

ABSTRACT

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Directed By: Professor Karen Bradley, Head of MFA Dance
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This thesis is a reflection on the creation, cultivation, process and performance of Megan Morse Jans' original work *Not Leading Lady Material*, an interdisciplinary dance-theater piece presented in a style evocative of the cabarets of the Weimar Republic. The performance included song, storytelling and dance, and thematically explored intimacy, identity, and social/political disruption all while eliminating the fourth wall and inviting the audience on a journey through personal narrative. This paper examines the navigation and weaving together of different expressive disciplines, as well as the challenges presented in the performance of both original and copyrighted material. The result was a dynamic performance that engaged the audience in an evening of laughter, participation, and vulnerability.

NOT LEADING LADY MATERIAL

By

Megan Morse Jans

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
MFA in Dance
2015

Advisory Committee:
Professor Karen Bradley, Chair
Sara Pearson
Sharon Mansur

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Dedication

Dear Kevin Boggs,

I learned of your illness on the final day of my performance of Not Leading Lady Material. I was devastated to hear that not even two weeks before the show, you were suddenly diagnosed with end-stage liver cancer and had only days or weeks to live. I hoped that you would make it through the weekend, so that I could visit you in hospice and tell you in person how incredible your mentorship was to me. I know I thanked you in an email after our time in the studio together, but I feel that I never properly thanked you for how profoundly you impacted this project.

You passed away at 4:30pm on March 13, my final performance of this project. You were surrounded by your friends, family and loved ones. Our entire community grieves for you. We are so sad, but I cannot help but look hopefully at the responses to your illness and death. Thousands of Facebook posts of gratitude for your presence and guidance, hundreds of people gathering to celebrate your life, and so many people passing around stories, which strikes me as the most appropriate way to offer thanks to the universe for knowing you.

I decided that I would dedicate my last performance to you. Since I could not say thank you in person, I could certainly use everything that you taught me to create a warm, intimate, vulnerable and truthful evening of storytelling. I have to tell you, it was a success.

For me as a performer, all of the elements of the show came together on the final night. Perhaps your passing gave me the much-needed perspective about all of

the twists and turns of this project. Ultimately, there was a better reason for me to perform this material, than just getting it “right”. It became an offering of thanks.

At the end of the night, I commandeered the microphone once more. I wanted this audience to know that this night was special and different from the others. I told them that there were many collaborators in this project, and that I wished I could thank each and every one of them. I told the audience that you had mentored me in the studio down the hall, and that every moment and story in this piece started as a conversation with you. I told them that I was never able to thank you properly, so I wanted to send you off in song, but I needed their help. We sang together: Kevin goodnight...Kevin goodnight...goodnight Kevin, goodnight Kevin, I'll see you in my dreams.

I have to believe that in some way you were present or aware of all of this. I am no longer a religious person, much to the chagrin of my mother. I want to believe that the energy of our beings is scattered and given back to the universe, but retains a memory of who we were and how we impacted others. Perhaps a little of your energy was present with us on that night. Dr. Laurie Meer attended the final performance and she said to me that she could see you in my storytelling. That was perhaps the most touching thing she could say to me in that moment. I think you would be proud.

You and I were only acquaintances, and yet I am so deeply affected by your death. In fact, there is a part of me that is questioning why I am so affected. The answer I keep coming to is that this project is the most authentic piece that I have created at this point in my life. Each person who floated in and out of my periphery,

no matter how brief an interaction it may have been, was a lynch pin. You were part of a perfect storm of mentors and collaborators that I needed in order to have the courage to be honest and truthful, and to be able to “step into the arena” (Brown 2010) as the great Dr. Brené Brown would say.

So for all of this, I thank you and wish you peace, painlessness, and joy as you watch all of the fruits of your labor here in this life, from the other side. Bon voyage.

Sincerely,

Megan Morse Jans

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my incredible committee chair, Professor Karen Bradley, for her continuous support of this project and for her grounding presence, especially during moments where my own self-doubts began to creep in. I will use your advice to breathe and mentally practice for the rest of my performing life.

In addition, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my committee members Sharon Mansur and Sara Pearson. Your continuous support, especially during the production process, was invaluable to me, as was your faith in me as a performer.

Thank you to the faculty of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland College Park, who have guided me over these past three years and have shown me the breadth of my practice, and places within myself that I had no idea existed.

To the production staff and design collaborators of TDPS, I could not be more thankful for your role in bringing my vision to life. Cary Gillett, Cate Barger, Ruth Anne Watkins, Moriamo Akibu, Jessica Kerns, Robert Croghan, Rob Siler, and Dan Patrick Leano, Jeff Dorfman...you are all rockstars.

Thank you to my amazing dramaturgical team Andrew Neal Barker and Christina Banalopoulou for your dedication and passionate commitment to this project. You both were my sanity, my sounding boards, my therapists and friends through this process and I am eternally grateful.

I would like to express a special thank you to my amazing voice teacher Dr. Madeline Miskie, for showing me the potential that lives in my voice and stretching

me in ways I previously did not have the courage to stretch. To my musical collaborator Michael Langlois, thank you for your generosity of time, energy, spirit and ideas. Kevin Brown, my dear Emcee, I owe you a debt of gratitude for your help, feedback and collaboration. Thank you, my friends, for being a part of this crazy journey.

There are two organizations that helped me immeasurably during the research and creative processes of this project. Those organizations are LaTiDo DC and SpeakEasy DC. My experiences performing and workshop-ing with these organizations helped me to find a kind of vulnerability in my performance that truly allowed me to connect with my audience on a deeper level than I have ever experienced before.

I am fortunate to have the most supportive family an artist could hope to have. A special thank you goes out to my husband, Michael Jans, to my son Jacob, to my parents, to my in-laws, to my aunts and uncles, and to my grandparents for supporting me in pursuing a graduate education in dance. It has been a team effort and all of you have earned this MFA as much as I have.

I would like to say thank you to all of my friends who have dealt with all of the joys and challenges that have accompanied this pursuit. You have been present for the midnight panics as well as the triumphs and victories. I would not have been able to achieve this without you.

Lastly, I would like to thank my students, both current and former. You have all provided so much insight and inspiration to me. I am grateful that I have had the

opportunity to be a part of your artistic journey and I wish you well as you go out into the world as artists and human beings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I have learned to do many things. The majority of my time is spent dancing, teaching dance and mothering an amazing, little boy named Jacob. My artistic lineage is not exactly what one might expect from someone who has made a career out of performing, making and teaching contemporary/modern dance. My first endeavor into the performing arts was learning to play the piano at age eleven as well as singing in the church choir. In my teen years, I added the violin and musical theater. It was not until I was an undergraduate musical theater student at Kent State University, that my formal training as a dancer began.

While studying theater, dance took me wholly and completely. I was so fascinated by my shifting and changing body as I learned to dance, that I abandoned music. I devoted all of my energy to learn how to be a dancer and dance-maker. For twelve years, I chose to focus solely on my dance practice, until I was offered the opportunity of performing in a musical again.

It was during that process that I rediscovered my love of singing and my love of making music. As I continued in my journey of vocal rediscovery, I felt the foundations of my hard-earned dance practice begin to shake. At that time, I had just committed to my graduate studies in dance at the University of Maryland College Park, and I was concerned that I was yet again, choosing to abandon music. Fortunately, after my vocal abilities were discovered at UMD, I was nurtured as an interdisciplinary artist and the walls between my practices began to crumble.

The first incarnation of my thesis project was a large-scale, group dance inspired by choral singing and movement choirs. At the same time that I was

hatching this idea, which I originally called *Making Noise*, I concurrently began working on putting together an independent project. This independent project was a cabaret show. I was working with a few musician friends and we were scheming as to how to get this show produced in the next year. The original cabaret project had no dance in it, and was an evening of music. At that time, I had not even considered my interest in cabaret to be congruent with my choreographic life.

In the summer of 2013, I took a trip to Tel Aviv and everything changed. I traveled there to spend 16 days immersing myself in Gaga Technique with Ohad Naharin. My original research interests when I entered the University of Maryland, were in embodiment and somatic/dance practices. While I was there, I spent an extraordinary amount of time in deep somatic practice and personal reflection. One morning as I was walking beside the Mediterranean Sea on my way to class, it struck me...nothing is separate. My dancing is not separate from my singing, so why should my interest in cabaret be separate from my choreographic endeavors?

My inner somatic devotee wishes that I could attribute this realization to my immersion in Gaga technique. It is a delicious practice, especially in the heat of summer in Tel Aviv, Israel. We, a group of over three hundred dancers from all over the world, practiced for hours in studios with large windows that opened toward the Mediterranean. The intention of Gaga practice is to guide the dancer on tour of their own body in research for new and interesting movement patterns. It is somatic in nature because it taps in to the energetic and the emotional layers of the body in addition to the physical layers of the body. However, while the experience was

extremely revealing and enjoyable, I cannot credit it for turning on the cabaret light for me.

I, after some time and removal from the experience, think it was more so the trip itself that began the de-compartmentalization of my practices. I was alone, for sixteen days with my thoughts and my body, on the other side of the world. I felt strangely isolated even though I was spending large amounts of time with others, moving and conversing. Perhaps the realization happened because I discovered that instead of immersing myself in someone else's ideas, what I actually wanted was to focus on my own ideas.

This felt like waking up. My body was waking up, my mind was waking up and my spirit was waking up. Could I create something that explores all of these things that I love? Could I make a piece that incorporated dance and music? After all, I happened to be in the perfect environment to experiment. My thesis project would be supported by a group of faculty, production and advising mentors. None of these mentors would allow me to make a fool out of myself, and all of them believed in my abilities and pursuits. If I was actually going to get up on a stage in a cabaret setting, all of the necessary elements were aligning to make that happen.

Statement of Project

Not Leading Lady Material is an intimate, three-person, cabaret style performance that explores the relationship between the audience and the performer. The performance includes song, storytelling and movement. Thematically, the piece examines intimacy, identity, and social/political disruption all while eliminating the fourth wall and inviting the audience on a journey through my personal narrative.

Why cabaret? Why intimacy?

My first exposure to cabaret-style performance, was in 2000 when I was hired as the assistant choreographer for a production of the musical *Cabaret* in Cleveland, Ohio. Through my work on this production, I learned about the cabarets of the Weimar Republic and I became enamored with the style, the openness, and the world of the pre-Nazi Germany. That project was my first introduction to the musical *Cabaret*, to Christopher Isherwood, to Kander and Ebb, and to dramaturgy. I fell head over heels in love with the show. I vividly remember our dramaturg presenting photographs and stories about people who traded entire wheelbarrows full of marks for a single loaf of bread. It was a desperate time and out of that desperation came the immense creativity of the cabarets. The cabarets provided respite from the vast poverty and dangerous political climate, as well as an accepting environment for those whose lives were relegated to the fringes of society. In that environment thrived an eclectic collection of artist/experimenters who pushed the boundaries of performance and created a unique and enduring legacy.

I am a contemporary/modern dancer and most of my choreography has existed within that style for the majority of my career, with the exception of the times I have collaborated theatrically on musicals, reviews and opera. While in graduate school, I developed a desire to explore story-telling, singing, narrative and more theatrical forms of expression, which in turn lead to my revived interest in cabaret performance.

As a young theater major, before I made the transition to studying dance full time, I was immersed in Stanislavsky's Method Acting approach to performance. My

experience of Method Acting is not dissimilar to my experience of performance in the context of Modern Dance. Both are what I would describe as environmental, meaning that both create an environment in the performance space, and the audience experiences the performance as a third party, voyeuristically. To be truthful...I never got the hang of Method Acting. I never understood it, I was never able to fully integrate Method technique into my performance practice, and I pretty much faked my way through my theater studies. I was consistently told that I should not make direct eye contact with the audience, that I should build a character that was not me, and that I should think, act and behave the way that my character would. This never worked for me. However, when I was just myself, telling stories at a party, I felt a connection and I felt alive.

My interest in an intimate relationship between the performer and the audience is directly influenced by my choices as a consumer of art. As a consumer, I am much more likely to attend a performance that is highly theatrical. As a practitioner, I have done everything from entertainment to performance art. I choose to sustain my personal practice through contemporary/modern dance training, but I rarely spend money to see performances of contemporary/modern dance unless I have a personal connection to the performers and creators of the works being presented. The reason I do not actively consume dance performances is because I rarely feel a connection to the piece or performers if they are not personal friends or acquaintances. As an audience member, I desire to be spoken to, to be addressed, to find commonality, and dare I say...to be entertained.

I am fortunate; I have a wide comfort zone as a performer. I have both contemporary and classical western dance training. I studied theater in my undergraduate education in addition to dance, and I have been studying classical singing for the past two and a half years. I am comfortable using my voice in addition to my movement and have been fortunate to collaborate as a dancer-maker/performer in operas, musical theater and dance performances.

