

The World of *Cabaret*
Dramaturgy Packet

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A Note from Your Dramaturg

I'm Dr. Kerry Goldmann, and I am thrilled to be your *Cabaret* Dramaturg! To give you a bit of my background: I received both my bachelor's and master's degrees from UNT, each with a major in history and a minor in theatre, and I received my doctorate from the University of Texas, Dallas, in interdisciplinary Humanities. I have spent the last ten years of my academic career researching, writing, and teaching college courses on the theatre, culture, and histories of communities who have been marginalized due to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. I am currently a professor in the UNT's history department, and I teach courses on Jewish history and culture, critical race theory, and Black American history and culture.

For the run of this show, it is my job to ensure all who are involved are informed on the world of *Cabaret*. I've included a comprehensive overview of research in this packet that I hope will be useful for each of you. Beyond the packet, I love to talk theatre and history, and I'm happy to go over this research with any of you who are interested in learning more. Don't hesitate to send me questions, topics you'd like me to research, or just a request for an open discussion. Please consider me an open resource!

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I. History of the Cabaret

Etymology: The word “Cabaret”

Though “cabaret” now evokes images of the costumes and performers, the word originally denoted the physical spaces in which these performances took place. The history of the word “cabaret” stems from *cambrete* or *cambret*, meaning small room or chamber, first used in the Picard dialect of northern France in the 13th century. Similar words were used in Middle Dutch to refer to a low-rent inn or restaurant.

France

Cabarets first sprang up in France in the late 15th century and distinguished themselves from taverns because they served both food and wine. Early on, cabarets were not noted for entertainment or performance. In the 17th and 18th centuries, more artists and writers would frequent these venues and they became more known as spaces for artistic socializing. It was not until 1881 that Cabaret took on its modern form, known for dinner and drink service being accompanied by entertainment forms such as music, songs, comedy, dance, and drama. The first cabaret show, established in 1881, was “Cabaret Artistique,” later renamed “Le Chat Noir” (translation: The Black Cat). In this era, the bourgeois, or upper-middle class, especially enjoyed frequenting cabarets for entertainment. They delighted in throwing off social conservatism, and therefore, the debauchery of cabarets grew overtime.

French Cabaret would inspire the founding of clubs and acts across the western world, but it would look different in each political and social landscape. This demonstrated the nature of cabaret as a highly reactionary art form.

Germany

Cabaret began in Germany in 1901 with the establishment of the Bunte Theater (Colorful Theater) in Berlin. This theatre was meant to host *Kleinkunst*—vignette style performance that was not meant for “serious” theatre. The word “Kabarett” started being used to describe these entertainment venues by around 1910. They strove to appeal to the middle class (as in France). German Kabarett wanted to be synonymous of displays of wealth, lavish consumption, and eroticism. Cabarets that attempted to be too political or topical in their revue lost audiences who only wanted delights. There were also censorship laws that limited political critique.

After WWI, Germany used cabaret shows not just to simply entertain but also mock the chaotic political climate of the day. They used a great deal of satire and what’s called “gallows humor,” meaning dark humor in the midst of grim circumstances. Though the shows were not directly “political,” they were now more topical in depicting the chaos of the day (inflation, bankruptcy, drug use, housing shortages, changing social trends etc.). The shows presented these topics in such lavish and absurd fashion that it dually provided both an escape for audience members and

a way for them to confront the absurd measure of change in their current world. Eroticism was utilized by cabarets as a form of political satire. Following the war, political censorship of popular culture came to an end. Though the end of censorship meant that politics could now be openly criticized, cabarets instead leaned further into nudity and obscenity as its indirect critique of social and political convention. One German journalist commented in 1921 warned that this style would “strengthen an apathetic audience in its intellectual laziness.” German conservatives, including the National Socialist (i.e. Nazi) Party, wanted to heavily censor these shows for their open representation of gender conflicts, homosexuality, and clergy and political corruption.

Music, Style, Spectacle, and Space

How do we define cabaret? What components make up a cabaret? A central element to cabaret is the **space** in which it operates, which the word originally referred to as a small restaurant, bar, or nightclub. Cabaret spaces are often smaller and intimate which speaks to the close relationship shared between performer and audience during shows. In Berlin, during the Weimar Republic, there were larger cabaret venues that catered to all ages and classes of people, but most were these intimate spaces. In terms of **style**, a cabaret is a form of variety theatre that includes a mix of song, music, dance, drama, and or magic. Cabaret in the 1920s and 30s was defined by popular artistic styles of the day, including expressionism and avant-garde (both defined below). Because of the nature of the spaces in which cabaret began, the cabaret style is adult-themed and provocative, often rejecting societal conventions. These shows were characterized as experimental and allowed those who did not quite fit into society to unapologetically express themselves while refuting the tastes of the mainstream that cast them aside. The **music** of cabarets also challenged convention. Composer Richard Pearson Thomas said that cabaret songs exist “in that world that’s somewhere in between” other genres. Rhythmic beats combined with seductive, and sometimes lewd, lyrics to keep the audience energized and enticed. The **spectacle** of cabarets in the 1920s projected glamor and grandeur, especially in regard to the performers—their makeup, hair, and costuming. Cabaret outfits of this era flaunted skin and sexuality as a response to the end of censorship, and cross-dressing of both men and women was a common element of these performances. However, the ostentatious spectacles appeared more degraded by the 1930s with glitter shedding and wear showing, reflecting the heavy economic hardships. In this era especially, skin-bearing costumes did not reflect a kind of self-empowerment, but rather a selling of the body in a period when that was the only commodity many had.

Several notable songs from Weimar cabarets: “Das Lila Lied” (“The Lavender Song”), “Mir ist heut so nach Tamerlan!”, and “Raus mit den Männern” (“Chuck Out the Men”)

EXPRESSIONISM AND THE AVANT-GARDE

The artistic style of expressionism developed fully in the first decades of the 20th century as a part of the avant-garde movement, which revolved around revolutionary art of the working class. It began in Eastern Europe, mostly centered in Germany, and was mainly centered around paintings. However, expressionism proved a new, popular artistic style in many mediums including poetry, theatre, and early film. was cultivated in theatre by August Strindberg in one of

his early trilogies (*To Demascus*). It'll hit American theatres around the 1920s with Eugene O'Neill (*Long Day's Journey into Night* and *The Hairy Ape*), but it wouldn't remain incredibly popular with American audiences. Expressionist artists were responding to a vastly changing world amidst mass industrialization and urbanization. They were often responding with emotion-driven depictions of life's hardships. The markers of expressionism include exploration of class struggles between the bourgeois (middle class) and the proletariat (working class), ritualistic dancing and mystical forces (in other words, the characters have little control over their actions), and it often dramatizes the spiritual awakening of the tragic working-class protagonist (their resistance: the upper class). Religion was a central aspect of expressionism. Cabarets provided an outlet for expressionist creation in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, as seen through performances of heightened emotion, themes of madness and mental agony, and music with melody distortion.

