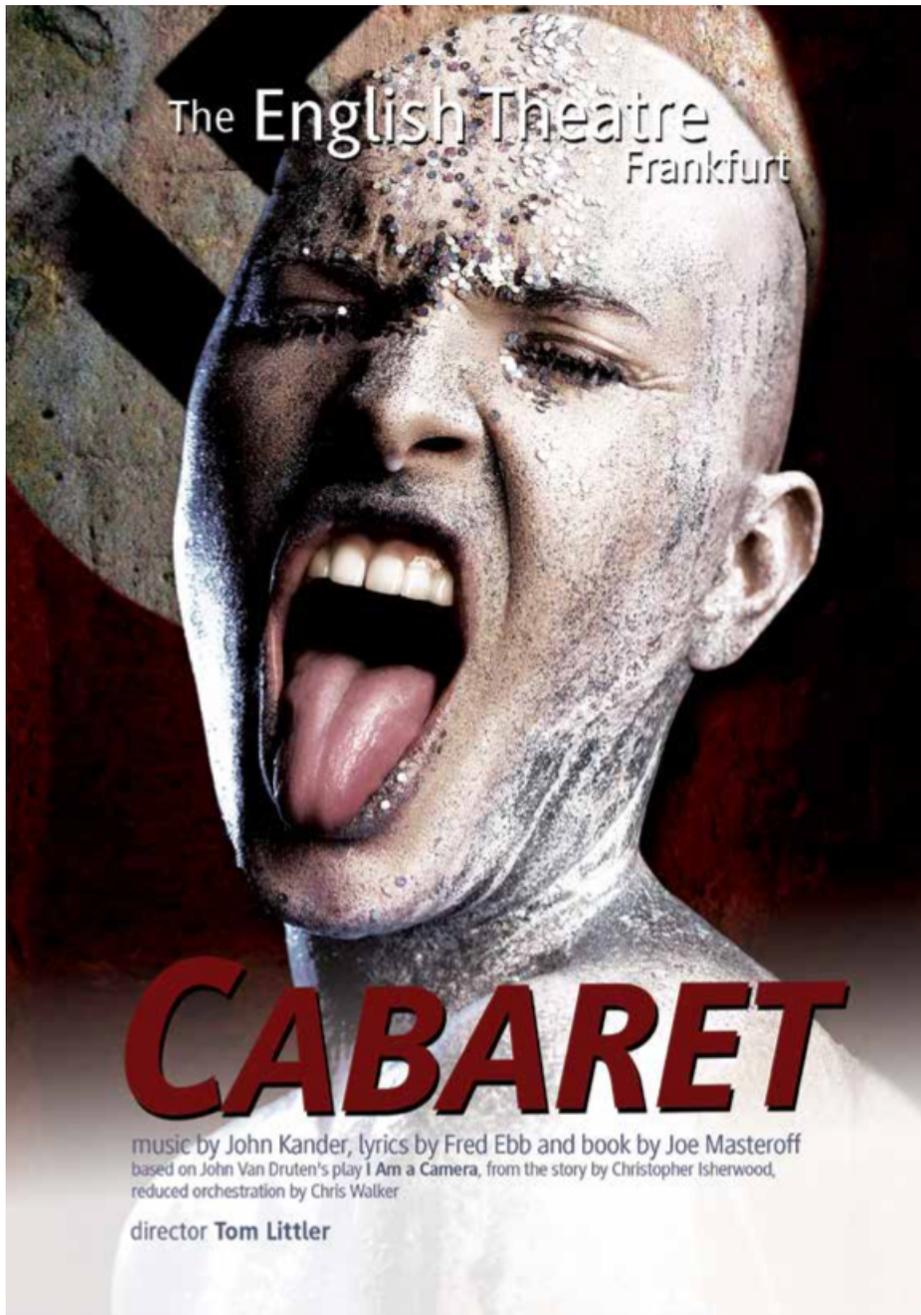


This teachers pack includes factual information as well as tasks and topics to be dealt with in the classroom. Cut and paste as you please, and please consult the official programme for additional information.



CABARET

Musical in 2 acts. Book by Joe Masteroff: Based on the play *I Am A Camera* by John van Druten and *The Berlin Stories* by Christopher Isherwood.

Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb.

Broadway production directed by Harold Prince .

Produced for the Broadway Stage by Harold Prince, Broadhurst Theatre, Broadway 20 November, 1966 (1166 perfs)

SYNOPSIS

Cabaret takes place from 1929-1930, a time when Berlin, in the midst of a post-World War I economic depression, is transitioning from a center of underground, avant-garde cultural epicenter to the beginnings of Hitler's totalitarian regime and the rise of the Nazi Party. Into this world enters Clifford Bradshaw, a struggling American writer looking for inspiration for his next novel. On his first night in Berlin, Cliff wanders into the Kit Kat Klub, a seedy nightclub overseen by the strange, omniscient and gender-bending Master of Ceremonies, "the Emcee." Here, Cliff meets Sally Bowles, a vivacious, talented cabaret performer, and an utterly lost soul. Sally and Cliff begin a relationship, which blossoms unexpectedly into a dream-like romance. As time passes, however, the situation in Berlin changes from exciting and vital to ominous and violent; Ernst, Cliff's first German friend, turns out to be an up-and-coming member of the Nazi Party, and Herr Schultz, a fellow boarder at Fraulein Schneider's guest house (and Schneider's fiancée), is the victim of an Anti-Semitic hate crime. When he finds out that Sally is pregnant, Cliff decides that they must leave for America at once, before things get any worse. Sally, afraid, confused, and unsure that she'll ever really be able to trade the sexy, illicit cabaret lifestyle for motherhood, gets an abortion, and tells Cliff that he must leave without her. With a distinctly Brechtian dose of provocation and a score featuring songs that have become classics of the American Musical Theater, *Cabaret* is a fierce, meaty musical that pushes the boundaries of the form and literally holds "the mirror up to nature."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The creation of a new work of musical theatre is always a team effort. The story of *Cabaret* is based on characters and events first told as *The Berlin Stories*, a collection of works by writer Christopher Isherwood. *The Berlin Stories* were, in turn, based heavily on real people and events. The character Sally Bowles is based on Jean Ross, a British nightclub singer Isherwood met in Germany in 1931. Ross shared lodgings with Isherwood in Berlin, and he immortalized her as the “divinely decadent” Sally Bowles in his 1939 memoir *Goodbye to Berlin*, one of the works later included in *The Berlin Stories*. Ross was never happy about being identified with the fictional Sally Bowles. Playwright John Van Druten first adapted *Goodbye to Berlin* for the stage as the 1951 Broadway play *I Am a Camera*. The play takes its title from a quote from the first page of *Goodbye to Berlin*: “I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking.” Isherwood’s characters were brought to the stage again in 1966 with the debut of the musical *Cabaret*, a project of acclaimed American theatrical producer Hal Prince. Prince acquired the option on Van Druten’s play and Isherwood’s original stories, and engaged American playwright Joe Masteroff to write the book for a new musical theatre production. The music of *Cabaret* was created by the highly successful songwriting team consisting of composer John Kander and lyricist Fred Ebb. The team is known primarily for their stage musicals, which also include *Flora the Red Menace* — the musical that marked Liza Minelli’s Broadway debut — and the hit *Chicago*. Kander and Ebb scored several movies including the film version of *Cabaret*, as well as their most famous song, the theme from Martin Scorsese’s *New York, New York*. *Cabaret* won Tony awards for Best Musical, Best Score, and, in 1998, Best Revival. The 1972 film version, directed by Bob Fosse and starring Liza Minelli as Sally Bowles, was a further re-interpretation of the story. While the movie uses Ebb and Kander’s music, the storyline is more aligned with Isherwood’s original novel than with the musical theatre version.

THE CHARACTERS

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

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 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.

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.

VOCABULARY LIST

Adlon – The original Hotel Adlon in Berlin was one of the most famous hotels in Europe. It opened in 1907 and was largely destroyed in 1945. The current hotel, which opened on August 23, 1997, is a new building with a design inspired by the original.

bauble – a small, showy trinket or decoration

Chelsea – is an wealthy area of South West London. Chelsea once had a reputation as London's bohemian quarter, the haunt of artists, radicals, painters and poets.

Conferecier – *french* announcer, Emcee (Master of ceremonies), is the official host of a ceremony, a staged event or similar performance.

