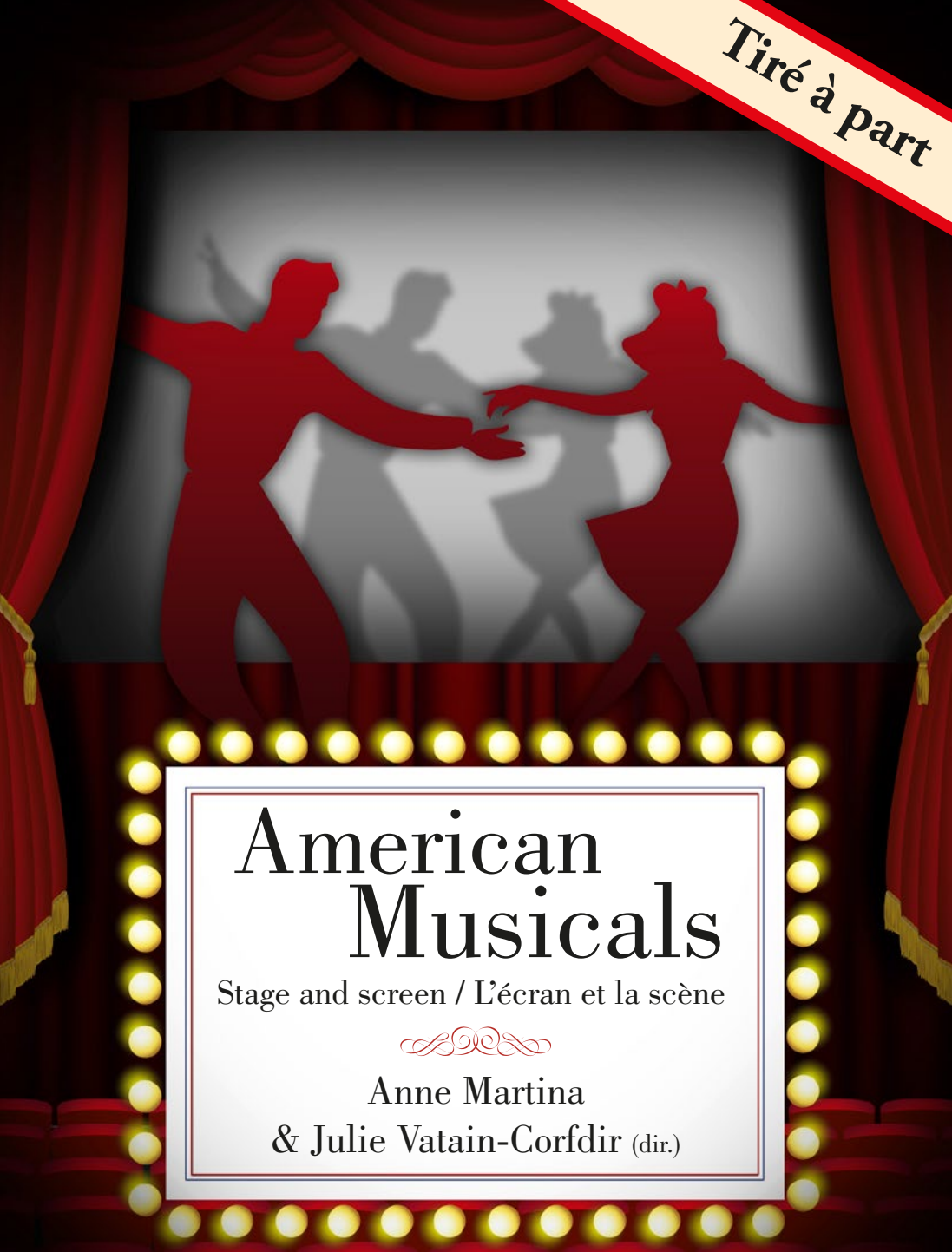

American Musicals

Stage and screen / L'écran et la scène

Anne Martina
& Julie Vatain-Corfdir (dir.)

SUP

What happens when American musicals travel from Broadway to Hollywood, from Hollywood to Broadway – or indeed to Paris? Taking its cue from the current partiality towards cross-media interaction, this collective volume aims at reassessing the role and impact of stage/screen transfers on the genre, by blending together academic and creative voices, both French and American. The bilingual chapters of the book carefully explore the musical, dramatic and choreographic repercussions of transposition techniques, evidencing the cinematographic rewriting of theatrical processes from Lubitsch's screen operettas to Fosse's *Cabaret*, or tracking movie-inspired effects on stage from *Hello, Dolly!* to *Hamilton.*

The focus being at once aesthetic and practical, equal attention has been paid to placing performances in a critical framework and to setting off their creative genesis. Musicals are approached from the varied angles of dance, theater, film and music scholarship, as well as from the artist's viewpoint, when Chita Rivera or Christopher Wheeldon share details about their craft. Taking full advantage of the multimedia opportunities afforded by this digital series, the chapters use an array of visual and sound illustrations as they investigate the workings of subversion, celebration or self-reflexivity, the adjustments required to "sound Broadway" in Paris, or the sheer possibility of re-inventing icons.

Que se passe-t-il quand une comédie musicale américaine voyage de Broadway à Hollywood, d'Hollywood à Broadway… ou à Paris ? Le penchant ambiant pour l'intermédialité et le succès grandissant du *musical* en France ont inspiré ce volume collectif qui, en croisant les voix universitaires et artistiques, françaises et américaines, entreprend de réévaluer l'impact des transferts scène-écran sur le genre. Les chapitres bilingues de cet ouvrage sondent les répercussions musicales, dramatiques et chorégraphiques des techniques de transposition, mettant au jour la réécriture filmique de procédés théâtraux depuis les opérettes cinématographiques de Lubitsch jusqu'au *Cabaret* de Fosse, ou pistant les effets de cinéma sur scène, de *Hello, Dolly!* à *Hamilton*. Dans une visée à la fois esthétique et pratique, la genèse créative des œuvres est envisagée aussi bien que leur cadre critique. Les *musicals* sont ici abordés sous l'angle de disciplines variées : danse, théâtre, cinéma, musique ; ainsi que du point de vue de la pratique, lorsque Chita Rivera ou Christopher Wheeldon témoignent de leur art. Au fil de chapitres enrichis d'un éventail d'illustrations visuelles et sonores grâce aux ressources de l'édition numérique, les auteurs interrogent les mécanismes de la subversion, de l'hommage et de l'auto-réflexivité, les ajustements nécessaires pour « chanter Broadway » à Paris, ou encore la possibilité de réinventer les icônes.