Typically, I am cast in pieces that explore what I would refer to as controversial material. For example, my most recent role prior to *Not Leading Lady Material*, was Wendla in *Spring Awakening*. Throughout the course of the musical, Wendla is relieved of her virginity, subsequently finds herself pregnant and dies because of a botched abortion. Before that, I performed the role of Janet in *The Rocky Horror Show*, and many other original works that used modern dance as a platform to express social commentary. However, no one has ever asked me to be myself on stage. I was always the embodiment of another character or another idea.

I, perhaps with a bit of hubris, thought it would be easier to be myself on stage rather than to create a character. I was mistaken.

During the year and a half process of creating *Not Leading Lady Material*, I came face to face with exactly how hard it is to stand in front of an audience and reveal a truth about myself. The act of personal storytelling is an act of extreme vulnerability. I struggled with this almost as much as I struggled to learn the German pronunciation of one of the songs I chose to perform, *Berlin Im Licht* by Kurt Weill. I experienced bouts of anger and questioned why I would make a decision to do something that left me so bare.

I entered the studio for many hours alone with my fears, hesitations and vulnerability. Sometimes, I was even productive. Other times, I watched cat videos on YouTube. However, the experience of spending a great amount of time with the materials of my own life, was ultimately therapeutic. I began to see the threads that connected these stories to the song repertoire I chose and I was able to use movement as a way to weave these initially disparate parts together.

The truth is, even though I have a wide range of tricks up my sleeve, never once did this piece make its way inside my comfort zone. It stretched me till the very end. Perhaps that is the most successful part of this process for me as an artist. I did not arm myself with any of my usual weaponry of mastery, I knew that was not possible from the beginning. Instead, I did what I could to be honest and true in the moment. I did my best, which under the duress of a constantly shifting production, was not always great, but it was truly authentic.

Definitions

I have been immersed in academic and artistic inquiry for the past three years. During this time I have adopted several terms into the language that I use to describe my work. However, during the course of writing this document, I have discovered that I am using these terms in slightly different ways than their generally accepted definitions. This section clarifies my use of these terms in the context of this project.

Authenticity: truthfulness, self-inclusivity, and a particular honesty of form and intention. While all of my choreographic work has been a reflection of who I am in the moment of creation, the work I have created for this project has a different level

of honesty. Rather than adjusting my movement and content to fit a certain style or aesthetic, I have done my best to create this content without any particular stylistic alignment to my previous works of contemporary/modern dance. This work is more authentic, because it navigates my entire artistic lineage rather than only a small part of my practice.

Subversion: bucking of the norm, disruption of the established patterns and structures of power, deliberately adopting the opposite identity of that which is socially expected of someone. In this performance, I believe that singing and storytelling subverts the expectation of audience members that dancers do not voice themselves. I also believe that by adopting personas for this performance I was able to subvert the established norms of motherhood, marriage and style.

Fourth Wall: the space between the performer and the audience. In my conversations about the fourth wall with other graduate students and faculty members, it has come to my attention that many seem to regard the fourth wall as an invisible, spatial boundary that exists in the performance space to separate the performance from the spectators. For me, the fourth wall has become a somewhat more metaphorical idea. I tend to think of the fourth wall as being the emotional and energetic distance between the performer and the audience. So while more traditional views of breaking this barrier might involve the physical action of a performer crossing the boundary of the performance space and traveling into the audience space, I believe that it is possible to energetically break the fourth wall without having to cross any spatial

delineation. In this performance, I attempted to do this by directly addressing the audience during moments of storytelling, performing presentational interpretations of songs, and creating opportunities for the audience to become directly involved in the performance by having them sing and dance in their seats. I also tried to break the fourth wall emotionally by embracing a more vulnerable approach to my content sourcing and performance. In essence, I was breaking my own personal fourth wall in order to try to facilitate a stronger connection with the audience.

Social/Political Disruption: a disturbance of the expectations for one's identity. For me, this deals with my identity as a woman and the feeling of voicelessness I have experienced. Throughout my life there has been a series of events and experiences that has left me feeling voiceless and without personal agency. I do not wish to write about these experiences in detail, however it is safe to say that they are common experiences of otherness that most women in western cultures have had. It is the imposed societal identity of femininity and motherhood that I wish to disrupt with my performances. That imposed identity consists of the quiet, sexless mother with no ownership of her body. Instead, the idea of femininity and motherhood that I incorporate into my work consists of bold sexual empowerment, tenderness, vulnerability, and powerful agency of form.

Agency: empowerment, the capacity to make choices that directly challenge societal norms.

Chapter 2: Research/Investigations

Early on in the process of creating this piece, the book *The Cabaret* by Lisa Appignanesi was recommended to me as a potential resource for this project. In this book, I found a comprehensive history of cabaret performance as well an informative guide through the traditions of the cabaret. Even from the beginning stages of this project, I was interested in the function of the cabarets. I asked myself, what purpose did the cabarets serve? Why did the traditions evolve the way they did? What is the significance of the social-political climate that contextualizes them? Is there any correlation with my own social-political experience that I can draw upon in the creation of this piece?

My next step was to interview a cabaret singer. My advisor, Karen Bradley, connected me with a well-known DC cabaret singer named Sally Martin. I interviewed her at a café in Washington, DC. We spoke for ninety minutes about her background and experience as a cabaret performer. What was most interesting to me about our conversation was that she left me with a warning. She said:

“Audiences want to be entertained!! They want to have fun. Too many cabaret artists approach it too intellectually. No matter how much of a personal catharsis you experience as the performer, you still want your audience to have fun. You, as an artist, want to reveal your essence...but you don't want to reveal too much.” (Martin 2014)

This riding of the line between revelation and mystery became a constant personal conversation as I was sourcing material and shaping the performance.

After reading *The Cabaret* and after my interview with Sally, I was beginning to understand that the environment, function and purpose of cabaret performance is drastically different from my experience in Musical Theater and as a dancer. I felt that it was becoming increasingly important that I actually participate in a cabaret performance, so I began researching cabarets in the Washington, DC area. I decided to submit audition materials to an organization called LaTiDo that hosts weekly cabaret events featuring musical theater artists and spoken word artists. I was selected and given a ten-minute, two-song performance slot on July 14, 2014 at the bar hosting the event, The Black Fox Lounge. I met with the piano player and went over my two songs: *Dance Ten Looks Three* from *A Chorus Line* and *They Just Keep Moving The Line* from the television show *SMASH*. I waited patiently as the other performers offered themselves to the audience, and I eagerly took the microphone when it was my turn. I sang my two songs, but I also chose to tell two stories as well. It was the first time that I was in front of an audience, revealing a truth about myself.

I told two stories about being a performer, both involving a failure. The first was about my failure to meet what I considered the standards of body type during the beginning of my professional performing career, the second was about a failure during an educational performance experience. As I told these stories and sang my songs, I experienced something I had yet to experience in a direct way with an audience. I experienced their laughter and I realized that they laughed not at me because I was funny, but instead in solidarity with me because they understood.

I have been a performer for twenty-two years and have had profoundly connected performing experiences, but this was different. Perhaps it was due to the

nature of my content or perhaps it was due to the intimacy of the space, I might also attribute it to performing in front of an audience full of performers. However, in this moment all of the elements aligned and before me was the grandest revelation I needed in order to create this project: I want to be a performer who offers the audience solidarity, intimacy, commonality, and authenticity. As they laughed at the carefully constructed and choreographed punch lines I created for these stories, I realized that I needed nothing more than my truth. I needed no fancy tricks, no expensive production, no high notes, no low notes, no extreme extensions, what I needed was the courage to be vulnerable.

Dr. Brené Brown, in her TEDx presentation *The Power of Vulnerability*, speaks about the nature of vulnerability, shame and courage. She defines courage as, “to tell the story of who you are with your whole heart,” (Brown 2010). I pondered this, and its potential implications for my performance. Usually when performing, I arm myself to the teeth with rehearsal and as much mastery as I can attain. Dr. Brown spoke words that resonated with me as an audience member and subsequently disrupted my usual ideas about performing. I wondered if I actually had the courage to be vulnerable in front of an audience? I wondered if I could walk into what she describes as the arena and shed my armor rather than increasing it? How would that impact my performance and my audience’s ability to relate to my performance? If I do this, might they actually get it? How would this affect my creative process and decision-making when it came to deciding upon content for my piece?

While my nature is gregarious and outgoing, I am a rare INJF personality type on the Myers Briggs spectrum of assessment. I am classified as introverted, intuitive,

judging and feeling. I am deeply private, although I may not appear to be at first glance. I have learned to function, perform my personality, and to do the dance of social, educational and professional interacting. However, there is another side of me that is so deeply sensitive that I cannot bear to expose it. There is a lot of myself I do not share, and I am intensely private about my creative process. Sharing my creative process has probably been one of the most challenging aspects of graduate school for me. I usually do not share my work, even for feedback until I feel that it is at some level of completeness.

Prior to my experience at LaTiDo, I had become quite adept at keeping myself out of my creative work. For years I created dances on other dancers, only stepping into my own choreography very rarely. It took an experience of extreme connection in the context of performance to show me that I needed to face my fear of vulnerability and honestly share myself with the audience in order to facilitate the kind of connection that I believed was possible.

The evening of the cabaret at LaTiDo, I happen to re-meet a DC storyteller named Kevin Boggs. I first met Kevin at the beginning of my second year in the MFA program at UMD when I participated in a workshop with the local storytelling organization SpeakEasy DC. The workshop was terrific and sparked in me a desire to incorporate personal storytelling into my thesis project. The night of the cabaret, Kevin happened to be performing as well. After the performance we struck up a conversation and I told him about my project. I asked if he would be willing to help me develop the stories I was planning on incorporating into my thesis performance, and he readily agreed.

We made arrangements and met at The Clarice on Friday August 8, 2014 for two hours. For those two hours, the seeds for every single moment of storytelling that ended up in my performance of *Not Leading Lady Material*, were sown. I told Kevin my stories and he helped me structure and shape them. He asked me many insightful questions that evening, perhaps the most important of which was why I wanted to share? I answered him by explaining that my experience as a contemporary/modern dancer has left me feeling disconnected from my audience. I had become tired of hearing the same feedback over and over again from audiences: I didn't get it, but you were really beautiful up there. I longed for a connection that was deeper. I had no desire to spoon feed the audience content, but I did have a desire to experience the same kind of solidarity that I have previously experienced with the cabaret at LaTiDo. He nodded and appeared to understand. We kept working long past our agreed upon time and my mind was left spinning for days after.

Chapter 3: The Process

For my Research Based Choreography class taught by Sharon Mansur, I began keeping what she refers to as a Creative Process Book, or CPB. I filled it with odds and ends...ramblings about cabaret singers...random anecdotes about my son Jacob...thoughts about how I am choosing to define myself as an artist in this moment.

Now I must issue a disclaimer: I have never been one to journal at all. I never kept a personal journal and I have been reluctant, yet willing, as a student to journal my experiences for my instructors. However, this was a kind of journal that was not only exciting, but was compelling for me to keep. It didn't have to follow any sort of logical format and I could choose to put in it whatever indiscriminate bit of information that struck me as something I might want to consider. I fell in love with my CPB and it has proven to be one of the most valuable creative tools for me in this project. My CPB became a dramaturgical container for the beginning thoughts and the sourcing of material, which evolved into *Not Leading Lady Material*.

CPB Excerpts

The book itself.

Image 1.



9-7-13

“Experiencing a little bit of creative nostalgia.”

“My dragon is invisible, with snaggle teeth and snowflakes for his breath. He sits in my room and protects us while we snuggle and sleep so no monsters get into our dreams.” ~Jacob Jans

9-10-13

“The cardinal sins of cabaret:

- ~Ignoring the audience
- ~Choosing the wrong venue
- ~Choosing the wrong wardrobe
- ~Trusting electronics to do what you cannot
- ~Booking the room before you have a show
- ~Making a show too structured.
- ~Including too much patter

~Trying to win an award or good review

~Too much hype

~Singing “Cabaret” at your cabaret”

<http://www.cabarethotlineonline.com/TipsMistakes101.shtml>

11-4-14 “Not Leading Lady Material” (This ended up being the title of my piece)

Image 2.



After the conclusion of Sharon Mansur’s Research Based Choreography class and after the compilation of the material in my CPB, I decided to turn to a more concrete record of information. I decided to start experiencing the music. Because my previous singing experience had been limited to the American Musical Theater cannon, I enlisted the help of my voice teacher Dr. Madeline Miskie, to aid in my navigation of composer Kurt Weill. I consider Weill to be one of the most notable composers of the Weimar Republic cabarets. His songs of that era are iconic.

I asked Madeline to bring in some of Kurt Weill’s repertoire so that we could begin experimenting with them in the studio. At a voice lesson with her in the spring of 2014, she agreed and then ominously declared: Ok...but I am going to bring in something that is really going to stretch you. I was both anxious and excited.

