

Milwaukee Repertory Theater Presents

September 14 - October 24, 2010
Quadracci Powerhouse Stage

CABARET



This study guide is researched and designed by the Education Department at Milwaukee Repertory Theater and is intended to prepare you for your visit. It contains information that will deepen your understanding of, and appreciation for, the production. We've also included questions and activities for you to explore before and after our performance of **CABARET**.

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NOTE: CABARET
contains adult
content.

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SYNOPSIS

*"Leave your troubles outside!
So-life is disappointing? Forget
it! In here, life is beautiful-the
girls are beautiful-even the
orchestra is beautiful!
Willkommen im Cabaret!"*

- The Emcee

Spoiler Alert: This synopsis reveals crucial plot points

ACT ONE

CABARET begins in the Kit Kat Klub, a cabaret in 1929 Berlin. In the opening number the

audience is welcomed by the Emcee and the Kit Kat Klub girls. After this, the action shifts to a train car where we meet Clifford Bradshaw, an American writer looking for inspiration for a new novel. Cliff meets Ernst Ludwig, a native of Germany, who not only recommends a place to stay in Berlin, but also opportunities to work and make money. After arriving in Berlin, Cliff makes his way to Fraulein Schneider's boarding house. Fraulein Schneider ends up charging Cliff 50 marks for his room, half of what she originally wants. However, we find out that Fraulein Schneider has learned to live with what life has to offer, even if it isn't what she truly wants.

After settling, Cliff decides to explore and visit the Kit Kat Klub, another place Ernst suggested he visit. We see the Emcee introduce Sally Bowles, a British singer. When done with her number, Sally calls Cliff on a table phone and is astounded to hear someone who speaks English on the other end. She asks him to recite poetry for her and he indulges her by reciting a poem about baseball. Cliff asks Sally to come home with him; however, she declines as she believes that her boyfriend, the owner of the club, would be too jealous.

It is the next day and we are back at Cliff's apartment and Sally arrives as he is working on his novel. She tells him that her boyfriend has thrown her out and she has no place to stay. Sally asks Cliff if she can move in. Although hesitant at first, Sally convinces him. We then move into Fraulein Schneider's apartment where Herr Schultz, an elderly Jewish fruit store owner, is visiting her and

giving her a gift. It is here that we see that there is romance between the two.

It is now several months later despite Cliff knowing that he is living in a dream world, he continues to ignore the reality of what is happening in Berlin and continues to party with Sally. She reveals that she is pregnant, but does not know who the father is. Sally wants to have an abortion, but Cliff convinces her not to since there is a chance that he could be the father. Ernst calls on Cliff and says that he has a job for him—deliver a suitcase to a client. Cliff accepts thinking it is easy money though the contents of the suitcase are suspect.

After this, we see Fraulein Schneider confronting another one of her boarders, Fraulein Kost, about bringing sailors into her room. She wants Fraulein Kost out of the house; however, Fraulein Kost retorts that Herr Schultz has been in Fraulein Schneider's room. Herr Schultz saves her reputation by saying that they are to be married in three weeks. Fraulein Kost leaves and Fraulein Schneider thanks Herr Schultz for lying about their engagement. However, after saying that he was serious, he proposes.

We then go to Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz's engagement party. Cliff brings the questionable suitcase to Ernst. Fraulein Kost is also in attendance and wants to get back at Fraulein Schneider and tells Ernst that Herr Schultz is a Jew. Ernst warns Fraulein Schneider that marrying a Jew might not be in her best interest. Act I ends with "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" sung by all except Cliff, Sally, Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz.

ACT TWO

We find Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz discussing their marriage. Fraulein Schneider is concerned about what could happen, but Herr Schultz feels that things will be fine in the end. During their conversation a brick is thrown through the shop window and they question whether it was

malicious or just kids. Fraulein Schneider leaves and goes to Cliff and Sally's room where she returns their engagement present. The Emcee then performs a number with a girl in a gorilla suit and sings about their love, the disapproval they have faced and encourages the audience to be more open-minded.

During this time, Cliff and Sally have been arguing about their future. Cliff wishes to bring Sally to America to raise their baby; however, Sally believes that their life is wonderful in Berlin. Cliff points out that Berlin is becoming more unstable and Sally continues to protest. She leaves to perform at the Club and when she comes back, ad-

mits to Cliff that she has had an abortion. Cliff slaps her and says that he is leaving for Paris in the

morning, but hopes that Sally will go with him. She retorts that she's always hated Paris and Cliff leaves without her.

We are back in a train car with Cliff on his way to Paris. He is writing a novel that reflects on his experiences in Berlin. He begins to sing and the Emcee joins him and then overtakes him. We shift

back to the Kit Kat Klub where the cabaret ensemble sings the song in a much darker tone, dressed in Nazi regalia. The Emcee continues to sing as the lights fade and we hear him say "Good night."