JAZZ AND RACE

Though cabaret began in Europe, the performers of the 1920s and 30s would be heavily influenced by jazz music hailing from Black artists in Harlem, New York. **Josephine Baker** and **Bessie Brown** were two well-known Black cabaret singers and dancers during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Jazz was a melding of European and African music, characterized by improvisation and strong beats. Ironically, jazz provided the same rebuke of convention as cabaret, yet it would still be co-opted by white performers and audiences. This was even true in Berlin. German artists perceived jazz music through the lens of race and fetishized both Blackness and Black culture. White liberals in America and Europe in this period reveled in Black culture because it felt like a rebellion against an establishment, which explains why cabaret performers co-opted Black culture, such as jazz music and dancing. They viewed jazz, which they deemed "jungle music," as primitive and something to be used for entertainment purposes—as opposed to recognizing it for the deep artistic merit it held. Jazz was considered the antithesis of German musical traditions and a celebration of social difference. The problem, most often, was that Black culture would be valued by these liberal white groups who simultaneously continued to devalue Black people. (NOTE: the presence of race in Germany in this period is expanded on in "The World of the Musical" below).

PERFORMERS AND AUDIENCE

As noted above, the intimate setting is meant to remove any disconnect between the performer and audience. The performer welcomes the audience member into the world of the cabaret where they can feel comfortable to delight in crude humor, seductive performers, and mockery of public figures. The small Berlin cabaret venues catered mostly to middle-aged and younger adults from middle to upper classes.

The performers ranged in age, gender, sexuality, and class, but often existed in the fringes of society and saw themselves as "Other." **Anita Berber** was one of the most famous cabaret performers in the Weimar Republic. Berber's art, as well as her own life, were exemplary of the time. She regularly performed nude, as was now allowed Germany, but it was more about

stripping humanity down to its dark essence than eroticism. Her performances also mocked rigid gendering through costume, popularizing female tuxedos, and she dramatized drug use which was rampant in the republic. [read more about Berber's life and art here:

<https://www.messynessychic.com/2022/01/21/she-was-too-scandalous-even-for-1920s-berlin/?fbclid=IwAR10HfkkXD0JetTBpLiW1YuSgoQXaBivrUTDaLVHdqH2ZjgktpBsT4Ri3O0>] British

artists and spectators made their way to Berlin for the cabarets. As audience members, they were said to have both delighted in the debauchery while also scoffing at how extremely it mocked convention, such as when male performers dressed as women. As for performers, one British star on the Berlin cabaret scene, **Jean Ross**, was the inspiration of the original iteration of Sally Bowles. Charles Isherwood was so inspired by Ross' presence onstage and off that he wrote her into his *Goodbye to Berlin* stories. The Sally Bowles of Isherwood's book and the later musical were noted to have a lot in common in terms of performance and personality.

II. The World of the Musical

The Weimar Republic

The story of the Weimar Republic is an intriguing one, not least because of its tragic ending. The Weimar Republic was born in the last days of World War I, as a mutiny among sailors and dock workers forced the abdication of the German monarch. The future of Germany was seized by idealists, who hoped to make their homeland the most liberal democratic nation in Europe. Instead, the Weimar Republic lasted barely 15 years, ending in 1934 with the emergence of totalitarian rule under Adolf Hitler. Even as the Weimar Republic was being dismantled by the Nazis, historians and political scientists began to seek answers about why democracy had failed in post-war Germany. They found no easy solutions. The Weimar Republic died a death of a thousand cuts, hamstrung and undermined by a myriad of factors and forces.

In November 1918, as the German war effort was collapsing and surrender to the Allies was imminent, the German navy mutinied and the Hohenzollern monarchy collapsed with scarcely a whimper. The government of Germany was assumed by civilian politicians, liberals and social democrats like Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann, and Gustave Noske. These men were political moderates—but they were also optimists who believed that Germany could make a successful transition to democratic republicanism. True to their liberal values, they crafted a constitution that gifted the German people probably the freest, most democratic political system of its time. Once commanded to follow and obey, Germans could now select their representatives, their representatives, their government and their head of state. All were given legal equality, civil liberties and the right to vote, regardless of status, wealth, education or gender.

But for all their idealism and good intentions, the men of Weimar were confronted with enormous challenges and difficulties. They inherited a nation exhausted, depleted and starved by four years of total war. Even as they planned the future Germany was threatened by a struggle for power between the Spartacists (local communists who wanted revolution), the Freikorps (former soldiers of nationalist political views) and other nationalist counter-revolutionaries. Germany was also at the mercy of foreign powers, who wanted to punish it for the war and prevent future threats by decimating the German economy. The humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles (1919) ignited paranoid nationalists, who already clung to the belief that the 1918 surrender was unjustified, the work of socialists and Jewish conspirators. The men of Weimar crafted an ambitious mode for republican government—but uniting all or even most Germans behind this model proved almost impossible.

The most pressing and visible problems of Weimar Germany were political instability, violence and economic suffering. These problems were particularly acute in the early 1920s. The government's ability to respond was constrained by the new political system. The proportional voting system adopted by the new Republic was more democratic than any ever devised—but this proved detrimental to getting things done. Rather than encouraging decisive leadership and facilitating action, the Reichstag became a swamp of small parties, conflicting ideas and self-interest. The perils of the 1920s screamed for strong leadership but the Weimar system coughed up a series of weak coalition governments and no less than 15 different chancellors, most of them politically impotent. The Reichstag was divided, paralyzed, and unable to implement necessary policies or reforms; running the state proved a difficult, if not impossible task.

Germany's economic condition was even more perilous. Though hostilities formally ended in November 1918, Germans continued to suffer from an Allied food blockade that continued until mid-1919; the ensuing starvation contributed to the deaths of more than one million civilians. The Treaty of Versailles stripped Germany of her colonial possessions, important European territories and valuable industrial regions. In 1921 Berlin was handed a reparations bill totaling more than \$30 billion. This outrageous burden killed off any hope of post-war economic recovery. The already devastated German economy could not shoulder this burden and by 1922 Berlin was defaulting on its quarterly reparations payments to the Allies. France and Belgium responded by sending troops to occupy the industrial Ruhr region seize German material and produce. Germans responded by initiating a paralyzing general strike and—as a last resort by the desperate Weimar government—frantically printing of banknotes, a move that triggered the devastating hyperinflation of 1923.

--Eric D. Weitz, Historian

<https://alphahistory.com/weimarrepublic/weimar-republic-introduction/>

The Golden Twenties and the Crash

Germany was eventually raised from this swamp by the pragmatism of Gustav Stresemann, the restoration of foreign relations and American financial assistance. Recognizing that a bankrupt Germany would destabilize Europe and threaten its own economy, the United States intervened, negotiating with a more conciliatory Weimar government. The Dawes Plan of 1924 reconfigured reparations payments and facilitated billions of dollars' worth of foreign loans to kick-start the German economy. This injection of capital allowed German industrial and manufacturing sectors to quickly recover, leading to rapid improvements in employment, wages and standards of living. The period 1924-29 is consequently referred to as the "Golden Age of Weimar." It was a time of progress of improved living standards of bourgeois values and surges in art, film, and popular culture.

But the Golden Age was a temporary and artificial prosperity—something that Germans themselves seem to understand. In 1929 the nation was ravaged by the Great Depression, which drained Germany of foreign money and capital. Threatened with unemployment and starvation for the second time in a decade, German voters lost faith in the government and abandoned mainstream political parties. Instead, they turned to fringe groups who were committed to dismantling and destroying democracy. One of these groups, the NSDAP or National Socialist German Workers Party, had been small and insignificant during the 1920s. But as conditions in Germany deteriorated, the NSDAP's electoral fortunes improved—and the ranting speeches of its leader, Adolf Hitler, began to strike a chord with the German people. By 1932, the path to a Hitler-led government and to the death of the Weimar republicanism—was being cleared.