She brought two Weill songs for me to learn: *Je Ne T'aime Pas* and *Berlin Im Licht*. What followed was a year-long journey of learning the technique, the melody, the pronunciation and ultimately the abandonment of form in order to tap into the aesthetic of cabaret performance. Oh...and I learned to sing in French and German. These two songs became my foundation and the initial framework of the structure I created for *Not Leading Lady Material*.

Dramaturgy

Early on in my process, dramaturgy became extremely important to me. For my initial proposal, I enlisted the help of Khalid Long, PHD candidate in Performance Studies. He helped me organize and refine my thoughts for my thesis proposal, however he could not be involved for the duration of my project, due to his studies. Later I was paired with PHD candidate Christina Mbanalopoulou by Dr. Faedra Carpenter, and I also formed a partnership with dramaturg Andrew Neal Barker. This triangular dramaturgical arrangement, ultimately served me extraordinarily well due to the collaborative yin and yang perspectives they were able to provide me.

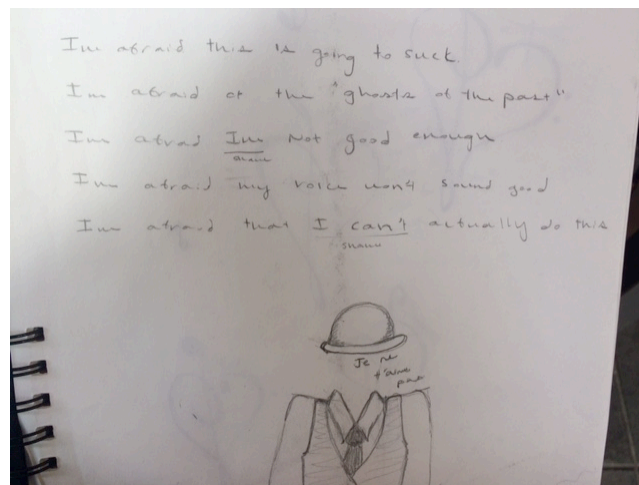
On April 17, 2014, I met with Christina in the studio to speak about my piece. Now let me first say that Christina is wonderfully supportive and kind, and throughout this process has become not only a collaborator, but also a dear friend. I cannot remember exactly what I said to initiate our conversation, but it must have very quickly turned to my insecurities as a creator and a performer. In my CPB I wrote,

“She (Christina) asked me what I am afraid of. I answered, ‘I’m afraid it will suck.’ She said you have to let your fears live in the room with you. You

don't have to confront them, but you can let them live in the space.” (Jans 2014)

That evening, I wrote down my fears in my CPB so that I could let them physically live in the space with me as I created this piece. My fears at that time were: “I am afraid this is going to suck. I’m afraid of the ghosts of the past. I’m afraid I am not good enough. I am afraid my voice won’t sound good. I’m afraid that I can’t actually do this,” (Jans 2014). I also drew a picture in my notes that evening, which I now realize, became the first incarnation of my Tramp persona.

Image 3.



Persona

In my field notes for my interview with Sally Martin, I wrote that I asked her whether or not she ever used the idea of personas when she is performing. Her answer was only one word, “definitely.” (Martin 2014) I define persona as an exaggeration of an aspect of one’s own personality that can be assumed and performed. For me, persona is a way of distilling my personality into various and somewhat archetypal characters or roles. What I have found in my experimentation

with persona is that my audiences seem to be able to digest content more easily if it is filtered through a persona that is not totally multi-dimensional. Or, they are easily shocked when a persona delivers content that does not match their expectation. The personas that I ended up creating and utilizing for this performance were The Dame, a bold and brassy performer, The Tramp, a silent and tragic character, and The Mother, a vulnerable and honest person navigating parenthood.

I became interested in the idea of creating personas because of my personal insecurities about being the main performer in this work. I kept questioning myself as to whether or not I was actually interesting enough to create an evening length performance about my own life that could engage an audience. After all, when I take a look at my life, most of it, with the exception of my experience as a performer, is extraordinarily ordinary. I am a mother, I was married at a young age, I teach dance to children and college students, and the majority of my thought process is dominated by figuring out what to feed my family every night on a tight budget.

Shortly after my performance at the Washington DC cabaret organization LaTiDo, I learned of the passing of theater maven Elaine Stritch. I was familiar with her work in musical theater, in particular her work with Sondheim on Company, and I decided to learn more about her. I stumbled across a YouTube video of a 2002 performance of her one-woman show *Elaine Stritch At Liberty*. I watched it again and again and I became fascinated by her demeanor, by her candor and by her connection to her audience. It was then that I noticed a common theme in her narratives, failure.

She cleverly disguised her professional failures through humor and her brassy demeanor. It was brilliant. I wanted to filter my own stories through this type of filter, so I invented the persona of The Dame.

The Dame persona is not only inspired by Elaine Stritch, but other famous dames as well, such as Julie Wilson, Bette Middler, Ethel Merman, Eartha Kitt, and Marlene Deitrich. The Dame persona tells jokes, recounts her flops, is unapologetic, and is not afraid of profanity or promiscuity. Into her, I distilled the most authentically cabaret parts of myself that I could find. She sings the repertoire that clearly tells of her own adventures, and she is not afraid to scare the audience with her intensity. Initially, she danced a jazzy soft-shoe, however due to time and pacing of the piece, her dances were cut. Instead, she moves lithely through gesture and invocation.

Image 4.



The second persona I created was The Tramp. Inspired by Charlie Chaplain's tragicomical character The Little Tramp in the movie *The Kid*. I had already decided on the song repertoire for The Tramp when my teacher Dr. Madeline Miskie brought *Berlin Im Licht* and *Je Ne T'aime Pas* by Kurt Weill into the studio for me to learn. Inspired by silent movies, my first decision was to give The Tramp persona rules. First, The Tramp is male. The early cabarets and the cabarets of the Weimar Republic contain a rich history of experimenting with gender. In her 1930 film *Morocco*, Marlene Dietrich recaptures the spirit of the German cabarets with a rendition of *Give Me A Man Who Does Things*, sung in French. She performs the piece dressed in a man's tuxedo and kisses a female audience member on the lips (Dietrich 1930). The Tramp persona does not speak, but can sing. However he can sing in French or German. The Tramp, when not singing, can only express himself through movement.

Image 5.



The final persona in *Not Leading Lady Material*, is named The Mother. When hatching this project, I did not have a name for her. I jokingly referred to her as Just Me, for many months. The Mother persona was renamed by my first costume designer, Sarah Kost.

The Mother persona is a container for my complex experiences of allowing the “Too-Good Mother to Die” (Estes 1992). Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés describes the Too-Good Mother as, “the milk-teeth mother, the blessed one every baby needs in order to gain a toehold in the psychic world of love,” (Estes 1992). She is perfection, the über-mom, and the mom that never forgets about birthday parties or school projects. I began my journey of motherhood wanting desperately to be the Too-Good Mother, but as Dr. Estés points out in *Women Who Run With The Wolves*, in many forms of cultural mythology the Too-Good Mother does always dies before her child grows into adulthood. She is usually replaced by something else that is a device or symbol of intuition. She also could not live in me.

The Mother is a persona that I could use not only to communicate the great dichotomy of voice-fullness verses voiceless-ness that I have experienced as a mother, but also to shock. My persona would not be the jeans and sweatshirt-wearing mother that has become synonymous with the image of motherhood in our society. This persona would be the empowered mother with supreme agency of her form. She speaks frankly about her son and husband and does not mince words when it comes to how they have made her feel great joy and great disappointment. She wears lingerie in the performance, because she is the truest disruption in the show.

Image 6.



Disruption

A chance conversation in our graduate office made me think about appropriateness in a new way. I was speaking with one of my office-mates; the

conversation was sexual in nature. The person with whom I was speaking concluded her story and I began to tell a story in response to hers. Midway through my response to her, she said to me: aren't you somebody's mother?

This stopped me in my tracks. Yes, I am mother to a young boy, but I am also an autonomous human being. This and several other similar conversations began playing over and over again in my mind. I asked myself the question, why is it inappropriate for me to speak with sexual agency because I also happen to be a mother?

My theory is that there is actually a simple way to break down appropriateness into an equation. The equation that I have created is: identity + expectation = appropriateness. If your identity matches the expectation of others that is already culturally in place, then you are appropriate. If your identity does not meet the expectation of others, then you have violated the appropriateness equation and you are deemed inappropriate.

My identity as a mother sublimated any other aspect of myself in my friend's mind. I believe that is because when I decided to have a child, my agency was culturally transferred to my child. Our cultural view of motherhood, in American society, is that the focus of the parent is solely on the child. We are expected to sacrifice the parts of our selves that are deemed less worthy than motherhood, ie- sexuality and autonomy.

I feel this is an extremely singular view of woman. However, it strongly affected how I started to view the personas I was creating for this work. I wanted to

create a disruption of expectations for my audience. The easiest creative disruption to decide upon was The Mother disruption.

I wanted to speak frankly about my experiences of motherhood both joyful and challenging. I wanted to be able to express the experience of feeling silenced yet strangely empowered by motherhood through movement. Ultimately what I decided was to perform the movement and stories of this persona in lingerie. To me, it represented a total disruption of form, content and presentation. Mothers do not wear lingerie. Or at least, not appropriate mothers.

The other two personas were a bit more challenging to disrupt. The Dame persona is disruptive by nature, so I decided to place her disruption in her narrative. The famous dames that inspired this section rarely assumed traditional structures in their personal lives. So I incorporated marriage and parenthood into The Dame's narrative arc.

The Tramp also presented some challenges in the realm of disruption. Playing with gender is already disruptive to expectation. However, I wanted to take it further. I decided that the disruption for The Tramp would be a stylistic disruption. In this section we broke completely from the iconic style of the cabaret, and moved into the abstract. This narrative arc would include a trip into the contemporary through movement and soundscape. I would leave the framework of the song repertoire in place, but I would create a stylistic break in the middle of the section. I also decided to incorporate a device to facilitate the stylistic break, in the form of an unexpected letter delivered to The Tramp. This letter is meant to evoke a sense of painful

nostalgia, discomfort and foreboding in the otherwise established gaiety of the cabaret.

Micro and Macro Movement Life

Early on in my rehearsal process, one of my committee members, Sharon Mansur, brought up an interesting idea. She asked me what the micro-movement life of my personas was, especially when I was singing? I had been developing choreography for each of the personas and their corresponding sections and I wanted a bridge to connect the song and storytelling lives to the movement lives of each of the personas.

I define micro movement life as the natural, signature movement patterns that live in the bodies of my personas. In short, micro movement life is the innate movement identity that each one of us has. It is the movement that differentiates each one from the other. Macro movement life is the choreography that I created for each persona.

In order to discern the micro movement lives of the personas, I started to try to pay attention to my natural movement habits as I was learning the song repertoire. When I sang *Pirate Jenny*, I noticed that I had an instinctual concavity in my torso. Sharon observed a grounded, spiraling, sway when I sang *They Just Keep Moving The Line*, and mentor Alvin Mayes detected a downward and directional energy during *Berlin Im Licht*. So I spent time with these patterns and allowed them to exaggerate themselves within my movements and subsequently allowed them to bleed into my more choreographic moments as well.

My choreographic invention came from a similar process, except that I was intentionally exaggerating these micro movement patterns in an attempt to link the micro and the macro. My macro movement choreography came from a place of deep meditation and examination. Honestly in the beginning of this choreographic process, I was not sure where to start. So I decided to take a look at a few of my older choreographic phrases. I examined phrases from before and during my graduate studies as a jumping off point. This meditation on my movement memories helped me experience my own patterning just enough to spring board me into a new direction.

My new direction choreographically was to try to interrupt my habitual choreographic decision-making. In essence I was trying to disrupt myself. I would feel deliberately tap into what I would feel as my usual choreographic instinct, and I would try to take myself into a different direction. The result of this process was a set of phrases that I was able to continuously manipulate and fit to my performance intention. While the choreography was set, I was able to play with it a little each time I performed it; which was extremely gratifying as a performer.

The Script

It has been my intention from the beginning of this process that *Not Leading Lady Material* is a work that I will continue to perform in the future. In my early production discussions with faculty member and production coordinator Cary Gillett, we began working on getting the proper licenses to perform my song selections as well as assembling that information so that I would know who to contact and how to procure licensing for future performances. As we continued through the process of

licensing, one of the organizations requested a copy of the script. This sent me into a complete and utter panic.

As a choreographer, I have never been asked for a script of my work. I knew that at some point there would have to be some kind of paper record or timeline of what song, story or movement event happened when, but I never had the intention of creating a script. I was only given a week to write it. Cary reassured me that it was only a draft and I could still make changes.