Groschen – was the name for a silver coin. Groschen replaced Schilling as the common name for a 12 Pfennig coin. Following German unification and decimalisation, the Groschen was replaced by the 10 Pfennig coin and Groschen remained a nickname for the 10 Pfennig coin until the introduction of the Euro.

inebriated – drunk; intoxicated

inkling – a slight knowledge or suspicion; a hint

to invigorate – making one feel strong and full of energy

Nollendorfplatz – is a square in the central Schöneberg district of Berlin. The adjacent area in the south around Motzstraße is Berlin's most prominent gay village. Nollendorfplatz has a long history as being a gay area which dates back to the turn of the 20th century, immortalized by

the writings of W. H. Auden, Klaus Mann, Christopher Isherwood, and many others. It's famous for its leather and darkroom bars.

palpitation – a noticeably strong or irregular heartbeat due to agitation or exertion

pickle – *informal* a difficult situation

Prairie Oysters – a cocktail made of a raw egg, Worcestershire sauce, tomato juice, vinegar, hot sauce, salt and pepper. The drink has been referred to as a hangover cure.

Remington – a typewriter manufactured by **E. Remington and Sons** **sordid** – involving immoral or dishonourable actions and motives **spinster** – an unmarried woman, typically beyond the usual age for marriage **sublime** – of very great excellence or beauty; unparalleled **taciturn** – *of a person* reserved or uncommunicative in speech; saying little

whirl – frantic activity of a specified kind

Yankee Doodle – *often derogatory* an American, another term for Yankee

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Weimar Republic

Following Germany's defeat at the end of the First World War, Wilhelm II, the last emperor of the German Empire, stepped down and Germany became a federal republic called Deutsches Reich ("German Realm"). Historians typically refer to this time period in the history of Germany as the "Weimar Republic" after the city in which the nation's new constitution was written and adopted in August 1919. In its efforts to recover from the war and address the reparation requirements agreed to in the Treaty of Versailles, throughout the 1920s the Weimar Republic relied on massive loans from the USA to boost its post-war economy. When the stock market crashed in 1929, America called on Germany to repay the loans, and no other nation could afford to provide the kind of assistance to Germany that America had. The effect on the

German economy was devastating. Companies went bankrupt, and the number of Germans unemployed leapt from 650,000 in September 1928 to 3 million in September 1930. In this time of economic crisis, many people looked for hope to the ideologies of extreme political parties like the Communist Party on the far left of the political spectrum and the Nazi Party on the far right. The Nazi Party had financial problems of its own, having nearly gone bankrupt in 1928. They were bailed out by a wealthy businessman, however, and made a strong showing in the 1930 election of the German parliament or Reichstag. By 1932, the Nazi Party held the largest number of seats in the Reichstag. After a brief attempt by the Centre Party to hold onto power, the leader of the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler, was sworn in as Chancellor on January 30, 1933.

Gay Berlin

During the Weimar era, Berlin gained an international reputation as a center of cultural transformation and modern thinking. A prominent feature of this transformation was Berlin's long history of gay culture. In spite of the fact that homosexuality had been criminalized in Germany since 1871 by a section of law known as Paragraph 175, Berlin was somewhat of a haven for gays and lesbians in the 1920s. The character of Cliff Bradshaw is based loosely on the real-life experiences of gay author Christopher Isherwood on whose stories *Cabaret* is based. Likewise, the atmosphere of the fictional Kit Kat Club is based on real Berlin cabarets of the 20s and early 30s. The first gay magazine started in Berlin in 1896, and the first gay demonstration was held in 1922. The non-profit Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sex Research) opened in Berlin 1919, offering a research library and large archive, a research division, and a marriage and sex counselling office. The Institute was a pioneer worldwide in the call for civil rights and social acceptance for homosexual and transgender people. In part due to the success of the Institute, on October 16, 1929 a Reichstag Committee voted to repeal Paragraph 175. Sadly, this historic decision was overturned when the Nazis assumed power just a few weeks later, and in 1933 the Nazis burned the Institute's library and began to send homosexual people to concentration camps.