Cabaret takes place in the last several years of the crumbling Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi Party.

The Rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party

As the facades of prosperity in the Weimar Republic fell, the path was paved for a tragic revolution in Germany. Adolph Hitler became the leader of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party in

1921 and was elected Chancellor of Germany in 1933. He centralized power under himself and the Nazi Party by 1934 and set out to conquer states with substantial German populations to consolidate them into the Third Reich (third great German Empire). Hitler and the Nazis preached eugenics (ethnic cleansing) and white supremacy. They denoted their supremacy by strictly defining the “Other,” meaning racial and ethnic outliers, homosexuals, political foes, and those who were differently abled. Hitler saw Jewishness as a race, not ethnicity, and deemed the “Hebrew race” responsible for the economic crisis. What he referred to as the “Final Solution” to the problem took form as the Holocaust, the mass murder of 6 million Jews and at least 1 million people in groups deemed “undesirable” by the regime. As for the Afro-German experience, African Germans were not targeted in the Holocaust, but they were severely discriminated against and even sterilized in Nazi Germany.

Hitler and the Nazi regime sought to shutdown many cabarets because they were run by Jews, they had leftist sentiments, and they criticized those in power. Cabaret was highly politicized theatre even without explicit political material. The nature of cabaret celebrated difference and sought to dismantle the very hierarchies and social categorizations that the Nazi Party fixated on enforcing. Cabaret performers evolved from moral yet provocative girls into brash and decadent dancers, like those personified in *Cabaret*. Kick lines were later evaluated as “products of human destructuring and dehumanized restructuring.” Although cabarets were scrutinized for the content of their performances during Hitler's regime, they evaded harsh treatment because of their size. The large theatres were examined and censored for erotic content, but the intimate cabarets were commonly overlooked because they were able to hide between the cracks. The nightclub stages continued to explore sex and political satire long after major theatres were suppressed. However, by 1937, most cabarets were closed, and Hitler’s government completely outlawed political criticism.

1930s Berlin: Everyday People and Artists

The Berlin of the 1920s has been described as a metropolis for hedonism and the spectacle of culture. The overarching problems of the period were so engrossing and demoralizing that much of the public poured themselves into consuming and producing entertainment. The economic prosperity of the 20s was only a thin veneer veiling economic disaster, but artists still articulated hope in what they created. By the 1930s, that hope was snuffed out, and entertainment and art became more about escapism. What people were struggling with in their everyday lives, including drug use and class struggle, played out in cabaret sets.

Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality in the Berlin Arts Scene: 1920s vs. 1930s

Berlin was not just another city in Europe. According to Joseph Pearson, a Canadian cultural historian living in Berlin, the Weimar Republic “was a time of anxiety, but also a time for hedonism, sexual liberties and artistic experimentation.”

Racial and ethnic outliers contributed greatly to the Berlin arts scene. Black jazz bands from America toured Germany in 1924 which would ignite the jazz age in Berlin cabaret. However, most of the headlining cabaret performers in Berlin remained white. Many of the

cabaret composers of the Weimar Republic, such as Werner Richard Heymann and Friedrich Hollaender, were Jewish and fled Germany to create elsewhere when Hitler came to power.

Weimar Berlin was indeed known to be a place that broke the social conventions. Many women in this period questioned gender roles and some of them defied patriarchal traditions by becoming economically independent from men. The cabaret environment also created room for sexual minorities to express themselves in a relatively freer way. Many gay and lesbian-targeted establishments opened and survived during those years, even though sexual intercourse between males was criminalized. Cross-dressing—a matter of performance as well as costume—gave both men and women a platform on which to play with sexual identity.

Berlin has a long and substantial history of queer culture. It was considered, from 1920s until the rise of the Nazi party, to be the gay capital of the European continent. Berlin's status as a site of prominent cultural production was at odds with formal law; homosexuality was illegal in Germany from 1871 all the way until 1994 under the *Strafgesetzbuch*, or German penal code. The liberal attitudes in Berlin were partially the result of advocacy pioneered by Magnus Hirschfeld. Hirschfeld was a German physician who advocated for gay and transgender rights decades before the timeline of Cabaret, and his work and revolutionized German thought about homosexuality. Hirschfeld coined the term “transsexualism”—while terminology has since evolved, it was an important beginning to the discussion of gender nonconformity and medical gender transition—and some of the institute staff were themselves transgender. The institute offered endocrinological and surgical services, including the first modern sexual reassignment surgeries. Hirschfeld also strongly advocated against the arrest of crossdressers, especially those involved in sex work. Documentation of much of Hirschfeld's would be destroyed in Nazi book burnings, which included the Institute archives.

Outside of cabarets, there was also a sizeable gay literary culture. The 1920s and early 1930s, there were at least 25 different gay German periodicals. These publications were sold alongside other standard papers. They provided community news, listed events, and even listed personal advertisements.

III. Literary Versions

The Novel(s)

Christopher Isherwood began writing of his time in Berlin from the 1920's to the 1930's with a fragmented grouping of stories that were to be called *The Lost*. The compilation became too immense, and he re-thought the process of his storytelling. Some pieces of *The Lost* were salvaged, such as the adventures of Mr. Norris and *Goodbye to Berlin*. Isherwood's stories propagated further work by authors John Van Druten and Joe Masteroff. Isherwood first published *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* and then put together the book entitled *Goodbye to Berlin*. From there, he expanded his work into the *Berlin Stories* (1945) which would be noticed and adapted into the play and then musical.

Goodbye to Berlin was published in 1945 by Christopher Isherwood and made up a majority of stories in *Berlin Stories*. In the introduction, Frank Withford wrote of Isherwood's position as disinterested observer, a camera that merely recorded events. The question could be raised as to how a person so distant from the emotion of the time could write so passionately and so frequently about such involved situations and relationships. Nevertheless, Isherwood writes of Berlin... "a city of self-indulgent pleasure where anyone rich enough can satisfy his most extravagant sexual needs, where dancing between men is permitted and where the bars never close." It was important to Isherwood that the readers be aware that this book was not by any means wholly autobiographical. "Christopher Isherwood' is a convenient ventriloquist's dummy, nothing more."

The contents of this book are quite involved, yet they seem very disjointed. The book is written in a linear fashion. The central character, Christopher Isherwood, remains present throughout; however, each chapter involves different characters whom the reader falsely expects will eventually relate back to one another. *Goodbye to Berlin* consists of six chapters: A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930), Sally Bowles, On Reugen Island (Summer 1931), The Nowaks, The Landauers, and A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3). About half of this book will be central to the later writings of Van Druten. A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930), Sally Bowles, and A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3) are most significant in later adaptations.

The first chapter, A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930), introduces the author, Christopher Isherwood, as he writes in first person:

I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair.

Someday, all of this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed. (p. 15)

This is the set-up for the main character as he encounters numerous people who greatly affect his life. Fraulein Schroeder is the first person we meet, Christopher's fortunetelling landlady, who refers to him affectionately as "Herr Issyvoo." She is a woman of strong convictions. At age fifty-five, she has run the gamut of financial stability. Years before, she housed the wealthy and lived in extreme comfort. Now she finds herself mopping her own floors, desperately clinging to tenants, and sleeping in the living room because she gave up her personal space to needy tenants. Schroeder is a strong woman. She remembers the beauty of the past, but is surviving the strife of the present with her chin up. She has had only one true man in her life. He died of pneumonia years back, and now she loves vicariously through the lives of her boarders. Fraulein Kost is a lodger who supports herself by way of prostitution. She is a large, sexy woman who means harm to no one. Schroeder truly likes Kost but disapproves of her line of work. Other tenants are written of, but none carry through to the future stories.

