

# CABARET

THE MUSICAL AT THE KIT KAT CLUB

EDUCATION PACK TWO: CREATING THE SHOW



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## Pack Two: Creating The Show

In this pack, you'll find interviews, careers information, and discussion points about the show. You'll also find out more about the inspirations for our cast and creative teams, and ideas for further research and reading about CABARET.

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*'The toast of Mayfair'*

## PERFORMING SALLY BOWLES

Although Sally Bowles is a key character in the narrative, the audience find out very little about her backstory other than what the character herself chooses to share. She is, at heart, a performer, and so it's never clear what's a performance and what is her true self. Rebecca Frecknall's production concept deliberately blurs the boundaries between performing in the Kit Kat Club, and real life outside the club, which only highlights Sally's enigmatic qualities.

Jordan Fein explains this interpretation of Sally. *'She is a performer and that is her life blood. That's complicated. Being an extraordinary performer comes at a cost. She's also a survivor. Sally has figured out how to exist in this challenging world, and she continues to do so. I always have this feeling that she will survive.'*

**Q: Consider the other female characters in CABARET. To what extent are they also survivors? What do you think happens to each of those female characters after the show's narrative ends?**

Emily Benjamin (the production's original alternate Sally Bowles) tells us: *'Sally represents the worst parts of every performer. She shows a lack of consideration for other people and ignores the bigger picture because she's so focused on the need to stay warm but also to party and have a good time. She questions the needs to be so serious about everything. Sally is deeply intelligent though and intelligent enough to be able to ignore what's going on in the wider world. That means that she's able to blinker herself. I think she chooses to blinker herself'.*

**Q: How do the interactions between Emcee and Sally take place during the production? Does Sally ever have any agency in her actions? To what extent is Emcee taking advantage of Sally, and how far is Sally herself responsible for not being able to leave the Kit Kat Club?**

The relationship between Sally and Emcee is important. Notice before her performance of *Cabaret*, Sally is introduced with, *'Ladies and Gentleman – the Kit Kat Club is so proud to welcome back – an old friend. I give you and don't you forget to bring her back when you have finished with her...Sally Bowles!'* You might interpret this as Sally being unable to break her addiction to performing – at terrible cost – but it's also a very possessive way to describe her by the Emcee.

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Take a look at the photographs below.

**How does each costume convey an aspect of Sally's personality?**



Photo: Marc Brenner  
Madeleine Brewer as  
Sally Bowles



Photo: Marc Brenner  
Amy Lennox as  
Sally Bowles

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Take a look at the photographs below.

**How does each costume convey an aspect of Sally's personality?**



Photo: Marc Brenner  
Cara Delevingne as  
Sally Bowles



Photo: Marc Brenner  
Rhea Norwood as  
Sally Bowles

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Sally's coat forms part of the narrative – she sells it in order to pay for the abortion. However, designer Tom Scutt explains that it's much more than that. *'I read it as a piece of armour or protection, a comfort blanket'*. Tom continues, *'I wanted it to be something that was outrageous, I suppose in some way, something that someone could completely fall in love with and buy, even if they couldn't really afford it.'*

Tom's decision to costume Sally in Cliff's suit at the end of the production becomes *'a bit of a resignation to the overwhelming masculinity of the world. It also kind of felt to me like she was becoming a rock star in that moment. We talked a lot about Annie Lennox and Sinead O'Connor – two artists whose style includes trouser suits.'*

**Q: Can you interpret the over-sized suit that Sally wears in any other way? What might it suggest about her vulnerability, or feeling out of her depth?**

Tom describes Sally's use of Cliff's suit at the end of the production as an act of love. *'She takes his suit from him so that it can't absorb who or what he is. He can now flourish into the queer person that he is.'*

Madeleine Brewer (former Sally Bowles in the West End) says, *'the word I've been using to describe Sally is 'technicolour.'* *An influence I've been using David Bowie – that's the kind of person she wants to be.'*

**Q: If you had to describe Sally in one sentence, how would you articulate that?**

Madeleine discusses the way in which she made decisions during the vocal coaching process of rehearsal. *'We discussed how much of her accent is put on. Is she trying to be something? Is she trying to prove something and play a role?'*

**Q: As you watch and listen to the production, notice where Sally's accent changes. Why do you think the creative team have made that choice?**

The interpretation of Sally has room to develop and change depending on the casting of the actor playing the role. Jordan Fein explains, *'Jessie's (Buckley) Sally was earthy and grounded, aware of what's around her but also so vulnerable. When she comes on in the baby doll dress there's an irony – it feels like she's a Shirley Temple who's going in to battle. Amy (Lennox)'s version looks like a young girl. Their journeys through the piece are very different.'*