"Sally--wake up! The party in Berlin is over! It was lots of fun, but it's over. And what is Berlin doing now? Vomiting in the street."

- Cliff

ACT ONE MUSICAL NUMBERS

Willkommen	Don't Go
So What?	Why Should I Wake Up?
Don't Tell Mama	The Money Song &
Telephone Song	Sitting Pretty
Perfectly Marvelous	Married
Two Ladies	Tomorrow Belongs to Me
It Couldn't Please Me More	(Reprise)
Tomorrow Belongs to Me	

ACT TWO MUSICAL NUMBERS

Married (Reprise)
If You Could See Her
What Would You Do?
I Don't Care Much
Cabaret
Finale



Resident Acting Company Member Lee E. Ernst, who plays the Emcee, rehearses a song from CABARET. Photo courtesy of Michael Brosilow.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: *CABARET takes place in multiple locations including the Kit Kat Klub and Cliff's apartment. If you were to design the set, what would it look like to you? How would you differentiate between the two places? What would you want on stage to convince the audience that they are in a 1930s night club and apartment? How would you present the scenes in the train car? Draw your ideas and share them with your classmates.*

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY: *After the show, compare what you drew to what you saw. What differences and similarities did you see? Did what you see work for the production? What changes might you make? Explain your ideas with your classmates.*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tony Award-winner, **Joe Masteroff** wrote the book for **CABARET**. He was born December 11, 1919 in Pennsylvania and graduated from Temple University in 1940. After graduating, Masteroff served in the Air Force for four years. When he returned, he studied with the American Theatre Wing, an educational theatrical organization, from 1949 to 1951. This launched his career in theater as an actor and in 1953 made his Broadway debut in **THE PRESCOTT PROPOSALS**.

After acting for some time, Masteroff began his career as a playwright. In 1959, his first play, **THE WARM PENINSULA**, opened on Broadway at the Helen Hayes Theater. Four years later, Masteroff was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Author of a Musical for the book of **SHE LOVES ME**.

In 1966, Masteroff was commissioned by Harold Prince, a famous Broadway producer and director, to write the book for **CABARET**. The show ran for 1,165 performances and won the Tony for Best Musical.

John Kander wrote the music for **CABARET** and was born March 18, 1927 in Missouri. Kander was raised with music and began taking piano lessons at the age of six. Many of his childhood evenings were spent with his family playing piano and singing songs. Kander attended Oberlin College, where he began his

formal musical training. He composed his first scores for **SECOND SQUARE** and **OPUS TWO** in 1950 and **REQUIEM FOR GEORGIE** in 1951, still as a student. In 1951, Kander graduated from Oberlin and then attended Columbia University where he earned a Master of Arts

degree in 1954. He worked as a choral director and conductor for several years and eventually landed a job as a sub pianist for two pre-Broadway shows. This gig landed him his first job as a music writer for **GYPSY** in 1959 and in 1962 made his Broadway debut with the score for **A FAMILY AFFAIR**.

Fred Ebb was the lyricist for **CABARET** and was born April 8, 1928 in New York. During his adult life, Ebb did anything but music—he bronzed baby shoes, was a trucker's assistant and worked at a hosiery company. However, in 1955 he graduated from New

York University with a degree in English Literature and earned his Master's Degree from Columbia University two years later. After graduating, Ebb co-wrote many lyrics to songs, including *I Never Loved Him Anyhow* and *Don't Forget*. His first theatrical writing job was in 1951, while he was still in school, for **BAKER'S DOZEN**, a musical revue. Ebb wrote his first book musical, **MORNING SUN**, with Paul Klein. This was a very unsuccessful show, running for only eight performances.

In 1963, John Kander was introduced to Fred



The original poster from the debut of CABARET in 1966.

Ebb and the two began working together. Their first song, *My Coloring Book*, was nominated for a Grammy Award. GOLDEN GATE was Kander and Ebbs first theatrical collaboration, but it never opened on Broadway. Harold Prince was still enthusiastic about the two and hired the pair for FLORA, THE RED MENACE in 1965 and the team of Kander and Ebb was

solidified. A year later, they worked together on CABARET and earned a Tony Award for Best Score. This strengthened their partnership and Kander and Ebb continued working together for nearly four decades writing music for many musicals including CHICAGO, WOMAN OF THE YEAR and THE KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN.

CABARET OVER THE YEARS

CABARET began as a 1966 Broadway musical and since then has been adapted multiple times to create a Tony Award-winning masterpiece that has endured for over 40 years. The original Broadway production of CABARET, directed by Harold Prince and choreographed by Ron Field, opened on November 20, 1966. The show ran for 1,165 performances over three years and won multiple Tony Awards. It starred Bert Convy, Jack Gilford, Jill Haworth, Lotte Lenya, Joel Grey, Peg Murray and Edward Winter.