I sat down and began to chronicle which events and moments I wanted to happen when. I wrote out my stories, I filtered in the songs and I left big, gaping, open descriptions such as: movement section here, and improvisational banter here. I created character descriptions and did my best to find accurate translations of my German and French songs. It started to feel like I was assembling a puzzle. It actually started to make sense to me.

The first draft of the script ended up being 23 pages long and provided me much needed structure and limitations. Ultimately the framework created by the script really helped me be creative and less intimidated by the scope of the project. It also provided me a valuable point of departure for communication with the production, design and stage management teams.

One of the challenges of the thesis process is to produce a dance event in a theatrical setting. At times, it can be difficult to function as a creator of a malleable process like dance making, within the context of the more concrete world of theatrical production. Technical theater specialists are accustomed to having a script that delineates the limitations and scope of the project far in advance, as well as having

firm, creative decisions before the rehearsal process even begins. This is not always conducive to creating new dance material. My first draft of the script provided a channel of communication that gave my team just enough information to begin, and provide me with an open enough platform to not feel stifled by the production process.

I felt liberated because I finally had something that seemed less ethereal and more concrete. Albeit wet concrete, not the kind that is more formed. The script became something that really created a lot of ease in the studio, especially for the production team as well as my collaborators Kevin Brown, The Emcee, and Michael Langlois, The Musician.

All together there were four drafts of the script created. I have included the final draft as an appendix to this paper. The script along with my CPB, will also serve as a record and an archive for the creative process of constructing this work. Because I chose to perform copyrighted material within my thesis performance, I sacrificed being able to keep a video of the piece. So when I go to recreate it or perhaps set it on another performer in the future, while I do not have a video record of the piece, I still have plenty of documentation to begin the reconstruction.

Audience Involvement

I set a goal for this piece, that I wanted there to be no fourth wall between us as performers, and the audience. I knew that by directly addressing the audience in my storytelling and singing, I was technically eliminating any suspension of disbelief or voyeurism, but it was not enough for me.

When I began working with Kevin Brown on his part as The Emcee in this piece, he brought up the idea of a sing-a-long. I loved the idea and thought it was the perfect way to shatter the fourth wall. As we worked on the sing-a-long, we brainstormed different ways to help the audience learn the song in order to sing it. I noticed that as Kevin performed, he would use similar gestures that corresponded with the main idea of each of the musical phrases. It struck me that not only could we get the audience singing, but we could potentially get them moving as well.

We exaggerated his movements and set them choreographically. They were simple enough to communicate to the audience the content of the song, and they were easy to remember. We added the run crew into the dance as well. This was not only fun, but also helped to establish the invention of necessity I wanted to be present in the world of our show. The thought being: in our cabaret we cannot afford dancers...so bring out our crew!

This part of the process required a lot of refinement, but ended up being a metaphor for the main idea of this work. Movement and song can exist together. We can dance and we can sing and we can do it all with one body and at the same time. On top of that we can facilitate an empathetic audience response and get them moving and singing as well. We can do all of that, with a sense of humor and joy.

Design and Production

The design process was successful in creating an interesting and beautiful world for this performance to take place in, but it was filled with challenges. I am the child of a designer and I married a designer and design is an extremely important part of my creative process. From the very beginning of nearly all of my creative

processes, I have tried to imagine the world in which the dance takes place and how that affects the shaping of the movement and the arc of the piece.

At the end of the summer, before the fall semester began, Robin Brown and I were assigned our design team. Robin, my cohort in the MFA program, and I were sharing an evening in the Kogod Theater at The Clarice to produce our thesis concerts in March of 2015. The initial design team consisted of costume designer Sarah Kost, lighting designer Rob Siler for my piece, lighting designer Connor Dreibelbis for Robin's piece, set designer Dan Patrick Leano and sound designer Jeff Dorfman. Robin and I took the initiative to meet with our design team before the official design meetings commenced in order to get a jumpstart on the process and to introduce ourselves to this new group of designers.

Each designer on our team was a first year graduate student in the MFA Design program, with the exception of our professional sound designer Jeff Dorfman. I had a few concerns going into the process that mainly centered around the fact that most of our team was coming straight out of undergrad right into designing our pieces without having any professional experience and without having the mentorship of our distinguished design faculty.

Our first meeting took place before the fall semester began in Applause Café at The Clarice. Robin and I gave an introduction of ourselves as artists and an overview of where we were at that point in the process with our thesis projects. The meeting was successful and engaging. We began hashing through ideas almost immediately and I left the meeting feeling very positive about the direction of our designs. I carried that feeling through out our first design meeting as well.

The initial research presented by our design team was superb. They did a spectacular job of finding imagery that I felt represented this Weimar-esque experience I wanted to evoke for my audience. However, once the sketches and renderings started making an appearance, I became concerned once again. It seemed that the path from research to design was not quite seamless for them as I had hoped. I had to continuously remind the costume designer that The Tramp persona is directly inspired by Charlie Chaplin and is male, and our set designer did not seem to grasp the concept of an intimate space right away.

About half way through the fall semester, Robin and I received the news that our costume designer Sarah Kost made the decision to withdraw from the design program. We had been aware that she was not quite content with the limitations of her degree track, but the news of her withdrawal from the program and from our projects came as a complete surprise. Unfortunately she chose not to speak with us directly about her decision and we were made aware through Facebook and through our Production Coordinator Cary Gillett. This was disappointing on a number of levels.

While I had concerns about her design abilities, she was a passionate and committed collaborator. I had grown accustomed to her energy as a part of our design team and it was quite a blow to have to start from scratch again. That being said, her departure from the project ultimately ended up being a blessing because both Robin and I were then paired with costume designer Robert Croghan.

Robert is an excellent and experienced costume designer and was the designer whom I had initially requested for my thesis project. Robert has participated in many

successful collaborations at UMD including *Visible Seams* by Erin Crawley-Woods. I had the privilege of wearing one of his designs in that performance and I was very eager to see what he would bring to the table.

I met with Robert and we discussed the research Sarah had produced as well as what I thought worked about her designs and what I felt was not hitting the mark. Robert carefully listened, asked detailed questions and began working on his interpretation of my world. I could not have been happier with what he produced.

Image 7.





Image 8.



Image 9.



Image 10.



Image 11.



Robert
Creehan

not leading lady
material
Pianist

Image 12.

One of the added benefits of having Robert as a part of our design team was that he had previously designed two MFA Dance Thesis projects and was intimately familiar with the process.

Designing a set for this project presented some unique challenges. In the beginning stages of developing our concert, Robin and I were asked by our production coordinator as well as by The Clarice staff, to find some ways to connect our worlds. They had previously received feedback from patrons that it was a bit jarring for audiences to see two separate and unrelated performance events on the same bill. Since Robin was interested in creating a site-specific, immersive piece, she generously agreed to do so inside my cabaret world. This gave Dan Patrick, our set designer, the huge and monumental task of marrying our worlds.

His initial design was definitely evocative of the Weimar period, but was lacking somewhat in intimacy. During one of our first design meetings, there was a rather uncomfortable interaction between the design faculty and Dan Patrick regarding his initial renderings. So we went back to the drawing board. His subsequent design was better, although not exactly what I had expected.

When he presented what would become our set design, it was somewhat less cabaret and somewhat more abstract. I asked him to tell me about his design and his response was quite encouraging. He spoke about how he initially thought that this was a period piece but through our showings and conversations, he realized that it was a contemporary piece that happened to take place in an environment that was evocative of period. Since my piece was about storytelling and memory, he wanted

to frame the space, somewhat like a picture frame. I agreed that it was a good place to start.

Image 13.



My main critique of this design was that it felt top heavy and I was concerned that it would draw the audience's eye up and could compromise the intimacy of the space. However, philosophically I liked where it was going. I suggested that perhaps the swaths of fabric could be less heavy and not red. We seemed to be at a consensus and began moving forward with the design.

It was not until we were officially in production meetings at the start of the 2015 spring semester that we discovered several scenic issues that mainly due to inefficient communication. Somewhere along the way, I believe possibly at the cost-out meeting that we were told was bit mandatory for Robin and I to attend, several design decisions were made without our permission. One of them was the fabric,

which I learned was going to be red in spite of my concerns. When I brought this up, my concerns were met with a terse response of: that idea was old, we have moved on to new ideas.

I was completely surprised that there were new ideas that I had not been informed of. This brought up several concerns for me about the process of involving design and production. I observed that even though Robin and I were the creators of these projects, most of the design and production conversations happened over us rather than directly involving us during these meetings. We were both very taken aback by this part of the experience.

Both Robin and I have extensive experience self-producing work professionally, and it felt as though the technical team (with the exception of production coordinators Cary Gillett and Cate Barger, lighting and costume design) did not regard us as truly being leadership for this project. My speculation as to the reason for this is two-fold: one, we are dance students and I have experienced a certain amount of predisposition to dismiss the seriousness of our projects, and two...we are women. Looking around the room, it seemed that with the exception of our production coordinators, women were very much underrepresented on our team. I noticed that every time we brought up something that might present a technical challenge, it was met with heads shaking and words of annoyance from most of the male members of The Clarice staff. I doubt that if we were middle-aged white men, that we would be met with such disregard. While I can only guess and cannot state exactly why our ideas were met with annoyance, I can speculate that part of that may have had to do with a lack of communication between scenic and production.

I felt it an important topic of conversation to bring up so I spoke with my thesis committee chair Karen Bradley and Cary Gillett, both of whom felt it a good idea for me to communicate my issues with this part of the process. I sent an email to Dan Patrick and to his faculty advisor Dan Conway. Mr. Conway responded right away and we were able to meet within a few days of my email. I expressed my concerns and they were met with a careful, listening ear and some very agreeable solutions. After that meeting, I was much more satisfied with the direction of our scenic design.

Subsequent production meetings felt a bit easier for me from that point on. I know that there were more challenges for Robin, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. I still noticed a reluctance amongst The Clarice staff, but it was much more manageable from my perspective.

Ultimately I am extremely happy with how the set turned out. It was a difficult process to get to that point, but the results were beautiful and truly transformed the space. I believe that in the end, with the guidance of Dan Conway, Dan Patrick created a space that was evocative of a Weimar Republic nightclub and with the help of lights and costume, transported our audience into a different place.

My experience with lighting designer Rob Siler could not have gone any better. From the beginning, he was attentive, enthusiastic, collaborative and inventive. I believe he lit my world beautifully and helped to support my narrative with clever and emotional lighting choices.

One of the technical elements that I requested from Rob was floor lights. I felt that floor lights were evocative of the period I was referencing, as well as a fun element for us to play with. He readily agreed and incorporated my ideas into his design. We jokingly referred to our lighting concept as: make Megan pretty. I told him of my love of theater magic and tried to empower him to make creative choices.



Overall, I loved his lighting design and I feel that it, along with costumes, were some of the strongest aspects of the project.

Image 14.

Sound design and operation were a somewhat challenging aspect of the project. Sound designer Jeff Dorfman was a supportive and active collaborator who brought a tremendous number of contributions to the table. He was able to create fantastic rehearsal recordings so that I could utilize the time of my musical collaborator more efficiently, and he definitely contributed quite a bit of creative ideas to help transform our sonic environment. He was extraordinarily helpful in the preparation process, and my critiques are more about operation than design.

This is an educational experience for all who are involved, and I recognize the need for undergraduate students to have technical experiences in order to satisfy their degree requirements. However, sound mixing requires a certain level of expertise and

finesse. Jonathan Hsu, our sound operator, did a fantastic job considering he had absolutely no experience mixing sound, but there were still major sound issues throughout our performance run. Had I realized that Jeff would not be mixing sound for our performances I would have insisted that we integrate Jonathan into the process much, much earlier in order to help him learn the ins and outs of operating a sound board.

Which brings me to stage management. Glorious, wonderful, supremely helpful stage management. Being a creative worker that has mainly focused on producing dance performances, having reliable stage management has never been an option due to budgetary reasons. I was somewhat nervous about integrating stage management into the project, because I had spent the majority of my rehearsal time alone in the studio, and that had become quite comfortable for me.

My first meeting with Ruth Watkins, our marvelous stage manager, was terrific. We went over the script, I filled in the places that I felt were going to expand and elaborated on and what I planned on editing. We talked about my goals and my rehearsal needs. She created our schedule and communicated all of the particulars to the rest of my collaborators and provided a grounded presence to help balance out my, at times, scattered energy. Overall, her responsibilities were to get the show organized and onto the stage successfully. She did this patiently and expertly.

Along with Ruth, came our two fantastic Assistant Stage Managers, Moriamo Akibu and Jessica Kerns. Moriamo was mainly present during most of my rehearsals, while Jessica focused on Robin's work and Ruth floated between us. I was fortunate to work with Moriamo when we were both cast in the School of Theater, Dance and

Performance Studies production of *Spring Awakening*. It was a joy to work with her then, and it was a joy to work on my thesis project as well.