In the second chapter, Sally Bowles, we meet Fritz Wendel, a relatively wealthy German who fancies himself smooth with the ladies. Fritz plays a minor part in this story. He introduces Chris to this chapter's leading lady, Sally Bowles. Sally is the focus of Chris's most prominent relationship in the story. Sally is an extravagant woman, a cabaret dancer with a passion for fame and fortune. She lives off any money laid before her but has a strange innocence that draws people toward her. Sally appears to care little for what others think or feel. As Chris watches her dance he notes: "She sang badly, without any expression, her hands hanging down at her sides yet her performance was, in its own way, effective because of her startling appearance and her air of not caring a curse what other people thought of her." Her appearance and sense of self-worth is primary to her relationship with Chris.

Sally and Chris's relationship is a roller coaster of events. She is attracted to Chris's genuine sensitivity, and eventually comes to live at Fraulein Schroeder's. Sally, quite an actress at heart, lies about her background and professes to be an old prostitute. A rich American named Clive swings into and out of Sally and Chris's lives, spoiling them with gifts and wild nights, in order to fulfill his own odd pleasures. Adding to the pleasure and pain of their lives, Sally becomes pregnant after a brief fling with a man called Klaus. After a mutual decision between Sally and Chris to abort the unborn child, Chris goes to the Baltic to continue his writing career. Chris and Sally part ways for several months. Upon his return, he and Sally have a very distant relationship. The relationship they share throughout the story is unusual. Although they feel deeply and passionately for one another, their relationship remains Platonic. For this promiscuous woman and this emotionally needy artist to go without sexual relations for months on end seems quite unusual. Chris's sexual orientation is not discussed in this section; however, questions of his preference naturally occur to the reader. This is the final chapter in which Sally and Chris interact.

The final chapter, A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3), gives a brief wrap-up and relocation of previously mentioned characters. In this chapter, the question of Chris's sexuality is finally broached. An American boy at a nightclub asks him if he is "queer." His reply is flat and direct, "Yes, very queer indeed." The response may be interpreted as sarcastic, or as a final release of truth; it is left up to the reader. Most importantly, this chapter looks at the severe political changes occurring in Berlin. Riots are common in the streets, and the Nazis talk of wanting to see "blood flow." Hitler's soldiers are beating and humiliating anyone not involved with the Nazi Party. Through his open-shuttered eyes, Chris observes and reports on the changes in Berlin.

The Play

I Am a Camera was a playscript adaptation from John Van Druten of *Berlin Stories*, published in 1951, that adapts the latter portion of *Berlin Stories* into a cohesive dialogue of Christopher Isherwood's discoveries and experiences in, Berlin. Transformation into script form altered the pace of his stories. Meaning was not necessarily lost, but the details were blurred. The play contains character and situational adaptations from Isherwood's stories. *I Am a Camera* begins with Chris entering a passage for his book. We are introduced to Fraulein Schneider, previously known as the character Fraulein Schroeder. She retains her personality and background from the original story but decreases in importance to the everyday function of Chris's life. Toward the end of the play, Chris becomes disgusted with her anti-Semitism and ends their friendship. The audience no longer hears from Fraulein Schneider. Fritz Wendel is a character in the play, already acquainted with Chris, who falls madly in love with a wealthy Jewish woman, Natalia Landauer. She comes from the family written about in the chapter

entitled *The Landauers from Goodbye to Berlin*. Their relationship is rough, a Jewish and German combination, until Fritz admits his true Jewish origins and marries Natalia. Sally Bowles is once again a central character in Chris's life. Unfortunately, we receive no background of their relationship.

Sally is the same girl we knew in *Goodbye to Berlin*. In this play, Chris gives a description of her: "I wonder how old she is. Her face is young, but her hands look terribly old. And they were dirty, too. Dirty as a little girl's hands. Sally's hands were like the old hands of a dirty little girl." Sally endures both old and new experiences. Again, Klaus impregnates her, and Clive beguiles her with talk of a vacation around the world. Sally and Chris quarrel, as best friends do, until she convinces him to feign a proposed marriage to her to please her mother. Sally's mother is a new character in the chain of stories, but her presence ends with *I Am a Camera*. Sally and Chris never marry, but they do evaluate the lives they are leading. In pursuit of his writing career, Chris returns to his home in England, and Sally takes off to the Riviera with a man who promises her a film career. As the play ends, Sally and Chris say goodbye, yet part as close friends. We are left with hope for Chris's future, and we expect Sally to continue in her erratic way of living.

This adaptation holds the truth of personal relationships in the dialogue yet does not commit to the political ugliness exploited in *Goodbye to Berlin*. The basic purpose of *I Am a Camera* is to illustrate personal interaction in a time of moral strife.

The Musical

Cabaret is the musical adaptation by Joe Masteroff, John Kander, and Fred Ebb of John Van Druten's *I Am a Camera*. This musical takes a great leap by augmenting the importance of the nightclub in which Sally Bowles performs. In earlier works, the club is referred to, but never seen. Masteroff took the nightclub, the Kit Kat Klub, and used it as the primary illustration of moral and social decadence in Berlin.

This play begins on New Year's Eve of 1929, and it takes us into the early 1930's. Sally Bowles's attitudes and way of life remain constant from previous writings, but the character formerly known as Christopher Isherwood is now called Clifford Bradshaw (the name Bradshaw coming from *The Last of Mr. Norris*). He is now portrayed as an American seduced by the charm of Fraulein Sally Bowles. Character relationships are made clear in this musical. Cliff meets Ernst Ludwig on a train in the opening scene. Ernst has taken the place of the former character, Fritz Wendel. Although there are no references that indicate he is Jewish like Fritz Wendel, it becomes clear that Ernst is smuggling money and information for the Nazi Party. The subplot of the difficult relationship between Fritz Wendel and Natalia has been replaced in Cabaret. Natalia is no longer a character at all. She has been replaced by a Jewish-fruit shop owner named Herr Schultz. Schultz falls madly in love with Fraulein Schneider, the German landlady of Cliff's dwelling. This subplot introduces the personal strife caused by the rise of the Nazi Party. Their love is torn apart by politics, and we are left wondering why love cannot conquer all.

The character relationships and background are clearly defined in Cabaret. The relationship that develops between Sally and Cliff is quite different from before. For the first time, they become sexually involved with each other, leaving no question of Cliff's sexual orientation. Cliff is the one who impregnates Sally in this play, and he is no longer the one she runs to for help. Sally aborts the unborn child just as Cliff is warming up to the idea of a family. At the beginning of the play, Cliff and Sally are completely enchanted with one another. By the end, they acquire a solid distaste for each other's lifestyles. The Kit Kat Klub, ever present in this

tale, is the haven for the morally destitute. It is an escape. Interestingly, the inhabitants of the bar range from middle-class Germans and Jews to basement-life transvestites, all the way down to the Nazi soldiers. It is not a place that people go in order to escape the Nazis; rather it is an escape from social and economic decline. The Kit Kat Klub is a place to...“Leave your troubles outside!” Unfortunately, Cliff discovers, through his political encounters in the club, that not all his troubles may be left outside. The Master of Ceremonies is a beautiful addition to this story. This androgynous character is the host for all performances in the Kit Kat Klub. He is slick, sleazy, and captivating. He has actually taken over part of Christopher Isherwood's old character as the narrator. The Emcee never speaks, but he sings and dances his way through the characters' life stories. He belies the notion that the outside world will never intrude the club. Such notions are present in the songs “My Eyes” and “Sitting Pretty.” By the end of *Cabaret*, the Emcee's attempts at humorous entertainment are overshadowed. His twisted, comical views on life are squelched by reality. We are left with no hope for the future lives of those characters which we have come to know and love throughout the play. Hitler's politics and the impending doom of the concentration camps loom in the air.