In 1972, CABARET was made into a film directed by choreographer Bob Fosse. The film

starred Liza Minelli, Michael York and Joel Grey. Fosse took out all the musical numbers that didn't take place on the Kit Kat Club stage, so only two characters sing—Sally Bowles and the Emcee. Three songs were also added: *Maybe This Time*, *Mein Herr* and *Money, Money*. Other changes

included making Sally American as well as changing Cliff's name to Brian Roberts and also making him British. Despite the many differences, the film version gained much acclaim and won eight Academy Awards.

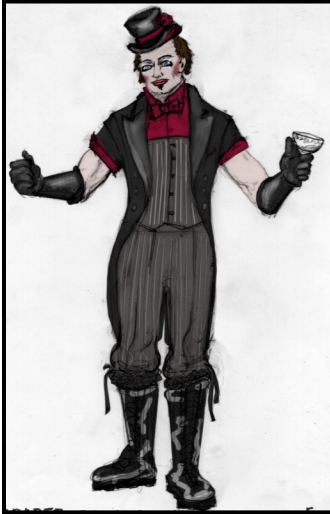
CABARET was revived in 1987 on Broadway (also the version The Rep is producing) and was once again directed by Hal Prince. It opened on October 22 and ran for 261 performances. Joel Grey returned to play the Emcee again and also starred Alyson Reed, Gregg Edelman, Regina Resnik and Wener Klemperer. The revival included the songs made specifically for the film as well a new song entitled *Don't Go*.

The second Broadway revival of CABARET was in 1998. It was directed by Sam Mendes and starred Natasha Richardson, Alan Cumming, John Benjamin Hickey and Denis O'Hare. The production ran for 2,377 performances becoming the third longest-running revival in Broadway musical history. Mendes' version had a completely different feel than the original production and the first revival. The 1998 revival was highly sexualized and emphasized the decadent atmosphere of the Kit Kat Klub rather than the political situation and lovers' stories. Again, despite the changes, the revival won four Tony Awards including Best Revival of a Musical.



THE CHARACTERS

EMCEE: He is the master of ceremonies at the Kit Kat Klub. He also comments on the action of the play.



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.

FRAULEIN KOST: 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.

SALLY BOWLES: Sally is an English-born singer living in Berlin. Her lifestyle is that of a liberated woman: doing what she pleases and enjoying life to the fullest.

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.

RUDOLF SCHULTZ: Herr Schultz also lives in the

*Costume Renderings drawn by
Todd Ivins, Costume Designer*

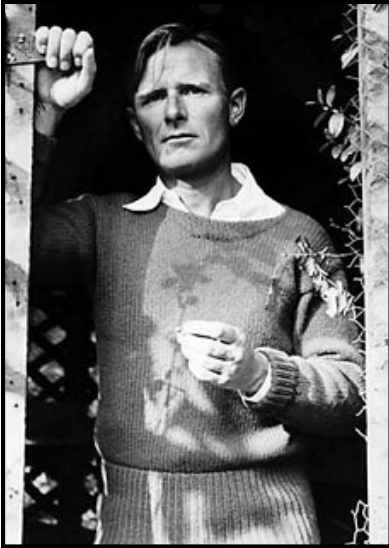


Kelley Faulkner, as Sally Bowles, leads Kit Kat girls Amber Rees, Tiffany Topol, Megan Nicole Arnoldy, Amanda Danskin, Lili Thomas and Nikki Van Cassele, as Clifford Bradshaw, played by Geoffrey Hemmingway, and Ensemble cast member LaToya Codner enjoy the show. Photo courtesy of Michael Brosilow.

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION: *From these descriptions, what are your first impressions of each character? Do you think you'll like one more than another? Why do you believe this?*

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION: *After seeing CABARET, what are your impressions of each character? Did anything you thought of before change after seeing the production? If you were to be one of the characters what choices would you have made? Would you have done similar or different things? Why? Discuss your ideas with a small group.*

THE INSPIRATION



In the 1930s, an English novelist created stories that inspired the script of CABARET.

Christopher Isherwood published *The Berlin Stories*, a book that contains two novellas—*he Last of Mr. Norris* (written in 1935) and *Goodbye to Berlin* (written in 1939) and is considered to be one of the most important political novels of the 20th century.

From an introduction to *The Berlin Stories* written by Isherwood:

“From 1929 to 1933, I lived almost continuously in Berlin, with only occasional visits to other parts of Germany and to England. Already, during that time, I had made up my mind that I would one day write about the people I’d met and the experiences I was having. So I kept a detailed diary, which in due course provided raw material for all my Berlin stories.”