Madeleine Brewer's interpretation of Sally considers her as *'larger than life person but she is a person, a human being. She makes an incredibly difficult decision – her reasons are both practical and impractical. I want the audience to feel her journey and see that this is a woman who's trying. She's got such an effortless power to her but it's what also undoes this dream that she could have had. She's someone who wants to be a mother*

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Perhaps the most famous of Sally's songs is the title number, *Cabaret*. In it, Sally is celebrating the fantasy and illusion provided by the cabaret. In contrast to the Liza Minelli version of the song, its function within this production is to show her delicate mental state. Jennifer Whyte, the production's Musical Supervisor, says, '*It's not about getting the most beautiful sound in the song. It's the emotional storytelling that's important.*' This interpretation conveys Sally's nihilism – she refuses to see the truth, perhaps inevitably becoming trapped eternally in the world of the Kit Kat Club, even as the real world around her implodes.

**Q: To what extent is Sally Bowles genuinely and/or deliberately ignorant? For example, seeing a copy of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in Cliff's room, she asks, '*is this your novel?*'**

**Q: As you reflect on the portrayal of Sally in the production, how might you storyboard or explain the arch that her character goes on?**



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*'I am your host'*

## PERFORMING THE EMCEE

The Emcee is both the production and the Kit Kat Club's Master of Ceremonies - guiding us through the show and introduces various musical numbers. There is a suggestion in this production that he may be part-owner of the Kit Kat Club, with Max as his business partner.

Throughout CABARET's production history, the Emcee has been a shape shifter and chameleon. In some productions it has been suggested that he is a queer character - one of the many whose own story will end shortly after the show's narrative does. In this production, the casting of the Emcee informs the character's interpretation. In the original cast with Eddie Redmayne as the Emcee, perhaps he will disappear off into the shadows and find a way to survive long after many of the other members of the Kit Kat Club disappear. With subsequent actors playing the role, the interpretation differs but he is the dominant manipulative force behind the performance.

**Q: After you've seen the show, consider your interpretation of the Emcee. Does he have redeeming features? Are there moments when you might assume we are seeing him off-guard or all of his moments planned and carefully executed?**

Jordan Fein sees the Emcee as someone who *'takes us through the show in ways that we don't even realise until the end... you can watch a second time and you can clearly see how he's observing, leading and controlling everyone around us.'*

Photo: Marc Brenner  
Jake Shears as the Emcee



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Lauren Dickson, Resident Director for the production, tells us, *'for the Emcee, their scene partner is the audience.'*

**Q: How do you think the actor playing the Emcee encourages the audience to become complicit in some of his actions? As an audience member, are you always aware that your emotional response is being manipulated? Are there any specific moments in the production where your reaction shocked or surprised you?**

Callum Scott-Howells suggests that his interpretation started with an exploration of his own physicality and how that then blends with that of the Emcee. Although the costume designs don't tend to vary too much between cast changes, there is room within the character to make it more individual.



Photo: Marc Brenner  
Callum Scott Howells as the Emcee

**Q: To what extent do you interpret the Emcee as a traditional chorus? Where does he interrupt, participate or challenge what is happening on stage? When he performs musical numbers as part of the cabaret act, how do those numbers encourage us to think rather than simply enjoy the show?**

Callum interprets him *'as a child in an adult's body. This is his toybox and this is him discovering things about himself – we've been playing around with the idea that they the people in the cabaret are his dolls. When he manipulates them, he doesn't know what's going to happen next.'*

The scene in which the dolls first appear is the only time where we see an unguarded version of the Emcee. He removes his wig, and wears a dressing gown as he sings *Tomorrow Belongs To Me*. The dolls that are placed on the stage during the song continuing the idea of toys in a toy box, are eerily replaced by human figures at the end of the play. The make-up, the wigs, the toys and the pretence all vanish...



Photos:  
Marc Brenner

**Q: Look carefully at the poses and gestures created by the Emcee. How do these compare and contrast with the movements of other characters on stage? What is the impact of having the Emcee observing much of the action?**

*In his interpretation, Callum hopes 'people leave having seen a reflection of reality. The relevance of men being in power and what they're actually capable of: the way they create a toxic masculinity. Look at I Don't Care Much, for example. The Emcee is saying 'this is my world and I can do what I want'. You don't have to look very far to see that in real life'.*

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*'Is it a crime to fall in love?'*

## PORTRAYING FRAULEIN SCHNEIDER AND HERR SCHULTZ

Photo:  
Marc Brenner

The audience first meet Fraulein Schneider at the same time as Cliff does – on his arrival in Berlin. We quickly realise through her song *So What?* that Schneider has survived a great deal. She has never married, and has seen her potential husband dead and buried.

