2010

August – December

EXPERIENCE THE art. FALL

YOUR GUIDE TO

- Cabaret
- Alice vs. Wonderland
- The Blue Flower
- Drums in the Night

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FALL 2010
AT THE A.R.T.

This fall, I invite you to join us at the A.R.T., where we continue our commitment to expand the boundaries of theater by exploring both classics and exciting new work.

Our season opens with rock star Amanda Palmer of Dresden Dolls fame starring as the Emcee in ***Cabaret***. Our club theater OBERON will be transformed into the Kit Kat Klub for this classic Kander and Ebb musical set in Weimar Berlin. Come join the outrageous and provocative Palmer for an experience where "life is beautiful" and nothing is quite what it seems.

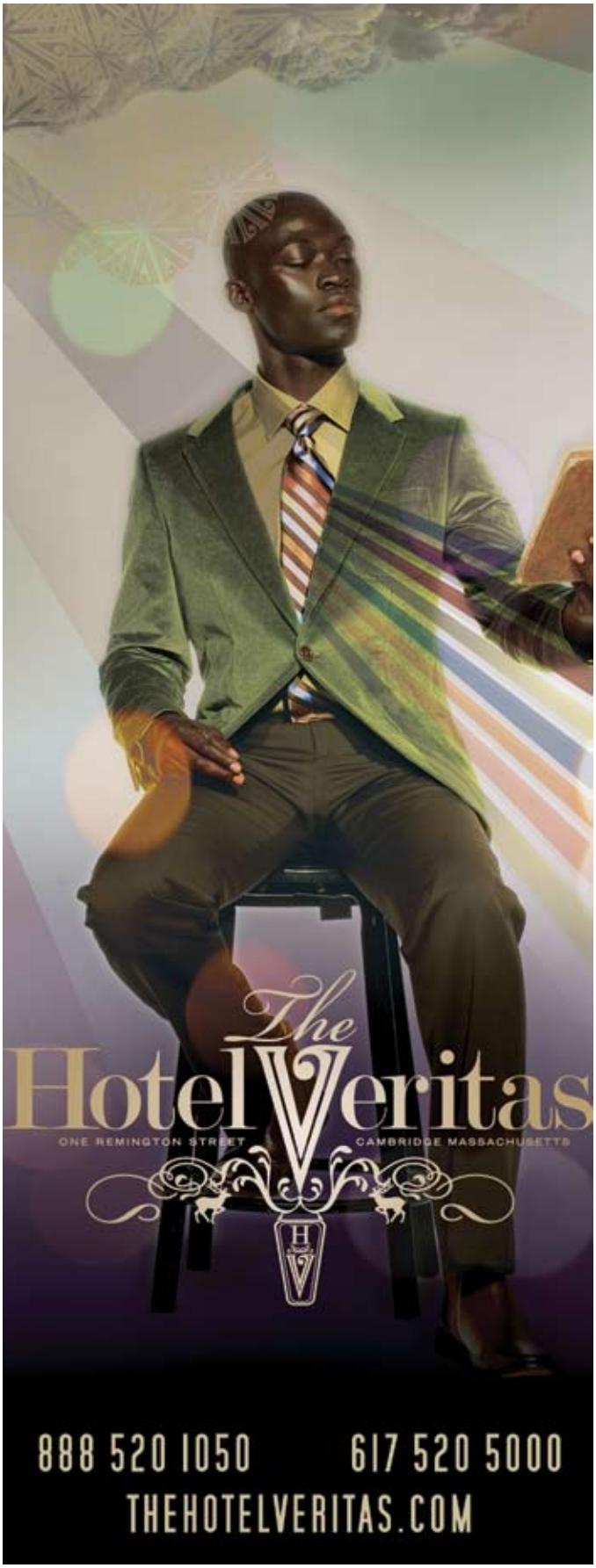
In December on our Loeb Mainstage, the sound of Weimer cabaret fuses with country-western music in ***The Blue Flower***, a new musical by Jim and Ruth Bauer. Complete with silent films and a live on-stage nine-piece "Weimarband," ***The Blue Flower*** rides the twisted rails of history from Belle Époque Paris through the battlefields of the Great War and beyond. Our Loeb lobby will be home to Cabaret Voltaire, an homage to the real Dada café that is one of the inspirations for ***The Blue Flower***. Gather with your friends in our beer garden—before or after the show!

In September and October, don't miss our New American Voices series featuring the work of three dynamic young American playwrights. As part of that series, we are delighted to bring ***Alice vs. Wonderland***, a remix of Lewis Carroll's familiar story, to the Loeb Mainstage following its sold-out three-month run in Moscow last spring. Staged by internationally acclaimed director János Szász, ***Alice vs. Wonderland*** features the A.R.T. Institute Class of 2011 and a script written by Institute alum Brendan Shea. Lastly, director Robert Scanlan brings to life the rarely seen ***Drums in the Night*** by Bertolt Brecht, also featuring our A.R.T. Institute students.

In this guide, you will find interviews with our artists, essays about the productions, and all the details you need to buy your tickets.

On behalf of everyone at the A.R.T., welcome to our 2010/11 season!

Diane Paulus,
Artistic Director



FALL 2010

AT A GLANCE

CABARET

Book by Joe Masteroff
Based on the play by John Van Druten
and stories by Christopher Isherwood
Music by John Kander | Lyrics by Fred Ebb
Directed by Steven Bogart
Starring Amanda Palmer as the Emcee
Starts August 31, 2010 @ OBERON

PHOTO: KYLE CASSIDY

Take your seat at the Kit Kat Klub, the perfectly marvelous cabaret where Amanda Palmer of Dresden Dolls fame presides over the debauched party as the Klub's magnetic Emcee.

1998 Broadway Production Co-Directed and Choreographed by Rob Marshall and Directed by Sam Mendes

ALICE VS. WONDERLAND

Written by Brendan Shea
Based on Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*
Directed by János Szász
Featuring the A.R.T. Institute Class of 2011
Starts September 18, 2010 – 8 shows only
@ Loeb Drama Center

IMAGE: RAY CAESAR

Lewis Carroll meets Lady Gaga in this psychedelic update of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, directed by János Szász (*Mother Courage*, *Marat/Sade*, *The Seagull*).

AT THE A.R.T.

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The A.R.T. Institute for Advanced Theater Training presents

DRUMS IN THE NIGHT

By Bertolt Brecht

Directed by Robert Scanlan

December 16–18, 2010

Loeb Drama Center Experimental Theater

With her lover, Andreas, presumed dead in World War I, young Anna Balicke agrees to marry the local war profiteer. But when Andreas unexpectedly shows up alive, the couple must find their way back to each other amidst postwar desolation and the chaos of an uprising.

THE BLUE FLOWER

Music, lyrics, script, and videography by Jim Bauer

Artwork, story, and videography by Ruth Bauer

Directed by Will Pomerantz

Produced by special arrangement with Stephen Schwartz, Andrew Levine, and Steve Tate

Starts December 1, 2010 @ Loeb Drama Center

PICTURED: MEGHAN MCGEARY; PHOTO: TYLER KONGSLIE

Powered by seductive music, fanciful silent films, a kinetic cast and the "Weimarband" live on stage, ***The Blue Flower*** rides the twisted rails of history from Belle Epoque Paris through the battlefields of the Great War and beyond.

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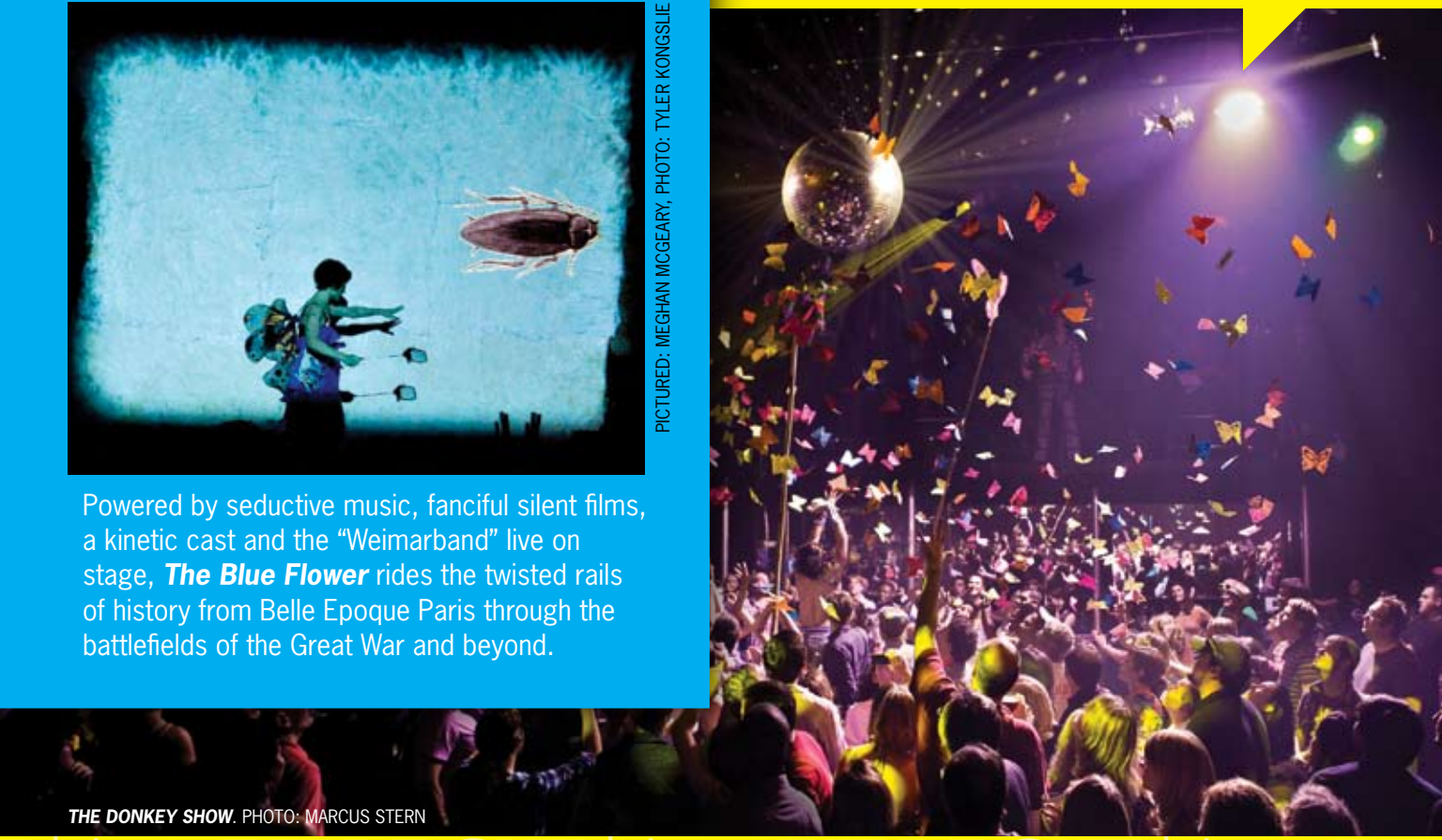