In addition to her stage management duties, Moriamo provided helpful feedback about pacing and performance. She did everything from help me run lines to stand in for me when there were elements that I needed to step out of the piece in order to see. I am hopeful that I am able to work with all of these women again at a future date.

Chapter 4: Performance

I started preparing for the performance of *Not Leading Lady Material* directly after my role as *Wendla* in *Spring Awakening*. That performance concluded in March of 2014, and left me with a year to get myself ready. I spent the year diving into the music, developing my text and stories, and creating movement that would challenge me as well as contribute to my narrative arc.

When I conceived this project, it was on the heels of many discussions about academic and performance rigor. Those conversations left me compelled to ask myself the question: do I have what it takes to pull off an evening of mostly solo material? I had no idea whether or not I would be successful. I knew that I did not want to create a parade of talent displays, instead I wanted to create a compelling performance that my audience could connect to. So I embarked on a journey that would have twists and turns and challenges more numerous than I could imagine.

The first and largest twist and turn was confronting my own insecurities in the studio. For years I have set my work on other dancers, I have directed singers and I have helped shape performances. All of a sudden I was in the studio mining my own life experiences for material, I was confronting my fears and on top of that I was inside the work. I started to doubt myself in ways that I typically do not. I felt like I had no editorial barometer and questioned every minute bit of material and its validity. Others offered me help in the studio and the few times I took them up on it, I felt naked and exposed.

This battle with myself, which went on for the duration of the creative and performative processes, was the fundamental difference between this and the other

works that I have created. While it is true that the elements of this performance were different from my previous performances, never have I had to wrestle with myself to this extent in order to produce content. I believe that I really needed time alone in the studio to do this; it was a private battle. I had to break down all of my own walls, so that I could show a more vulnerable and authentic version of myself.

I will elaborate on audience responses later on in this paper, but vulnerability became the common denominator in nearly every piece of feedback I received. Even my father used the word vulnerability after he saw the show. Since listening to Dr. Brené Brown's TedxTalk, I knew that an open and vulnerable performance was what I wanted from this work. Now that I am at this point in the process, I am grateful for the initial discomfort vulnerability caused me.

Vulnerability, courage, empathy, intimacy. Words that both equally scare me and give me the warm fuzzies. In my heart, I think hearing Dr. Brown's words about courage and shame only confirmed what I already knew. I knew that it was time to set my personal insecurities aside and step boldly into the arena. I kept trying to remind myself over and over and over again that this project was not about my virtuosity (or lack thereof), it was about seeing. It was about truly seeing and being seen.

That is where the movement came from. The choreography came from improvisations that were directly stemming from my emotional state and my desire to be authentic. I sequenced through my body, searching and searching for what felt right to come next in the pattern. Every time I felt myself going for one of my usual tricks, I stopped myself and tried to convince my body to find an alternate route.

Quite often I used the camera as a tool to remember the choreography that came to me, but at a certain point I had to turn it off and learn to trust my body's capacity for memory.

This piece was hard for me in so very many ways. It was not the most physically effortful piece I have ever performed, but it was demanding of the moderation and balance I needed to find in order to blend my dancing with the musical and storytelling aspects of the work. If I were only dancing, I would have taken class, warmed up to the point of exhaustion and I would have ridden my third wind to carry me through the show. If I were only singing, I would have rested and warmed myself gently with yoga and somatic practice. But I had to find a middle ground in order to accomplish what I set out to do. I would warm up with yoga and dance movement, but then I had to leave it and have faith that my body was ready to perform. Sometimes, more than an hour would pass between my physical warm up and my performance on stage.

Part of the reason for the huge length of time between prep and performance was due to the amount of text I performed in the piece. I needed that in-between time to recite all of my text before I stepped onto the stage. That need was even more prevalent after the largest hurdle of the project came my way.

Two days before opening night, the rights to sing my opening number *They Just Keep Moving The Line*, were rescinded. There was no way for me to perform it without permission and the university would be at risk for a lawsuit if I chose to perform it. I had to learn a new song and I had to learn it quickly.

I was devastated and terrified. I called every musical theater colleague I have for suggestions. I was searching for two possibilities: a show stopping number that I could perform the heck out of, or a song that supported the narrative arc I had worked so hard to put in place. My heart was set on finding something that supported the narrative, but I understood that finding a narrative-appropriate song might not be possible.

The answer was given to me as a suggestion from my friend Sally Boyett. She suggested that I sing *Colored Lights* by Kander and Ebb. It supported the narrative, but energetically it lacked in the pizzazz department. So, along with my musical collaborator Mike Langlois, we decided to kick it up a notch. What could be more empowering, than to throw a verse of *Don't Rain on my Parade* right in the middle of the song? After all, it strikes me as something that the goddesses of cabaret would approve of.

I learned the new number for opening night. My anxiety was so high that unfortunately, I could not remember all of the words during the show. The performance was so challenging and my one forgetful moment set off a chain of difficult moments within the piece. It was truly not my best work. I left the theater that night in tears.

The next morning I received a strange notification on Facebook. Dr. Laurie Meer had added me to the group: *Love and Support for Kevin Boggs*. I scrolled through the posts in this group and I learned that not even two weeks before, Kevin my storytelling collaborator, went to the hospital for stomach pain and was diagnosed with end stage liver cancer. He was sent directly to hospice and unfortunately he

passed away at 4:30pm on March 13...my final performance of *Not Leading Lady Material*.

I cried. I cried for this person who I only knew briefly, but who had a profound effect on this thing that I had created. I cried for:

This thing that was so unabashedly me.

This thing that was the hardest thing to make go in the way I wanted it to go.

This thing that meant so very much to me.

I cried because I was tired and frustrated and sad, and I cried because I felt guilty that I had never properly thanked him for his guidance.

I decided to dedicate my last performance to him. It was what I needed to pull myself together. I asked stage management for what I needed, a music stand with the lyrics so I would not forget them. The audience that night was filled with my friends and family, and I finally felt safe and sure enough to really allow the movement and the music to flow through me. I thought of Kevin as I told my stories and I hoped to honor him by sharing my truth.

I danced more fully that evening than I have in a long time. I felt sure in my voice and sure in my abilities. At the end of the show the whole team and the whole audience sang to Kevin to send him off to wherever we go when we die. It was a beautiful moment and I could not be more grateful.

I am very proud of my performance in this piece. No performance is easy, at least not one that I have ever given, but this piece was my most challenging performance to date. I struggled with it until the last night, and on that night it felt

like all of the pieces of the puzzle had fallen into place. I felt like I hit stride that evening, and I am excited to see what is next for *Not Leading Lady Material*.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Responses

I chose to do this piece in the style of cabaret for a variety of reasons. I was drawn to the spirit of the Weimar Republic cabarets, and I knew it was a form that I could experiment with all of my chosen disciplines of expression. In the end, it offered me the chance to play. It was a structure that I could fit the bits and pieces of myself into. I could be funny, I could be tragic; I could be a singer, a dancer and a storyteller. I could even be subversive and irreverent, which had been a secret dream of mine for many years. It was such a freeing experience in that way. I felt unbound to the ties I had previously established to contemporary/modern dance and felt that I moved into the realm of genuine and truthful self-exploration in performance. The most important lesson I took from the cabaret was to stop apologizing. In the process of creating this piece, I learned just how apologetic I tend to be in both life and in my work. However, this form does not allow for apology. The audience will perceive it as fear. So I assumed these personas and allowed them to broadcast their faults, rather than allow these faults to place me into my usual habit of self-deprecation.

It is my hope to continue performing this piece and to tour it as well. I would love to take it to other cities and perform it in front of new audiences. While the scope of our production at UMD was quite large in my opinion, the piece itself is designed to be portable. It was purposefully choreographed for small spaces, and the only production elements I would really need in order to remount the work are the costumes, a microphone and a piano.

I definitely see my collaboration with musical director Mike Langlois continuing into the future. We already have plans to continue to participate in each

other's projects for the coming months. I would love to continue the collaboration with Kevin Brown as well, but he is a member of the Actor's Equity union so financially it may not be possible to cast him in future productions of this work without major theatrical or financial backing.

I feel that this piece accomplishes many of the goals I had initially established for myself. I wanted it to be humorous, accessible to lay audiences, integrative of my artistic practices, and portable. There are, of course, places that can still be refined and it is by no means totally finished or set.

I have received a lot of positive feedback from audience members. It is interesting how the performance has affected the feedback. I theorize that due to the content, the frank nature of the piece, and the use of humor and profanity, has had a liberating effect on what audience members have shared with me. For example, the first email response I receive was from second year MFA Dance candidate Meghan Bowden: "You A Bad Bitch Megan Morse Jans! It takes some real CAJONES to pull off a one-woman show, and I must say you do so with elegance, grace and BALLS. BRAVO!"

I am particularly interested in the reaction of mothers in the audience. I asked two friends/audience members who are mothers to share their thoughts with me.

"I am acutely aware of the many roles I find myself playing : boss, supervisee, colleague, mother, partner, daughter and friend. Jumping between these roles is rarely seamless and the lines between the roles are often blurred. Megan's thesis piece, *Not Leading Lady Material*, was a theatrical representation of the many facets of a life using music, dance and comedy in a cabaret performance. For me, the piece exemplified the sometimes incongruous nature of the roles we play as well as the necessity of play, movement and comic relief to survive and thrive. We mustn't take ourselves too seriously. *Not Leading Lady Material* treasured the precious moments we have wearing our varied hats and invited the audience on a journey that was both personal and

universal.” ~ Erica Bonarev

“First and foremost, from the moment you stepped into the space, you had an absolutely amazing presence. Captivating. Strong. I was immediately engaged in your work, and continued to remain so, not just during the performance, but for a while afterward as well. I was so moved by the way you introduced various "faces" of yourself, creating a complete and rich tapestry of womanhood. I often feel like I am compartmentalizing different aspects of myself - artist, mom, wife, teacher, etc. - and so many times I have felt lacking in some (or all!) of those roles. Hearing your stories woven with songs and movement brought a profound richness and complexity to the many roles in your life, and it made me think about my life with more tenderness and honor. I was also struck by the dichotomy of your confidence and your vulnerability. The more I think about it, the more it seems like confidence + vulnerability = bravery. In that respect, this was such a brave piece. I truly loved and and was drawn into your story immediately. Please perform this show more times! More people need to see it.” ~ Rachel Sitomer

I found the responses definitely varied along gender lines. The following responses are from the male audience members.

“She’s fabulous. I’d pay a lot of money to see her again.” ~ Richard Bell

“I had wonderful evening the other week for Megan Adrielle's Thesis Project dance performance. I was thoroughly entertained by the mix of dance, stories, wit and humor. I am always a little anxious about seeing dancer performances as they aren't my forte but I felt quite at ease and so enjoyed every minute of her performance. Her hazy and rich lighting and back room bar or club sets also complimented by giving a speakeasy feel to the room - complete with cocktail tables.” ~ Kevin Brannan

"The atmosphere for *Not Leading Lady Material* was present from the moment I stepped into the theatre. It was comfortable but there was mystery in the air, which Megan thrived on in her multiple personas. I was most impressed with her commitment to text and narrative. No matter which story she was telling or which language she was singing in, she brought the words to life and managed to leave her own sonic fingerprint in the process."
~ Michael Pistorio

“The choreography was incredibly meticulous and well rehearsed, and incorporated modern dance elements of repetition, rhythm, use of space, and baby-inspired movement. I felt that the choreography added to the honest and vulnerable nature of the performance and worked well with the stories being

told by Megan. Speaking about her son and various roles as a mother and performer, Megan intrigued the audience and excellently incorporated the various elements of the performance to convey emotions of humor, humility, empathy, and vulnerability.” ~ Zachary Cherna

The responses have been beautifully generous. My experience in this field tells me that this will be the way it goes for the next few weeks. As the newness of the piece and the recentness of the performance begins to fade, most likely the more critical responses will filter their way in to me. I am prepared for that this time, unlike other projects I have previously undertaken. I know there are still moments in the piece that need refinement. I decided in the end, to sacrifice that refinement in order to focus on my performance of the material. It was difficult to generate, integrate, memorize, direct and ultimately perform the content of the piece and I reached a point where I could no longer multitask and I felt my biggest responsibility at that point was to my audience.

In many ways, I find it difficult to write a conclusion about this piece because it still feels like it is still in its infancy. I have no plans to finish refining, reworking, re-staging, and recreating *Not Leading Lady Material*. It came together on the final night of the performance and I feel as if that experience was only a taste of what could possibly happen if I continue to perform this piece. I look forward to taking it to unfamiliar audiences and I look forward to becoming more and more comfortable sharing my stories, dances and songs.