Lotte Lenya – the actress who originated the role in 1966 – remarked that she was not going to excuse Schneider's actions in the play but she was going to explain them. Vivien Parry – the second actress to play the role in the new London production – adds: *'We get the entire trajectory with Schneider and to accompany her on the whole emotional journey. We see her as a feisty and resilient woman who dares to allow herself to fall in love. Then, when it doesn't happen, she explains her situation with What Would You Do?'*



**Q: Schneider says to Cliff and Sally, *'All my life I have managed for myself – and it is too old a habit to change. I have battled alone and I have survived...In the end, what choice have I? This – is my world!'*** To what extent do you sympathise with Fraulein Schneider for the decision that she makes?

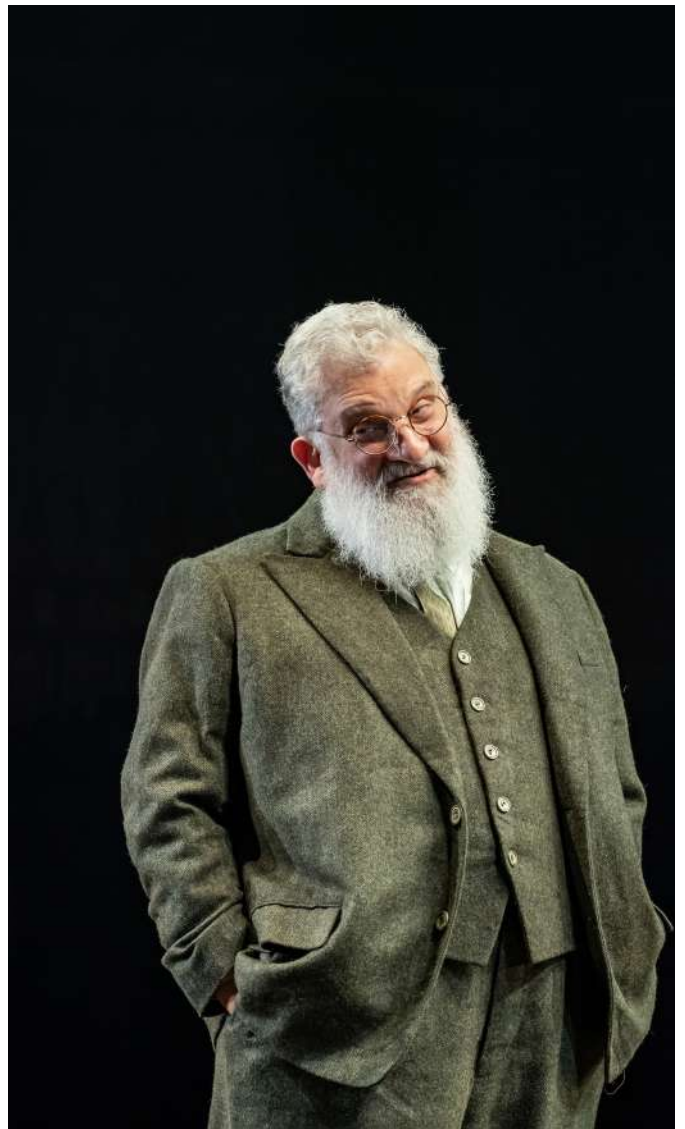
In contrast, we might consider Herr Schultz as an optimist. Richard Katz, the second actor to play the role in the new London production, suggests that there is a blend of both optimism and naivety in Schultz's inability to believe that things will not work out as he hopes. Richard comments, *'We always assume that the parliament and judiciary in this country will keep the bad guys away. But what happens when you don't know who the bad guys are?'* Schultz has no idea, in that moment, that he is part of anything bigger than the developing romance between two older people. Richard describes this as Schultz's *'Romeo moment: where these two people are going to live out their days together'*.

**Q: Vivien also quotes director Terry Hands who suggests that the actor's job is not to feel emotion, but instead to make sure that the audience feels emotion. Reflect on your experience of watching the production. What did actors do at specific moments that evoked a particularly strong emotional reaction for you?**

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A successful performance of both Schneider and Schultz requires excellent comic timing and an ability to listen to the other actor, highlighting the tragedy of what is happening around them and eventually to Schultz directly. Richard refers to Mel Brooks who, in the 1960s film *The Producers* was mocking the Nazis who had committed such atrocities less than 20 years before. *'It's incredibly important to be able to make people laugh. We are being disruptive and a bit naughty, but it heightens the seriousness of the message'*.

**Q: Consider the song *It Couldn't Please Me More*. How are we encouraged to find Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz convincing and endearing? Consider the lyrics as well as the way in which the song is performed in this production.**



Photos:  
Marc Brenner

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'Step by step'

## CHOREOGRAPHING CABARET

Julia Cheng's choreography incorporates a range of dance styles, several of which might not be traditionally connected to musical theatre. For example, you'll see several musical numbers influenced by waacking – a dance style from the disco era of 1970s America. Seen in many LGBTQ+ venues in that era, the style also takes its inspiration from martial arts and the use of weapons such as nunchucks.