Anne Martina & Julie Vatain-Corfdir (dir.)

American Musicals

Stage and screen / L'écran et la scène

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FOREWORD

Anne Martina & Julie Vatain-Corfdir

The history of American musicals is that of constant, complex, and fruitful media interaction. And yet, media crossovers long escaped enquiry. Artists themselves were often to blame for a biased perception of their work, particularly in film. In the many interviews they gave, Busby Berkeley or Gene Kelly were keen to present their work, and the history of film musicals in general, as a growing emancipation from stage models. Following their lead, early film critics showed a tendency to analyze Hollywood musicals produced in the 1930s, '40s, and early '50s as *cinematographic* achievements, characterized by a refined use of the codes of classical Hollywood cinema. When increasing economic difficulties arose in the mid-fifties – due to the collapse of the old studio system, the rise of television, and gradual shifts in public tastes – Hollywood was compelled to devise a set of strategic responses, leading to the evolution of the film musical (some would say its decline). The first, and most conspicuous reaction was to limit financial risk by increasingly foregoing original works in favor of adapting successful Broadway shows as faithfully as possible. A second response was to use rock 'n' roll music, and later pop music, to cater to younger generations, thereby often altering the classical syntax of the genre through increased subservience to the record industry (examples abound from *Jailhouse Rock* to *Woodstock* and *Moulin Rouge*). A third, more creative reaction was to scatter the script with elements of *auto-critique*, at the risk of undermining the mythologizing process at the heart of the genre and alienating its traditional audiences (from *A Star is Born* and *It's Always Fair Weather* to *All That Jazz*, *Pennies from Heaven* or *La La Land*).[1] From these combined factors stemmed the common belief that artistic achievement in Hollywood musicals was synonymous with aesthetic autonomy and narrative originality, while decline was entailed by a growing subjection to other media forms.

Conspicuously enough, reciprocal trends have been pointed out – and found fault with – on and off-Broadway, where musical versions, sequels or prequels of profitable films and Disney movies are a staple cause for complaint or irony among critics and audiences alike. Scholars of the stage musical have in fact shown the recent evolution of the genre to respond to economic pressure in ways that mirror the choices made

1 See Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1987, pp. 120-121.

earlier by the film industry – some, like Mark Grant and Ethan Mordden, explicitly lamenting the supposed collapse of musical shows. Grant's catchy (albeit reductive) book title, *The Rise and Fall of the Broadway Musical*, encapsulates a Spenglerian model, according to which the demise of the genre has been entailed, since the late 1960s, by radical economic and aesthetic shifts – the rise of entertainment conglomerates functioning as theatre producers, the popularity of spectacle-oriented "megamusicals," and the proliferation of adaptations. All of which testify to Broadway's increased dependence on mass media, in particular music videos and film.

Yet laments about the end of a so-called "Golden Age"[2] characterized by artistic integrity do not resist critical investigation. Not only are they imbued with nostalgic overtones, implying that musical works produced before and after the "Golden Age" have less artistic value and cultural depth than those from the pivotal period, but

they also ignore the complex, ceaseless interaction between Broadway and Hollywood *throughout* the history of the genre, which more recent research has brought to light. The rise of cultural and intermedial studies in the 1990s was critical in this respect. Opening new avenues for research on the American musical, it has led to a fruitful reassessment of the influence of Broadway stage forms and aesthetics on iconic Hollywood films. This has been exemplified by Martin Rubin's illuminating investigation of the way Busby Berkeley's art is indebted to 1910s and 1920s Broadway shows[3] or, more recently, by Todd Decker's insightful study of the many rewritings of *Show Boat*.[4]

However notable and influential such analyses have proven to be, much remains to be investigated. This reliance on recycling other media to spur creativity prompts enquiry into the nature, shape and influence of Broadway-to-Hollywood or Hollywood-to-Broadway transfers, as well as into the interactions and cross-fertilizing processes they generate. Current research indicates that such sustained investigation is under way. Theater-driven reference works on the American musical[5] have shown a growing interest in film, though chapters that truly focus on cross-media transaction are still rare. In France, a 2015 international conference – from which five of the essays in this

2 For a critical assessment of the term "Golden Age" in the field of musical comedy, see Jessica Sternfeld and Elizabeth L. Wollman, "After the 'Golden Age'", in Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris, Stacy Wolf (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2011, p. 111.

3 Martin Rubin, *Showstoppers: Busby Berkeley and the Tradition of Spectacle*, New York, Columbia UP, 1993.

4 Todd Decker, *Show Boat: Performing Race in an American Musical*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2013.

5 See Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris, and Stacy Wolf, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2011; William Everett and Paul L. Laird, *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, 3rd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 2017.

volume proceed – directly addressed those issues, while the three-year "Musical MC²" research project headed by Marguerite Chabrol and Pierre-Olivier Toulza has been comprehensively exploring the influence of cultural and media contexts over classical Hollywood musicals. Simultaneously, on the Paris stage, a reciprocal interest in the reinvention of classics has been displayed, for instance, in the Théâtre du Châtelet's widely-acclaimed productions of *An American in Paris* (2014), *Singin' in the Rain* (2015) and *42nd Street* (2016), all of which have been hailed as fully creative rather than derivative.

Such contemporary partiality – and curiosity – towards intermediality provided the inspiration for the present volume, which aims at reassessing the role and impact of stage/screen transfers (in both directions) on American musicals, by blending together academic and creative voices, both French and American. The essays and interviews collected here carefully explore the musical, dramatic and choreographic repercussions of transposition processes, evidencing the wide range of rewriting and recoding practices encompassed in what is commonly referred to as "adaptation." How does re-creation for another medium affect the shape and impact of a musical, both aesthetically and practically? How can the "adapted" version assert its status and value with regards to the "original," striking a balance between due homage and legitimate creative claims? These questions are tied to issues of authorship and authority, as well as to the notion of self-reflexivity, which can prove equally conducive to celebration or to subversion. They also call into question the audience's reception of the work, in particular when it comes to iconic scenes, or to characters illustriously embodied by a famous performer. In fact, any study of the relations between Broadway and Hollywood would be incomplete without reflecting upon the impact of *human* transfers – not only in terms of stars, but also in terms of directors, composers and lyricists, choreographers or costume designers.