Jewish Berlin

Of course it was not only the gay community that had reason to fear the Nazis. In 1933 the Jewish community in Berlin numbered 160,000, representing one-third of all Jews in Germany. Many Jewish people saw the growing danger and fled to other countries. Between 1933 and 1939 Berlin's Jewish population dropped by half to 80,000 as a result of emigration. At the time when Cabaret is set, the Jewish community was just beginning to grasp the magnitude of the threat

THEMES

The Power of Figurative Language

The musical numbers inside the Kit Kat Klub are all social commentaries on the narrative events taking place outside the club. They present a symbolic interpretation of the literal actions and concepts; sometimes in an ironic way and sometimes in manner that allows for messages to be communicated that might prove dangerous if communicated literally. The line drawn between what is happening outside and the figurative reinterpretation inside is a very powerful demonstration of how metaphor, symbolism, imagery and allusion can help create a secret language that under the right circumstances can result in a revolution without most people even being aware a revolution happened.

Distraction and Denial

Those circumstances that can help a minority communicating a secret language are ones in which the majority are at first distracted from what is happening around them and then compound that sin with denial of the potential for they let happen while distracted. At first the Nazi are objects of scorn and ridicule. Then, as they begin to proliferate to a more pervasive degree." This pattern of distraction represented by the decadent entertainment at the cabaret and denial represented by naïve assumption that such a force of violence can be contained is never given full expression in terms of what it leads to. Because we all know what it leads to. Until it starts happening around us and the pattern simply repeats again.

The Link Between Fascism and Established Social Norms

Lying just beneath the veneer of the two (or three) love stories in the narrative and the entertaining interpolations upon the narrative is the linear progression of influence being enjoyed by the fascist ideology of the Nazis. It is not by accident that the Nazis were able to gain ground at a time when traditional values and established social norms were collapsing under the weight of a surrender to decadence as the relief many Germans could find from the crushing consequences of surrendering to end the Great War. It is also not by accident that the love stories touched upon progressive liberal attitudes bent on destroying those values and norms: marriage between Jew and Christians (if only by misunderstanding in this case), homosexuality, bisexuality, premarital sexual relations. And, of course, inside the cabaret and joyously open musical exhibitions of sadism, masochism and every other vice. All these assaults upon the traditional values were seen not as a progressive of civilization, but as evidence of its moral decay under the terms of fascist ideology. This link between the mainstreaming of extreme right-wing political views and the loosening of long-held social norms has since the setting in the early 1930's firmly established that it was hardly a "German thing" but rather an almost predictable outcome of such circumstances around the world. *Cabaret* artfully conveys this link by once again using the forceful power of symbolism and metaphor.

SYMBOLS, ALLEGORY, MOTIF

"Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome"

The opening song heard inside the cabaret is one of multinational welcome. The choice of English and French in addition to the native tongue of German symbolizes how the rise of the Nazis is going to tear Europe apart and pit the native against the foreigners. The song acts a symbol of foreshadowing of the ominously unwelcoming shadow lurking over the characters.

The Kit Kat Klub

The title song promises that life is a cabaret where no prophets of doom can ruin your day. . The Master of Ceremonies promises that the cabaret is a place life is beautiful and you can leave your troubles behind. Nazis filling up the seats inside the Kit Kat Klub seems to contradict and disprove that notion. The Kit Kat Klub can therefore be seen as a symbol of two things at once. It can be said

to represent the notion of a utopian ideal where everybody is equal and conflict never penetrates. Or it can be seen as a place where ignorance prevails and the oblivious optimism it engenders creates dupes just waiting to be victimized. Or it can even be both at the same time.

The Girl in the Gorilla Costume

The musical number, "If You Could See Her" might well be somewhat confusing to some as familiarity with World War II drifts farther and farther away from the consciousness of audiences. Some might be moved to ask why is the M.C. dancing with a girl in a gorilla costume even if they understand the chilling final line "She wouldn't look Jewish at all." Why a gorilla? Why not a Scandinavian blonde? After all, isn't the point of the song about Nazis seeing a Jewish girl as the guy in love with her sees her? And wouldn't it make sense to make the girl look as far away from Jewish and as close to the Aryan ideal as possible? Yes, in a sense, that would a good decision. But according to Nazi ideology, the Jewish race were no better than animals. The song is asking the Nazis to see the girl through his eyes which means they are already looking at her through her eyes. The gorilla thus is a symbolic of the Nazi view of Jews as animals, but it also touches upon their rejection of Darwinian evolution a master race such as theirs could possibly have evolved from an ape. The Jewish race, sure...but not their "supreme" race.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

QUIZ

1. In the opening song 'Willkommen' many of the phrases are repeated in 3 different languages.

What languages are they?