Look at the photographs below. These are examples of posters made during workshops and rehearsals which summarise key words and ideas for each dance number. There is one for each of the musical numbers within the show.



**Q: Considering what you knew about CABARET before watching this production, are you surprised by the words on each one? What would you have expected?**

Many audience members may be surprised by the style of the CABARET choreography, as there are some clear choreographic contrasts to the iconic 1972 film directed and choreographed by Bob Fosse. His trademark isolations, use of chairs and bowler hats may lead us to expect something similar in this Kit Kat Club.

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Performed in the round, the choreography for this production uses various different shapes and configurations as the ensemble dance. Pay close attention to this in:

- *Willkommen*
- *Don't Tell Mama*
- *Mein Herr*
- *Money*
- *Kickline* (opening of Act Two)

**Q:** Some of the choreography parodies the cabaret style. Where is this particularly evident?

**Q:** How is the doughnut revolve used to enhance and support the choreography?



Photo:  
Marc Brenner

In *Two Ladies*, the Emcee and two of the ensemble simulate various sex acts, alongside the rest of the ensemble performers. Much of the choreography and staging was workshopped, but Jordan Fein discusses the importance of building a trusting and safe rehearsal room. *'This is a process in which consent is asked for before placing one's hand anywhere on another person's body. In addition, it was important to name a person in the room to whom company members could speak if they were feeling uncomfortable, creating a safe rehearsal space with clear boundaries and open dialogue.'*

**Q:** Creating a safe and calm rehearsal space is important to Rebecca Frecknall and her creative team. Discuss how you might do this with your classmates or fellow cast members. What guidelines could you create to ensure that everybody feels safe, valued and able to contribute?

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'In here, life is beautiful'

## SCENIC AND COSTUME DESIGN IN CABARET

As you explore the auditorium and observe the different costumes and styling of the performers, notice the eye motif. This is represented in the lights set in the stage floor, on the lamps of the tables in the stalls, and on the interior walls of the theatre building. Even the logo of the production involves an eye. There's a sense of voyeurism in CABARET, and the idea that privacy comes at a cost. Helga even tells Cliff, '*you happened to catch my eye.*'

**Q: As you watch the production, notice who is watching whom, and the various references to 'watching'. How is the auditorium used to emphasise this even further?**

The creation of CABARET's design concept took just five months. This is an extremely quick process, which might take anything up to two years under normal circumstances. The renovations of The Playhouse Theatre, and the mounting of a production shortly after COVID lockdown restrictions were lifted meant that the production team had to grab the opportunity and work with speed and determination!

Tom Scutt designed both the costumes and set for this production. However, the set doesn't just include what you see on stage. Instead it encompasses the entire refurbishment of the theatre itself, ensuring that the audience move through the different spaces including the foyers, bars and public areas before entering the Kit Kat Club itself.



Photo:  
Mark Fox

**Q: As you move around the theatre, notice the different textures, colours and finishes on all of the fittings and fixtures. Once back at home, research 1920s and 1930s Berlin. Where can you see the influences that inspired the designs and renovations?**

In creating the production concept, Tom researched ideas with other team members, including historically accurate images, but also what Tom describes as '*instincts*' – ideas such as eyes, and circles or certain colours that became integral to the production.



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Look carefully at the stage. Can you see that it is formed of several different circles? Within those circles is a doughnut revolve, and a lift that is decorated with festoon lights. This structure was inspired by a rough sketch Tom drew of the different tiers of society. *'It was one man at the top, with a baton, whilst the least powerful were at the bottom, going round and round'*.

The circles also represent the idea that although the production is set on the cusp of the 1920s and 30s, history tends to be cyclical and repeats itself.

**Q: Looking down on the stage you might also think that the stage is like an eye. Where else can you see eyes and circles in the costumes and the décor?**

The research for the show was collated into a 2-inch thick, A3 ring bound book, which provided a reference point throughout the design process. Those images also included historical costume, modern fashion and even horror movie tropes. The Emcee for example is inspired partly by horror characters such as Freddie Kruger: a sinister character who appears in the darkest and mostly unlikely of places.