The chapters of this volume fall into three sections, the first of which focuses on formal innovation and re-invention. It opens with an investigation into Ernst Lubitsch's endeavors to invent a cinematographic equivalent to the operetta around 1930, when the norms and form of the musical picture were yet to be established, ultimately showing how music, in such early examples, becomes a way to create a fictional world on screen (Katalin Pór). While this study offers a chronological foundation stone to analyze subsequent transfers and influences, the second essay provides a more theoretical perspective on the question, by comparing directorial choices in adaptation over a wide range of periods and production types (Dan Blim). From *Damn Yankees!* to *Hamilton*, the chapter explores the ways in which stage and screen

media deal differently with breaks and "sutures" in a musical's narrative continuity, thereby shedding light on the specificities of each medium. These insightful inaugural essays then make way for the in-depth study of such canonical examples as the screen-to-stage transfers of *42nd Street* and *An American in Paris*. The two shows are carefully compared in terms of their "conservative," "innovative" or "reflective" approach to adaptation, and placed in the context of constantly refashioned Hollywood and Broadway motifs (Anne Martina). This is given further resonance by the following roundtable with the creators of *An American in Paris*, which provides a mirrored point of view on reinvention from the artists' and producers' perspective. The precision and generosity with which they discuss the show's genesis, musical construction and color palette offer a unique insight into the vision behind this contemporary (re-)creation (Brad Haak, Van Kaplan, Craig Lucas, Stuart Oken, Christopher Wheeldon).[6]

The second section delves into the political and cultural implications of adaptation, using several case studies of major musicals which have been rewritten, reinterpreted, and sometimes transferred back to their original medium. The first of these analyses offers a refreshing outlook on *My Fair Lady*, by suggesting that the musical's romanticized ending may not be as out of line with George Bernard Shaw's original feminist vision as is commonly assumed. This leads to a detailed exploration of romantic and feminist ramifications in the crafting and filming of the musical (Aloysia Rousseau), and is followed by a performer's perspective on the same work – and others – from the point of view of a professional singer of musicals in France today (Julien Neyer). The next two essays then continue with the study of famous adaptations from the 1960s, by focusing on shifts in the political and racial significance of *Finian's Rainbow* (James O'Leary) or the consequences of tone and scale alterations in *Hello, Dolly!* (Julie Vatain-Corfdir & Émilie Rault). Francis Ford Coppola's screen version of *Finian's Rainbow* is thus shown to revise the stage show's politically-oriented innovations in order to align the script with New Left conventions, while Gene Kelly's adaptation of *Hello, Dolly!* is analyzed as the somewhat maladroit aesthetic product of contrasting tendencies towards amplification on the one hand, and sentimentalization on the other. Moving on from the last of the optimistic "supermusicals" to one of the finest examples of a darker and more cynical trend, the last essay in this section focuses on the successive rewritings of *Cabaret* for the stage, screen – and stage again. Amid this circular pattern, Bob Fosse's version of the iconic musical emerges as a re-defining moment not only for the show, but also for the evolution of the genre itself (Anouk Bottero).

6 All of our interviews are transcribed and published with kind permission from the speakers.

The third section of the volume takes a closer look at the challenges facing the performers of musicals on stage and screen, in particular when it comes to singing and dancing – live or in a studio. A shrewd analysis of Gene Kelly's career – short-lived on Broadway but stellar in Hollywood – shows how his choreographic bent towards perfectionism evolved, from *Cover Girl* to *Singin' in the Rain*, and how his apparent doubts about his acting talents came to be expressed and answered through his screen dances (Jacqueline Nacache). This is followed by the direct testimony of a legendary dancer and Broadway performer, who talks at length about the expressivity of "character dancing," the different lessons in focus learned on stage or in front of the camera, or the joys of working with Leonard Berstein, Jerome Robbins or Bob Fosse (Chita Rivera). Building on this dancer's experience, the following chapter asks the question of how to re-choreograph a cult scene and dance it anew, using examples from Robbins' choregraphy for *West Side Story* (Patricia Dolambi). Finally, shifting from dance to song, the last interview of the volume turns to the evolution of singing practices and spectators' tastes, from opera to "Golden Age" musicals and on to contemporary musicals. Voice placement and voice recording are discussed, along with specific techniques such as "vocal twang" or "belting," by a singing coach with experience both in the US and in France (Mark Marian). This comparative perspective re-emphasizes the fundamental dynamic of the volume, which is that of transgressing borders – between media, disciplines or, occasionally, reception cultures – bringing together the voices of music, dance, film and theater scholars as well as performers and producers, in order to shed light on creative phenomena which, though they are as old as the advent of the talking picture, still prove multifaceted and prolific today.

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DEUXIÈME PARTIE

From subversion to self-reflexivity

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RE-DEFINING THE MUSICAL
ADAPTING *CABARET* FOR THE SCREEN

Anouk Bottero

When Stephen Harnick, the lyricist of many successful musicals such as *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), was first presented with the idea of adapting Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories* (1945), he quickly dismissed it: "It can't be done. Maybe you could make a play out of it, but not a musical".[1] Harnick did not seem to have heard of John Van Druten's 1951 stage adaptation *I Am a Camera*, but "[i]t seemed as if nobody seriously believed that Christopher Isherwood's semiautobiographical Berlin stories or John Van Druten's stage adaptation of the 'Sally Bowles' story could be made into a Broadway musical".[2] To see that what was to become one of America's best-known musicals was initially regarded as unfit for the Broadway stage and "inadaptable" to the musical genre may now seem quite striking. More precisely, the multiplicity of sources presiding over the conception of *Cabaret* points to the musical's adaptability and its malleable dimension. The critical and popular acclaim garnered by stage director and producer Harold "Hal" Prince's original staging of *Cabaret* (libretto by Joe Masteroff, music and lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb) in 1966,[3] as well as director-choreographer Robert Louis "Bob" Fosse's 1972 film adaptation (starring Liza Minnelli and Joel Grey),[4] also questions the implicit criticism that the subject did not fit in the happy-go-lucky world of musical theatre and film, or did not answer the genre's commercial and mainstream obligations. Indeed, a musical taking place in a seedy and decadent 1930s Berlin cabaret, against the backdrop of the Nazis' gradual ascent to power, might not have seemed a very likely subject for Broadway and Hollywood, even at the beginning of the 1960s. In that perspective, *Cabaret* remains a pivotal musical, insofar as both Prince's and Fosse's versions challenged the conception of what could be considered good material for a musical – and what a musical was supposed to be and look like.