His time in Berlin, gave him the inspiration to create these two stories based on what he saw. His observations of the nightlife and other people allowed him to mix fact and fiction together in order to create over the top characters and situations that replicated what was happening

in Weimar Germany. At this time people were lavish and everything was over done, but things were on the brink of falling apart. Not only did Isherwood express what he saw, he also used the book to express his ideas about human sexuality, including his own. In *Goodbye to Berlin*, the main character is named Christopher Isherwood. Isherwood intended the character to be representative of himself, not actually himself. His ideas of sexuality and homosexuality were expressed very indirectly. This was frowned upon and considered “illegal” before 1967 (and even then it was still chastised). Because of the combination of fact and fiction, *The Berlin Stories* is considered by many partial-autobiographical, although Isherwood never comes out directly and states that the main character is actually him.

Many of the other characters in *The Berlin Stories* were inspired by people that Isherwood met and saw. One of the most significant people he met while in Berlin was Jean Ross, the inspiration for the character of Sally Bowles. Ross was born in Alexandria and moved to Berlin in order to have a self-proclaimed lifestyle (which fit in perfectly with the excesses of Weimar Germany). Isherwood lived with Ross for some time and he was

intrigued by the 19-year-old nightclub singer. While Ross gave him permission to use her stories as inspiration, she refrained from making it public that she was Isherwood’s muse for Sally Bowles. Despite the fact that Sally is portrayed as a

frivolous and easy woman, in reality Ross was nothing like that. Isherwood was attracted to the fact that Ross had a lack of sexual

“I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking... Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed.”

From Goodbye to Berlin

THE BERLIN STORIES CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD



inhibitions and a high sense of self-esteem. However, Isherwood skewed the character slightly in order to satisfy his unconventional ideas.

It is Isherwood's detailed accounts and interpretation of Berlin that allows readers to truly become immersed in the story. Below is an excerpt from *Goodbye to Berlin*.

"The extraordinary smell in this room when the stove is lighted and the window shut; not altogether unpleasant, a mixture of incense and stale buns. The tall tiled stove, gorgeously coloured, like an altar. The washstand like a Gothic shrine. The cupboard also is Gothic, with carved cathedral windows: Bismarck faces the King of Prussia in stained glass. My best chair would do for a bishop's throne. In the corner, three sham mediæval halberds (from a theatrical touring company?) are fastened together to form a hatstand. Fräulein Schroeder unscrews the heads of the halberds and polishes them from time to time. They are heavy and sharp enough to kill.

Everything in the room is like that: unnecessarily solid, abnormally heavy and dangerously sharp. Here, at the writing-table, I am confronted by a phalanx of metal objects—a pair of candlesticks shaped like entwined serpents, an ashtray from which emerges the head of a crocodile, a paper-knife copied from the Florentine dagger, a brass dolphin holding on the end of its tail a small broken clock. What becomes of such things? How could they ever be destroyed? They will probably remain intact for thousands of years: people will treasure them in museums. Or perhaps they will merely be melted down for munitions in a war. Every morning, Fräulein Schroeder arranges them very carefully in certain unvarying positions: there they stand, like an uncompromising statement of her views on Capital and Society, Religion and Sex.

All day long she goes padding about the large dingy flat. Shapeless but alert, she waddles from room to room, in carpet slippers and a flowered dressing-gown pinned ingeniously together, so that not an inch of petticoat or bodice is to be seen, flicking with her duster, peeping, spying, poking her short pointed nose into the cupboards and luggage of her lodgers. She has dark, bright, inquisitive eyes and pretty waved brown hair of which she is proud. She must be about fifty-five years old."

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: *Have someone read the above excerpt aloud to the class. What parts were you able to visualize? Write down phrases that stuck out to you. Why do you think Isherwood included such detail in his story? Discuss your answers with a small group.*

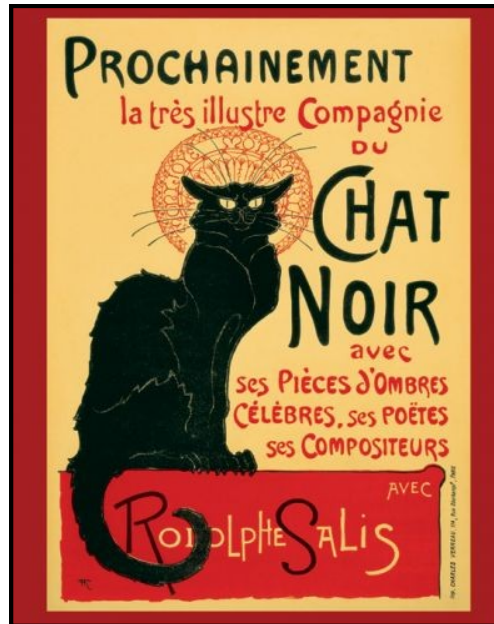
POST-SHOW ACTIVITY: *Find a copy of The Berlin Stories and read it (or some more excerpts from it). After seeing CABARET, what similarities do you see between the two? Why do you think Joe Masteroff used this text as an inspiration for CABARET? Do you see other characters in The Berlin Stories that may be in CABARET? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.*

HISTORY OF CABARETS

When many people think of a cabaret, they think of women dancing around on a stage entertaining an audience filled, most likely, with men. Despite the sequins-filled image you may see, the history of the cabaret dates back to the late 1880s and had nothing to do with women entertaining men.