Photo:  
Mark Fox



Photo:  
Mark Fox

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Research for design concepts don't just look at the time in which a production is set. For this production, research took place for:

- The time in which CABARET is set
- The time in which CABARET was written
- The time in which the film version of CABARET was made
- 2020 onwards – the world in which the production is performed

Design is also informed by:

- Dramaturgy
- The visual aesthetic required
- The study of music and musical numbers in the piece

**A particularly influential piece of research for Tom was Berlin Alexanderplatz – a 1980s series adaptation of Alfred Döblin's 1929 novel of the same name. This adaptation was directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder.**

**The fact that Fassbinder was a queer director also informed Tom's work, for a production that explicitly focusses on and engages the diversity of the company and the characters within it.**



Photo:  
Mark Fox



Photo:  
Mark Fox

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## COSTUME DETAIL

During *Willkommen*, the Emcee reveals the CABARET girls who appear veiled on stage. Their veils are removed by being flown out by cables that have been attached by the Emcee himself. Tom describes it as the cloches that are used to cover food and then removed with a flourish as the dishes are served. This image is inspired by two factors, the first is that a high proportion of women in Berlin in 1929 were sex workers. Many were widows, having lost their husbands in World War I and therefore the veils make them appear even more mournful. The second is the idea of the girls being revealed as something to consume. When they stand on the doughnut revolve (known affectionately within the production as the 'sushi revolve'), they are being paraded in front of the audience.

A pivotal point in the Emcee's costume is *Tomorrow Belongs To Me*, where we see a stripped back version of the character. It is as if he is stripping away his human form and is turning instead into this agent of chaos, leading into the skeleton costume worn in *Money*. This number is influenced by tarantellas and the idea of dancing with death. A tarantella is traditionally a dance of flirtation and courtship, which makes this design idea even more chilling.

Tom created a spectrum of colour that he would use for the design process. For example, the rusty red that you might see in some of the décor is then amplified and exaggeration in bright, electric orange in other aspects of the costume design. The sage green you see on the walls then contrasts sharply to Sally's neon green fur coat.



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## THE EMCEE

The Emcee's costumes are completed with various pairs of boots. Some are similar to the style of Doc Martens whereas others are more stylised, for example in *Money*.

I. Leather trousers and a cream knitted vest. He also wears a red cardboard party hat, and a pair of gloves.

II. A green coat which seems to be a parody of Sally's. It is mint green and made of ruffled chiffon.

III. A silk dressing gown in *Tomorrow Belongs To Me*. The Emcee wipes away some of his make up during his song and removes his wig to reveal a wig cap. This is the most vulnerable and stripped back that we see Emcee in the story.

IV. The skeleton in *Money*. The black chiffon effect puffed sleeves and trousers reveal white printed bone shapes underneath. His pointed boots also make him seem even more sinister. The gloves also have long fingernail shapes which emphasise the hand gestures and movements in the choreography.

V. Red Pierrot clown costume with oversized white ruff neck. This burgundy fabric reflects light and appears playful which juxtaposes the way that the Emcee is holding a rifle which shoots out a Nazi flag at a key moment in the musical number.

VI. Brown suit. This is as the customs officer and as part of the final moments of the play. When the Emcee sings *I Don't Care Much* he looks like a civilian. This perhaps challenges us, as civilians, to reflect on the lyrics of the song and the importance of individual action and bravery. If we interpret the Emcee as a queer character we can also consider the suit as an enforced identity for someone who may not survive long after the show's narrative ends.



Photo:  
Marc Brenner

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## SALLY BOWLES

Note the narrative arc that Sally goes through from the baby doll dress at the beginning of the production to the dull brown suit at the end. What does that tell us about her experience and the change in her emotional state? Tom Scutt mentions that whenever we see Sally, she is either taking off or putting on a costume. We are never sure if her clothing is anything but another identity or disguise.

1) Baby doll dress: a flirtatious, challenging costume which has ruffles which end above the knee. Sally also wears a white bonnet which mimics the embellishment of the dress. (The ensemble wear headbands that also echo the style of Sally's bonnet.) There is a sense of infantilisation and vulnerability. Sally also wears Doc Marten style boots and a brown short bobbed wig.

2) The green fur coat under which Sally wears purple underwear. The coat can be interpreted as Sally's 'armour' but it also becomes part of the narrative when she uses it as payment for her abortion later in the story

3) A silk style dressing gown in the scenes in Cliff's room.

4) Cliff's suit. Sally's decision to wear Cliff's brown suit blends her into the final scene where the entire company is wearing identical suits. Cliff's suit is too big for her, which makes her seem even more vulnerable. Again, she is wearing purple underwear under the suit – a mixture of her trying to be 'technicolour' but the external part of her is having to conform.



Photo:  
Marc Brenner



Photo:  
21 Marc Brenner

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## FRAULEIN SCHNEIDER

Fraulein Schneider has lived in her house for many years and it's with this in mind that her costume makes her appear 'part of the furniture'. You'll see this when she leans on a pillar. She wears an olive and sage blouse with an elasticated hem, with a dusky pink/brown woollen skirt which is mid shin length. She also wears some wooden beads and brown lace up shoes with a small heel.

For the engagement party, Fraulein Schneider wears a brown dress with a flower print on it.

The way in which colours interact is particularly important in a production that is performed in the round. Because there is minimal scenery on stage, the entire surrounding area must be co-ordinated.