Italian, German, and English

French, German, and Italian

French, English, and Italian

German, French, and English

2. In 'It Couldn't Please me More', what gift does Herr Schultz give Fraulein Schneider?

Diamonds

A Pineapple

Pearls

Roses

3. What color does Sally Bowles paint her nails?

red

green

pink

blue

4. Which character in the play appears in the most scenes, even if he or she doesn't speak (excluding members of the orchestra)?

Fraulein Schneider

Sally Bowles

Emcee

Clifford Bradshaw

5. What country is Sally Bowles originally from?

Germany

America

France

England

6. What years does this play take place during?

1987-1988

1940-1941

1929-1930

1937-1938

7. In 'If You Could See Her' the Emcee truthfully sings mainly of whom?

A Jewish woman

Sally Bowles

An ape

Helga

8. Why does Fraulein Schneider not marry Herr Schultz?

She is in love with someone else

They fight too much

He breaks her house's window

He is Jewish

9. Ernst Ludwig belongs to what group?

Boy Scouts

A shipping company

Cabaret boys

Nazis

10. At the end of the play, the Emcee is shown to be in a concentration camp. What is he shown to be there for?

Being Jewish and a homosexual

Being handicapped

Being a homosexual

Being Jewish

Answers

1. German, French, and English

2. A Pineapple

3. Green

4. Emcee

5. England

6. 1929-1930

7. A Jewish Woman

8. He is Jewish

9. Nazis

10. Being Jewish and a homosexual

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.

Have a look at the following posters from various productions of Cabaret. What do all the posters have in common? Which one is your favourite? How do they compare to the English Theatre Frankfurt's poster?





Pre-Show Activity

THEMATIC QUESTION: How do individuals respond to organized discrimination? **MATERIALS:** Papers and Pen. Optional: paper plates, cups, napkins, and prop menu; colored arm bands or badges to give to each group. **KNOW (Facts, Information, Vocabulary):** Improvisation (an unscripted scene discrimination). Adolf Hitler, Nazis, Cabaret (For more detailed background, students may read “The Rise of the Nazi Party” on pages 16-17 of this UPSTAGE Guide.) **UNDERSTAND (Comprehension of the big ideas):** Discrimination impacts all members of a society, but it is experienced differently depending on one’s status in the society. **DO (Active demonstration of learning):** Through guided improvisation, students will role-play as citizens of a fictional society that is becoming progressively more discriminatory against some of its citizens. **INCITING INCIDENT (The hook:)** Ask students to privately think about a time they, or someone they knew, faced discrimination because of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. Allow a few minutes for quiet reflection. Optionally, ask a few volunteers to share their experiences and feelings around it. **EXPOSITION (The vocabulary, concepts, and tools that**

will introduce learners to and allow them to investigate the thematic question.) “The musical Cabaret takes place in 1930s Germany, just as Hitler and the Nazi party were beginning to take power, but before the Holocaust. It was a complicated time for the Germans, and most people did not know what would happen when Hitler was in control. Today, we are going to use improvisation to explore what it feels like to live under a government that systematically discriminates against one group of people.” RISING ACTION: (Learners apply vocabulary, concepts, and tools to respond to the thematic question through a sequence of activities.) 1. Divide/Assign students into 4 groups. BLUE, RED, and YELLOW Families have 4 people each. Everyone else plays the RESTAURANT WORKERS. (Pre-arranged before class or randomized with through drawing) If using arm bands or badges, distribute them now. 2. Allow 3 minutes for Families to decide their characters’ relationships and Restaurant Workers to decide on jobs: Hosts, Waitpersons, or Cooks. 3. Setup room as Restaurant: 3 “tables,” a kitchen area, an “Entrance” (without leaving the classroom). Optionally give props to Restaurant Workers – Menus, plates, napkins, cups. 4. In a very official voice, announce: “DAY 1: “Everyone is equal in this society. It is dinner time, and we are in the restaurant. The BLUE, RED, and YELLOW families are all coming to the restaurant.” (Allow 3 minutes to improvise a normal day in the restaurant, where everyone is treated equally.) 5. Announce “DAY 2: “It’s a few months later and the YELLOW people have become very unpopular in the country. The RED people blame the YELLOW people for all the country’s problems. The BLUE people are undecided. Restaurant Workers can decide their own loyalty.” (Repeat dinner improvisation. Allow more time, about 5-7 minutes for students to explore different interactions based on the new circumstances.) 6. Announce DAY 3: “Now it’s a few months later. The RED people have won the elections and taken control of the country. All businesses are discouraged against serving the YELLOW people.” (Repeat dinner improvisation. Monitor student role-play carefully, and allow students to role-play discrimination scenarios, but stop if interactions escalate or become too upsetting for students. Allow 5-7 minutes.)