IV. Insights into the Musical Script

Characters

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (EMCEE): He is the master of ceremonies at the Kit Kat Klub. He also comments on the action of the play and acts as the audience's guide into the world of the show.

SALLY BOWLES: Sally is an English-born singer living in Berlin. Her lifestyle and attitude is that of the liberated woman coming out of the 1920s. The "New Woman" of this era drank, smoke cigarettes, spoke of sex with a new frankness, sought companionship and romantic love, and lived to enjoy their lives. In the beginning of the play, Sally lives lavishly, naïve to the political turmoil around her. She reaches the state of an enlightened, more politically-conscious woman towards the end of the show when she sings "Cabaret." During the song, her expressions, voice, and physicality change as she becomes both aware and cynical about the new world. The name "Sally" is a Hebrew name meaning "princess." "Bowles" is a Norman surname meaning "enclosure."

CLIFFORD BRADSHAW: Cliff is a novelist from Pennsylvania searching for something to write about. His travels have taken him all over Europe and he has finally arrived in Berlin. Little does Cliff know; he will find much more than he bargained for.

ERNST LUDWIG: Ernst is a friendly, helpful person... at first. His pleasantness helps Cliff find a place to stay, as well as provide him with some income to live. However, Ernst is a smuggler and has a dark side to him that is not revealed in the beginning.

FRAULEIN SCHNEIDER: Fraulein Schneider is the owner of the rooming house that Cliff stays at. While she is very traditional, she realizes that she is getting old and that, in the long run, small things don't always matter. The word "schneider" is an occupational name for a tailor, literally "cutter," from Middle High German "snider."

FRAULEIN KOST: "Kost" is a German, Ashkenazic Jewish family name. She is a prostitute living in Fraulein Schneider's rooming house. She tries to fool Fraulein Schneider about her business daily and tends to get away with it. Fraulein Kost is similar to Ernst Ludwig—she seems pleasant, despite her actions; however, we see a different side of her later on in the story.

RUDOLF SCHULTZ: Herr Schultz also lives in the rooming house that Fraulein Schneider owns. He is a Jewish fruit store owner and woos Fraulein Schneider with exotic fruit. Despite the rise of the Nazis, he does not feel endangered and continues his life without worry.

KIT KAT CLUB GIRLS: Includes Rosie (Latin name, meaning Rose), LuLu (Latin feminine form of Louis: Famous warrior), Frenchie (Frenchy or Frenchie is often a derogatory term for someone from France), Texas (based on the Caddo Native tribe word "taysha" meaning friends or allies), Fritzie (German, meaning "peaceful ruler"), and Helga (Indo-European, especially German, meaning "holy" or "blessed").

KIT KAT CLUB BOYS: Includes Bobby (German, meaning famed, bright; shining), Victor (Latin, meaning “victor, conqueror”), Hans (German, meaning “gift from God” or “God is gracious”), and Herman (Germanic derivation, meaning “army man,” from the older name Hariman)

MAX: He is the owner of the Kit Kat Club.

Glossary and Translations

*Script page numbers and language included in parentheses

Willkommen (1) (German) Welcome

Bienvenue (1) (French) Welcome

Fremde (1) (German) Foreigner

Etranger (1) (French) Foreigner

Glücklich zu sehen (1) (German) Happy to see

Je suis enchanté (1) (French) I am delighted

Bleibe (1) (German) Would remain

Reste (1) (French) rest

Meine Damen und Herren (1) (German) Ladies and gentlemen

Mesdames and messieurs (1) (French) Ladies and gentlemen

Guten abend (1) (German) Good evening

Bon soir (1) (French) Good evening

Wie geht's (1) (German) How are you

Comment ca va? (1) (French) How are you

Ich bin euer confrencier (1) (German) I am your emcee

Je suis votre compere (1) (French) I am your emcee

Und sagen (1) (German) And say

Wir Sagen (2) (German) We say

Toast (2) A lady who is named as the person to whom a company is requested to drink; often one who is the reigning belle of the season. The practice of drinking a toast goes back to the late 17th century, and it originated in naming a lady whose health the company was requested to drink to—the idea being that the lady's name flavored the drink like the pieces of spiced toast that were formerly placed in drinks such as wine.

Mayfair (2) A fashionable district in the West End of London, England. It was named after an annual fair held in the district between 1686-1764. It has remained a very affluent area, even through the 1930s and the Great Depression. In fact, when British Monopoly gameboards were being made for the first time in the 1930s, Mayfair was Mayfair is the most expensive property on the standard British Monopoly board at £400

Fraulein (2) (German) a title or form of address for an unmarried German-speaking woman, especially a young woman.

Besetzt (4) (German) Occupied

Nein (4) (German) No

Sind die frei (4) (German) are these seats occupied?

Ja...bitte (4) (German) Yes...please

Yankee Doodle (4) The fictional character which the American patriotic song of the same name is about. "Yankee Doodle" dates back to the American Revolution.

Germany (4) A sovereign state in central-Western Europe. Reformed from a monarchy into a parliamentary republic (Weimar Republic) in 1919, following WWI.

Berlin (4) The capital and largest city of Germany. Berlin also contained the largest Jewish population in Germany (around 160,000 in 1925), though they still only made up roughly 4% of the city's population of 4 million. The population today is around 3.6 million.

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (4) The capital city of Pennsylvania, with a population of around 80,000 in the 1930s. During the Depression, industrial production in Pennsylvania fell by 50

percent, 270,000 manufacturing jobs were lost, and they suffered from inadequate housing. By 1932, Pennsylvania was burdened with caring for the largest number of families seeking relief in the country, 324,000 of them, compared to 312,000 in New York and 234,000 in Illinois.

German border (4) Germany shares borders with nine European countries: Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Austria, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

Ja (4) (German) Yes

Touring (4) Vacationing, sight-seeing throughout Europe

Deutsche Grenzkontrolle. Ihre passe bitte (5) (German) German border control. Your passport please.

Sie waren geschäftlich (5) (German) They were on business

Auf einer urlaubsreise (5) (German) on a vacation/ trip

Bitte öffnen sie ihren koffer (5) (German) Please open your suitcase

Haben sie nur diesen koffer (5) (German) Do you have only this suitcase?

Das ist alles (6) (German) That's all

Baubles (6) a small, showy trinket or decoration.

Silk stockings (6) Thigh-high socks, used in lieu of full pantyhose



Marks (8) The Reichsmark was the official currency of West Germany from 1924 until 1948. The conversion rate in 1931 was approximately 4.23 Reichsmark to 1 US Dollar.

Nollendorfplatz (8) a square in the central Schöneberg district of Berlin, Germany.

Nollendorfplatz has a long history of being a gay area and annually hosts the Lesbian and Gay City Festival. The village has a memorial that commemorates the persecution of homosexuals during the Holocaust.