The first cabaret opened in the Monmartre district in Paris in 1881. At that time, the term actually meant any business that served liquor. Le Chat Noir was an informal saloon where poets, artists and composers came to perform and share what they had created with each other and with an audience. This establishment was so popular that more cabarets opened in Paris and by 1900 they were established all over France and Germany. Soon, the relaxed atmosphere became more formal, with many cabarets beginning to schedule routine performances by various artists. Despite the few changes that were made, cabarets were still intimate and provided audiences an opportunity to enjoy food, drink and entertainment. Eventually the idea of the cabaret spread all over Europe and eventually to the United States in the early 1900s.

Cabaret in 20th century Germany was a distinctive art form – a combination of dance, song and drama – designed to provoke thought as well as entertain. Despite the innocent origins of the cabaret, it did evolve into the bawdy nightlife that many of us think



about. In the beginning, the cabaret lifestyle was heavily regulated by Germany's government. There were no risqué performances and any political or social comments were severely looked down upon. While there was no law against this, if you were caught doing something controversial there were consequences. The cabaret, although visited by some, was not a highly popular place to go during the 1910s because

of the restrictions and also because of the war. Many people thought that times were too serious to engage in amusement and believed that all cabarets should be closed.

The popularity of the cabaret did not show until after WWI and the beginning of the Weimar Republic. With the new government came relaxed restrictions and cabarets began to freely discuss topics that were formerly looked



Inside the Winter Garden, Berlin's most famous cabaret.

down on. This new found artistic freedom allowed cabarets to thrive during the Weimar era. Performances included political satire, sexual discussions and even nude performances. Because of this freedom, German citizens were able to examine, criticize and attempt to find a better way of life. People could go to a cabaret, have a drink, critique the government and have a few laughs without worrying about being punished or undermining Germany. Laurence Senelick states in his book:

“The examples [of cabarets] in Berlin and Munich were so influential that within a few years the revolutionary transformation of the mental and artistic habits of the Germans was

already complete...they longed for color, disorder, and the unleashing of the arts of the theater.”

Cabarets thrived for many years, especially in Berlin. However, after Adolf Hitler’s rise to power and election as chancellor, cabarets began to close and become obsolete. Many owners were Jewish or too liberal for the Nazis and feared that they would lose their cabarets or their lives if they stayed in Germany. Those who stayed were forced to do apolitical performances and then eventually were forced to praise Nazi actions. In 1937 all forms of political expression were banned. Because of this dominance, the artistic art form of the cabaret was ruined.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: *Cabarets in Germany flourished during the Weimar Era because of their freedom of expression and they even began to expand greatly in America. Do some research about cabarets in America during the 1920s and 1930s. Were they as successful as those in Germany? Why or why not? Discuss your findings with a small group.*

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: *Research cabarets and night clubs today. What do they look like? What are some major changes that you notice? Where can you find cabaret style entertainment in the media today? Share what you have found with your classmates.*



The Kit Kat Klub is in full swing as Chorus members Amanda Danskin, David Hathaway, Danny Henning, Amber Rees and Michael Lindsey rehearse a number. Photo courtesy of Michael Brosilow.

TEACHER RESOURCE: Go to <http://www.youtube.com> and search for The Real Cabaret (there are six parts totaling approximately one hour). This is a fantastic documentary that explores the inspiration behind CABARET. Follow Alan Cumming (the Emcee in the second Broadway revival) as he explores the origins and history of the show. This documentary is engaging and interesting and is a great way to prepare your students for seeing The Rep’s production of CABARET.

WEIMAR GERMANY

From 1919 to 1933 the Weimar Republic reigned in Germany. This was the first attempt at establishing a democracy in Germany after World War I. The republic was named after the city of Weimar where a national assembly met to create a constitution after WWI. Despite the assembly's good intentions, the Weimar Republic failed after much conflict and tension.

What Led Up to the Weimar Republic?

Before the Weimar Republic, the German Empire had been governed by the military. However, when it was clear that the Germans had lost WWI (and were to take all the blame for the devastation in the world), the Supreme Army Command insisted that a civil government be established. Unfortunately, the plan to transform Germany became obsolete as the chaos ensued in the country. Soldiers were returning from the war and were wounded both physically and psychologically. Violence was breaking out between left- and right-wing groups. Political representation of the working class was divided, with one group leaning more towards a Socialist system (eventually to be named the National Socialist German Workers' Party [the Nazis]) and one towards the Communist system. Despite all the negative actions happening in Germany, the National Assembly was able to convene and eventually elected the Republic's first President, Friedrich Ebert and instituted the new German constitution into law in August 1919 officially establishing The Republic.