FALLING ACTION: (Learners reflect on the moment of truth, articulate their choices, and justify their responses to the thematic question.) ASK representative students from each group: How

would you describe the experience from your perspective? How did it change from DAY 1 to DAY 3? ASK: How do different people experience discrimination differently, within the same society? ASK: Why do you think some people responded differently than others? (Try to identify a few examples of people making different choices to the circumstances) DENOUEMENT: (Learners anticipate how their responses to the thematic question might be applicable in the future.) As you watch Cabaret, consider how different characters in the play respond to the rise of the Nazis in different ways. See if you can understand their point of view and their choices.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITY

THEMATIC QUESTION: How does a cabaret performer make a comment on current events?

MATERIALS: Weimar Cabaret; access to information on current events; name tag, hat, or suspenders to designate the Emcee, simple song lyrics and limericks printed KNOW (Facts, Information, Vocabulary): cabaret, conférencier, shock value, parody, fourth wall

UNDERSTAND (Comprehension of the big ideas): How cabaret performers used parody, shock value, and breaking the fourth wall to engage their audience in a topical exploration.

DO (Active demonstration of learning): Create and perform cabaret acts in the classroom-turned-cabaret.

INCITING INCIDENT (The hook): Learners engage in the investigation of the thematic question through an action or event. As students settle, teacher, wearing something that designates him or her the Emcee, says, in the style of an emcee: Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome to OUR cabaret! Begin interacting with students as if they are the audience, questioning: In Berlin in the thirties cabaret performers parodied Nazis. What should we parody? What's really on your

mind? Get responses, repeat them, and then conclude with something mildly shocking like: Politics, economics! So many choices! Perhaps Miley Cyrus? Shall I twerk?

EXPOSITION (The vocabulary, concepts, and tools that will introduce learners to and allow them to investigate the thematic question.) What did I just do that was similar to production of Cabaret you saw? (talk to audience, talk about politics, use humor, use shocking things) Scribe answers and ask students to keep these techniques in mind. Based on the production you saw, what topics do cabarets address? Scribe answers. Students read Weimar Cabaret resources,, highlighting or circling topics that cabarets addressed. Use this information to add to the list. Why do you think cabaret performers chose these topics?

RISING ACTION: (Learners apply vocabulary, concepts, and tools to respond to the thematic question through a sequence of activities.) • Individually, students list three current event topics they feel would make good cabaret topics. Popcorn out ideas, and land on one or two topics that resonate with the class. • Break students into groups of three or four. Give the groups three options for their cabaret act: a song, a dance, or a poem. Make a simple limerick and simple song lyrics available for adaptation. Give students time to create and rehearse their cabaret act. • Ask each group to name their act and create a set list on the board. Rearrange the classroom to create a stage and seating area.

MOMENT OF TRUTH: Learners demonstrate their understanding of the thematic question. Students perform their cabaret acts, with the teacher acting as conf rencier and introducing each act.

FALLING ACTION: Learners reflect on the moment of truth, articulate their choices, and justify their responses to the thematic question. When you were performing, how did you get the audience involved? When you were sitting the audience, how did the performers get you to think about this topic? Why do humans use humor and entertainment to talk about serious subjects?

DENOUEMENT: Learners anticipate how their responses to the thematic question might be applicable in the future. Where do we see the elements of cabaret in modern society? In our pop culture?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After seeing how the rise of the Nazis impacts the characters in *Cabaret*, consider these lines from Fräulein Schneider's song "What Would You Do?"