THE DONKEY SHOW. PHOTO: MARCUS STERN

THE EXPERIENCE a.r.t. is being made possible through a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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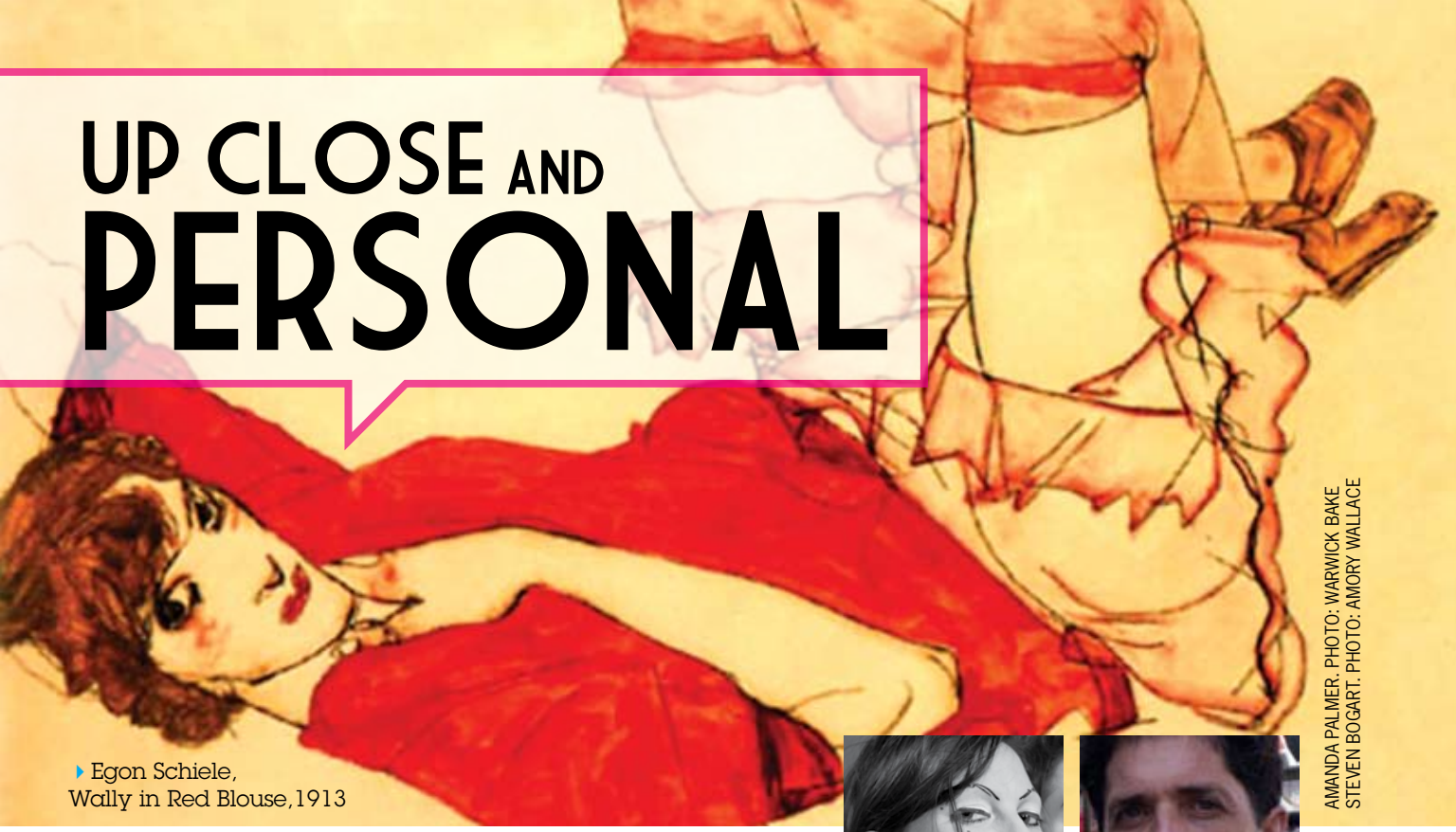

Egon Schiele,
Wally in Red Blouse, 1913

AMANDA PALMER. PHOTO: WARWICK BAKE
STEVEN BOGART. PHOTO: AMORY WALLACE

A.R.T. DRAMATURG RYAN MCKITTRICK INTERVIEWS STEVEN BOGART, DIRECTOR OF *CABARET*, AND AMANDA PALMER, THE EMCEE IN *CABARET*.

Ryan McKittrick: When ***Cabaret*** premiered in 1966, it broke many of the conventions of American musical theater and gave audiences a whole new kind of experience. What kind of relationship would you like to develop between the audience and the performers in this production?

Amanda Palmer: I want a very intimate relationship. My goal is to make sure that no one feels like just a spectator. I want everyone to feel like they are at an event with each other. Their connection with the performers is important, but their connection with each other is also very important. My fantasy with theater is always to surprise people. Not necessarily to shock or unsettle them, but really to surprise them with an experience that they didn't anticipate. Even if that's just a brief moment or a discovery. OBERON is small and intimate enough that we should be able to create individualized experiences for people, a lot like the A.R.T.'s production of ***Sleep No More*** last season. So even if you go to the bathroom at intermission, something might happen.

Steven Bogart: We want people to have little private experiences at their tables while other things are going on around the space. OBERON is the perfect space for this in many ways because there are so many places for the audience to keep discovering vignettes. So we can have many things going on simultaneously. Not to the point where you lose the focus—but if you look over here you might see one thing, and if you look on the other side of the room something completely different might be happening. In the rehearsal process we're going to be encouraging the performers to take as many risks as possible. And because of that there will probably be a lot of room for improvisation within the structure of the musical.

AP: That's why I'm excited about my role as the Emcee. Steve and I talked a lot about whether I would play Sally Bowles or the Emcee. When I was imagining doing the same job forty-two nights in a row, the Emcee looked like the tastier role for me because I can imagine it evolving over the course of the run. I love the idea that my performance can be different every night. My movements can be different. I can do different things to different people.

RM: You and the design team have been looking at a lot of early twentieth-century expressionist art as you prepare for this production. What's drawn you to that period?

SB: There was a lot of experimental art in the early twentieth century. These incredible artists were doing amazing things. And that period was so filled with artistic freedom of expression and sexual freedoms of expression. It was so raw and visceral. So we've been looking at paintings by Otto Dix and George Grosz.

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"My fantasy with theater is always to surprise people. Not necessarily to shock or unsettle them, but really to surprise them with an experience that they didn't anticipate."

-Amanda Palmer

PHOTO: KYLE CASSIDY

Steven Bogart and Amanda Palmer

AMANDA PALMER'S PLAYLIST

SONGS FROM OTHER MUSICALS THAT I DON'T HATE

She Says Good Morning
- The Pretty Things, from their rock opera *S.F. Sorrow*

The Ballad of the Soldier's Wife
- performed by Marianne Faithful; by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill

Song of the Moldau
- performed by Dagmar Krause; composed by Hanns Eisler for Brecht's musical *Schweyk in the Second World War*

Marat/Sade
- a medley performed by Judy Collins; based on the music that accompanies the play *Marat/Sade*.

America
- from the *West Side Story* original cast recording; music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Colored Spade
- from the *Hair* original soundtrack; music by James Rado and Gerome Ragni

Pirate Jenny
- performed by Nina Simone; from *The Threepenny Opera* by Brecht and Weill

Nanna's Lied
- performed by Meret Becker; based on a poem by Brecht, set to music by Eisler, and later, Weill

Too Darn Hot
- performed by Ella Fitzgerald; from *Kiss Me, Kate* by Cole Porter

Alabama Song
- performed by The Doors; originally from Brecht's play *Hauspostille*

And the Austrian painter Egon Schiele has been a huge influence.

RM: What drew you to Schiele?

SB: Just the perfect purity of the expression—simple, tortured, elegant.

RM: Tortured? Isn't ***Cabaret*** supposed to be fun?

SB: The audiences need to enjoy themselves and really have a good time, but then the insidious nature of the totalitarianism starts creeping into their psyches. Fascism is there all along in the musical—it's just masked at the beginning.

AP: I think this is a great musical for people who hate musicals. I like the idea of musicals, but I pretty much hate all musicals.

RM: Why is ***Cabaret*** different for you?

AP: I've seen a lot of productions of ***Cabaret***. The first time I saw it was when I was living in Germany, and I just remember thinking that the songs were great. And I like the way the musical is structured. It gets away with having songs that don't necessarily drive the story forward, and that can really just stand on their own. That's why I've covered songs from ***Cabaret*** in my Dresden Dolls repertoire—we've done "Mein Herr" and "I Don't Care Much." They all work as entertaining songs. And I think one of the reasons ***Cabaret*** works so well is because a lot of the action unfolds in a place where it actually makes sense to have music—a cabaret. And the songs have these very powerful messages beneath them.