1 Quoted in Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2011, p. 15.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
3 The original production of *Cabaret* ran for 1,166 performances when it first opened on Broadway, and won 8 awards out of 11 nominations at the 1967 Tony Awards, among which Best Musical, and Best Direction in a Musical.
4 Fosse's *Cabaret* also won 8 Oscars, out of 10 nominations at the 1973 Academy Awards, among which Best Director.

This initial paradox seems to concur with a moment of crisis that was faced by the genre of the musical, both in the theatre and film industries, during the 1960s. The second half of the 1960s marked the end of the "Golden Age" of musicals, a period usually comprised by most researchers between 1943 and 1964.[5] The reasons for this decline in popularity were mostly due to the economic fallout faced by Broadway and the musical film industry – a crisis which challenged the musical's establishment as a paragon of popular culture[6] – but also to the revolutionary socio-cultural changes that shaped most of the 1960s, and which made it even more difficult for musicals to "sustain [their] habitual veneer of happiness."[7] In that context, Hal Prince's original production of *Cabaret* seemed to bring to the stage musical the breath of fresh air it needed, by making it darker, more political, and more cynical, and moving away from the musical's "integrated form" – in which all elements of the musical concur to the advancement of the plot[8] – towards a new, director-driven "concept musical".[9]

If the conception of *Cabaret* on stage was marked by a conscious move to transform the musical as a genre, its film adaptation gave way to the possibility for a musical to transform itself, especially if transferred onto the screen. For Geoffrey Block, Fosse's *Cabaret* signs "the end of an era that generally features more faithful adaptations, an era significantly framed, as with the "Golden Age" musical, by the films of *Oklahoma!* (1955) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971)."[10] After Fosse's *Cabaret*, there were simply two very distinct *Cabaret*s. Such distinctiveness of the film adaptation compared to its stage counterpart is also linked to the emerging prominence of the director's role in the conception of musicals. Hal Prince's production demonstrated the paramount importance a director of musicals could have on a

5 1943 marks the year of the first "fully" integrated musical, Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, whereas 1964 was the year of high-rated productions such as *Funny Girl, Hello, Dolly!* or *Fiddler on the Roof*.

6 To learn more about the economic aspect of Broadway's fading popularity, see John Kenrick, "History of the Musical Stage – 1960s III: The World Turned Upside Down", *Musicals 101*, visited on April 3rd, 2017; Jack Poggi, *Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell UP, 1968.

7 Stacy Wolf, "Something Better Than This: *Sweet Charity* and the Feminist Utopia of Broadway Musicals", *Modern Drama*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2004, p. 315.

8 See Geoffrey Block, "Integration", in Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris and Stacy Wolf (dir.), *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, Oxford/New York, Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 97-110.

9 The general definition of the "concept musical" is that a "concept," i.e. the vision and/or the subject, governs and drives all the elements of the production, rather than the narrative. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 105. We can notice that the film musical's transformation follows the transformation of the stage musical pretty closely.

stage production.[11] Fosse, by moving away from constraints of fidelity to the original point of reference (the stage production), also followed Prince's redefinition of the role of the director[12] and more specifically, of the director-choreographer – despite a lack of classical ballet training and a relative ignorance of filmic vocabulary.

In many ways, *Cabaret* thus embodies a correlation between questions of adaptation, the subsequent transformations such translation from one medium (the stage) to another (the screen) entails, and a moment of redefinition of the genre. If most commentators shed light upon *Cabaret*'s disruptive dimension and how it set a precedent for the genre of the musical, I will try to shift this perspective onto the adaptations of *Cabaret*, from stage to screen and back again, so as to show how they too might have enriched the genre's mutations across the decades. In order to do this, I will take Fosse's *Cabaret* as the focal point of my analysis. This choice is not out of contempt for Hal Prince's highly innovative original production, but because Fosse's film remains the most democratic way to access this musical. To study the film's departure from the original production is a way of analyzing the transfers that have been made from Broadway to Hollywood, and of understanding how Fosse himself managed to create a specifically cinematographic *Cabaret*. This will also enable me to consider the extent to which the film has, in an amusing reversal, become a point of reference for audiences of subsequent stage revivals. Therefore, this article will follow the diachronic evolution of *Cabaret*, from its conception to its cinematographic reinvention, and to its reversed impact on stage performances of the musical.

ADAPTING *CABARET*: LEAVING THE THEATRE BEHIND?

For audiences who saw Fosse's 1972 film while having Prince's 1966 production in mind, *Cabaret* might have seemed like a completely different musical. The subplot was considerably altered: the amusing storyline of the older couple composed of Fraulein Schneider and Herr Schultz was replaced by the dramatic infatuation of gold-digger (and Jew in disguise) Fritz Wendel with wealthy Jewish heiress Natalia Landauer.

11 Usually, the paternity of musicals tends to be attributed to composers ("a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical," "a Stephen Sondheim musical"), a habit which does not always reflect the paramount influence of the choreographer, the lyricist or the director. See Jim Lovensheimer, "Texts and Authors", in Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris and Stacy Wolf (dir.), *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-32.

12 About the directors' vision's role in transforming *Cabaret*: "[...] the film was directed by Bob Fosse, not Harold Prince, and was accordingly informed by a different sensibility." (Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.)