U-Bahn Station (9) The Berlin U-Bahn, short for *Untergrundbahn*, (“underground railway”) is a rapid transit railway in Berlin, the capital city of Germany, and a major part of the city’s public transport system. The U-Bahn serves 173 stations, one of which lies in Nollendorfplatz.



The U-Bahn Station in Nollendorfplatz. Today, the architecture of this building remains much the same as it looks in this old photograph.

Metro/Subway (9) The high-capacity public transport system found in New York City. The New York City Subway is one of the world’s oldest public transit systems, one of the world’s

most used metro systems, and the metro system with the most stations, with 472 stations in operation. It offers service 24 hours per day on every day of the year.



The New York City Subway in Manhattan

Chamber Pot (9) a bowl kept in a bedroom and used as a toilet, especially at night.

Dumpy (10) (of a person) short and stout.

Churchyard plot (10) a grave; a place where the remains of dead people are buried or otherwise interred.

Uncorseted (10) not wearing a corset; not controlled or inhibited.

Hamburg (12) the second-largest city of Germany with a population of roughly 1.8 million people today, and just over one million people in 1930.

Proprietor (12) the owner of a business, or a holder of property.

Italian oranges (12) Italy is not one of the world's leading exporters of oranges, but is accredited with many varieties of the modern, common orange, including the Belladonna, Biondo Comune, Biondo Riccio, and the Calebrese.



An Italian Orange Grove

Schnapps (13) While schnapps is traditionally defined as a strong alcoholic drink resembling gin and often flavored with fruit, the German term *Schnaps* refers to any kind of strong alcoholic drink. The main kinds of fruit used for German schnapps are apples, pears, plums, cherries, and apricots.

Hot-water bottle (13) A bottle filled with hot water and sealed with a stopper, used to provide warmth, typically while in bed, but also for the application of heat to a specific part of the body.



Mazel (13) as in “Mazel Tov;” a Jewish phrase used to express congratulations for a happy and significant occasion or event. The phrase is of Yiddish origin, as Schultz explains.

Yiddish (13) the historical language of the Ashkenazi Jews. Yiddish is a German dialect which uses the Hebrew alphabet and many Hebrew words but with a very distinctive Ashkenazic pronunciation. It developed as a fusion of German dialects with Hebrew, Aramaic, and Slavic languages. Prior to the Holocaust, there were 11-13 million speakers of Yiddish among 17

million Jews worldwide. 85% of the approximately 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust were Yiddish speakers, leading to a massive decline in the use of the language.

Remington (13) E. Remington and Sons was a manufacturer of firearms and typewriters and became known for manufacturing the first commercial typewriter.



Convent (15) a Christian community under monastic vows, especially one of nuns.

Indiscretion (15) behavior or speech that has too great a readiness to reveal things that should remain secret or private; displays a lack of good judgment.

Patater (16) A colloquialism for potato, as in “sweet potato;” a clever way to make potato rhyme with the following line, which ends in “mater.”

Mater (16) Mother

Chums (16) a close friend.

Lady chaperone (16) in its original social usage, a person who for propriety’s sake accompanied an unmarried girl in public: usually she was an older married woman, and most commonly the girl’s own mother. In modern social usage, a chaperone is a responsible adult who accompanies and supervises young people.

Antwerp (16) a city in Belgium, and is the capital of *Antwerp* province in Flanders. With a population of 520,504, it is the most populous city proper in Belgium.

“Somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright. A band is playing somewhere and somewhere hearts are light. And somewhere men are laughing and somewhere children shout. But there is no joy in Mudville, might Casey has struck out!” (18) An excerpt from the poem “Casey at the Bat” by Ernest Lawrence Thayer. Find the whole poem [here](#).

Tart (20) A female of immoral character; a prostitute. Sally is implying here that Max is moving on from one prostitute to the next as the new year rolls around. Popular usage of the word in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Seedy (20) sordid and disreputable.

Dive (20) a shabby or sleazy bar or similar establishment

Allure (20) the quality of being powerfully and mysteriously attractive or fascinating.

Union (20) an organized association of workers formed to protect and further their rights and interests; a labor union.

Communists (20) people who support or believe in the principles of communism. *More on communism in historical background.*

Gin (21) a liquor which derives its predominant flavor from juniper berries. Gin is one of the broadest categories of spirits, all of various origins, styles, and flavor profiles that revolve around juniper as a common ingredient.

Whim (21) a sudden desire or change of mind, especially one that is unusual or unexplained.

Swine (22) a person regarded by the speaker with contempt and disgust, with reference to the dirtiness of pigs.

London (22) the capital and most populous city of England and the United Kingdom. It had a population of 8,110,358 in 1931 and 8,961,989 today. London has long been a leading global city in the arts, commerce, education, entertainment, fashion, finance, healthcare, media, professional services, research and development, tourism and transportation.

Stratford-on-Avon (22) a market town and civil parish in the Stratford-on-Avon District in the county of Warwickshire, England, 91 miles northwest of London. The population is around 28,000.

Stonehenge (23) a prehistoric monument in Wiltshire, England. It consists of a ring of standing stones, with each standing stone around 13 feet high, 7 feet wide and weighing around 25 tons. Stonehenge is not a town or a residential area, so no one lives there.

Paris (23) the capital and most populous city of France, with a population of 2,891,020 in 1931 and 2,206,488 today. Paris is a global center for art, fashion, gastronomy, and culture.

Mudville (23) a fictional town mentioned in the poem “Casey at the Bat.” Contrary to what Cliff tells Sally, Mudville does not exist.

Mein lieber herr (24) (German) My dear sir

Knit your brow (24) to frown, or to move your eyebrows down and together, because you are thinking carefully, or because you are angry or worried.

The continent of Europe (25) Europe is a continent located entirely in the Northern Hemisphere and mostly in the Eastern Hemisphere. It is bordered by the Arctic Ocean to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. It comprises the westernmost part of Eurasia and is 1,339 miles horizontally and 2,076 miles vertically.



Auf wiedersehen (25) (German) Goodbye

Is war sehr gut, mein herr und vorbel (25) (German) it was good, but now it's over

Du kennst mich wohl (25) (German) You know me

Ach, lebel wohl (25) (German) Oh, goodbye

Du sollst mich nic mehr sehen mein herr (25) (German) You shall not see me anymore, my dear sir

Gary Cooper (27) a British-American film actor known for his authentic and understated acting style and screen performance. He was a major movie star from the end of the silent film era through to the end of the golden age of Classical Hollywood, between 1925 and 1961.



Snappy operator (29) A person who makes quick, concise decisions; Ernst is implying here that Cliff was quick to snatch up Sally, after only having met her the previous night.

Prairie Oyster (31) a drink consisting of a raw egg, Worcestershire sauce, tomato juice, vinegar, hot sauce, salt and ground black pepper. The egg is broken into a glass so as not to break the yolk, which causes the drink to bear a similarity to the texture of an actual oyster. The drink is generally used as a hangover cure.



Worcestershire Sauce (32) a fermented liquid condiment of complex mixture originally created in England. The term “Worcestershire” is usually used generically, but the original recipe included anchovies layered in brine, tamarinds in molasses, garlic in vinegar, chilies, cloves, shallots, and sugar.

Hals and beinbruch (33) (German) “Break a leg!” Literally: neck and leg fracture.

Mein Kampf (33) a 1925 autobiographical book by Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler. The work describes the process by which Hitler became antisemitic and outlines his political ideology and future plans for Germany. “Mein Kampf” translates to “my fight.”