RM: What are some of those messages?

AP: Take "The Money Song." It's so simple and campy and clever. But in the context of the show it's fucking dark. You're talking about exchanges of human life.

RM: What do you think of Sally Bowles's decision at the end of the musical to stay in Berlin and keep performing in the cabaret instead of leaving Germany with Cliff? Is she weak?

SB: I think that's what Cliff thinks. But in his own way he's almost siding with the Nazi policy to domesticate German women—he's telling Sally, "you've got to do this with your life." ***Cabaret*** is an anti-fascist musical that is very clear about what it is working against—but it is still a musical in which the male gaze is very strong, and despite its anti-fascist intention, the role of women is subjected to that gaze.

RM: How will you be addressing that in your production?

SB: We're gender-bending the hell out of this thing. Instead of being all women, the Kit Kat Klub dancers are going to be male and female. Amanda's going to be playing a gay male Emcee. And Tommy Derrah is playing the landlady, Fraulein Schneider. So the audience won't always know or understand what they're looking at. The answers won't be so clear, and hopefully that will provide the audience with a more visceral experience.

Ryan McKittrick is the A.R.T. Dramaturg.

George Grosz, Lovesick

KLUBBING

David Reynoso's set design for *Cabaret* at OBERON

Otto Dix, To Beauty, 1920

HEAR FROM DAVID REYNOSO, SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER FOR *CABARET* AND COSTUME DESIGNER FOR *ALICE VS. WONDERLAND*.

Ryan McKittrick: What kind of environment are you creating for ***Cabaret***?

David Reynoso: It's going to be a space that's alive as soon as you enter. When you come into the Kit Kat Klub, the show has already started by the time you sit down. It's been fascinating to research the old Weimar-era cabarets. Berlin was known as the epicenter of sexual escapades. It was a place where people went to let loose, which is interesting because OBERON has developed a similar reputation.

RM: Have any artists inspired your design?

DR: We've been looking at the paintings of Otto Dix and a lot of other German expressionist artists. The Kit Kat Klub dancers are going to be wearing a lot of makeup, so they'll look like paintings that have come to life. They'll be exciting and arousing, but there will also be something saddening about them.

RM: What's appealed to you about Otto Dix's paintings?

DR: What I love about Dix is that his paintings are grotesque. There's something equally alluring and off-putting about them, which is very much what the Kit Kat Klub is. There's a constant tension in the Klub between fun and ugliness and you see this in Otto Dix's work. I think ***Cabaret*** is going to be a one-two punch. You're brought in thinking that you're here to have fun, and then all of a sudden you realize there are horrible things lurking in the shadows. That's represented in a lot of the artists we've been looking at.

RM: What else has influenced your design?

Otto Dix, Lady with Mink and Veil, 1920

DR: We've been looking at the film *The Blue Angel* with Marlene Dietrich—I've been fascinated by all the tchotchkes and statues in the cabaret where her character performs. I've also been inspired by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* because of how, on a visual level, human bodies behave in relation to the monumental and sometimes oppressive spaces depicted in the film.

RM: You also designed the costumes for the A.R.T.'s production of ***Alice vs. Wonderland***. How would you describe the look of your costumes in that show?

DR: Early on in the process, I showed the director János Szász some images of these thuggish-looking men with gold teeth and big jewelry who are wearing these girly, baby doll dresses over their baggy clothing. There was something about the topsy-turviness of it that felt very appropriate for ***Alice***. Things were just not what they were supposed to be.

Ryan McKittrick is the A.R.T. Dramaturg.





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THE EVOLUTION OF THE EMCEE

BY RACHEL HUTT

The original Broadway cast of *Cabaret*, with Joel Grey at center

THE EMCEE IS THE CORE OF *CABARET*. HE ENTERTAINS THE AUDIENCE THROUGH SONGS, BANTER, SEX, AND ALCOHOL. THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES DISTRACTS HIS PATRONS, LETTING THEM FORGET THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHAOS OUTSIDE.

The Emcee, according to Richard Gilman in *Newsweek*, "serves as a metaphor for what's happening outside the cabaret." The Emcee sings about greed, sex, anti-Semitism, and apathy. Under his grotesque makeup, he is a beacon of truth. While Cliff and Sally party to excess and Berlin flirts with catastrophe, the Emcee reminds us of what is lurking underneath.

Joel Grey originated the role of the Emcee for the 1966 Broadway production and reprised the part for the 1972 Fosse film and the 1987 Broadway revival. Charming and disturbing, Grey described the Master of Ceremonies as "…a sort of marionette… like a ventriloquist's dummy." Gliding across the stage, Grey flashes a big smile and expands his eyes to saucers. Telling a few dirty jokes, he urges the audience to relax. In an elegant tux, white face, and rouged cheeks, he twirls a cane like a Weimar dandy. Grey's Emcee may be odd, but he is harmless.

But just when the lulled spectators think they are safe, Grey's Emcee turns sinister. All of a sudden the sex becomes vulgar as he

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Alan Cumming as the Emcee in the 1998 Broadway revival of *Cabaret*

EXPOSING THE EMCEE
BY ALAN CUMMING

I only wanted to do the part if it was going to be an authentic look at what it was really like to be alive then, to be a part of a decadent world that ultimately disappeared. I wanted to be dirty and to be shocking, and to look like a drug addict, and to scare people and enchant them at the same time.... I am so glad I did it for so many reasons. It felt great to do something so different and very liberating to be so exposed - literally.

Alan Cumming played the Emcee in the 1993 London revival and 1998 Broadway revival of Cabaret, both directed by Sam Mendes. Read more about his perspective on Cabaret at http://bit.ly/9H5s2L.

COME TO THE CABARET

A panel discussion co-presented by the A.R.T. and the Humanities Center at Harvard

Monday September 20, 6:30 p.m. at OBERON
(2 Arrow Street, Harvard Square)

Moderated by Homi K. Bhabha, Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities and Director of the Humanities Center at Harvard

Panelists will include:
- Charles Maier, Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History, Harvard University
- Carol Oja, William Powell Mason Professor of Music, Harvard University
- Martin Puchner, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Harvard University
- Amanda Palmer, the Emcee in the A.R.T. production of ***Cabaret***

gropes two women at the same time. What starts as a parody of a romantic love song ends with a chilling anti-Semitic remark. Seeing their reflections in an enormous mirror hanging on the upstage wall, the patrons slowly realize they have been lured into fascism. Grey's performance leaves the audience sick.

In 1993, Alan Cumming radically reinterpreted the role of the Emcee. In *American Theatre* Roger Copeland described Cumming's portrayal as a "seduction machine who slinks out of a black-leather trench coat and greets the audience in three languages and at least that many sexual orientations. Whatever you want—whatever your fancy or fantasy—this protean, gyrating, omni-sexual creature will fulfill it for you." Cumming thrusts sex and despair into the spotlight. Tattoos, glitter, and black lipstick replace the white face and red cheeks of Grey. Cumming wears only a black bow tie against his bare chest. Bruises and track marks run up his arms. As he sings "I Don't Care Much," he shoots himself up with heroin.

Alan Cumming's bruised and beaten body replaced Joel Grey's wide-eyed, satanic puppet. Pain radiated from Cumming's character work. Critics called Cumming's Emcee a chameleon. During the song "If You Could See Her," Cumming dances with a gorilla. Everyone enjoys the shtick. Out of nowhere toxic waste bubbles up to the surface. When Cumming utters the last line, "She doesn't look Jewish at all," he hisses it as a threat. According to Sam Mendes, who directed the 1993 London and 1998 Broadway revivals, when Cumming sings that line, "the musical turns into a black-as-pitch play. The audience is a willing participant in the first part of the evening, but then the doors lock from the outside and they become prisoners."

Joel Grey as the Emcee

The role of the Emcee has changed with each new production. In a 2003 interview, composer John Kander said, "When ***Cabaret*** was first done, it was fresh and imaginative and no one had ever seen anything like it. And in a funny way, that's what Sam [Mendes] did for a whole other generation: we got back the feeling ***Cabaret*** had had the first time out." It's been twelve years since the second Broadway revival opened. By casting the Emcee as a woman, played by rock performer Amanda Palmer, the American Repertory Theater will give the Emcee another jolt.

Rachel Hutt is a second-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T./ MXAT Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2010

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10/3 - Sunday 12pm
Lowell Memorial Auditorium
MICHAEL PIERSON
"Prelude to the Civil War: The State of the Union 150 Years Ago"

10/7 - Thursday 7pm
Pollard Library
JUSTIN LOCKE
"The Principles of Applied Stupidity"

10/18 - Monday 12pm
UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center
ERIC S. ROSENGREN
President & CEO
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
Discusses how financial problems affect the real economy

10/20 - Wednesday 7pm
Whistler House Museum of Art
CONCERT:
AARON LARGET-CAPLAN
"Bach, Dance and Sleep"

10/24 - Sunday 2pm
National Park Visitor Center
BEN Z. ROSE
"John Stark, Maverick General"

11/7 - Sunday 2pm
National Park Visitor Center
KENNETH M. TINGLE
"The Girl in the Italian Bakery"

11/8 - Monday 12pm
UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center
DEAN BAKER
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LEAVE YOUR TROUBLES OUTSIDE...

BY JOSEPH PINDELSKI

Liza Minnelli in stockings and bowler, Joel Grey smeared with greasepaint—that's what many of us see when we think of Weimar cabaret. This impression is accurate, up to a point. But German cabarets were far more diverse than Hollywood movies depict. From palatial theaters to seedy beer halls, these different venues offered an amazing variety of artists. Their competition to win Berliners' Deutschmarks created an era of innovation whose legacy lives on.