Quite an important number of songs were replaced by newly-created ones: "Mein Herr" replaced "Don't Tell Mama" as Sally Bowles's introductory song, whereas the song "Maybe This Time" has "no direct counterpart in the stage version."[13] Only Joel Grey reprised his role as the Emcee; the controversial British Sally played by Jill Haworth[14] was replaced by a stunning and buoyant American Sally Bowles portrayed by Liza Minnelli. Cliff, an aspiring American writer, became a British Cambridge graduate named Brian. So many changes might seem vertiginous and quite daring as they touch upon the very storyline and draw a radically different vision of the characters. In classic screen adaptations of stage musicals, there was a commercial logic at work that would prompt the creation of new and flashy musical numbers to compensate for the film's lack of live performance.[15] Contrary to this logic, Fosse did not try to compensate and removed a lot of songs – every song that would not take place within the Kit Kat Klub (the notable exception being "Tomorrow Belongs to Me"). Somehow, he had understood the necessity to make musical film a genre that responded to the medium's naturalistic and realistic dimension, without forgetting the theatrical roots of the genre of the musical, as Garebian puts it: "Fosse made realism the rule of his film. No song or dance was ever an affront to realism."[16]

Indeed, filmed adaptations of "Golden Age" musicals tended to oscillate between "two poles,"[17] which went from a filmed version of a theatrical production to a version without any theatrical apparatus. By keeping musical numbers within a diegetic theatrical space, Fosse tried to position *Cabaret* outside of these two poles: after this film, all numbers taking place in naturalistic settings, in an apparently natural way, would seem incongruous. As Fosse himself said in an interview with Fabienne Pascaud for French TV and cinema magazine *Télérama*, "*On ne peut plus croire aux héroïnes qui chantent en faisant la vaisselle, ou tournoyent en faisant leurs courses. C'est pour cela que* Cabaret […] *se* [*situe*] *dans le milieu du music-hall.*"[18] And indeed, when Sally Bowles and the Emcee sing, it is because it is their job. And whenever people burst into song

13 Randy Clark, "Bending the Genre: The Stage and Screen Versions of *Cabaret*", *Literature Film Quarterly*, vol. 19, n°1, 1991, p. 55.

14 Most critics were less than charmed by Haworth's performance, especially because of her lack of singing capabilities (even though this was the reason why Prince chose her, out of realism, for the role of a second-rate nightclub singer such as Sally Bowles). See Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

15 Raymond Knapp and Mitchell Morris, "The Filmed Musical," in Raymond Knapp, Mitchell Morris and Stacy Wolf (dir.), *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

16 Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

17 Raymond Knapp and Mitchell Morris, "The Filmed Musical", art. cit., pp. 141-142.

18 "No one believes in those actresses who start singing or twirling as they wash the dishes or run errands anymore. This is why *Cabaret* [...] takes place in the world of music hall." In Fabienne Pascaud, "Entretien avec Bob Fosse", *Télérama*, no. 1585, May 28th, 1980, p. 95.

outside of a theatrical space, it does not go unnoticed, as in "Tomorrow Belongs to Me": "As the band dies down, a young man who could be the poster boy for Aryan good looks begins to sing. Again, *Cabaret* is not a musical in which people break into song unremarked, so the crowd takes notice."[19]

Performances therefore hold a signifying, metaphorical, ironic value: theatricality is being pointed out, in a Brechtian gesture of alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*), but the interpretative weight is slightly displaced compared to the stage version. Indeed, in the stage version, Hal Prince insisted on the play's political content by directly addressing the audience watching the musical. His stage designer, Boris Aronson, created a tilted mirror which was held over the audience in order to reflect it. This breach of the fourth wall, highly reminiscent of Brechtian techniques, was a way of pointing out the illusion-making process, but also of urging the audience to compare the political situation depicted in *Cabaret* to the United States' own political turmoil.[20] This rather blunt move could not be equally direct in the film, because of the diegetic audience present during the cabaret numbers, and because of the very border created by the screen and the camera lens. As Garebian notes, the atmosphere of cabarets was particularly fertile for the development of Brecht's alienation effect, precisely because of the immediacy and intimacy between performers and audience.[21] Therefore, "a sense of theatre"[22] needed to be maintained within the film, especially when it came to the metaphor encapsulated by the tilted mirror (most visible in the first and last numbers, "Willkommen" and "Auf Wiedersen" sung by the Emcee), in order to obtain the same effect of alienation that the stage production provided.

Focusing on the musical's alienation effect proves important when considering questions of adaptation, because such distantiation mostly played on subtle references to the original production (Prince's 1966 staging). In the film, the first notes of the opening number "Willkommen" accompany a close-up on the Emcee's reflection in a distorted mirror. As the camera rolls back, this distorted mirror reflects the Emcee's back and the audience facing him. As he struts out on stage, the mirror is quickly lifted up, in a clear reference to Aronson's ingenious setup. During this number, there are also several shots of the audience: immobile, these Grösz-like figures also echo Prince and

19 Steven Belletto, "Cabaret and Antifascist Aesthetics", *Criticism*, vol. 50, no. 4, Fall 2008, p. 612.

20 Aronson and Prince mostly had the Civil Rights movement in mind. See Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

21 "Cabaret also helped Brecht formulate his theater practice and theory of *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect). The small cabaret stage and smoky, sexy atmosphere produced an intimacy and immediacy for performers and audience." *Ibid.*, p. 52.

22 "[...] every time we return to the girls and their leering master [...] we return, as it were, to a sense of theater." Roger Greenspun, "Movie Review – Cabaret", *The New York Times*, February 14th, 1972.

Aronson's staging, as well as Patricia Zipprodt's costumes, which were directly inspired by German expressionism.[23] These spectators are uncanny and strange, but their brief appearance manages to establish a continuum between the diegetic audience and the heterodiegetic one. These painting-like shots interrupt the dynamic of the film, and entice the film's spectators to identify with their onscreen counterparts. There's a definite blurring of audiences in order for this "sense of theatre" to pervade the film. The very presence of Joel Grey as the actor who already played the Emcee on stage (and whom spectators might recognize) also participates to the construction of this sense of theatre. His presence functions as a whimsical reference to Prince's staging, which sets the audience back in the atmosphere of the original production, and somehow "contributes to the blurring of distinction between the three audiences: Broadway, diegetic, and film."[24]

The many transformations at the roots of *Cabaret*'s screen reinvention all point to a conscious move to re-create "a sense of theater" on the screen that could bear as much signifying weight as its real stage counterpart. Thus, Brechtian cross-media references to Prince's original stage production contributed to the recreation of the cabaret's atmosphere on screen. But this "sense of theatre" was also informed by stark filmic and cinematographic aesthetics at work in Fosse's redefinition of *Cabaret*.