Dostoevski (33) as of Fyodor Dostoevsky, was a Russian novelist, short story writer, essayist, journalist and philosopher. Dostoevsky’s literary works explore human psychology in the troubled political, social, and spiritual atmospheres of 19th-century Russia, and engage with a variety of realistic philosophical and religious themes.



“Haven’t the foggiest” (34) To have no knowledge or understanding about something.

Guten tag. Ich kaiser Penny und ich bien Englanderren (34) (German) Good day. I’m Emperor Penny and I’m from England.

Groschen (47) the colloquial word for the German ten-pfennig piece (currency coin), not to be confused with the currency of the Holy Roman Empire or 20th-century Austria.



Stag (48) a male deer

Linden (48) Also called *Tilia*, a genus of about 30 species of trees, or bushes, native throughout most of the temperate Northern Hemisphere. *Tilia* species are mostly large, deciduous trees, reaching typically 65 to 130 ft tall.



An American Linden Tree, or Tilia Americana.

Rhine (48) a European river that begins in the southeastern Swiss Alps, flows through the German Rhineland and the Netherlands and eventually empties into the North Sea. The Rhine has been a vital and navigable waterway carrying trade and goods deep inland since the days of the Holy Roman Empire. In the modern era, it has become a symbol of German nationalism. Scandinavian and German mythology tell of a hoard of gold found within the river. Richard Wagner's opera, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, is set at the Rhine, and features three "Rhinemaidens" who protect said gold. Every Saturday, amateur treasure seekers come to the Rhine to pan for gold, hoping that the stories are true.



Affably (49) friendly, pleasant, and easy to talk to

The Adlon (49) Hotel Adlon Kempinski Berlin is a luxury hotel in Berlin, Germany. The legendary original Hotel Adlon was one of the most famous hotels in Europe. It opened in 1907 and was largely destroyed in 1945 in the closing days of World War II. The current hotel, which opened on August 23, 1997, is a new building with a design inspired by the original.



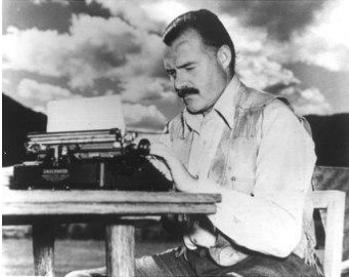
Hotel Adlon, before and after WWII.

Tawdry (50) showy but cheap and of poor quality.

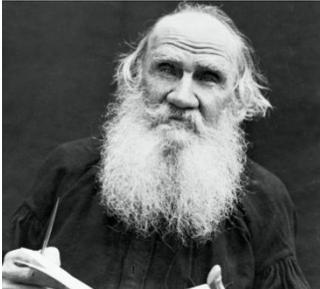
Ravishing (50) delightful; entrancing.

Sublimely (50) of such excellence, grandeur, or beauty as to inspire great admiration or awe.

Hemingway (51) Ernest Hemingway was an American novelist, short story writer, and journalist. His economical and understated style had a strong influence on 20th century fiction, while his adventurous lifestyle brought him admiration from later generations.



Tolstoy (51) As in Leo, or Lyov Tolstoy, was a Russian writer who is regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time. he is best known for the novels *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877), often cited as pinnacles of realist fiction. He also wrote short stories, novellas, plays, and numerous philosophical essays.



Proust (51) Valentin Louis Georges Eugène Marcel Proust, known as Marcel Proust, was a French novelist, critic, and essayist best known for his novel *In Search of Lost Time*. He is considered by critics/writers to be one of the most influential authors of the 20th century.



Oriental (53) the Orient is the *East*, traditionally comprising anything that belongs to the Eastern world, in relation to Europe. The term Oriental is sometimes used to describe people or objects from the Orient.

Taciturn (53) (of a person) reserved or uncommunicative in speech; saying little.

Prosit (56) an expression used as a toast when drinking to a person's health.

Yen (57) the official currency of Japan. As of right now, 1 Yen is equal to 0.0086 USD. In 1931, 1 Yen equaled 0.488 USD.

Pound (57) A unit of currency used in UK and many Middle Eastern countries. In 2022, 1 Pound Sterling= 1.35 USD, but in 1931, 1 Pound= 4.55 USD.

Escapade (57) an act or incident involving excitement, daring, or adventure.

Fourteen carat yacht (57) This lyric seems to be emphasizing luxury and expense only for the sake of the song, because there is no such thing as a "14 carat yacht." Firstly, "karat" is misspelled- "carat" refers to the weight of gemstones and can only range from .5 to 2.5. "Karat," on the other hand, refers to the the fineness of a precious metal object such as gold; 14 karat gold is of 58.5% purity, and while not the purest of golds, is still an impressive measure. Yachts, however, are not made of gold, nor are they made of diamonds, but they are luxurious watercrafts notorious for their use for leisurely activities.

Heartburn (61) a burning pain in your chest. The pain is often worse after eating, in the evening, or when lying down or bending over. Occasional heartburn is common and no cause for alarm. Heartburn occurs when stomach acid backs up into the esophagus that carries food from your mouth to your stomach.

Spinster (61) an unmarried woman, typically an older woman beyond the usual age for marriage. Popular usage from the 1700s through the early 1900s.

Palpitations (62) a noticeably rapid, strong, or irregular heartbeat due to agitation, exertion, or illness.

O Wie Wunderbar (63) (German) Oh, how wonderful

Nichts ist so wie-es war (63) (German) Nothing is as it was

Durch ein wiensig-es wort (63) (German) By a tiny word

Heirat (63) (German) Marriage

Auf dem Erd-Ge-Schost (63) (German) From/still on the first floor

Durch ein marchen schloss (63) (German) Through a fairytale castle

Mit ein wiensig-es-wort (63) (German) With a tiny word

Und das grau in grau (63) (German) And the gray in gray

Wird auf ein mal blau (63) (German) Turns blue all of a sudden

Wie noch kein blau jemals war (63) (German) How no blue ever was

Und dann steht man da (63) (German) And then you stand there

Sagt beseligt ja (63) (German) Says a blessed yes

Heut wird mein traum nicht so grau in grau (63) (German) Today, my dream is not so gray in gray

Heut nacht mein traum jemals war (64) (German) Tonight my dream was ever

Mortally ill (65) extremely sick, unlikely to live longer than a few months more.

Cut-Crystal (66) Lead glass, commonly called crystal, is a variety of glass in which lead replaces the calcium content of a typical potash glass.



Entr'acte (66) an interval between two acts of a play or opera.

Goose-stepping (72) a special marching step performed on formal military parades and other ceremonies. While marching in parade formation, troops swing their legs in unison off the ground while keeping each leg straight and unbent. The step originated in Prussian military drill in the mid-18th century and is now used by the militaries of over seventy countries, is nowadays heavily associated with Nazi Germany. Watch [this video](#) to see Nazis marching with the goose step in 1938.

Heil Hitler (72) The Nazi salute, or Hitler salute is a gesture that was used as a greeting in Nazi Germany. The salute is performed by extending the right arm from the neck into the air with a straightened hand. Usually, the person offering the salute would say “*Heil Hitler!*” (Hail Hitler!), “*Heil, mein Führer!*” (Hail, my leader!), or “*Sieg Heil!*” (Hail victory!). It was adopted in the 1930s by the Nazi Party to signal obedience to the party’s leader, Adolf Hitler, and to glorify the German nation (and later the German war effort). The salute was mandatory for civilians but was mostly optional for military personnel who retained the traditional military salute until shortly after the failed assassination attempt on Hitler in 1944. Use of this salute is outlawed in modern Germany, and it is also considered a criminal offense in modern Poland, Slovakia, and Austria. In many other countries, the salute constitutes illegal hate speech if used for propagating Nazi ideology.