The German mark was so weak that money became practically useless and was thrown away.

The Beginning of The Republic

Even from the start, the Weimar Republic had problems. Both left- and right-wing extremists accused each other of betrayal to movements. The right-wing went so far as to accuse the Republic and its democratic system as being responsible for Germany's defeat in WWI. In 1920, the right-wings invaded and captured Berlin and established Wolfgang Kapp as Chancellor of a new government. Friedrich Ebert withdrew from Berlin and reconvened in Dresden forming a strike against Kapp. The Kapp government collapsed approximately four days after invading Berlin. Eventually, communists also began uprising; however, the German army put immediate stops to these, fearing a takeover.

By 1923, the Republic could no longer afford to keep paying for damages as stated in Versailles. Because of this, French and Belgian troops began to occupy the Ruhr region in eastern Germany, the most valuable industrial area at the time, and took over the mining and manufacturing companies.

Strikes led by workers lasted for eight months, the economy suffered and the Socialist Worker's Party gained power.

The Golden Era

From 1923 to 1929, the Republic was relatively stable and because of this is often referred to as the Golden Era. There were fewer uprisings and the economy seemed to be on an upward

path. During this time, Gustav Stresemann was Chancellor of Germany for a brief period, but served the majority of the six years as Foreign Minister. Stresemann issued new currency, the Rentenmark, in order to stop hyperinflation that was damaging Germany's economy. He also refused to continue printing money which started the inflation. Germany also was admitted into the League of Nations, signed a neutrality pact with Russia and banned severe gun control. Despite all this progress, much of the money needed for these things was funded by overseas loans which in turn increased the nation's debts and unemployment.

Living in Weimar Germany

During the Weimar era many Germans lived life to the fullest. The era was known for its over-the-top and excessive lifestyles. People were not afraid to express themselves socially, politically and sexually. Experimentation was a common word during this time from art to culture to religion and much more. The people of Germany were in a state that allowed them to try new things with little backlash from the government. Cabarets flourished providing entertainment for all. During this time,

Germany also became the center of many movements including Dadaism and Expressionism. Artists like Otto Dix, George Grosz and John Heartfield painted pictures reflecting what they saw. Writers, including Fritz Lang and Bertolt Brecht, wrote about the decadence and debauchery that existed in Germany. Concert halls and cabarets were alive

with the new and modern music of Alban Berg and Kurt Weill. With all experimentation and new movements the Weimar Republic became a modern Renaissance for Germany.

The Fall of the Weimar Republic

With the crash in the stock market in the United States (1929), Germany's economy continued to fail and lose more money. Riots began breaking out and the people of Germany realized that the Weimar Republic was failing. By 1932, the Weimar Republic had lost the support of most Germans and many of them were behind the now formed Nazi party. These supporters began rioting and causing violence leading to the loss of power for the Republic. The government was taking money from the workers and the unemployed were receiving less and less. By July of 1932, Adolf Hitler was gaining more support. His ideas of an authoritarian government and a perfect society sounded much better than the failing Republic. Many Germans wanted to see Hitler as Chancellor and he was appointed to office in 1933. With this event, a new government was established and Hitler was named Führer of Germany.

The Rise of the Nazi Party

The Nazi's promised a strong, authoritarian government to the people of Germany. Many believed this was needed in order to bounce back from the Weimar Era. Hitler and the party acted quickly and established strict regulations on different things including political activities and religion. In 1933, the Nazi's established the new government as a totalitarian dictatorship giving Hitler four years of dictatorial leadership. Soon after this, Hitler began to intensify his "cleansing" the German population of homosexuals, Jews and anyone else resistant to the new government. The Gestapo, the secret state police which had over 100,000 enforcers, was established



"Republican Automatons" by George Grosz.