With a storm in the wind, what would you do? Suppose you're the one frightened voice Being told what the choice Must be, Go on, tell me, I will listen. What would you do if you were me?

Use a standing agree/disagree exercise, asking students to stand on either side of the room, or the middle, if they agree or disagree with the following statements:

- "Fräulein Schneider made the right choice not to marry Herr Schultz."
- "Cliff made the right choice to leave Berlin."
- "Sally made the right choice to ignore the events around her." (For each statement, ask a few students to explain their position)

Ask students to choose one of the major characters (Cliff, Sally, Fräulein Schneider, Herr Schultz) and answer the question: "What would you do if you were me?" Write a letter to one of the characters, giving advice on what you think they should do and why. Consider what it must have been like living in the 1930s, without having the historical perspective about Hitler and the Nazis that we have now. What did the people know then? What did they not know, that we know now? How does this lack of perspective affect their decisions? How can we relate to this?

Activities

1. In the process of re-imagining the characters and events first written by Isherwood and then rewritten for the stage by John Van Druten, the creators of *Cabaret* made a number of changes. Read *I am a Camera* by Van Druten, or *Goodbye to Berlin*, which can be found in a contemporary collection of Isherwood's work called *The Berlin Stories*. Explore the ways in which Masteroff, Ebb and Kander have altered the story and characters in staging *Cabaret*. Why do you suppose they chose to make these changes? What theatrical purpose do the changes serve?
2. Watch the 1972 film version of *Cabaret*. How is it the same as the stage version? How is it different?
3. The Historical Context section of this teacher's pack only touches only briefly on a number of topics that can be researched in greater depth. Some topics to explore are:
 - a. Germany in the era of the Weimar Republic
 - b. The rise of the Nazi party in 1930s Germany
 - c. The history of cabarets in the 1920s and 30s.
 - d. The role of the Berlin Institute of Sex Research in the historical movement towards civil rights for LGBTQ* people.The Jewish community in the Weimar Republic
Curriculum Connections English Language Arts Drama and Musical Theatre History of modern Europe Human Rights

ESSAY QUESTIONS AND SAMPLE ANSWERS

The plot of the musical is the flamboyant and bohemian tale of cabaret entertainers and gigolos whilst the sub-plot is concerned with the rise of a dangerous Fascist regime. How do the two plot lines intertwine?

The sub-plot intertwined with the central one both obviously and subtly. Throughout the musical we see more and more representatives of the Nazi regime, like the SS officers sitting in

the front row of the Kit Kat Klub. However, the more subtle weaving in of the rise of the Nazi regime is at its most impactful when it comes to the impending threat to the Jewish characters in the movie. Although their fate is not mentioned it is implicitly stated that they will be threatened (especially since they have money that the Nazis will steal) and that they need to plan either an escape or to be hidden in plain sight claiming to be Christians instead of Jews although this too will become impossible once their papers and ID are demanded. The fact that the SS officers are shown in the final scene foreshadows the fact that the Bohemian days of fun and games are numbered and that the Third Reich is already influencing every area of life in Berlin

This is a "fun" musical because of the familiar song and dance routines and the entertaining way in which the characters conduct their relationships with each other. However, it can also be seen as somewhat of a morality play. What are some of the serious issues dealt with under the guise of entertainment?

Sally is very free and easy and a genuine free spirit who wants to live for the moment and pay little regard to the future or the consequences of her actions or choices. She deals with a pregnancy outside of marriage which in that era was almost unheard of and was still a disgrace (remember, this is the age in which unwed mothers were sent away to the convent where nuns would take their newborns away for adoption regardless of the young mother's wishes) This is demonstrated by Jack's offering to marry her - if she wants to have the child marriage is going to be a necessity. Realizing that she does not see the role of stay at home mom in her future Sally decides to have an abortion - this would likely be a backstreet affair without proper medical follow-up or attention. We also see a lot of different relationships, most of which seem to be either for money or for convenience. There is not much true romantic love in this film. The art of being a gigolo (basically a man living off a richer woman) is highlighted and relationships seem to be for some kind of gain but rarely genuine. This is another of the moral questions the movie asks of the audience.

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