FOSSE'S *CAMERA OBSCURA*

While theatre is a structuring element of Fosse's adaptation, *Cabaret* was not meant to resemble either the original stage production, or traditional film adaptations. Through very specific means such as montage and choreography, *Cabaret* emphasized the transformations of the film musical genre. Not only did it become darker, but Fosse's own cinematographic aesthetics also transformed the genre's structuring concepts, and added an extra layer of ambiguity to Prince's original stage production.

Choreography proves an interesting point of entry within Fosse's cinematographic vision, as it exemplifies the disruptive dimension of his work as a director-choreographer. Throughout *Cabaret*, Fosse distorts the musical film's traditional use of choreography. The number "Mein Herr" is very interesting insofar as it is at odds with the classic filming of a number, and shows that Fosse's own choreographic aesthetics presented cinematic qualities. Instead of insisting on the virtuosity of the performer among the ensemble through a full-length shot, Fosse's camera is very mobile and

23 Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-62.
24 Randy Clark, "Bending the Genre", art. cit., p. 57.

focuses on details and odd angles of the chorus girls' bodies. Shots of crotches, armpits and knees frame Liza Minnelli's performance. The eye of the spectator is directed to these oddities and small details, which are at the basis of Fosse's choreographic style.[25] This very close attention to detail, especially vulgar and prosaic ones, is already far from the virtuosic and dreamy quality of traditional dance numbers. As Roxane Hamery points out, there is no lyricism of any sort in Fosse's choreography, just a concentration on the gesture.[26] In that perspective, Fosse tries to move away from the glitz and glamour of traditional musical numbers, and this is especially fitting with film since the camera allows for zoom-ins on details which direct the audience's gaze towards the more prosaic dimensions of a number.

In keeping with their dreamlike and virtuosic tradition, "Golden Age" film musicals would normally use dance and choreography, like songs, to draw parallels between the male and female protagonists to create privileged moments of interlude where those characters can "[express] desire without having to take full responsibility for them."[27] In "Mein Herr", Sally is alone. There is no parallel dancing on Brian's part – he will actually never perform throughout the entire film. Such imbalance shows that the pairing of lovers in parallel scenes, defined by Rick Altman as a constitutive element of the film musical's "overall duality," is no longer viable in *Cabaret*.[28] Fosse's stance highly contrasts with that of a Robbins in *Fiddler on the Roof*, which was released just one year before *Cabaret*, and in which dance still allows characters like Hodel and Perchik to fall in love and express it. But like *Cabaret*, more and more musicals, on stage *and* on screen were starting to upset this principle (amidst the sexual revolution and its challenging representations of the male and female pairing) such as Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (1970), as well as Fosse's own stage and screen versions of *Sweet Charity* (1966 and 1969). In *Cabaret,* instead of giving the couple a fictional refuge in

25 "[...] his choreography draws the viewer's eye to the smallest and subtlest nuances of the body through precise gestures, a movement of the ribs, the shrug of the shoulder, a tilt of the pelvis, or a facial expression." In Cathy Young, "Hand on the Pulse: Dancing with Bob Fosse," *Dance Chronicle*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2009, p. 176. See also Martin Gottfried, *All His Jazz: The Life and Death of Bob Fosse*, New York, Bantam Books, 1990.

26 "*Dans ces films, la syncope est partout, le rythme est saccadé, empêchant tout élan lyrique, poétique, ramenant toute l'attention au geste et à son exécution.*" ("In these films, syncopation is everywhere: the rhythm is twitchy, which cancels every possible flight of lyricism or poetical attempt, and the spectator's attention is constantly drawn back to the gesture and its execution.") (Roxane Hamery, "Bob Fosse : les passions despotiques", in Sylvie Chalaye and Gilles Mouëllic (dir.), *Comédie musicale, les jeux du désir : de l'âge d'or aux réminiscences*, Rennes, PUR, 2008, p. 116.)

27 Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1987, p. 82.

28 For Altman, more than the plot, "the oppositions developed in the seemingly gratuitous song-and-dance number, [...] are instrumental in establishing the structure and meaning of the film. Only when we identify the film's constitutive dualities can we discover the film's function." *Ibid.*, p. 27.

which they can express their mutual affection, dance merely enables Sally (and only her) not to take responsibility for her inconsistencies, as she playfully sings about her sexual prowess and multiple affairs. The traditional union of the male and female leads is never fulfilled through dance in *Cabaret*. Much to the contrary, dancing either creates odd and uncanny pairings (such as the Emcee and Sally in "Money, Money"), or upsets the balance of the traditional couple. When Maximilian invites Sally and Brian to his country house, the three of them drunkenly engage into a waltz of sorts during one evening. This dance foreshadows (and somehow leads to) the triangular relationship, which will eventually tear apart Sally and Brian's couple. To some extent, the impossibility for Brian and Sally to exist as a couple is demonstrated through the choreography of music-and-dance numbers. I can go even further and say that the traditional roles given to musical and non-musical sequences seem to be reversed in the film. The union between Natalia and Fritz, which is a very traditional stance on the genre's compulsory secondary love story, belongs to the non-musical realm, and is completed without the help of dance. On the other hand, Sally dances and sings, but Brian and her are not able to fulfil the required pairing of the male and female leads, despite her capacity to perform. Fosse's limitation of choreography and dance to their realistic boundaries endows the film with a darker, more cynical and decidedly different vision of the musical's myths of duality and love.