Germany erupted into an industrial superpower in the late nineteenth century, making Berlin a center of hustle and alienation. Artists expressed this sense of chaos and fragmentation in French-inspired café revues. Unlike their French counterparts, however, Germany's *kabaretts* attempted to create more than liquor-soaked variety shows; they aspired to be a cultural salon for the new century.

German artists worried about Germany's cultural landscape. Theater attendance was dwindling: only insipid comedies and variety shows drew large audiences. Seeing that serious theaters—and their jobs—were in peril, artists turned to the variety-show style of *kabaretts*, hoping its popular appeal would renew German theater. Their goal was to edify with art and literature, not just entertain with song and dance.

Germany's theatrical renewal was not easily won. In 1902, Berlin's first *kabarett*, Ernst von Wolzogen's opulent Motley Theater, closed one year after its debut. Audiences wanted entertainment, not stuffy art songs and poetry. To Wolzogen's dismay, audiences ignored his gilt playhouse and gravitated toward off-beat pub-*kabaretts*, which had begun to spring up all around Berlin that same year. Pub-*kabaretts* offered all strata of Berliners a thrilling night of theater. The Hungry Pegasus was one such place, bringing bohemian artists together in the cramped back room of an Italian restaurant where artists experimented with ideas that would make polite Germans gasp. The atmosphere was electric, the crowd eclectic: artists, millionaires, workers, and scholars packed the seats. Like the schnapps, the camaraderie between rich and poor flowed freely. Pub-*kabaretts* edified, entertained, and were outrageously successful. From these first attempts, later cabaret producers learned valuable lessons.

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▸ Marlene Dietrich in *Morocco*. ▸ Brecht (standing, left) at a rehearsal of the cabaret show *Mahagonny*. Weill is on the right. ▸ Caran d'Ache, view of the interior of the Chat Noir during a shadow play, 1887. ▸ Kurt Weill. ▸ The burning of the Reichstag, February 27-28 1933, signalled the end of the Weimar Republic.

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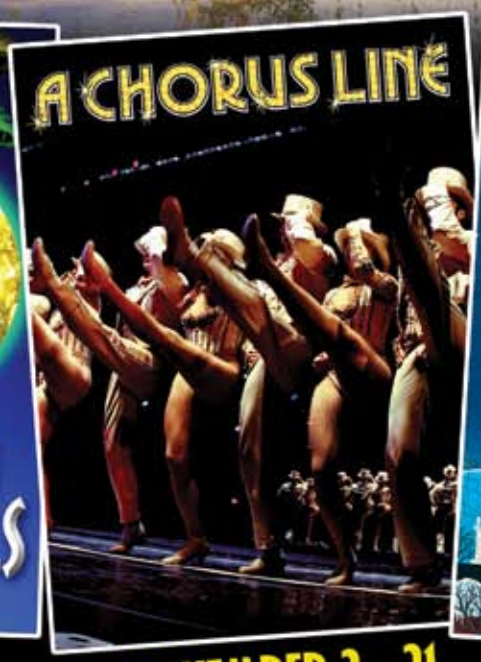
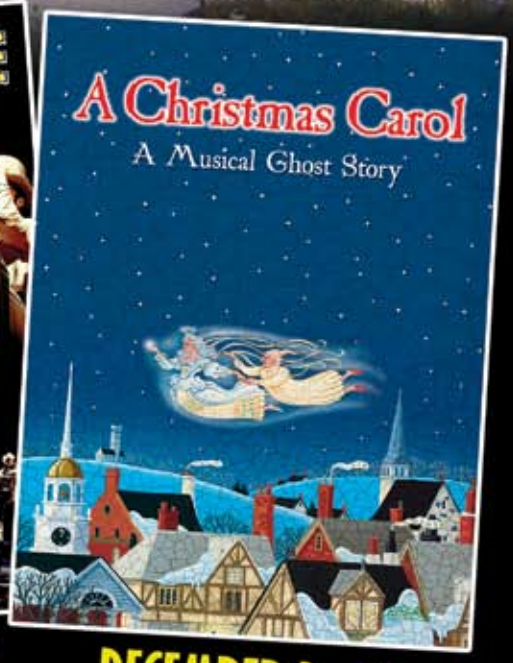


NOVEMBER 2 - 21



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Bertolt Brecht

Sitting at tables, imbibing cocktails, audiences indulged in parades of cross dressers, queers, skits, jokes, and other offerings that playfully mocked ineffective government, sexual rigidity, and a post-war world that made little sense.

Germany's defeat in World War I spawned the cabarets we are most familiar with. In the new Weimar Republic there was no censor, and *kabaretts* plunged from bohemian hotspots to dens of iniquity. To combat this artistic degradation, producers began opening "*cabarets*." German artists again needed to save their jobs by rising above the common fare, and the French spelling emphasized this ascent. What followed was nothing less than a renaissance.

What developed from the attempts of Wolzogen and successes of The Hungry Pegasus were places like Wild Stage and Cabaret Megalomania. Producers shifted the look and appeal of the cabarets as they fought for every patron with creature comforts and envelope-pushing acts. Sitting at tables, imbibing cocktails, audiences indulged in parades of cross dressers, queers, skits, jokes, and other offerings that playfully mocked ineffective government, sexual rigidity, and a post-war world that made little sense. The energy of this exploration and redefinition was infectious. Cabaret artists sparked a cultural renaissance that expanded well beyond Germany.

Today's productions of Shakespeare in the Park owe a debt of gratitude to the Weimar cabaret. During the Weimar period the legendary producer Max Reinhardt broke down the walls of the theater to produce the *Oresteia* in a circus ring. His ability to see beyond the proscenium arch was born in his early *kabarett* work. Cabaret's heterodoxy was spreading.

The sexually enigmatic beauty of Marlene Dietrich would never have graced the silver screen had she not stumbled onto a cabaret stage. She worked as a chorus girl in Friedrich Hollaender's upscale cabaret and in 1928 made her star turn with the lesbian anthem "When My Special Girlfriend." Before long, her husky voice and provocative glamour lit up films like *The Blue Angel* and *Blonde Venus*, sharing with the world the wit, sophistication, and sexual allure of cabaret. In *Morocco*, Dietrich plays a cabaret artist who sings a cynical French song about the end of an affair. Wearing a man's tuxedo and top hat, she kisses a woman and then throws a flower to Gary Cooper. This turn sums up the sprit of Weimar: breaking down boundaries.

Interrogation lies at the heart of the work by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, and it was in the cabaret that these two artists learned to question. Weill contributed music to cabaret performers; Brecht wrote sketches. Brecht once sang at the Wild Stage, and his song about the German army digging up a dead soldier to send his corpse to the front so enraged the audience that a riot almost broke out. The cabaret style—with the conférencier (known today as the Emcee) breaking up the action to comment and interact with the audience—sowed the seeds of Brecht's epic theater. After Brecht and Weill honed their skills separately in cabaret, the two came together in 1927 and began a revolution in theater.

With the rise of the Nazis in 1930 the days of cabaret were numbered. Intolerance and violence grew, and many artists left Germany. The cabarets had changed from artistic refuges to targets because the Nazis viewed cabarets, and everyone associated with them, as degenerate. While Reinhardt, Dietrich, Brecht, and Weill came to America, other cabaret artists fled to other parts of the world. This diaspora of talent took with it the cabaret spirit of inventive chaos.

Joseph Pindelski is a second-year dramaturgy student in the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University.

A performance at the Hungry Pegasus cabaret.

CABARET WEEKEND AT THE BRATTLE THEATRE

A series of films inspired by ***Cabaret***,
co-presented by the A.R.T. and the Brattle Theater. For tickets:
40 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA | 617.876.6838 | brattlefilm.org

FRI, AUG 27 — SUN, AUG 29

Friday, August 27

CHICAGO
At 7:00 (113 min)
(2002) dir Rob Marshall w/ Renee Zellweger, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Richard Gere
The multi-Oscar-winning adaptation of Kander and Ebb's musical boasts feisty dames with songs in their hearts and weapons concealed behind their backs.

ALL THAT JAZZ
At 4:30, 9:15 (123 min)
(1979) dir Bob Fosse w/ Roy Schneider, Jessica Lange, Leland Palmer, Ann Reinking
Famed choreographer Bob Fosse's semi-autobiography of a life of sex, drugs, and dance, dance, dance.

Saturday, August 28

THREEPENNY OPERA
At 1:00pm (112 min)
(1931) dir G.W. Pabst w/ Rudolf Forster, Lotte Lenya
A film interpretation of Brecht and Weill's incendiary operetta.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
At 3:30, 6:45 (163 min)
(1977) dir Martin Scorcese w/ Liza Minnelli, Robert De Niro
A quirky 'noir musical' from one of cinema's most outspoken cinephiles. Songwriters Kander and Ebb (*Chicago*, *Cabaret*) penned "New York, New York" especially for this film.

LIZA WITH A Z
At 10:00pm (60 min)
(1972) dir Bob Fosse
A concert directed for TV by Fosse and starring, who else, Liza Minnelli. Screens with: *The Muppet Show* with guest Joel Grey!

Sunday, August 29

THE LOVED ONE
At 1:00pm (122 min)
(1965) dir Tony Richardson w/ Robert Morse, Jonathan Winters, Anjanette Comer, Dana Andrews
A hilarious love story set in a funeral parlor. Adapted from an Evelyn Waugh story by Christopher Isherwood and Terry Southern (*Dr. Strangelove*).

A SINGLE MAN
At 3:30, 7:30 (99 min)
(2009) dir Tom Ford w/ Colin Firth, Julianne Moore
Set in Los Angeles in 1962, a poignant, romantic tale of love interrupted. Adapted from Christopher Isherwood's novel by fashion icon Tom Ford.

CHRIS & DON: A LOVE STORY
At 5:30, 9:30 (90 min)
(2007) dir Tina Mascara, Guido Small
The true-life story of the passionate three-decade relationship between British writer Christopher Isherwood and American painter Don Bachardy, thirty years his junior.