## HERR SCHULTZ

Herr Schultz wears a light green shirt with a vertical stripe print, with an olive green tie. He wears a brown apron as appropriate to his occupation as a greengrocer. For the party scene he wears a burgundy paisley scarf and brown woollen jacket. For the engagement party, Fraulein Schneider wears a brown dress with a flower print on it.

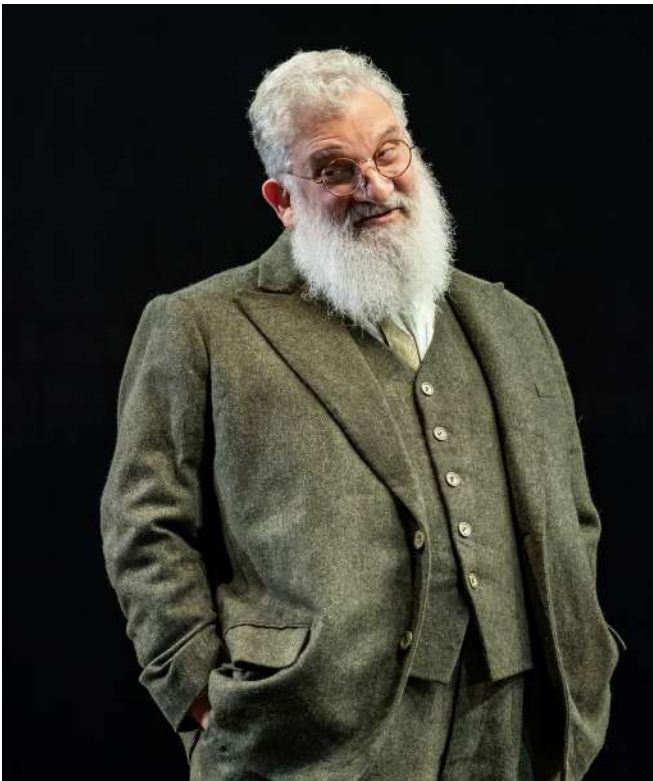


Photo:  
Marc Brenner



Photo:  
Marc Brenner

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## ENSEMBLE COSTUMES

The ensemble costumes create individual identities for each of the cabaret boys and girls. For example, Lulu wears a knitted bikini top, a finger-wave wig with pig-tails which is a blend of 1920s hair style, with the pigtails and green tint a nod to the fashion of the 1990s.

As you look closely at the ensemble's costumes, notice that they do not reflect the poverty that we might expect to see. The creative team want to reflect the creativity, inclusivity and exploration that was happening in the artistic world during the Weimar period. Notice the blends of colours and fabrics, with velvet, silk, beaded head dresses and underwear as outerwear. Pay close attention to the use of wigs, make up and accessories to highlight each character's individuality.



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*'Come hear the music play'*

## SOUND DESIGN

Nick Lidster, Cabaret's Olivier-Award winning Sound Designer, answered our questions about his design process for the production.

*How do you approach sound design for a show like CABARET?*

With previously performed shows, I read the script we are using in our production. I watch and listen to other versions of the show. In this case, because the orchestration was based on the recent Sam Mendes production, I watched the Donmar production. Obviously, I watched the film. From there, I try and visualise what sort of show it is and how I want it to sound and design accordingly.

*Can you help us describe the style of the sound design for the show?*

We use naturalistic amplification, with different types of heightened amplified versions of this idea, depending on the scene or location. The dialogue amplification would be minimal and natural whereas the club would be heightened. Dream like moments would be altered using reverb effects.

For example, *Maybe This Time* is staged with Sally looking at or facing Cliff, but she isn't really talking to him or even there in that moment. She has reverb on her voice, as does the orchestra, to create an audible distance between her and Cliff, to isolate her, like you might using lighting. *Tomorrow Belongs To Me* is a bigger example of this idea, only more surreal and stylised.

*Where is the sound design particularly important in creating dramatic and emotional impact?*

The beginning of the show starts in the Kit Kat Club, as we transition from our preshow musicians and performers to CABARET. We have the CABARET trade-mark snare drum roll and cymbal crash for the Emcee reveal. We are immediately a bit louder than the preshow with a 'club type reverb' because we are in the Kit Kat Club. This effect is repeated throughout the evening as we keep returning to the club. It gives us a nice punchy beginning and a recognisable audible environment for the club.





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In *Tomorrow Belongs to Me* the Emcee is a person who, like a chameleon, shows different sides of his character to blend into whatever circumstance or group of people he finds himself in or is with. He is a survivor and is also controlling. In our show, I have recorded him singing the three-part harmony that is in the score. So when he sings *Tomorrow* live,



we hear him and his harmony parts all in the same eerie reverb effect singing as one person, and we see little statues of the Emcee revolving around him, to show his different personas. It is intended to sound both beautiful and creepy.