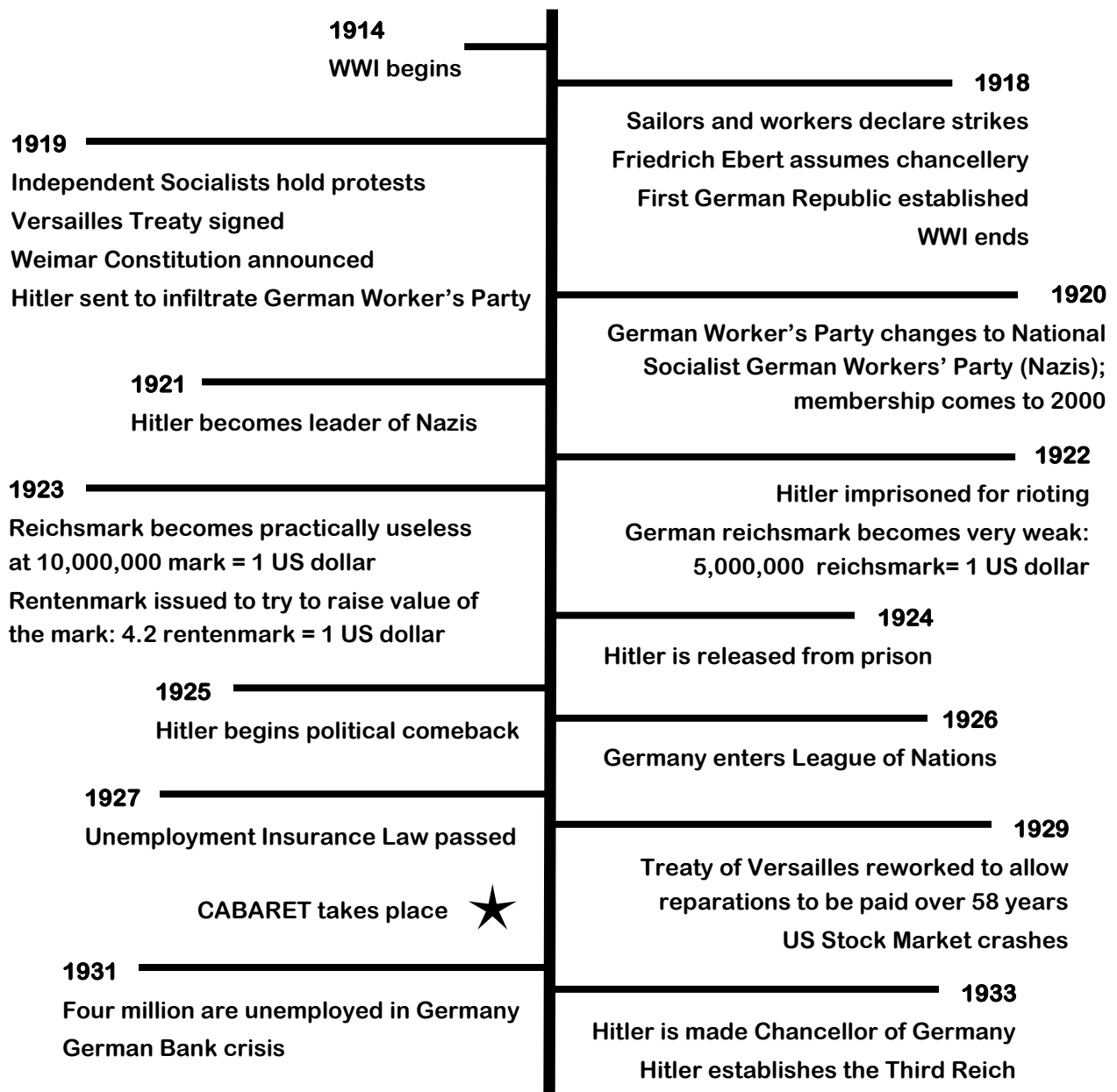
quickly in order to control the German population. After Hitler was in full reign, the Nazis

began to establish dominance in Germany in order to fulfill Hitler's ideas of a perfect world.

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION: *Do some more research about what it was like to live during Weimar Germany. What other issues were there that created more problems for Germany? How do you think things would have been different if Germany would have won World War I? Discuss your answers with your classmates.*

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION: *Compare and contrast Weimar Germany to the US today. What similarities and differences do you see in politics? Society? Culture? List your ideas and discuss your answers with your classmates.*

IMPORTANT EVENTS OF WWI AND WEIMAR GERMANY



CABARET takes place ★

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARK CLEMENTS, DIRECTOR

What hopes for The Rep do you have as the incoming Artistic Director?

Big things. My overall hope is that we will continue to please our existing audience that have been very loyal to us for many years and to considerably add to that including our subscribers and single ticket sales and that we'll appeal to a broader and more diverse demographic. That we will create theater for all; that's kind of what I'm fully committed to and I want people to feel an ownership of this building and this city. I want to create world class theater for Milwaukee, made in Milwaukee.

Why do think doing a musical in the Quadracci Powerhouse is important for The Rep and Milwaukee?

I think most prominent regional theaters in this country and in the UK and in Europe do musical theater as part of their cannon of work. Musical is a very broad term and doing a show like CABARET is a different experience than WICKED or GREASE, not saying they are any less, just different and I'm interested particularly because this is a drama house, and I'm interested in stories that have a strong narrative line and can tell a story. And maybe further down the road we can make something that is entertaining and a celebration of the musical form, but I'm particularly interested in musicals that have something to say. It's one of the things I love about American theater, that particular genre, there are so many iconic pieces, CABARET being one of them, and it feels like our job, as a theater of this size and nature, to be presenting the best of American and world class theater. You can't do that and leave certain pieces out and ignore the musical theater works. That didn't make sense to me. And I also think the way that we produce these shows will be very distinct because of our space in the Quadracci Powerhouse. It's a very unique stage and it will give a very different experience for people in

Milwaukee as opposed to seeing something at Skylight or the Marcus Center.