In a perfect world, this piece would be my job. I wonder what it would be like to actually be a performer. The truth is that I am a teacher-performer, and of course a mother and wife. I cannot imagine what it must feel like to only be a performer,

mother and wife. Teaching is a great passion of mine and in the past it has provided me with energy, motivation and personal satisfaction to know that I am helping my students learn about this craft I care so deeply about. Perhaps in the future, I could offer my students even more if I have had the opportunity to even briefly focus on solely being a performer. However, I am probably past the point in life when that is actually an option. I am too encumbered and I have too many responsibilities that are far too important to me to take a big risk and sacrifice the part of my practice that actually helps support my family.

So my conclusion is...there is no conclusion, and instead I will make the following promises:

~I will begin the process of trying to create the pipe-dream performance tour I want to make. Even if it fails.

~I will set out to raise the boat-load of cash and support I will need to accomplish that tour. Even if it is difficult along the way.

~I will take with me, the memory of creating the first version of this piece, and I will continue to use the methods of inquiry and creative processing that I have learned in the MFA Dance program at the University of Maryland as the piece continues to mold and shape itself. Even if I never perform it again.

~And I will have a darn good time while doing all of those things. There is no 'even if' for that one, it is just a given.

Appendix

Not Leading Lady Material

By

Megan Morse Jans

DRAFT 4, 3-5-15

Created in collaboration with Mike Langlois and Kevin Allen Brown
Dramaturgy by Andrew Barker and Christina Banalopoulou
Special thanks to Alvin Mayes

Costume Design by Robert Croghan
Set Design by Dan Patrick Leano
Lighting Design by Rob Siler

Setting:

A nightclub that is evocative of the Weimar Republic. Although this is a contemporary piece, it should capture the spirit of the cabarets of Germany in the pre-Nazi era. There is an accumulation of personal items in the space, and the room should appear to have been constructed using all found objects. These objects may or may not be items that actually belong in a cabaret/theatrical space, but they have been repurposed to function as items that infer that this is a performance space.

Key Elements: A piano (can be either upright or baby grand) and bench, an old fashioned silver microphone, and several chairs or stools.

Characters:

Emcee: ageless yet aged. His job is to keep the show going no matter what. His energy should both meet and contradict the energy of the main performer. His is quite fabulous yet somewhat scary a la Joel Gray in *Cabaret*.

The Dame: 30s-40s, ballsy, brassy, fabulous, inappropriate, funny and gorgeous. She's as smart as she is beautiful and knows how to use her physicality to get what she wants or to take the audience on a trip into something unexpected.

The Tramp: 30s-40s, inspired by Charlie Chaplin's *The Little Tramp* in the movie *The Kid*. He is adorable, yet a vagrant and criminal. A conman, but of the most charming sort. He is tragic and painfully nostalgic and embodies all of the pain and loss of the cabaret.

The Mother: 30s-40s, quiet and powerful. Bountiful, beautiful and real. There is nothing fake or pretentious about her. She has full agency over her self, her choices and how she moves through life.

The Dame, The Tramp and The Mother are all played by the same performer.

The Musician: 30s-40s, a piano player that appears to be grandfathered into the space. His energy is calm and collected and he goes wherever the other two performers wish to go. He is there to support, underscore and guide them through their journey.

Scene 1:

Night time in the club, the show is about to start. The audience is guided into the performance space by the Emcee. Café Music/Cabaret music is being played on the piano by The Musician as the audience finds their seats.

Emcee's entrance music (Sons of by Jacques Brel) plays as he takes his place behind the old fashioned microphone, which is downstage center.

EMCEE: *(improvisational banter to start off, commenting on audience members and welcoming the audience to the performance)* We must not waste time, it does not flow back. Welcome, welcome, welcome!!! Welcome to Not Leading Lady Material. I will be your host, your guide, your shepherd, your ringmaster, your chairman, and your Master of Ceremonies tonight...Without further ado, I present the crouton of DC...because let's face it folks, she ain't big enough to be the toast...the one, the only...The Dame!!!

Emcee exits, The Dame enters, in the dark, and takes her place behind the old fashioned microphone, The Musician is playing her entrance music on the piano as her entrance music, 8-bar "Sooner or Later" play on/off. Lights up on The Dame. She takes a moment or two after the applause and in the quiet, to look around and make eye contact with each other audience members. This is a settling, a pause, before the performance begins. She performs a series of gestures as if she is floating underwater. She looks at The Musician and gives him a nod, indicating that she has decided everyone is ready. The Musician begins to play.

THE DAME:

("They Just Keep Moving the Line" by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman)

THE FIELD WAS BRIGHT WITH CLOVER

I SAW THE FINISH SIGN

I STARTED AS A ROVER

AND THEN VICTORY WAS MINE

I THOUGHT THE RACE WAS OVER
BUT THEY JUST KEEP MOVING THE LINE

THEY CHEERED AT MY PERSISTENCE
BUT PRAYED FOR MY DECLINE
THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE
LED TO HOLLYWOOD AND VINE
I TRIED TO GO THE DISTANCE
BUT THEY JUST KEEP MOVING THE LINE

I JUMPED ALL OF THE HURDLES
TO BREAK OUT OF THE PACK
I STARTED ON THE OUTSIDE
AND THEN HIT THE INSIDE TRACK

I LEFT THE OTHER FILLIES
BACK AT THE STARTING GATE
WAS READY, ON MY MARK, I GOT TO SET
TO HURRY UP AND WAIT

SO TALENT AND AMBITION
WON ME A CHANCE TO SHINE
I ACED THE BIG AUDITION
BUT IT'S RAININ' ON CLOUD NINE
CAN'T BEAT THE COMPETITION
'CAUSE THEY JUST KEEP MOVING THE LINE

I HANDLED EVERY CORNER
EACH BUMP ALONG THE TRACK
AND WHEN I SAW THE RIBBON, WELL
THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK

I WON THE PHOTO FINISH
I POSED FOR ALL THE MEN
BUT BEFORE I GOT MY TROPHY
WELL, THE RACE BEGAN AGAIN

SO I MADE FRIENDS WITH REJECTION
I'VE STRAIGHTENED UP MY SPINE!
I'LL CHANGE EACH IMPERFECTION
TILL IT'S TIME TO DRINK THE WINE!
I'D TOAST TO RESURRECTION
BUT THEY JUST KEEP MOVING THE LINE!

PLEASE GIVE ME SOME DIRECTION,
'CAUSE THEY JUST KEEP MOVING THE LINE!

(After the applause)

You're welcome. But seriously thank you. (each name has a corresponding gesture) My name is Sally. Sally Eartha. Sally Eartha Julie. Sally Eartha Julie Bette. Sally Eartha Julie Bette Marlene. Sally Eartha Julie Bette Marlene...but you can call me Megan. (Follow spot slips down to light only her breasts) Hey! Follow-spot, I'm up here!

I have been a performer for 22 years. In those 22 years, I have been a leading lady exactly twice. The first time was when I played the role of Janet in a community theater production of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

My leading man, my Dr. Frankenfurter, comes into the rehearsal process about two weeks late because he has another performance. We happen to meet on the night we are staging Act 2 Scene 1. For those of you who are not familiar with the show, that is the sex scene. Our conversation goes something like this: "Hi! I'm Megan, I'll be playing Janet. So in this scene, I am laying on a table on my back and you have your head between my legs. I look at you in surprise, you smack my ass, I flip over to my hands and knees and you mount me from behind. Do you have any questions?" We became very good friends.

The second time I was a leading lady, was here at UMD. I was Wendla in *Spring Awakening*. Now, I don't know this for sure, but I believe that I may actually have the singular and dubious distinction (*beat*) of being the oldest person ever cast in that role. She's roughly 14, 15 or 16 and I am 34.

So in our production, we have two versions of Wendla. We had young, naïve Wendla...and dead Wendla. So it's our final dress rehearsal, we let audience members in for the first time and they're allowed to take pictures and tweet during the whole performance. This makes me a little nervous. At the end of the second act, I have these two really intense scenes. One is with my mother where she reveals that the doctor has told her I am pregnant, followed by the scene when I sing Whispering.

Well the scene goes great and I sing Whispering really well. I'm totally overwhelmed with energy from that, so I ran backstage to do my quick change for my final scene as Dead Wendla.

Now, young, naïve Wendla has a pretty extensive costume. I have a dress, a pinafore, bloomers, socks that go up to my thighs and boots that lace. Dead Wendla's outfit is a gauzy shift dress, with bare feet and crown that has some extra hair and twigs braided into it. I rip off my shoes, my socks, my bloomers, my dress, my pinafore and quickly pull on my Dead Wendla dress as two of our lovely wardrobe people pin my crown to my head.

I go to my entrance and quickly notice that the person who I am supposed to enter with isn't there. And I'm thinking, what is with these undergrads? Have they learned nothing from my professionalism? And I realize...shit I'm not dead yet.

I run back to the wardrobe people, tear off my crown and my dress and yank on my other dress. I have no shoes, no socks, no bloomers, no pinafore and I only have time to button the top and bottom buttons of my dress, which means that it is open and I am at risk for baring my breasts on stage in front of an audience full of smart phones, taking pictures and Tweeting.

I run to my entrance and get there just in time to be pulled on stage by my mother. I scream, "please no Mama, don't make me go with the evil doctor who will perform a back ally abortion on me that will ultimately result in my untimely death at the tender age of 15!!!" as the the evil doctor pulls me off stage.

Well...as you can imagine, I am fairly upset. I finally have the lead role, I finally have an audience, I'm the grad student and I'm supposed to be the professional in this situation.

I finished the show and go backstage, and get ready to hear all about how I've just broken the show. The directors come back. I....meander over to them and say, "so how about that scene where I get dragged off to my death?" and brace myself for their disappointment. They look at me and say, "Megan....*(deep, sharp inhale through the nose)* It was...AWESOME." I say, "What?! Did you notice my dress or my shoes?" "no, did something happen?" "oh no, nothing happened, totally fine, my dress is great, everything is great, thanks so much!"

EMCEE: Megan, why don't you sing them another song.

THE DAME: What a good idea, perhaps we should introduce them to our friend Jenny.

EMCEE: Yes!

(EMCEE moves the mic)

THE DAME: Thank you.

(DAME removes her robe to reveal her dress. She holds the robe above the piano, drops it and The Musician and he begins to play)

("Pirate Jenny" from Threepenny Opera by Kurt Weill)

YOU GENTLEMEN CAN WATCH WHILE I'M SCRUBBIN' THE FLOORS
AND I'M SCRUBBIN' THE FLOORS WHILE YOUR GAWKIN'
AND MAYBE ONCE YOU TIP ME AND IT MAKES YOU FEEL SWELL
ON A RATTY WATERFRONT IN A RATTY OLD HOTEL
AND YOU'LL NEVER GUESS TO WHO YOU'RE TALKIN'
AND YOU'LL NEVER GUESS TO WHO YOU'RE TALKIN'

SUDDENLY ONE NIGHT, THERE'S A SCREAM IN THE NIGHT
AND YOU YELL "WHAT THE HELL COULD THAT HAVE BEEN?"
AND YOU SEE ME KIND OF GRINNING WHILE I'M SCRUBBIN'
AND YOU SAY, "WHAT THE HELL'S SHE GOT TO GRIN?"

AND THE SHIP, THE BLACK FREIGHTER
WITH A SKULL ON ITS MASTHEAD
WILL BE COMIN' IN

YOU GENTLEMEN CAN SAY, "HEY GIRL FINISH THE FLOORS,
GET UPSTAIRS, MAKE THE BEDS, EARN YOUR KEEP HERE!"
YOU TOSS ME YOUR TIPS, AND LOOK OUT AT THE SHIPS
BUT I'M COUNTIN' YOUR HEADS AS I MAKE UP THE BEDS
CAUSE THERE'S NOBODY GONNA SLEEP HERE.
TONIGHT, NONE OF YOU WILL SLEEP HERE.

THEN THAT NIGHT, THERE'S A BANG IN THE NIGHT
AND YOU YELL, "WHO'S THAT KICKIN' UP A ROW?"
AND YOU SEE ME KINDA STARIN' OUT THE WINDA...
AND YOU SAY, "WHAT'S SHE GOT TO STARE AT NOW?"

AND THE SHIP, THE BLACK FREIGHTER
TURNS AROUND IN THE HARBOR
SHOOTIN' GUNS FROM THE BOW

THEN YOU GENTLEMEN CAN WIPE OFF THE LAUGH FROM YOUR FACE
EVERY BUILDING IN TOWN IS A FLAT ONE.
YOUR WHOLE STINKIN' PLACE WILL BE DOWN TO THE GROUND
ONLY THIS CHEAP HOTEL WILL STAND UP SAFE AND SOUND
AND YOU YELL "WHY THE HELL SPARE THAT ONE?"
AND YOU YELL "WHY THE HELL SPARE THAT ONE?"