Sneer (76) smile or speak in a contemptuous or mocking manner.

Ein bischen verstandnis (77) (German) a little bit of understanding

Leben and leben lassen (77) (German) live and let live

Inflation (81) In economics, inflation is a sustained increase in the price level of goods and services in an economy over a period of time. As currency gradually loses value, it becomes more and more expensive to purchase the same goods and services.

Cable (82) contact or send a message to (someone) by cablegram, which is a telegraph sent via cable.

Steamship (82) a type of steam powered vessel, typically ocean-faring and seaworthy, that is propelled by one or more steam engines.



Steamship fare (82) The cost of a ticket aboard the steamship. It's difficult to determine the fare of such a trip based on Cliff's quick reference, but my educated guess would be that an overseas journey such as this one would cost about \$160 back in 1931, so around \$2,500 today.

Waltz (84) a ballroom and folk dance, normally in triple time, performed primarily in closed position.

The Stock Market (84) the aggregation of buyers and sellers of stocks, which represent ownership claims on businesses.

Prophet (87) an individual regarded as being in contact with a divine being and said to speak on that entity's behalf, serving as an intermediary with humanity by delivering messages or teachings from the supernatural source to other people.

Sordid (87) involving ignoble actions and motives; arousing moral distaste and contempt.

Chelsea (87) an affluent area of South West London.

Blushing flower (87) An innocent young woman, similar to the phrase "blushing bride." In this lyric, Sally is likely implying that Elsie was a prostitute, or at the very least not naive or virginal.

Snicker (87) give a smothered or half-suppressed laugh.

American Express Office (91) The American Express Company, also known as Amex, is an American multinational financial services corporation headquartered in Three World Financial Center in New York City. The company is best known for its charge card, credit card, and traveler's cheque businesses.

Lezte ansage (83) (German) Last announcement

Berlin- Paris Express abfahrt vier uhr bahnsiege siebzehn (83) Berlin-Paris Express, departure four o'clock, platform seventeen

All einsteigen, bitte (83) (German) All aboard!

A beintot (93) (French) Goodbye

V. Notable Productions

1966 Original Production

Cabaret, directed by Harold Prince in association with Ruth Mitchell, premiered on Broadway at the Broadhurst Theatre on November 20, 1966. It played for 1,165 performances at the Broadhurst, Imperial, and Broadway Theatres before closing in 1969. In the 1967 award season, it won 8 Tony Awards for Musical, Composer and Lyricist, Director, Choreographer, Scenic Design, Costume Design, Featured Actor and Featured Actress, the Outer Critics Circle Award for Production, and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical. After its massive critical success, Cabaret took a national tour around the United States (1967-1968).

In response to Cabaret's opening, one reviewer said, "Am I pleased? That is an understatement. I am very happy about it." The performances were admired for their energy and truthfulness. From the "weathered beauties" of the kick line that exuded elegance and eroticism to Joel Grey's splendid depiction of the Emcee as a "perverse Puck," characterization was at its finest. Grey's performance was noted: "The entire mood of Cabaret is set, never to be broken, by the gifted performer." Lotte Lenya, as Fraulein Schneider, was recognized for her "incomparable authenticity." Many people admired Cabaret for its raw statements and outlook on life and society. "What is most satisfying — is its basically unromantic posture, its decision not to present its world as the best of all possible ones." Cabaret debuted at a perfect time for audience appeal. America was involved in the Vietnam war, and society was crying out for political understanding. This musical, depicting life in Berlin during the rise of Hitler, touched the hearts of people feeling the political unrest of their own country. Although the play was based in Germany, Americans were still able to identify with the political turmoil and find sympathy for the characters. They felt comfortable watching the show because it did not hit "quite so close to home." Cabaret first looked at a country and its political situation as a whole. It then took the individuals within and made them important to us. For example, political environment is the dominant factor in the play, but in the song "Tomorrow Belongs to Me," we witness each character's personal connection with the words. "Cabaret has brilliantly depicted one pathological symptom of a national sickness whose cure turned out to be worse than the disease."

Some reviewers didn't care for the musical. They were disappointed that the message of the play was lost in the music and dance. Rather than enhancing the plot, the songs tended to distort the messages. The people were lost. The music itself was condemned for needing more "melodic guts." Cabaret has a much more commercial feeling than Isherwood or Van Druten's stories. Many people seemed disappointed with this fact. Audiences flocked to see the production, but many left feeling deprived of the heart of the story. "Cabaret is a whale of a production and a minnow of a show. It is a musical built on the oozing decadence of 1930 Berlin, and itself a form of decadence, a victory of surface over substance." The creators of Cabaret abandoned the depth of the characters and expected the skeleton of the play to hold form. To the dismay of many, most of the meat was stripped away from this skeleton and replaced with song and dance.

1972 Film

For director and choreographer Bob Fosse's 1972 movie adaptation, he encouraged writers Jay Allen and Hugh Wheeler to go back to Isherwood's original stories, and they ended up with a screenplay that resembled the source material more than Masteroff's stage book.

Isherwood's real-life homosexuality was incorporated into the character modeled on him (Brian, changed from Cliff in the stage adaptation), who became bisexual. Fosse also departed from the stage version by deleting all but one of the non-diegetic songs taking place outside of the Kit Kat Klub, like 'Perfectly Marvelous' and 'So What?' He then added three new Kander and Ebb songs, "Mein Herr," "Money," and "Maybe This Time." The movie was a huge success both financially and with critics. It won eight 1973 Academy Awards, including best director for Bob Fosse, best actress for Liza Minnelli, and best supporting actor for Joel Grey, making him one of only eight actors to win Tony and Oscar Awards for playing the same role.

Notable Revivals

The musical was revived for Broadway in 1987. It played for 261 performances at the Imperial and Minskoff Theatres, and again in 1998 at Studio 54, where it played for 2,377 performances. In the second revival in 1998, *Cabaret* won 4 Tony Awards for Revival, Actor, Actress, and Featured Actor, 3 Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Revival, Actor and Actress, and 3 Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Revival, Actor and Actress. The most recent Broadway production was in 2014 at Studio 54.

Each context of revivals effected and changed how the musical was received. For instance, the themes that played well to American audiences in 1966 hit differently in the 1987 revival. Reviews of the 1966 production of *Cabaret* praised its efforts in reflection of the times. Unfortunately, when the show was revived in 1987 at the Imperial on Broadway, audiences questioned the content. One critic said, "Cabaret manages to be both a show biz musical and about a larger world than that defined by the footlights." The political situation of late-eighties America was vastly different from that of the mid-sixties. Audiences of the revival noticed the individual relationships and the focus on gender stereotypes much more than before. The political environment remained important, but as the crowds of the anxious eighties watched, they saw the individuals, and battled with them. While the critics raved about the production accomplishments of *Cabaret's* designers, actors, and director, they struggled with the "self-reflexive" content of the "diffusion of feminist principles." The eighties saw the rise of a self-centered, defensive population that focused their lives on "me" rather than "we." This was not the ideal state of mind to receive a play about community and universal need.

VI. Appendices

(FORTHCOMING)

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