OBERON

THE SECOND STAGE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Club theater thrived at OBERON in 2009/10. From left: Mr. Goodbar. Photo: Neil Contractor; Bent Wit Cabaret. Photo: Caleb Cole; Summer Saturnalia. Photo: David Aquilina

BY RYAN MCKITTRICK AND ARIANE BARBANELL

On the fringe of Harvard Square, OBERON is the hottest new destination for club theater. Diane Paulus refers to OBERON as the "second stage of the twenty-first century."

The audience experience has been at the core of Diane Paulus's thinking as the artistic leader of the A.R.T., and the establishment of OBERON is one of her main initiatives as she furthers the A.R.T.'s core mission to expand the boundaries of theater. With its dance floor, flexible performance areas, and full bar, OBERON encourages a completely new kind of relationship between audience and performers. Performances there make the audience active participants in the shows, giving them a sense of authorship and importance in the theatrical event, and a change from other theatergoing experiences. The social nightlife experience is integral to the event.

OBERON opened last summer with ***The Donkey Show***, Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner's disco adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A hedonistic hothouse where feathered divas invite audiences to enter a pulsing fantasy world, ***The Donkey Show*** transforms Shakespeare's enchanted forest into a Studio 54-inspired discotheque. The wild success of ***The Donkey Show*** with audiences from eighteen to eighty has made it a fixture at OBERON, and the show now plays every Saturday to packed houses.

In May 2010, the first annual Emerging America Festival—a collaboration among the A.R.T., Huntington Theatre Company, and ICA/Boston—brought the best of club theater from across the country to the OBERON stage.

In addition to offering work from the A.R.T's main season, OBERON is also a thriving incubator for emerging artists to imagine new projects that could only exist in this non-traditional environment. In addition to regular season programming, over sixty-five different events and more than fifty artists and performance groups brought work to the new space in its first year. This work featured hundreds of local performers including aerialists, beat poets, food artists, tap dancers, gender-bending sketch troupes, local comedians, hula-hooping burlesquers, and pop-and-lock human statues to name but a few.

Uhuru Afrika. Photo: Jairo Cruz.

The A.R.T. opens its 2010/11 season in OBERON with Kander and Ebb's ***Cabaret***, featuring singer and songwriter Amanda Palmer of Dresden Dolls fame as the magnetic Emcee. This production will transform OBERON into a perfectly marvelous Weimar-era Klub where anything can happen.

In February, OBERON will be home to the world premiere production of ***Prometheus Bound***, an outcry against tyranny written by Tony and Grammy Award-winning playwright Steven Sater with music by Grammy Award-winning System of a Down lead singer Serj Tankian. Staged by A.R.T. Artistic Director Diane Paulus, this dynamic new musical adaptation of Aeschylus's ancient Greek tragedy will immerse the audience in an environment that has the Dionysian energy and rebelliousness of a rock concert.

Most nights, if you walk down Mass. Ave. in Harvard Square, you will see a line of people waiting to get inside OBERON. Join them; you might not know what you will find inside, but you are sure to be engaged in the theatrical and social event that is at the heart of every OBERON experience.

Ryan McKittrick is the A.R.T.'s Dramaturg. Ariane Barbanell is the A.R.T's Director of Special Projects.

BE CONTEMPORARY

William Kentridge
Ambivalent Affinities

October 4 - December 11, 2010 | Sandra and David Bakalar Gallery

Free and open to the public, this exhibition features the hauntingly beautiful prints, drawings, and animated films of the acclaimed South African artist William Kentridge. The artist has also worked closely with theater, staging productions of "The Magic Flute" and recently "The Nose" at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

Hours: Monday - Saturday 12PM-6PM. Wednesday 12-8PM

William Kentridge: Ambivalent Affinities *was organized by Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

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REMIXING WONDERLAND

BY BRENDAN SHEA

Alice vs. Wonderland played for three sold-out months in Moscow.

The Alice of my generation is older than Lewis Carroll's— she's a teenager, facing the terrors of adulthood. A teenage Alice today dreams differently from Carroll's seven-year-old Victorian girl. Her Wonderland needed remixing.

In ***Alice vs. Wonderland***, the basic structure of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* remains, a series of encounters between Alice and a gallery of Wonderland oddballs. Each of the wacky characters Carroll created plays a role in her journey to adulthood. They are obstacles to Alice's self-realization. In order to progress, she must either defeat or evade them. The clash reminded me of a video game, hence, ***Alice vs. Wonderland***. Video games provide dreams on demand. The player explores a strange world, masters its rules and accomplishes the impossible. Carroll's narrative structure is familiar to anyone who grew up with Super Mario or Mega Man—a grab bag of surreal episodes, each with a puzzle to solve or an enemy to defeat. In Carroll's *Alice*, each of Alice's adversaries represents a pressure of Victorian life. To make them fit my pop Alice, I had to revamp them. Tweedledee and Tweedledum look as if they stepped off the set of *Mean Girls*.

János Szász, Hungarian theater and film director, brought his distinct style to ***Alice vs. Wonderland***, remixing the remix. The A.R.T.'s 2009 production of *The Seagull* epitomized the Szász aesthetic: raw, dark, brooding, and extremely physical. Szász found the nightmare in Alice's teen-angel dream. The production holds nightmare and dream in anxious balance. Alice journeys to adulthood along a razor's edge.

When Alice enters Wonderland, she becomes fragmented, unfixed, free to be anything or anyone. "I know who I was when I woke up this morning," Alice tells the Caterpillar, "but I must have been changed several times since then." Over the course of the play, Alice does change several times—she's portrayed by six different actresses. Each evokes a different aspect of adolescence: rebellion against authority; self-destruction; the mysteries of sex. Together, they paint a surreal portrait of a teenage identity crisis.

Teenage angst drives Alice's journey through Wonderland. Lewis Carroll tells a story about a girl who is either too large or too small to do what she wants to do. As she struggles to control her changing body, the most inconvenient of questions badgers her: "Who are you?" It's enough to drive anyone to dye her hair purple and wallow in malaise. Leaving childhood behind is not an easy nor happy journey through Wonderland, but a struggle against it.

*Brendan Shea is the author of **Alice vs. Wonderland** and a 2010 graduate of the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advance Theater Training at Harvard University. He is currently the Artistic/Dramaturgy Fellow at the A.R.T.*

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER (AND CURIOUSER)

BY LAURA HENRY

Don't let the hookah-puffing caterpillar fool you. *Alice in Wonderland* is a simple tale of growing up—one of a million stories with the same doubts and dilemmas. Why, then, do we keep telling *this* one?

It's not the plot of *Alice* that captivates us, but its imagination. Many writers have whined about the pitfalls of puberty, but Lewis Carroll transformed trauma into art. He created an alien world that has become as familiar as our own—a world where we are strangers, yet know every crooked path. Wonderland taught us to embrace the absurd. Why shouldn't cards use flamingoes as croquet mallets?

Alice transforms as often as Alice herself. Carroll's tale has been a novel and a film, a cartoon and a puppet spiel, a Broadway musical and an avant-garde phantasmagoria. So many artists in so many mediums have been drawn to this story because Wonderland is a blast of imagination, a world that defies logic. At the same time, Wonderland presents a challenge. Every time an artist enters this magic realm, he or she must compete with a formidable tradition.

Disney's animated film *Alice in Wonderland*, 1951.

It didn't take long for *Alice* to inspire adaptation. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* appeared in 1865; *Through the Looking-Glass* in 1871. Since 1903, there have been at least twenty films, attracting celebrities from W.C. Fields to Johnny Depp. The early films imitated John Tenniel's illustrations of the book. These pictures, flavored with a Victorian flair for serious nonsense, defined the image of *Alice* for generations.

Walt Disney's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) broke free of Carroll and Tenniel. Disney adored *Alice*, and he worked on his film adaptation for eighteen years. While Carroll's novel is a series of episodes, Disney knew a film audience needed rising action and a thrilling climax, so he trimmed, and changed, and added a chase scene.

Most importantly, Disney exploited animation to capture the sparkle of Carroll's imagination. A dazzling parade of figures swirls through the film: a Busby Berkeley pirouette of cards; a cat linking and unlinking his own purple stripes; a caterpillar shuffling his words inside speech bubbles. His visual and verbal puns recall Carroll's wordplay. Several sequences bear the influence of Salvador Dalí, who had recently worked with Disney on a short film entitled "Destino." Though unpopular when first released, critics have since lauded Disney's artistry in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Andre Gregory's stage production of *Alice*, 1970.

Puppet Alice made her screen debut in 1988, with Jan Svankmajer's *Alice*. The opening credits proclaim, "A film for children. PERHAPS!" Svankmajer's adaptation turns the absurdity of Carroll's work into political commentary on the Soviet domination of Czechoslovakia. Using stop-motion photography and an army of dolls, trash, and toys, Svankmajer's film delights and terrifies.

His Wonderland is a maze of grimy rooms and tunnels, filled with skulls and sawdust, raw meat and dead leaves. A taxidermied White Rabbit pulls his watch out of his gaping chest cavity and peers at it with bulging plastic eyes. Alice is lost in a squalid Czech tenement, chased by chicken skeletons and mice. Many saw Svankmajer's film as an allegory for current events: a disenchanted generation rebelling against an absurd regime.

Most recently, film director Tim Burton confronted the challenge of *Alice*. His version is a story of female empowerment. Down the rabbit hole, nineteen-year-old Alice doesn't just wander, she gets involved: she rescues the Mad Hatter from prison, pilfers the Queen's ferocious Bandersnatch, and confronts the Jabberwocky. Rather than giving in to circumstances, this Alice chooses her own path. An active Alice gives motion to the plot and enlivens Burton's rich visuals.