ALL THE NIGHT THROUGH, WITH THE NOISE AND TO DO
YOU WONDER WHO'S THAT PERSON LIVES UP THERE?
AND YOU SEE ME STEPPIN' OUT INTO THE MORNING
LOOKING NICE, WITH A RIBBON IN MY HAIR

AND THE SHIP, THE BLACK FREIGHTER
RUNS THE FLAG UP IT'S MASTHEAD
AND A CHEER RINGS THE AIR.

BY NOON TIME THE DOCK IS ALL SWARMING WITH MEN
COMIN' OFF OF THAT GHOSTLY FREIGHTER.
THEY'RE MOVIN' IN THE SHADOWS AND NO ONE CAN SEE,
AND THEY'RE CHAINING UP PEOPLE, AND BRINGIN' THEM TO ME
ASKING ME, "KILL THEM NOW OR LATER?"
ASKING ME, "KILL THEM NOW OR LATER?"

NOON BY THE CLOCK, AND SO STILL ON THE DOCK
YOU CAN HEAR A FOG HORN MILES AWAY
IN THAT QUIET OF DEATH, I'LL SAY "RIGHT NOW"
AND THEY'LL PILE UP THE BODIES AND I'LL SAY
"THAT'LL LEARN YA."

AND THE SHIP, THE BLACK FREIGHTER
DISAPPEARS OUT TO SEE
AND ON IT IS ME.

(Pause. The Musician begins to vamp "Sooner or Later" as underscoring for
The Dame's next story.)

On October 29, 2008, I gave birth to a BEAUTIFUL baby boy. Now, I realize that I am biased and that all mothers think their babies are beautiful, but mine was, and is, gorgeous. I mean, nurses would come from other departments to get a look at the cute new baby that had just been delivered.

I was on a LOT of drugs...but when the doctors handed me my beautiful baby, never ever could I have imagined the day...(pause) that he would walk in on my husband and I having sex.

I am a choreographer. I really like to arrange things and make them just so. So if I had any say in this matter, I would have wanted there to be candles and soft music in the background, perhaps there would have been covers involved. But what he walked in on...could only be called...rude sex. (*THE DAME mouths "it was fucking"*)

All of you know exactly what I mean by this. This was not romantic or loving sex, this was the kind of sex that just taking care of needs. I mean...there were toys involved, for crying out loud.

But what I could never have been prepared for, was his reaction. Which went something like this: (*In the most adult voice possible*) "Hey...whatcha doin?" (pause) I started to scream "Get out! Get out of here! Go back to bed! Get out of here!" amongst a flurry of movement and looking for covers. To which he responded:

(again, in the most adult and calm voice possible, with hands up and a devilish smile) "Ok," and leaves the room.

So, in honor of this auspicious occasion, I would like to dedicate this next song, to my man.

("Sooner or Later" by Stephen Sondheim)

SOONER OR LATER YOU'RE GONNA BE MINE
SOONER OR LATER YOU'RE GONNA BE FINE
BABY IT'S TIME THAT YOU FACE IT
I ALWAYS GET MY MAN

SOONER OR LATER YOU'RE GONNA DECIDE
SOONER OR LATER THERE'S NOWHERE TO HIDE
BABY IT'S TIME SO WHY WASTE IT IN CHATTER?
LET'S SETTLE, THE MATTER

BABY YOU'RE MINE ON A PLATTER
I ALWAYS GET MY MAN

BUT IF YOU INSIST, BABE, THE CHALLENGE DELIGHTS ME
THE MORE YOU RESIST BABE, THE MORE IT EXCITES ME
AND NO ONE I'VE KISSED BABE, EVER FIGHTS ME AGAIN
IF YOU'RE ON MY LIST, IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF WHEN

WHEN I GET A YEN, THEN BABY AMEN
I'M COUNTING TO TEN AND THEN

I'M GONNA LOVE YOU LIKE NOTHING YOU'VE KNOWN
I'M GONNA LOVE YOU AND YOU ALL ALONE
SOONER IS BETTER THAN LATER BUT LOVER
I'LL HOVER, I'LL PLAN

THIS TIME I'M NOT ONLY GETTING
I'M HOLDING MY MAN

SOONER IS BETTER THAN LATER BUT LOVER

I'LL HOVER I'LL PLAN

THIS TIME I'M NOT ONLY GETTING
I'M HOLDING MY MAN

*(The Emcee enters for scene 2, and The Dame exists during the
applause.)*

Scene 2:

The mood in the nightclub shifts. It is now evoking the nostalgic energy of a silent movie. The Emcee facilitates the transition between scenes with banter that is lovingly disparaging to The Dame. When The Tramp enters, she is dressed in drag wearing a man's suit, bowler hat and mustache.

(Emcee's entrance music)

EMCEE:

Well, not a dry seat in the house. Let's give it up for our amazing piano man, Mike Langlois! Tickling those ivories for a small fee. For an even smaller fee, he will tickle whatever you'd like. Since that last song was dedicated to her husband, I would like to dedicate this next song to my Grandma. She was a firey old broad. It's a sing-a-long! It's really easy and it even has choreographed movements to help you remember the words. I hope you'll join me! And if you don't...well, there's the big, damn door. It goes a little something like this:

(There are movements that correspond with each line of the song, the goal is to not only get the audience singing, but dancing too. THE EMCEE sings the first verse and then checks in with the audience.)

FIVE NIGHTS AGO, WHEN WE WERE ALL IN BED,
GRANDMA LEFT THE LANTERN IN THE SHED
AND WHEN THE COW KICKED IT OVER,
THIS IS WHAT SHE SAID

IT'S GONNA BE A HOT TIME, IN THE OLD TOWN, TONIGHT!
FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!

See! Easy peasy. And if you don't get it...BIG DAMN DOOR!!!

FOUR NIGHTS AGO, WHEN WE WERE ALL IN BED,
GRANDMA LEFT THE LANTERN IN THE SHED
AND WHEN THE COW KICKED IT OVER,
THIS IS WHAT SHE SAID
IT'S GONNA BE A HOT TIME, IN THE OLD TOWN, TONIGHT!
FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!

THREE NIGHTS AGO, WHEN WE WERE ALL IN BED,
GRANDMA LEFT THE LANTERN IN THE SHED
AND WHEN THE COW KICKED IT OVER,
THIS IS WHAT SHE SAID
IT'S GONNA BE A HOT TIME, IN THE OLD TOWN, TONIGHT!
FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!

(Run Crew enters to do the last two verses with THE EMCEE. They apathetically play along with the exception of one extraordinarily enthusiastic crew member)

TWO NIGHTS AGO, WHEN WE WERE ALL IN BED,
GRANDMA LEFT THE LANTERN IN THE SHED
AND WHEN THE COW KICKED IT OVER,
THIS IS WHAT SHE SAID
IT'S GONNA BE A HOT TIME, IN THE OLD TOWN, TONIGHT!
FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!

ONE NIGHT AGO, WHEN WE WERE ALL IN BED,
GRANDMA LEFT THE LANTERN IN THE SHED
AND WHEN THE COW KICKED IT OVER,
THIS IS WHAT SHE SAID
IT'S GONNA BE A HOT TIME, IN THE OLD TOWN, TONIGHT!
FIRE, FIRE, FIRE!

(Sing-a-long ends)

Hussy...harlot...Jezebel...minx...broad...floozy...strumpet...tart...wench...and
d vvvvvvvvvvamp...Ladies and gentlemen, without further adieu,
introducing this evening's provocateur...The Tramp!

(Same entrance music as THE DAME)

*The Tramp enters, wearing a men's suit and bowler hat that is evocative of
Charlie Chaplin's The Little Tramp. He (she), enters in a weighted and
masculine manor, bows sharply and begins to sing.*

THE TRAMP:

("Berlin Im Licht" by Kurt Weill)

UND ZUM SPAZIERENGEHN
GENÜGT DAS SONNENLICHT
DOCH UM DIE STADT BERLIN ZU SEHN,
GENÜGT DIE SONNEN NICHT
DAS IST KEIN LAUSCHIGES PLÄTZCHEN,
DAS IST 'NE ZIEMLICHE STADT
DAMIT MAN DA ALES GUT SEHEN KANN
DA BRAUCHT MAN SCHON EINEGE WATT.

NA WAT DENN? NA WAT DENN?
WAS IS DAS FÜR 'NE STADT DENN?

KOMM, MACH MAL LICHT,
DAMIT MAN SEHN KANN, OB WAS DA IST,
KOMM, MACH MAL LICHT
UND REDE NUN MAL NICHT
KOM, MACH MAL LICHT,
DAN WOLLEN WIR DOCH AUCH MAL SEHEN
OB DAS 'NE SACHE IST:
BERLIN IM LICHT.

KOMM, MACH MAL LICHT,
DAMIT MAN SEHN KANN, OB WAS DA IST,
KOMM, MACH MAL LICHT
UND REDE NUN MAL NICHT
KOM, MACH MAL LICHT,
DAN WOLLEN WIR DOCH AUCH MAL SEHEN

OB DAS 'NE SACHE IST:
BERLIN IM LICHT.

LA LA LA LA (ETC)

During the la la las, The Tramp selects a woman from the audience and slow dances with her)

KOMM, MACH MAL LICHT,
DAMIT MAN SEHN KANN, OB WAS DA IST,
KOMM, MACH MAL LICHT
UND REDE NUN MAL NICHT
KOM, MACH MAL LICHT,
DAN WOLLEN WIR DOCH AUCH MAL SEHEN
OB DAS 'NE SACHE IST:
BERLIN IM LICHT

Translation: (not sung)

And when you go for a walk, the sunlight may be enough, but to light the city of Berlin, the sun is not enough.

This is no little hicktown.

This is one helluva city!

If you want to see everything you can,

You have to use a few watts!

So what then? So what then?

What kind of a city is it then?

Come, turn on the lights so we can see what there is to see!

Come, turn on the lights and don't say another word.

Come, turn on the lights, so we can see for sure what the big deal is: Berlin in lights!

The Tramp bows after the applause, and begins to perform a very entertaining and presentational variation on the initial soft shoe dance. After a few minutes, the Emcee interrupts the dance while carrying a letter.

EMCEE: Megan, this came for you. *(offers The Tramp the letter)*

The Tramp gives the Emcee a look as if to say, "are you crazy? I'm in the middle of a show." And continues the dance.

EMCEE: Megan, it's important. You know who it's from. *(offers The*

Tramp the letter for a second time)

The Tramp shakes his head vehemently and continues to dance.

EMCEE: Megan, you must read it...

The Emcee, growing impatient with The Tramp, joins in and dances in unison with The Tramp. Clearly this is a dance that they have done for years together. At the end of the dance the Emcee stops The Tramp.

EMCEE: (shouts) TAKE THE LETTER!!!

This stops The Tramp in his tracks. He takes the letter, holds it, knowing whom it is from and what it says without reading it. He walks over to the piano and slowly puts the letter down on it, takes off the hat and the fake mustache; shedding the male-ness of his character. He, who is now she, moves into the center of the performance space, leaving the letter on the piano. A sound-score of whispers begins to play as she begins to dance. Her dance is a modern/contemporary dance that explores nostalgia and loss. This dance, while a stylistic break from the cabaret, embodies all of the tragedy and sadness that also exists in cabaret. When the dance ends, she walks over to the piano and sits down on the piano bench with the Musician and begins to sing.

THE TRAMP:

("Je Ne T'aime Pas" by Kurt Weill)

RETIRE TA MAIN, JE NE T'AIME PAS,
CAR TU L'AS VOULU, TU N'ES QU'UN AMI.
POUR D'AUTRES SONT FAITS LE CREUX DE TES BRAS
ET TON CHER BAISER, TA TÊTE ENDORMIE.

NE ME PARLE PAS, LORSQUE C'EST LE SOIR,
TROP INTIMEMENT, À VOIX BASSE MÊM',
NE ME DONNE PAS SURTOUT TON MOUCHOIR:
IL RENFERME TROP LE PARFUM QUE J'AIM'.

DIS-MOI TES AMOURS, JE NE T'AIME PAS,
QUELLE HEURE TE FUT LA PLUS ENIVRANT'.
JE NE T'AIME PAS...

ET S'ELLE T'AIMAIT BIEN, ET SI ELLE FUT INGRAT'...
EN ME LE DISANT, NE SOIS PAS CHARMANT;
JE NE T'AIME PAS...

DIS-MOI TES AMOUR
QUELLE HEURE TE FUT LA PLUS ENIVRANT
JE NE T'AIME PAS...

RETIRE TA MAIN, JE NE T'AIME PAS...

JE NE T'AIME PAS...