At the end of the show, we see our Emcee conducting our cast and live orchestra in a kind of collective fever dream, as the rise of Nazi-ism takes over Germany. We hear a multitrack of lots of overlaid snare drums on top of our club's live snare drum. The

sound of snare drums comes from all corners of the auditorium which builds to a scary crescendo.

*What are the challenges of the staging configuration for CABARET?*

The auditorium is divided into five different seating areas: stalls, circle, and gallery in the 'old' auditorium and stalls and circle in the new side. My sound system does have to cover 360 degrees as we have seating in the side boxes too. It was very difficult to plan and organise. It was very important to me that everyone going to the Kit Kat Club gets the same audio experience.

*Can you tell us a bit more about the technology the show uses?*

I wanted a very natural and open sounding show, so I used primarily point source loudspeakers: these are KV2 and Meyer loudspeakers. The main loudspeaker quantities and types for each seating area are then repeated. For the main stalls, there are a pair of KV2 ESR212 stereo speakers (left and right of the stage) and a Meyer UPJ down fill rigged overhead. There is a ring of small KV2 Cube loudspeakers set into the stage: these are called front fills. There is also a line of 6 x Meyer UPM1a delay loudspeakers, under the circle overhang and 8 x UPM1a surround sound loudspeaker system. This configuration is repeated for each seating area in the theatre auditorium.

The prologue sound design is a totally different and separate system. It was very time consuming and needed to be installed as the building work and front of house areas were built. There was a lot of interaction between the architect and builders to achieve this. It runs using Dante digital via a fibre and cat 6 network.

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Each loudspeaker group front of house has its own digital Dante address and mixer output. The radio mics have many different aerial systems, so that the Prologue performers can wander from room to room, and in and out of the auditorium. The connection between CABARET and the prologue system is analogue. We use the CABARET sound system when the Prologue performers are in the auditorium, The Prologue is mixed live on an iPad.

*How do you achieve the appropriate mixture of the more naturalistic settings plus the wilder cabaret performative elements of Kit Kat Club?*

Everything is amplified but dialogue is minimally amplified with no effects, so we hear the actor as naturally as possible, This is so we connect with them as human beings, experience their emotion and keep the human scale of their story.

The sound effects that are in the play are again chosen and treated simply to help with the real elements of the story. For example when Cliff and Ernst meet on a train, we hear them and the inside of a European train carriage (of the correct era). There are also more stylised and larger than life sounds for shock moments, like the brick coming through the fruit shop window is very loud and shocking.



Photo:  
Marc Brenner



Photo:  
Marc Brenner

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*'A band is playing somewhere and somewhere hearts are light'*

## THE MUSIC OF CABARET

Jennifer Whyte, CABARET's Musical Supervisor takes us through the key aspects of the role, and the music of CABARET.

'Many people think of musical theatre as highly polished and beautiful. However, as a Musical Director my role in the coaching of performance is from the point of view of story, first. It isn't about getting a beautiful sound at the expense of everything else. Instead it's important to communicate to the audience how a character is feeling. That's a much more intense emotional experience. Soundtrack and movie recordings don't necessarily reflect dark and painful situations that characters might find themselves in.

Rebecca (Frecknall) has intentionally blurred the lines of when we're on stage and when we're not and that's also reflected in the musical direction of the show. Musical theatre is much wider and deeper than it's often given credit for. When working with the principals, I encourage and invite them to abandon the preconceptions they may have about the character and the song, and approach it as a dramatic exercise. Certainly Rebecca and I took some risks – audiences won't recognise Sally's song *Cabaret* if they try and compare it to Liza Minelli's version, for example.

When working with the band, I encourage them to be individual. We are creating a rough nightclub in Berlin! It doesn't need to be, or indeed shouldn't appear to be, a traditional rank and file ensemble classical players. The direction and the playing is precise but individuality is possible in terms of timbre and it creates a broader texture. I urge the individuals to express themselves within the boundaries of precision and clarity. We are creating a 1930s Berlin cabaret band.

*Tomorrow Belongs To Me* is a rare and unguarded moment for the Emcee. This might be who he really is. The image is that he's a kid playing with his toy box with innocence and naivety and possibly a lack of awareness of his destructive impact. The Emcee is lacking in empathy and doesn't recognise what his actions can wreak on other people. There's a playful innocence that in the context is truly horrific because there's no accountability.



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I have rearranged about half of the numbers in the show, using the nine-piece version that we were provided with. This is partly because of logistics, and partly in order to support the storytelling. Whilst we're not trying to reinvent the wheel, we've added a new accordion part for *Willkommen*, and adjusted some of the woodwind parts. I've also added a violin part in Fraulein Schneider's emotional song. It's an instrument that communicates pathos, and it's also an instrument used in Jewish music so that's important too.