Alice has transformed frequently on stage as well as screen. Andre Gregory's *Alice in Wonderland* exemplified the turbulent theater of the counterculture. The 1970 production drew heavily on the methods of theater director Jerzy Grotowski, an advocate of intense physicality who believed the twisting, turning body of the actor should express pain and exaltation.

Post-show party: Sept. 25
Free with ticket to any performance of ***Alice vs. Wonderland***
Hosted by the A.R.T. Ambassadors
Questions?
Email us at ambassadors@amrep.org

Clockwise from top: Tim Burton's film adaptation, 2010 ▸ Jan Svankmajer's puppet Alice, 1988 ▸ One of John Tenniel's original illustrations, which accompanied Carroll's books

In Gregory's Wonderland, nothing kept its shape for long. The caterpillar lounged on the backs of four actors. Their torsos formed the mushroom, and one of their thumbs served as his hookah. Bodies huddled on top of each other created the rabbit hole that swallowed Alice. The actors constantly transformed, molding croquet balls and wickets, trees and balloons. Gregory's *Alice* created a dream state, bringing to life the joy and terror of childhood.

Visionary director Robert Wilson adapted Alice's story in 1992. With music by Tom Waits, the production wove together the biography of Lewis Carroll (whose real name was Charles Dodgson) with characters from *Alice*. Wilson explored the ambiguous relationship between the child Alice Liddell, the inspiration for Alice, and Dodgson, who took erotic photos of little girls.

Wilson staged Carroll's obsession with Alice in haunting images: an enormous camera lens followed her across the stage, the swelling tail of a vaudeville caterpillar pursued her. In a sensuous, scarlet forest, an old, alcoholic Alice bewailed her abuses to her cat. Waits's music and lyrics captured the pain of Wilson's version: "Hang me in a bottle like a cat/ Let the crows pick me clean but for my hat." Wilson's production forced the audience to consider the sinister connotations of Carroll's tale, dulling the glitter of Wonderland.

In Brendan Shea's new adaptation receiving its U.S. premiere at the A.R.T. this fall, Alice's story is a jumble of neon, guitars, and whirling lights. ***Alice vs. Wonderland*** is a kaleidoscope of music, color, and nastiness, all orchestrated by director János Szász, who invites us to follow Alice into Wonderland and re-experience the child-like joy in seeing a new world we've always known.

Laura Henry is a second-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University.

A.R.T. NEW VOICES SERIES

This fall we feature three dynamic young American writers. Join us for two readings, along with the U.S. premiere of ***Alice vs. Wonderland***.

READINGS

Tuesday, October 5, 7 p.m.

Origin Story

By Dan LeFranc
Directed by Hal Brooks
Loeb Drama Center Mainstage

Nowheresville, U.S.A. Pronoun—a teenage superhero with the ultimate identity crisis—is thrust into a deadly battle against crime, puberty, and tentacle monsters from Japan. ***Origin Story*** is a technicolor portrait of American teen culture, a comic book come to life with a surprise on every panel.

Dan LeFranc is the recipient of the 2010 *New York Times* Outstanding Playwright Award.

Wednesday, October 6, 7 p.m.

Crossings

By Angela Sun
Directed by Mia Rovegno
Loeb Drama Center Mainstage

Lynn lives between the monotonous world of her slowly fading publishing office and the crepuscular world of a bridge where she occasionally meets her adventurous daughter, Esther. One day Esther leaves the bridge for the underworld. When Lynn meets Mr. Smith, an extraordinary ordinary man, her two worlds blur, and she finds herself on a journey to bring her daughter home.

Angela Sun is the winner of the the 2010 Phyllis Anderson Contest, an annual competition open to all Harvard University students.

SUBWAYS, COLLAGES, GESAMTKUNSTWERK OH MY!

BY JENNA CLARK EMBREY

Ruth Bauer and Jim Bauer are the co-creators of *The Blue Flower*.

Ruth Bauer. Photo: Jill Atkinson. Jim Bauer. Photo: Ron Nicolaysen

Visceral and sensuous. These are the words Jim and Ruth Bauer, creators of ***The Blue Flower***, would like audiences to use when describing their work. The husband-and-wife team wants "people to enjoy it and let it just wash over them…just sound, and beauty and images, just absorbing." Both Jim and Ruth's backgrounds have led them to their distinct views on theater, art, and the experience of freeing oneself from the cerebral.

Jim, along with ***The Blue Flower*** cast member Meghan McGeary, formed the music duo DAGMAR in 2005, based on a song cycle Jim was writing "about a guy who can't get out of bed in the morning and an insect goddess who plunges through the ether to rescue him." With elements of rock and country, the band has been called "free-folk, dark, arty rock," and, as one reviewer put it, "for those who like their music impregnated with theater larvae." Like most new bands, DAGMAR started performing in small clubs and venues. But they wanted to reach more people: "If you're doing the small club thing, you're preaching to the choir, playing to thirty or forty of your best friends…if you can get them to come out." Determined to reach a wider audience, Jim and Meghan took DAGMAR underground—to the subways of New York City. After auditioning and being selected to an elite roster with the Music Under New York program, DAGMAR started playing for the rush of New York City commuters.

In the Union Square subway station, DAGMAR played for audiences that would make Madison Square Garden seem small-time—more than a hundred people a minute were hearing their music. In addition to accidental audience members, Jim realized

continued pg. 30

that DAGMAR was also attracting *repeat* listeners: "The first time, they just pay a little attention. The next time they come by, they stop and they listen for a minute. Then they listen for a song. Then they buy a CD."

The sound of DAGMAR and ***The Blue Flower*** is addicted to a fusion of dark and light elements. Described as "Sturm n' Twang" (a play on the eighteenth-century German literary movement called "*Sturm und Drang*" or "Storm and Stress") and "Kurt Weill going tête-à-tête with Hank Williams," Jim's music for ***The Blue Flower*** synthesizes the dark hues of cello and bassoon with the bright pedal-steel guitar of his Texas upbringing. This play of light and dark anchors ***The Blue Flower***.

If Jim is the ear, then Ruth Bauer, his wife, is the eye of the duo. A graduate of the acclaimed Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Ruth has always been interested in the art of collage—a form practiced by Weimar artists like Kurt Schwitters and Hannah Höch. Ruth also cites the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard and its collection of German Expressionist and Dada art as a major influence on her vision. As an artistic granddaughter of those movements—some of her professors at RISD had studied with German artists like Hans Hoffman and Max Beckmann—the creativity of Germany seduced her. After WWI, "the world was in pieces—the Dada artists were putting it together, […] mad with grief but trying to create things instead of destroying them," says Ruth. Inspired by the Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and the paintings of Franz Marc, Ruth began to experiment with video, which she calls "the ultimate painting, a palette that works with time and movement." Her art fuses with her husband's music to form a true *Gesamtkunstwerk*—total work of art. Jim is quick to point out that Ruth's video not only furthers the narrative in ***The Blue Flower***, but ultimately functions as a way of bringing in the audience: "A lot of times video used in installation art or in theater is there to sort of signify separation and distance…it's the opposite [in Ruth's work]." The video used in ***The Blue Flower*** does not just function as a simple visual backdrop, but as an interactive part of the characters' environment and an integral part of their emotional makeup.

DAGMAR's album cover

The Blue Flower reassembles music, art, and the corporeality of physical acting into a total theatrical event. With so many visually and aurally stunning elements, the Bauers want audiences to experience ***The Blue Flower*** on whatever level they choose—whether it be emotional or cerebral, the show welcomes response. As Jim says, "You just have to be open."

Jenna Clark Embrey is a first-year dramaturgy student at the A.R.T./MXAT Institute for Advanced Theater Training at Harvard University.

THE BLUE FLOWER STARTS DECEMBER 1

WHAT IS THE BLUE FLOWER, ANYWAY? BY JENNA CLARK EMBREY

"Infinite yearning"—this is how E.T.A. Hoffman summed up Romanticism. At the end of the eighteenth century, German poets, musicians, and philosophers spearheaded Romanticism. For the German Romantics one symbol summed up all their dreams—the blue flower. The image of the blue flower first appeared in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, a coming-of-age novel written by German romantic author Novalis in the eighteenth century. Rejecting the materialism of the bourgeois world around him, the young Heinrich searches for artistic and spiritual fulfillment, symbolized by a perfect blue flower. "It is not treasures that I care for" Heinrich said to himself, "but I long to see the blue flower. I cannot rid my thoughts of the idea, it haunts me."

After first gaining popularity during the Romantic movement, the symbol can also be found frequently in German folk songs of the last two centuries:

"If the golden sun laughs so bright, the world I must go roam,

Because somewhere in the earthly light, the blue flower must grow.

So I search the land and near the sea, to find this little flower,

And only where that blossom be, could I ever cease to wander."

-"Wenn hell die golden Sonne lacht," author unknown

The blue flower was adopted by both the German Youth Movement during the Weimar Era and the Student Movement of the 1960s as a symbol of hope and regeneration after the world wars—the image could be seen frequently on protests signs from both movements. Jim and Ruth Bauer, creators of ***The Blue Flower***, were drawn to the image as it symbolized the complex world of the Weimar artists—searching both for artistic perfection as well as a way to rebuild the broken world that surrounded them.

A WORLD IN PIECES

BY JIM BAUER AND RUTH BAUER

Dada dancer

We began ***The Blue Flower*** with the purpose of expanding and animating our work as a musician and visual artist with the four-dimensionality of live theater. We had no particular theatrical form in mind as a model, goal, or destination—only the desire to exploit the narrative powers of sound, light, movement, and imagery in the magic of a staged environment, and to do it in a way that would blur the distinctions between "high art" and popular entertainment.

The project started with music—the visceral way music, particularly live musical performance, communicates to its audience—and a curiosity about the shifting mixture of and running competition between light and dark, playfulness and restlessness, hope and foreboding that flowed through much of the popular and stage music of the German Weimar period. Without a specific story in mind, only a mood to express, orchestration was conceived and music written in an attempt to capture some of the same color and feeling.