Translation:

*draw your hand back, I don't love you,
because you wanted it, you're only a friend.
for others are the fold of your arms
and your dear kiss, your sleeping head.*

*don't talk to me, when it's the evening,
too intimately, even with a hushed voice
don't give me your handkerchief:
he smells too much the perfume I love.*

*tell me your love affairs, I don't love you,
what hour was the most kind for you
I don't love you...
and if she liked you well, and if she was ingrateful...
when telling me, don't be charming;
I don't love you...*

*tell me your love affairs,
what hour was the most kind for you
I don't love you...*

*Don't ask me anything
I'm crying*

*I don't love you,
I don't love you, oh my beloved,*

*Draw back your hand, I don't love you...
I don't love you...*

The Tramp puts on his hat, his mustache (assuming his masculinity yet again), looks at the letter on the piano. Deciding to leave the letter, he exits.

Scene 3:

The Emcee enters, this time with a different kind of resolve. He sings a call to arms, a political song meant to echo and compliment the tragedy of scene two, but as if he is singing for all of the voiceless. After his call to arms, the mother enters. The mood is sensual and intimate as she tells her stories. These stories are all told while performing choreography.

THE EMCEE:

("Sons of" by Jacques Brel)

SONS OF THE THIEF, SONS OF THE SAINT
WHO IS THE CHILD WITH NO COMPLAINT
SONS OF THE GREAT OR SONS UNKNOWN
ALL WERE CHILDREN LIKE YOUR OWN
THE SAME SWEET SMILES, THE SAME SAD TEARS
THE CRIES AT NIGHT, THE NIGHTMARE FEARS
SONS OF THE GREAT OR SONS UNKNOWN
ALL WERE CHILDREN LIKE YOUR OWN...
SO LONG AGO: LONG, LONG, AGO...
BUT SONS OF TYCOONS OR SONS OF THE FARMS
ALL OF THE CHILDREN RAN FROM YOUR ARMS
THROUGH FIELDS OF GOLD, THROUGH FIELDS OF RUIN
ALL OF THE CHILDREN VANISHED TOO SOON
IN TOW'RING WAVES, IN WALLS OF FLESH
AMONG DYING BIRDS TREMBLING WITH DEATH
SONS OF TYCOONS OR SONS OF THE FARMS
ALL OF THE CHILDREN RAN FROM YOUR ARMS...
SO LONG AGO: LONG, LONG, AGO...
BUT SONS OF YOUR SONS OR SONS PASSING BY
CHILDREN WE LOST IN LULLABIES
SONS OF TRUE LOVE OR SONS OF REGRET
ALL OF THE SONS YOU CANNOT FORGET
SOME BUILT THE ROADS, SOME WROTE THE POEMS
SOME WENT TO WAR, SOME NEVER CAME HOME

SONS OF YOUR SONS OR SONS PASSING BY
CHILDREN WE LOST IN LULLABIES...
LULLABIES...LULLABIES...LULLABIES...

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the stage, The Mother.

(The Mother enters and begins to perform a dance. After a few minutes, she breaks to tell the story.)

THE MOTHER:

I was in the kitchen, that was my kitchen dance. My now six year old, then four year old son Jacob was in the living room. Jacob is about "yay high" (breast height), has huge brown eyes, messy reddish hair and a large grin that is usually covering up some mischievous deed he's hatching. I'm washing dishes, and he comes in and says, "Mommy (x20) do you want to play transformers?" I say, "Do I?! *(sing "Robots in disguise")* YES!" And in his delightfully, mispronounced, 4 year old way he say, "Alright, I am going to be Octamus Crime and YOU...are going to be Sloppy the Boat." (beat) Well, I am shocked. How can I, Mommy, with my magic kisses and being the healer of all booboos, the meet-er of all needs, and to be quite honest...not below average on the mommy hotness scale, be Sloppy the Boat? I mean, I carried that child in my womb for nearly 10 months...I nursed that little shit for a year...there is no way, that I am Sloppy the Boat. However...being the good mommy that I am, I oblige, albeit... reluctantly...and I play transformers with Octamus Crime...as Sloppy the boat.

Then...we hear the noise that means it is about to be the most magical time of the day. It is the sound of the doorknob turning and the door opening, which can only mean...Daddy's home. Mike is pretty tall with dark hair, he's dressed in a striped button down shirt and he's carrying his brief case. Both Jacob and I run to the door and shout "DADDY'S HOME!!!" , which always makes Mike really happy. He hugs both of us and then Jacob, with an enormous amount of excitement, says, "Daddy (x20) do you want to play transformers with us?" to which Mike replies, "Do I?! YES!". At this point I am thinking...oh man, you are about to get it. You with all your FUN DADDY-ness. Because if I am Sloppy the Boat, I cannot imagine what you are going to be. Jacob then looks at Mike and says, "Ok great! I am Octamus Crime, Mommy is Sloppy the Boat...Daddy, you are Captain America."

(pause, the dance resumes for a few minutes and then resolves)

I have to tell you that since then, Jacob has created an entire mythos that surrounds Sloppy the Boat. For example, Sloppy has slop powers. Sloppy can turn into a boat or a submarine. And Sloppy ALWAYS beats the bad guys. Maybe Sloppy isn't exactly the leading lady role I wanted, but it is certainly the leading lady role that I am most proud of.

(pause)

This will be my last song for the night...unless you beg me. And in that case, I may have one more up my large, feathery sleeve. This is an old, old song made famous by the late, great cabaret singer Julie Wilson. (to the Musician) Alright, Mike Langlois!

The music begins.

("Bad, Bad Woman" music and lyrics by: Richard Addinsell and Rowland Leigh)

I AM THE TYPE THAT NOW-A-DAYS
EACH MODERN DRAMATIST PORTRAYS
MY NAME MEANS EXTRA MATINEES
I'M SUCH A HIT
I'M NEITHER, MODEST, PURE OR SHY
I SOMETIMES RATHER WONDER WHY
THE CENSOR EVER LETS ME BY
FOR I ADMIT, I'M A...

BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD, WOMAN, BUT I'M GOOD, GOOD COMPANY
I'M INCREDIBLY CHIC, I'VE GOT A PERFECT TECHNIQUE
A MIXTURE OF VENUS AND POLANEGRI
I'VE A BAD, BAD REPUTATION, BUT SOME GOOD, GOOD JEWELLERY
FOR I'VE FOUND THAT IN LIFE, MEN GET TIRED OF THEIR WIFE
BUT THEY'VE ALWAYS TIME TO SEE
A VERY BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD WOMAN
IF SHE'S GOOD, GOOD COMPANY.

BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD, WOMAN, BUT I'M GOOD, GOOD COMPANY
CLEOPATRA IT'S TRUE, WAS A RANK INGENUE
COMPARED TO WHAT I AM AND REPUTED TO BE
I'VE A BAD, BAD DISPOSITION, BUT A FACE THAT'S GOOD TO SEE
I GOT MARRIED OF COURSE, HUSBAND SUED FOR DIVORCE
AND THE JUDGE HE SAID TO ME
YOU'RE A VERY BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD WOMAN

BUT DAMNED GOOD, GOOD COMPANY.

SOME FOLKS THINK I'M EVIL, CAUSE I LOVE TO GIVE
BUT EVIL SPELLED BACKWARD IS LIVE BOYS, LIVE
BAD, BAD, BAD, BAD, WOMAN, BUT I'M GOOD, GOOD COMPANY

(THE EMCEE and THE MOTHER bow and gesture to THE MUSICIAN in thanks. They cup their hands around their ears encouraging the audience to yell "ENCORE!!!")

(Improvisational banter between THE EMCEE and THE MOTHER) Oh now nice! They want more. We do have one more song. So, this is a song about a real asshole. I mean, a class A dick.

EMCEE: I have just the thing, I'll be right back.

THE MOTHER: *(to the Emcee)* Ok. *(to THE MUSICIAN)* Maestro!

THE MOTHER:

("Surabaya Santa" by Jason Robert Brown)

I WAS JUST SEVENTEEN
WHEN YOU RODE INTO TOWN
JUST A GIRL FULL OF FANTASIES AND LONGING
I SAW YOU
I KNEW I HAD TO BE WITH YOU

THEN YOU LOOKED IN MY EYES
AND YOU ASKED ME MY NAME
AND I TREMBLED BEFORE YOU LIKE A BABY
THEN GENTLY I KISSED YOU
WHO COULD RESIST YOU?
YOU TOOK MY HEART AND SOUL

AND BEFORE I HAD A CHANCE TO TAKE CONTROL
WE RETIRED TO YOUR PALACE ON THE POLE
WHERE WE ONLY HAD OURSELVES
AND THE REINDEER AND THE ELVES
AND A LOT OF THINGS WE NEVER SAID

ABOUT THE LIFE I COULD HAVE LED
IF I HAD HAD THE SENSE TO STAY AWAY

BUT HERE WE ARE NICK
AND SO NICK
I KNOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO NICK
I KNOW BY NOW I'LL NEVER CLAIM YOU FOR MY OWN
I'VE BEEN RESIGNED TO SPEND MY CHRISTMASSES ALONE
AND SO AU REVOIR NICK
IT'S GRAND NICK
I DON'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND NICK
I SAW YOU LOOK AT BLITZEN LONG AND LOVINGLY
THE WAY YOU USED TO LOOK AT ME

*(The Emcee enters wearing a costume that is eerily similar to The Dame's
costume.)*

EMCEE:
I HAVE SAT TWENTY YEARS
IN THIS DRAFTY RETREAT
AS THE LATEST IN THE LINE OF MRS. CLAUSES
I'VE SAT HERE
AND WONDERED WHAT YOU WANT FROM ME
BUT YOU SIT BY YOURSELF
ON THE COUCH IN THE DEN
AND YOU WATCH "MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET"
YOU GET SAD AND DREAMY
CAN'T EVEN SEE ME
WON'T EVEN SAY, "HELLO!"

NOW YOU TELL ME THAT IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO
HA!
SLING YOUR SACK UPON YOUR BACK AND "HO, HO, HO!"
HA!
AND WHAT MATTERS MOST OF ALL
IS TO SIT INSIDE SOME MALL
AND YOU NEVER THINK OF ME
WHILE I AM PINING BY THE TREE
BUT NEVER MIND

I WILL SURVIVE
WHILE YOU ARE GONE

I SET YOU FREE, NICK
GOODBYE, NICK
GO RIDE YOUR REINDEER THROUGH THE SKY, NICK
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'LL EVER WANT ME BY YOUR SIDE
I KNOW YOU NOW
YOU WANT A PLAYTHING, NOT A BRIDE
SO ON YOUR WAY, NICK
SHALOM, NICK
DON'T FEEL THE NEED TO HURRY HOME, NICK
SHOULD I WANT COMFORT IN THE COLD AND BITTER STORM
I'VE GOT THE ELVES TO KEEP ME WARM

EMCEEE and THE MOTHER: (alternating lines)
OH, OH, NICK, I DIDN'T MEAN IT. I'M JUST GOING CRAZY ALL COOPED
UP IN HERE! OH, NICK, I MEAN, COME ON, I'M NOT EVEN GERMAN.
PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU. PLEASE! I'M YOUR WIFE DAMN IT. ISN'T
THERE ONE ONCE OF HUMAN DECENCY BURIED BENEATH ALL THOSE
LAYERS
OF FAT? YOU DISGUST ME! OH YES, IT'S SO EASY TO JUDGE, ISN'T IT?
DECIDING WHO'S NAUGHTY AND WHO'S NICE? WELL, WHO DIED AND
LEFT YOU GOD, MR. CLAUS? HMPH.

BUT NEVER MIND, NICK
OKAY, NICK
I HATE TO KEEP YOU FROM YOUR SLEIGH, NICK
WHEN YOU RETURN I WILL BE MANY MILES AWAY
I'LL HAVE MY LAWYER CALL YOUR LAWYER
NEW YEARS DAY!

THAT'S ALL FROM ME, NICK
GAIN WAY, NICK
I'LL MISS YOU LESS THAN I CAN SAY, NICK
HAVE FUN WITH ALL THE LITTLE BOYS ALONG THE ROUTE
I'LL GET THE MANSION AND THE FACTORY TO BOOT
I WILL NOT WAIT UNTIL THE SNOW BENEATH ME THAWS
I WILL ESCAPE

YOUR SANTA CLAWS!!

(End of show.)

Song List:

"They Just Keep Moving The Line" from the show SMASH

music: Marc Shaiman

lyrics: Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman

"Pirate Jenny" from Threepenny Opera

music: Kurt Weill

lyrics: Bertolt Brecht

"Berlin Im Licht"

music and lyrics: Kurt Weill

"Je Ne T'aime Pas"

music: Kurt Weill

lyrics: Maurice Magre

"A Bad, Bad Woman"

music: Richard Addinsell

lyrics: Rowland Leigh

"Surabaya-Santa" from Songs For A New World

music and lyrics: Jason Robert Brown

"Sooner or Later" from the film Dick Tracey

music and lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

"Sons of"

music and lyrics: Jacques Brel

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