Our orchestration of *Money* was influenced by Tom's designs for the show. When I saw them, there was a Tim Burton sort of influence so I followed the same kind of Danny Elfman and Tim Burton style of reworking the number to make it even more sinister. We use violin and keyboard, percussion and prepared piano effects to make it sufficiently spooky!'

### Sounds to listen out for:

- Prepared piano sounds. How does the piano sound at various different moments in the show that suggests different locations and atmospheres?
- The use of banjo, guitar and violin to create a sound traditionally associated with cabaret music
- A reference to Jewish style music with the use of violin
- Different sound effects applied by the sound design team to alter the acoustic experience for the audience. For example, the crackling effect of a gramophone player



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*'I told you I'd inspire you'*

## INSPIRATIONS AND PLAYLISTS

The CABARET company and creative team share their inspirations for working on the show.

### Playlists:

**Madeleine Brewer:** *Milord, Edith Piaf; Someone To Watch Over Me, Ella Fitzgerald & Fame, David Bowie.*

**Callum Scott Howells:** *Speed Race, Fernanda Abreu.*

**Emily Benjamin:** *Cherry Bomb, The Runaways & Bad Karma, Miley Cyrus.*

### Inspiration

**Isabella Byrd:** I really believe in simple and intuitive design. I spend a great deal of my creative time excavating the feeling of a play/work and determining how we can do more with less. There is a tiring trend in Lighting Design (and really all of modern technology) that more is more— and just because we have the computer power to put a glitzy bright cue on every beat of music, doesn't mean we should! We can trust the essential elements, and it can better tap into our emotional truths. I really encourage young artists to see as much art as they can manage and form their own tastes and opinions. We ought to be making art that is true to our personal space, or personal visions, and not just making things that might serve our capitalistic impulses. Can we collaborate and care for our moral imagination? How can the liveness of performance space inspire greater change?

**Nick Lidster:** When I was 19 years old, I started working in musical theatre, doing shows primarily by Stephen Sondheim, that was very inspirational for me.



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*'I used to love pretending I was someone else'*

## CAREERS IN THEATRE

**Jordan Fein:** Theatre made me feel close to who I thought or knew I was. I never wanted to do anything else. I acted when I was young but I had a great theatre teacher who allowed me to understand that directing was a possibility. I lived in New York for thirteen years making a lot of theatre.

**Tom Scutt:** I acted when I was in school, but I've also spent time writing music and in recording studios. I studied at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama on the Theatre Design course. I think increasingly, theatre design isn't simply an end point. I've also done music tours and exhibition design, for example. I've also directed and because the discipline works so closely with other aspects of theatre, there's a diverse range of opportunities out there.

**Emily Benjamin:** I completed a two-year foundation course in Musical Theatre at Performance Preparation Academy in Guildford and then I stayed on to do the Musical Theatre diploma. It's enabled me to take my career in all sorts of different directions. It may take several auditions to successfully obtain a place at drama school. Don't be put off!

**Vivien Parry:** I trained at Arts Educational and have worked with companies such as the RSC, Theatre Clywd, on TV and on radio. You have to be determined and resilient. I've done other jobs too and even have a bus driver's license! If you want to work in this industry, and do this job, you'll find a way!



**Nick Lidster:** My mother worked in the wardrobe department at Glyndebourne, so I grew up in the theatre. Sound and music was my interest growing up though. I did a theatre sound course at college and got a job in Manchester running a Rep. theatre sound department for the Library Theatre Company for 2 years. Then I mixed shows in the West End.

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**Rachel Benson:** I worked for two theatre companies as an intern and before I then went to drama school. I went to Rose Bruford and studied on the Actor-Musician course. I loved it!

**Laura Braid:** I went to a fine arts high school, in Canada and I was registered in a dance program there. I found a company called Culture Shock, and went to a hip hop class with them and instantly fell in love with the dance form, even after having a much more classical background before that! They took me on and I was with that company for eight years. The rest is history!

Take a look at the document [here](#) to see the different jobs that are required to bring the Kit Kat Club to life.

## References and Research Opportunities

The Making of Cabaret by Keith Garebian  
(Oxford University Press, 2011)

[The Weimer Republic – BBC Bitesize](#)

[Kander and Ebb Encyclopedia Britannica entry](#)

[PBS page on Kander and Ebb](#)

[Tom Scutt](#)

[Isabella Byrd](#)

[Autograph and Nick Lidster](#)



Photo:  
Mark Fox

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# CREDITS

**This pack was written by Education Consultant Susie Ferguson  
and commissioned by ATG Productions, Underbelly and AKA.**

With grateful thanks to:

Emily Benjamin  
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Stuart Burt  
Isabella Byrd  
Julia Cheng  
Lorna Cobbold  
Lauren Dickson  
Callum Scott Howells  
Richard Katz  
Kayla Lomas-Kirton  
Tom Scutt  
Jennifer Whyte  
Liv Buckley