As songs without lyrics took shape, we began an examination of the Weimar Republic and the brief "world between two wars." We were by necessity led back to the Great War that preceded it, the Belle Époque out of which the twentieth century seemed to spontaneously combust, and then further back through the longest period of uninterrupted peace and prosperity in European history. We finally reached 1889, the year in which we decided, for many reasons, the story would begin. In the course of our exploration we found inspiration for four fictional characters in the historical figures Max Beckmann, Franz Marc, Hannah Höch, and Marie Curie—three artists and a scientist—all four in ambitious pursuit of one thing or another, and all four drawn into the deep mud and unmoving trenches of the First World War. As we puzzled over why, counterintuitively, so many artists of the time eagerly marched off to war, a story began to take shape, and lyrics were woven into music that had been waiting for a sense of purpose and a place to go. It was 1999, the precipice of the new millennium, and the deeper we got into our subject, the more the *fin* of the present *siècle* was looking like the *fin* of the last. The parallels then were chilling, and are even more so now.

Inspired by the art and art movements of the early twentieth century—in particular Dada (in both its lyrical and its venal, politically charged forms),

Max Beckmann, Self-Portrait with Champage Glass, 1919

Hannah Höch, Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany, 1919

Surrealism, the golden age of German silent film, and the presiding spirit of pioneering artist Kurt Schwitters—the production is built as a collage, mirroring the intense interest in collage work immediately following the First World War. The world was in pieces both metaphorically and in reality, and the task was to make it whole again, put it back together in a way that made sense. The title comes from the symbol of the blue flower used initially by Novalis and other German romantic poets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to signify the ongoing, never-ending search for artistic perfection. The blue flower later came to symbolize, for others, reincarnation: the opportunity to keep coming back, each time doing things perhaps a little less badly.

After many years of development and reincarnations, ***The Blue Flower*** has become a musical play, with the story of three artists, one scientist, and a love rectangle unfolding through the pages of a fairy tale book of collages that artist Max Baumann has been working on for years. The show is a playful Dada-inspired romp through Max's closely protected memories, centering on the three friends and lovers he lost and the apparitions of events that overwhelmed their lives.

We dedicate ***The Blue Flower*** to the possibility of learning from history.

Jim Bauer and Ruth Bauer are the co-creators of **The Blue Flower**.

Franz Marc (1880–1916)

Known for his quasi-abstract, vibrantly-colored paintings of horses in pastoral settings, Marc was one of the leading artists of the Expressionist movement. Along with his friends August Macke and Wassily Kandinsky, he formed *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) artist circle, which focused on an intuitive, spiritual approach to art, including the relationship between music and the visual arts. Marc joined the German military at the outbreak of World War I and was killed at the battle of Verdun in 1916. In the 1930s, he was declared a degenerate artist by the Nazis, and his paintings were removed from museums.

THE BLUE FLOWER

Tracing the roots of ***The Blue Flower*** from the Belle Époque to the Second World War

COMPILED BY JOSEPH PINDELSKI

Nov. 7, 1867: The physicist Marie Curie is born.

1871: The nation of Germany is formed. The Belle Époque begins, lasting until 1914.

Feb. 8, 1880: The artist Franz Marc is born.

1881: Le Chat Noir, the first cabaret, opens in the Montmartre district of Paris. It is a huge success and remains open until 1897.

Feb. 12, 1884: The artist Max Beckmann is born.

June 20, 1887: The artist Kurt Schwitters is born.

Jan. 30, 1889: Prince Rudolph of Austria commits suicide; Archduke Franz Ferdinand becomes heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

1901: Germany's first cabaret, The Motley Theater, opens.

1903: Thirty-six-year-old Marie Curie, with Pierre Curie and Henri Bequerel, is awarded the Nobel Prize; The Motley Theater is sold.

1906: Marie Curie becomes the first female professor of General Physics at the Sorbonne.

1911: Marie Curie wins the Nobel Prize for chemistry.

June 28, 1914: Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria is assassinated; World War I begins.

Feb. 9, 1916: Cabaret Voltaire opens in Zurich and becomes the birthplace of the Dada movement that spring.

March 4, 1916: Artist Franz Marc dies at the Battle of Verdun.

January 1917: First Dada show at the Galerie Corray, Zurich; Max Beckmann is discharged from the German army; first issue of the journal *Dada* is published.

Nov. 1918 November Revolution in Germany; Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates; Friedrich Ebert becomes chancellor of Germany; World War I fighting ends.

January 1919: The Weimar Republic is formed.

June 1919: The Treaty of Versailles is signed, officially ending World War I.

1919: The Ballet Celly de Rheidt, known for its nudity and sexuality, begins performances in Berlin.

Max Beckmann (1884–1950)

Considered one of the most important and influential artists of the twentieth century, famous for his stern and mysterious self-portraits, German artist Max Beckmann's life spanned the horrors and travails of both World Wars. After serving as a medical orderly in World War I, his art took a decidedly dark turn toward a distorted realism he described as "the idea which hides itself behind so-called reality." After a period of fame and prosperity during the years of the Weimar Republic, he was labeled a degenerate artist by the Nazis. Over 500 of his works were confiscated from museums, and he was eventually forced to flee Germany in 1937. He lived in Amsterdam for ten years, and after the conclusion of the Second World War, emigrated to the United States, settling in New York City. He died suddenly while on a daily stroll through Central Park near his home on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Marie Curie (1867–1934)

As a young woman, Marie Curie made her way from her native Poland to Paris, where she enrolled at The University of Paris. After earning her degrees she became the first female professor there, and in time, the first person to earn two Nobel prizes, one in chemistry, one in physics. Known mostly for her pioneering work in radioactivity, she assembled, without the help of the French government, a fleet of ambulances — which became known as "petites Curies" (Little Curies) — to bring her new "x-ray" technology to the battlefields of World War I, where she was able to save many lives. Her passionate love affair with her husband, Henri Curie, came to a tragic end with his untimely death in a street accident in 1906. She died in 1934 from complications caused by a lifetime of exposure to radiation.

The Blue Flower is inspired by a wide range of artists, art movements, and events from the early twentieth century. These five historical figures provided the basis for the principal fictional characters in the show.

June 5, 1920: First International Dada Exhibition takes place in Berlin.

Dec. 23, 1920: Cabaret Megalomania opens in Berlin, focusing on political and literary acts.

Sept. 11, 1921: The politically minded Wild Stage cabaret is opened in Berlin, focusing on political and literary acts.

January 1922: For six nights, Bertolt Brecht performs some of his songs at the Wild Stage, causing a scandal.

December 1922: Cabaret Megalomania is sold; conservative Germans take the Ballet Celly de Rheidt to court over obscenity charges and the ballet loses.

1923: Berlin's political cabarets fall out of vogue: the Wild Stage and the Ballet Celly close.

Dec. 1, 1924: Weimar's most successful cabaret, Kurt Robitschek's Cabaret of Comedians, opens in Berlin with *Quo Vadis*, a satire that includes attacks on Adolf Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch."

September 1930: The Nazi Party becomes the second largest political party in Germany; Most of Berlin's substantive literary cabarets are shut down.

March 1931: Due to Nazi harassment of his primarily Jewish audience, Robitschek reduces ticket prices to his Cabaret of Comedians by thirty percent and banishes all politics from his cabaret, in hopes of attracting an audience.

November 1932: Nazis win the largest number of seats in the Reichstag, Germany's parliament.

January 30, 1933: Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.

Feb. 27, 1933: The Reichstag building is burned.

March 5, 1933: The Nazis win the majority of seats in the Reichstag and re-organize the German government; Germany's Weimar Republic is replaced by Germany's Third Reich.

Hannah Höch (1889–1978)

Revered as an "artist's artist," Höch is best known for her collage work and as one of the originators of photomontage. She trained originally as a glass and graphic artist. The 1915 Futurist exhibition at Berlin's Storm Gallery was Höch's first exposure to modern art. She joined the Red Cross during World War I, and after her return, became involved in the Dada art movement through her friendships with Raoul Hausmann and Kurt Schwitters. She was one of the few woman prominently associated with the group. After the rise of the Third Reich she remained in Berlin, and was instrumental in preserving Dada works from Nazi destruction.

Kurt Schwitters (1887–1948)

Schwitters founded the *Merz*, or "junk" art movement in Hanover, Germany. "Freedom from all fetters," was his motto, and that freedom came from the "product of strict discipline." What he and the Dadaists sought was a total breaking of tradition with a new form of "populist art." While no specific theory guided the Dadaists, they were unified by a similar aesthetic: the destruction of bourgeois intellectualism. He was known for carrying his collections and bits of artwork around with him, making attempts to pay for things with his small assemblages and collages. Suffering from occasional epileptic seizures, he was exempted from military service during World War I. In the early 20's, he recorded a performance of his famous "Ursonata," a 20-minute "symphony" or "sound poem" of spoken syllables and vocalizations, carefully documented and written out so that it can still be performed today. Schwitters was declared a degenerate artist by the Nazis, and had to flee Germany. He died in exile in England before the conclusion of the Second World War.

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Death and the Powers. Patricia Risley. Photo: Jill Steinberg 2010.

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BERTOLT BRECHT'S DRUMS IN THE NIGHT

BY ROBERT SCANLAN

Brecht (with clarinet) at the Munich Oktoberfest.

Few Americans have any consciousness of the German Revolution of 1918-19. It played a crucial role in the volatile transition from the defeated Kaiser's German Empire to the formation of the so-called "Weimar Republic," which is at its moment of inception in Bertolt Brecht's first produced play, ***Drums in the Night***. Brecht started writing ***Drums*** in the spring of 1919, when he was twenty-one years old. The premiere of the play took place at the Munich Kammerspiele in September of 1922—almost exactly one year *before* Adolf Hitler's "Beer Hall Putsch" a few blocks away in the same city. This was, for a young poet and fledgling playwright, being in the midst of it—and with a vengeance.