Montage, as a specifically cinematographic element, also plays an important role in the darker and more ambiguous dimension of Fosse's *Cabaret*: "[s]ince everything has to do with everything else and the Cabaret is always commenting on the life outside it, the film sometimes looks like an essay in significant crosscutting, or associative montage."[29] Crosscutting is probably the most powerful and visible metaphorical device of the whole film, as it maintains a continuum of interpretation between reality outside of the Kit Kat Klub and the cabaret. Nearly all numbers taking place in the Kit Kat Klub are interspersed with shots of other scenes happening outside of the Cabaret. As early as "Willkommen", the Emcee's opening number is crosscut with shots of Brian arriving in Berlin, "[establishing] the cabaret as a symbol of the metropolis itself."[30] In the original staging, Prince tried to establish such a parallel by dividing the stage into two parts – one representing the real world, and the other one (called the "limbo"), the mind.[31] But in Fosse's *Cabaret*, montage allows for a form of pervasiveness which blurs the metaphorical lines between reality (Berlin) and the realm of the Kit Kat Klub. This

29 Roger Greenspun, "Movie Review – Cabaret", art. cit.
30 Terri J. Gordon, "Film in the Second Degree: 'Cabaret' and the Dark Side of Laughter," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 152, no. 4, 2008, p. 444.
31 Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

is especially visible in "Tiller Girls", in which the chorus girls and the Emcee perform a can-can number. As the number nears the end and the Emcee engages in more bawdy gestures, the camera cuts to another scene where Nazis manage to penetrate the Landauer property, yelling "*Juden! Juden!*"[32] under Natalia's window. Audience and performers are still raving in another cut to the cabaret, and yet another shot shows Natalia opening her front door, seeing the yellow graffiti spelling "Juden" and the corpse of her dog on the threshold. As she is about to scream, the camera cuts back to the Kit Kat Klub, where the can-can theme is replaced by military music: the chorus girls and the Emcee suddenly turn around their cloche hats, and the high kicks of the Tiller Girls transform into Nazi goose-steps in a very menacing fashion. Suddenly, the scene is no longer funny for the heterodiegetic audience, despite the chilling laughter of the diegetic spectators. We feel confused about the number's message: is the cabaret mocking the Nazis? Or is the number conflating the cabaret with them?[33]

Crosscutting therefore emphasizes the ambiguity of the film's politics, especially in numbers such as "Tiller Girls", in which violence and entertainment are superimposed and almost fused in a much harsher and direct way. This montage technique has a confrontational value, because it clashes scenes of persecution with light entertainment, but it also shows how easy it is to fuse them together in order to dupe the audience. The final laughter of the audience is chilling, because suddenly, laughter is not a collective means of resistance towards oppression, but rather the symbol of "collective unawareness".[34] Contrary to Prince's *1966* production, there is no manifest disavowal of the political situation:[35] the film only widens the discrepancy between the diegetic audience and the heterodiegetic one. To some extent, the politics of the film seem to echo America's inner turmoil towards the end of the Vietnam War: it had brought to light contradictions and fractures within the American society, and perhaps it is possible to interpret Fosse's ambiguities as a parable of this difficulty to "take sides." This "split spectatorship," although present in Prince's production, "is greatly exploited in the film version, with the camera's powerful ability to enunciate and interpolate the spectator in processes of identification and disavowal."[36] Specific cinematographic

32 German for "Jew! Jew!"

33 Steven Belletto, "*Cabaret* and Antifascist Aesthetics", art. cit., p. 617. Similarly to the "Tiller Girls" number, the mud-wrestling scene during which the Kit Kat Klub's owner is beaten to death results in the same chilling and confusing dimension.

34 Terri J. Gordon, "Film in the Second Degree," art. cit., p. 454.

35 Cliff tells Sally: "If you're not against all this, you're for it – or you might as well be," a line which was not used in the film.

36 Linda Mizejewski, *Divine Decadence. Fascism, Female Spectacle, and the Makings of Sally Bowles*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1992, p. 204.

means therefore add a layer of ambiguity, the same way Fosse's use of dancing in the film contributes to a darker and more cynical vision of love than is usually displayed in film musicals: the film adaptation adds many layers of interpretation to the original stage production.

"*WILLKOMMEN*, *BIENVENUE*, WELCOME": BACK IN THE THEATRE

Stephen Harnick's assertion seems once again quite wrong: Fosse's screen adaptation of *Cabaret* does prove the adaptability of the play and moreover, its malleability, its capacity to evolve and transform according to a director's vision, the medium itself, and the era it is inscribed in. In a letter addressed to Keith Garebian in 2010, Hal Prince mentioned that "*Cabaret* [had] a life of its own."[37] In this statement, Prince not only referred to the initial stage production and its legacy, but also to the subsequent adaptations – on screen and on stage. Indeed, after Fosse's film, several stage revivals were launched, among which British director Sam Mendes's highly-acclaimed 1998 and 2014 Broadway stagings starring Alan Cumming as the Emcee.

It is important to bear in mind that the malleability of *Cabaret* is also linked to the subject it tackles (the rise of Nazism), and the fact that the themes it addresses resonate with social evolutions throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The character of Sally Bowles embodies these changes particularly well, as she "has been rewritten to represent each decade's version of a historical dilemma, a haunting of conscience in the years since World War Two."[38] This specific moment in the history of the 20th century remains an important point of reference for the analysis of current political phenomena, but also for the analysis of human response to the course of History and terrifying events. However, the musical's themes' openness to interpretation inherently contradicts the forcefulness of the director's vision. And this contradiction is once again embodied in the character of Sally Bowles, "whose figure acquired a definitive iconography with Bob Fosse's 1972 film *Cabaret*"[39] despite her many roles and many portrayals. Because of the mass appeal of cinema and the permanence of film on videotape and DVD, Fosse's version and his choices in representing the characters became the new frame of reference for audiences who had not seen Prince's original staging – or who had forgotten it. Therefore, similarly to Prince's stage production in 1966, Fosse's film became the new point of reference from which reinterpretations

37 Quoted in Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
38 Linda Mizejewski, *Divine Decadence*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
39 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

and reinventions of *Cabaret* could emerge. Despite his strong directorial authority, Fosse's liberties with the original version and his inventive use of Prince's staging swept away the impression that the libretto and score were untouchable and immovable monoliths. Subsequent innovative stage recreations such as Sam Mendes's took the same liberties with the source material, "seeing them as living texts to be explored and reinterpreted […]."[40]