What has the planning been like for CABARET? How have you and the designers been working together?

This team I'm working with—Todd Ivins, Nick Kourtides, Jeff Nellis—we've worked together a number of times. We're all quite involved and the first stages with the scenic designer are to talk about the vibe we want from it. I usually give some thoughts and then from there we storyboard it like a movie. We pretty much know how it's going to look and how it's going to move. I'm very committed to not having any blackouts; I don't like having any dead time in the theater. So for me it's always about that we're in a theater, we're not doing a movie, and I like to do things that are a celebration of that art form and that are witty and clever and keep the audience hooked up. It's not just about the scenes that we're watching but how we move those scenes so the audience is always engaged and never sitting in a blackout waiting for a piece of scenery to be changed. So that requires a lot of technical forethought and precision.

Has the Quadracci Powerhouse provided any challenges for CABARET? How has the space needed to be transformed in order to accommodate the production?

Well, it has offered some great opportunities, but at



Director Mark Clements and Choreographer Michael Pink discuss staging for CABARET. Photo courtesy of Michael Brosilow.

the same point, it has also offered some challenges. With the Quadracci Powerhouse stage you have to be very careful because it seems like a big space—and indeed it is—but you can't use a huge amount of it all the time because half the audience won't see it. As for the actual design of the stage the sightlines are very, very challenging. But, our job is to embrace what's there. For me, it's like taking the overall picture—will the audience see it from that angle or will they see that facial expression there—and making sure that we don't divide it up. If we were to do everything that everybody would see at any one point at every single moment in the process we'd probably be ending up in a six foot square area. Those are challenges. The opportunity is that the proximity to the audience for something like this is powerful. The close quarters with the instruments and all, and that's exciting.

How do you think students will receive CABARET? What do you hope they will gain from seeing the production?

I think the political message right now is resonating alive. The young people are much more savvy than their parents and grandparents sometimes in terms of an awareness of things that are going on around them and how that affects them. This piece is about seemingly unimportant political events happening that we think are just going to blow over and what happens if we take our eye off the ball, if we don't

pay attention for too long, how actually those seemingly inconsequential loony fringe groups can suddenly take hold and it can become the mainstream all of a sudden. And I think those things about prejudice and good stories are cross generational. People have different emotional responses to different characters. My feeling is that the young people will totally respond to the Fraulein Schneider/Herr Schultz story because how could you not? Just the fact that they're older people looking at young love. So I think those things will resonate. Just the basic human condition—are they making smart choices and are they making the right choice. And then at what point do we kind of subjugate our moral code to get what we want and is the easiest path the right path? I think good stories are good stories and people like good stories but I think the way that we execute and tell the story that's the skill and hopefully we're telling it with a degree of clarity and subtlety. And then in the backdrop you've got vibrant and sexy guys and girls playing instruments. I think that's one of the fun things about our show: you've got people acting, singing, dancing and playing instruments. I love that. One of our girls—I saw the other day—was playing a tuba one second and then she's changing her one shoe the next and then she's back on the tuba and then putting on the other shoe and then she's back on the tuba and then she's doing a kick line and I was just like wow. Hopefully this will be exciting.

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VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater is housed in the Milwaukee Center at the corner of Wells and Water Streets, downtown. Our building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company. This name is still carved on the wall outside.

You'll enter on the Wells Street side into a large, open space. Our Ticket Office will be visible on your left as you come through the front doors. The large space is the main hub for the businesses that share this building: a bank, an office tower, the Pabst Theater and the Intercontinental Hotel. If you walk into the center of this area, you'll see a staircase on your left. You will take this staircase to the Quadracci Powerhouse lobby.

Inside the lobby are restrooms, water fountains, and a coat check. If you decide to bring a snack, please know that food and drink are NOT permitted in the theater. However, you can leave things (at your own risk) at the coat check and enjoy them outside the theater during intermission. Most plays have one intermission that is about 20 minutes long. You might also want to look for signs in the lobby which give the full "running time" of the play.

**For more information on our Education Programs and our productions,
please visit our website at www.milwaukeeep.com**

Programs in the Education Department receive generous funding from:

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***"You need three things in the theatre – the play, the actors and the audience –
and each must give something." – Kenneth Haigh***

Theater is described as a collaborative art form. The success of a production relies upon every member of the process: playwrights, directors, designers, technicians, actors and the audience. Plays require audiences to give a new life to performances through their careful attention and enthusiastic reactions. The audience has an active role to play and the actors rely on you to be respectful and attentive. Through your observation of sets, costumes, lighting and the work of the actors, you'll be better able to follow the story and enjoy its live presentation. You are important in the final performance and your participation is what makes this process worthwhile.

Milwaukee Repertory Theater Education Department

<http://www.milwaukeeep.com/education/outreach.htm>

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