Drums in the Night was written with incredible bravado by a very young man while shattering events were unfolding in the streets. Germany's political collapse at the close of World War I triggered a mimetic echo of the Russian revolution of 1917, which ushered in the Communist era for the twentieth century. The young Brecht's starkly original scenes in ***Drums*** are set during a single decisive night—the night of January 15, 1919 when the so-called "Sparticist" uprising was crushed, and Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the founders of the Communist Party of Germany, were captured and tortured to death by right-wing vigilantes. But the astonishing thing about ***Drums in the Night*** is that it does not depict these events. It depicts what happened instead in the lives of severely war-stressed ordinary bourgeois civilians at the end of World War I. ***Drums in the Night*** is what is known in German as a *Heimkehrer* drama, a play about a returning soldier, and it depicts one man's impossible attempt to resume a pre-war life in a shattered world. That story in itself is timeless and recurring, as we witness in our own returning war veterans to this day.

Drums in the Night decisively launched the playwriting career of the man now universally acknowledged as Germany's greatest dramatist of the twentieth century. The play was awarded in 1922 the prestigious Kleist Prize (equivalent at the time to winning the Pulitzer Prize for its then twenty-four-year-old author). The enormous future influence of this precociously emerging Modernist master was destined to extend far beyond his native Germany. Theatergoers will be familiar with the titles of Brecht's greatest masterpieces, starting with *Mother Courage and Her Children* and the ballad-opera *The Threepenny Opera*, but many have also likely heard of the great epic parable plays of Brecht's maturity: *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, and *The Life of Galileo*. All but one of these influential masterpieces have been staged at the A.R.T.

Brecht's theoretical writings also had (and continue to have) a widespread international influence. The American avant-garde of the 1960s took up Brecht's twin ideas of an *epic theater* and of a deliberate *verfremdenseffekt* or "alienation effect" as cudgels against the psychological realism that seemed to predominate in American playwriting. Both terms were hard to define and harder yet to apply as intended in practice, but they inspired then and continue to inspire the young and the rebellious, and can be experienced (at slight remove) in such productions as last year's *Paradise Lost* as staged by Daniel Fish.

Drums in the Night is a much earlier play than the signature Brecht plays enumerated above. ***Drums*** reveals conventional techniques and conventional dramatic tensions handled with raw, non-theorized histrionic genius; it is written directly out of feeling and instinct, and an uncanny grasp of the historical currents of the time. Brecht's vocation as a dramatist was apparent from the start, and ***Drums in the Night*** provides a great opportunity to witness the genesis of all Brecht's important dramaturgy to come.

Robert Scanlan is Professor of the Practice of Theater at Harvard University and is the director of the A.R.T. Institute production of **Drums in the Night**.

The German Revolution of 1918-1919 ▸ Rosa Luxemburg, c. 1917 ▸ Karl Liebknecht, c. 1914 ▸ Street fighting during the revolution ▸ Rosa Luxemburg addressing a rally

Fall 2010 Calendar & Tickets

CABARET
at OBERON (STARTS AUGUST 31, 2010)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
AUGUST		8/31 7:30P				
SEPTEMBER			9/1 7:30P	9/2 7:30P	9/3 7:30P	9/4
9/5	9/6	9/7 7:30P	9/8 7:00P	9/9 7:30P	9/10 7:30P 10:30P	9/11
9/12	9/13	9/14 7:30P	9/15 7:30P	9/16 7:30P	9/17 7:30P 10:30P	9/18
9/19	9/20	9/21 7:30P	9/22 7:30P	9/23 7:30P	9/24 7:30P 10:30P	9/25
9/26	9/27	9/28 7:30P	9/29 7:30P	9/30		
OCTOBER					10/1 7:30P 10:30P	10/2
10/3	10/4	10/5 7:30P	10/6 7:30P	10/7 7:30P	10/8 7:30P 10:30P	10/9
10/10	10/11	10/12 7:30P	10/13 7:30P	10/14 7:30P	10/15 7:30P 10:30P	10/16
10/17	10/18	10/19 7:30P	10/20 7:30P	10/21 7:30P	10/22 7:30P 10:30P	10/23
10/24	10/25	10/26 7:30P	10/27 7:30P	10/28 7:30P	10/29 7:30P 10:30P	10/30

ALICE VS. WONDERLAND
at the Loeb Mainstage
(STARTS SEPTEMBER 18, 2010)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
SEPTEMBER						9/18 2:00Pt 7:30P
9/19	9/20	9/21	9/22 10:00A	9/23	9/24	9/25 2:00Pt 7:30P
9/26	9/27	9/28	9/29	9/30		
OCTOBER					10/1	10/2 2:00Pt 7:30P
10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/7	10/8	10/9 2:00Pt 7:30P

THE BLUE FLOWER
at the Loeb Mainstage
(STARTS DECEMBER 1, 2010)
TICKETS ON SALE TO MEMBERS: 10/26 | TO PUBLIC: 11/2

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DECEMBER			12/1 7:30P	12/2 7:30P	12/3 7:30P	12/4 2:00Pt 7:30P
12/5 7:30P	12/6	12/7 7:30P	12/8 7:00P	12/9 7:30P*	12/10 7:30P	12/11 2:00Pt 7:30P
12/12 2:00P 7:30P	12/13	12/14 7:30P	12/15 7:30P*	12/16 7:30P	12/17 7:30P	12/18 2:00Pt 7:30P
12/19 2:00P 7:30P*	12/20	12/21 7:30P	12/22 7:30P	12/23 7:30P	12/24	12/25
12/26 2:00P 7:30P	12/27	12/28 7:30P	12/29 7:30P	12/30 7:30P	12/31 2:00P	
JANUARY						1/1 2:00P 7:30P
1/2 2:00P 7:30P	1/3	1/4 7:30P	1/5 7:30P	1/6 7:30P	1/7 7:30P	1/8 2:00Pt 7:30P

DRUMS IN THE NIGHT
presented by the A.R.T. Institute at the Loeb Experimental Theater (STARTS DECEMBER 18, 2010)

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
DECEMBER				12/16 7:30P	12/17 7:30P	12/18 7:30P

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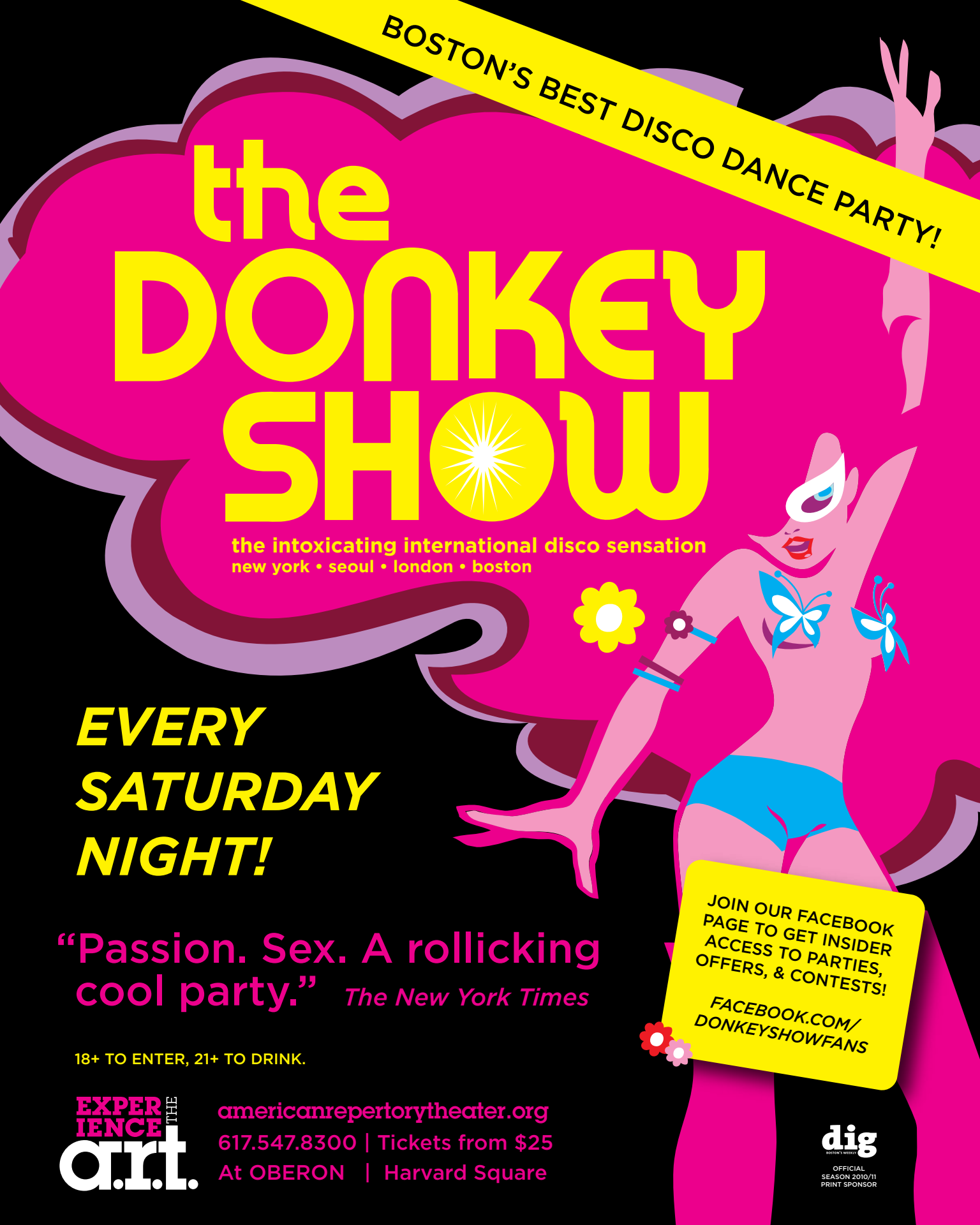
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