Disclosing Social Complexity	Strategic Involvement	The Demonstration of Care	Actor
COMEDY · Levitation	Released Passion	Embodied Mercy	Recovering Life Modes	Significant Engagement	The Invitation to Tranquility	Troubador

CONTEXT:

The following is a model that many will find helpfull as a way to introduce The Cabaret to those who will be working on its development in your local situation. The purpose of this workshop is to be existential so that at the end of the exercise everyone will have an interior feel of what they will want to convey to their audience.

CONTEXT	WORKSHOPS		PERFORMANCE	REFLECTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief history 2. Nature of the Cabaret. 3. Societal pain objectified and healed. 	Break into groups of 5-10 people.		Perform each of the routines.	Have the audience name the pain that each routine has portrayed and how that routine was healing.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name the malaise in society today. 2. Brainstorm comedy and music to address and heal it. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pull together a routine. 		
	5 min.	5 min.		

This chart from the LENS course provides the rationale for the three acts of the CABARET. They suggest themes and forms for the music and skits, but are to be woven subtly through the act rather than overtly expressed.

THE TWELVE DEFINITUDES OF RESURGENCE		
ACT I	ACT II	ACT III
POLITICAL	ECONOMIC	CULTURAL
Engagement Crisis	Vocational Malaise	Meaning Collapse
Phasiality	Sexuality	Rationality
Care	Integrity	Fulfillment

Summer '73

CABARET PRODUCTION SCREEN

July 26, 1973

SHOW		PRODUCTION		MEAL		PRACTICS	
S C R I P T	Rationale	L I G H T S	Rental	K I T C H E N	Basic Menu	B U D G E T	Anticipated Costs
	Name: Content		Crew		Food Service Design		In-kind Requests
	Comedy and Satire		Set-up		Image of Meal		Cost of Ticket
	Staging		Script		Cook model		Deadline
M U S I C	Band Personnel	S O U N D	Rental	B A R	Entertainment	P R E P R E P	Materials Acquisition
	Instruments		Crew		Purchase Liquor		Bar and Restaurant Set-up
	Sheet Music		Set-up		Train Bartenders		Meal Preparation
	Rehearsal		Script		Set up Bars		Stage Set-up
D A N C E	Girls	G E N E R A L	Costumes	S E R V I C E	Serving Model	E N A B L E M E N T	Bartenders
	Numbers		Make up		Waitress Assign		Good Servers
	Choreography		Property		Orientation		Performers
	Drilling		Crew		Relate to Kitchen		Back-up Forces
S I N G I N G	Singers	D E C O R	Timeline	D E S I G N	Bar and Restaurant Plan	C L E A N U P	Stage
	Music		Materials		Meal Design		Kitchen
	Accompaniment		Floor Plan		Decor Models		Bar and Restaurant
	Practice		Set-up Context		Materials List		Return

July 26, 1973

TEN WARNINGS ABOUT CABARET

Reflections of
Summer '73 Participants

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1. Do not get locked into one genre, life arena or life phase.
2. Keep volume, quality, quantity of material from causing show to drag.
3. Keep message tangential but clear; if we are not creating our own story, we are in trouble. Content must be universally appealing; i.e. recently dead issues are deadly.
4. Cut over against the frenzy with steady acts; think about mirroring the deeps. All must come off or none will.

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5. Avoid the exotic, the esoteric, and the grossly sensual or sexual, being careful not to fan hostilities and not to deal in contempt, ridicule, sentimentality, preaching, abusive cynical satire, naivete, futility, or superficiality.
6. Be spontaneous; release passion; dance through all movements; involve everyone in the room.
7. Cabaret is not a vehicle for actors and/or professionalism.

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8. Be sure there is no pain without healing; be missionally sensitive; spoof life, but do not slip into blasphemy. Avoid pointing to the mood of panacea, escape, cultism, propaganda, cheap grace, boosting morale.
9. The audience must be relaxed first but in a mood of anticipation and must understand that there is no "right" response.

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10. Chart the journey and then do not change course in mid-journey; use un-complicated sets, good choreography and no prompter. Rehearse, but do not over rehearse.

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- 1. Focuses Societal Malaise
- 2. Addresses the universal through a few particular issues

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- 3. Speaks to and employs local man
- 4. Releases creative passion in cast and audience
- 5. Elicits total audience participation

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- 6. Incorporates elements of comedy, satire, music, and dance
- 7. Is a sophisticated tool with professional quality

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- 8. Pushes life to transparency
- 9. Is a healing tool for society
- 10. Holds awesome mood tension between painful address and joyous release