Sam Mendes's 1998 Broadway recreation of *Cabaret*, and those that followed, perpetuate *Cabaret*'s resonance with contemporary issues and aesthetics. The protean aspect of the musical is undoubtedly linked with the redefinition and acknowledgment of "the authorial role of the director" in these "rewrightings".[41] Mendes also imprinted his own vision as a director, and in that perspective, his staging was very much in keeping with the tendencies and aesthetics of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, reflecting "the more rebellious, nihilistic, and violent tone of British popular culture 30 years later" that was exemplified on stage by the provocative dimension of in-yer-face theatre and the works of British playwrights such as Anthony Neilson or Sarah Kane, in order to "[reinvent] Prince's idea of the show as a mirror of contemporary developments."[42] The transformation of the characters of Sally Bowles and the Emcee were among the most blatant changes Sam Mendes brought to *Cabaret*: Sally and the Emcee were interpreted in the 1998 revival by Natasha Richardson, who won a Tony Award for Best Actress, and by Alan Cumming, who also won a Tony Award for Best Actor. Both actors brought forward a "heroin chic" aesthetic, especially Alan Cumming's exhibitionist, vulgar, drug-using Emcee who revealed bruises on his arms when he removed his leather coat, and who was "more androgynous than Grey's demonic doll."[43] Natasha Richardson's Sally was much less glamorous than Minnelli's and much less of a singer; yet she performed one of the most convincing interpretations of Isherwood's Sally Bowles.[44]

However, even if Mendes endowed *Cabaret* with his own directorial vision, he acknowledged the aesthetic and popular appeal of Fosse's version. Mendes's stage re-adaptation of *Cabaret* enhances the referential authority of Fosse's film, but also proves a case study for transfers between Hollywood and Broadway. This illustrates the porosity between film and theatre, and perhaps the gradual introduction of cinematic

40 Miranda Lundskaer-Nielsen, *Directors and the New Musical Drama: British and American musical theatre in the 1980s and 1990s*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 109.
41 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
42 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
43 Keith Garebian, *The Making of Cabaret*, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
44 *Ibid.*, p. 169.

staging and/or film aesthetics within the theatre – similarly to Fosse's "sense of theatre" on film. Indeed, even in terms of personal trajectories, Mendes's revivals of *Cabaret* are replete with transfers from the film world to the stage world. Mendes himself, as a director, oscillated from the start between stage and film throughout his career.[45] His choreographer and co-director for the 1998 and 2014 Broadway revivals, Rob Marshall, also directed films, even winning an Oscar for Best Picture in 2002 for *Chicago* (yet another adaptation of a much-loved Fosse musical). Looking beyond these personal histories, the very "flesh" of *Cabaret* (the book, the score, the characters and even the primary sources) becomes a point of "passage" from one pole (the film) to the other (the stage) in Mendes's revival. For instance, the score played upon viewers' expectations, by replacing some of the songs that were present in the libretto by songs specifically created for the film ("Mein Herr" and "Maybe This Time"). This element highlights "the importance of film adaptations in building audiences for the [revivals]",[46] but also the circularity of musicals like *Cabaret*, which create points of connexion from one version to another by soliciting the audience's knowledge of the songs. Once again, the character of Sally Bowles proves a peculiar point of passage between Hollywood and Broadway, as some of the actresses who reprised the role in Mendes's most recent revivals on stage were Hollywood actresses, such as Michelle Williams and Emma Stone, who both starred in the 2014 Broadway revival. Cinematography and the filmic treatment of *Cabaret* by Fosse would be a definite inspiration to Mendes and Marshall's staging: the luminous frame overlooking the stage, and within which the Kit Kat Klub's orchestra performed, framed the viewer's eyes, similarly to the frame of a screen. This desire to direct the spectator's eyes, as a camera would, also became visible in the choreography. Rob Marshall took up Fosse's gestural and dance vocabulary, insisting on small gestures and details (undulating fingers and pelvic thrusts) that were highlighted by lighting effects. For instance, as the first notes of "Willkommen" started to play, a light would circle the Emcee's hand emerging from behind a door, its fingers beckoning the audience to come in. And in the 1993 original Mendes London production (which prompted the very successful first Broadway revival), Mendes gave Fosse a humorous nudge during the number "Mein Herr", starring Jane Horrocks as Sally. Sally would sing "Mein Herr", holding

45 Sam Mendes is not the first director to alternate between film and theatre. Julie Taymor, an American film and stage director (best known for her films *Frida*, 2002, *Across the Universe*, 2007, and *The Tempest*, 2010, as well as her dazzling 1997 Broadway production of the musical *The Lion King*) is another good example of the circulation between film and theatre, all the more so as her stage productions display a manifest cinematic quality.

46 Raymond Knapp and Mitchell Morris, "The Filmed Musical," art. cit., p. 142.

a heart-shaped lollipop and sitting on a gigantic chair, as a playful reference to Fosse's own source of inspiration for the choreography of the number in the film (Marlene Dietrich in *The Blue Angel*).

As Fosse's version offered a gradual darkening of the tone of the musical and a more ambiguous moral stance, Mendes accelerated this move towards darkness, ambivalence and shocking sexuality, notably by removing any trace of glitz and glamour that was left and replacing it with a certain harshness. The ambiguous role of the audience was reinforced by Mendes's introduction of *Cabaret*'s audience *as* the Kit Kat Klub's audience, sitting at café tables just as in a regular cabaret (even renaming the theatre that would host its 1998 revival "The Kit Kat Klub"): the confusion and blurring of boundaries between the two worlds became even more visible than with Fosse's systematic intercutting. Mendes pushed forward the complexities of the subject (the rise of the Nazis conflated with a moral decadence and indifference to the political situation), shocking and provoking his contemporary audiences by ending the musical with the Emcee wearing a concentration camp uniform (with a pink triangle), before throwing himself on an imaginary electric fence. Even if Prince and Fosse's versions entailed no such thing as a happy ending, Mendes's stance is implacable. This harsh and shocking ending finishes off the musical's no-longer-canonical happy ending by leaving no room for escape and/or survival. But Mendes's radical choice also highlighted issues that had been avoided by Fosse's film, such as the representation of homosexuality and queerness: this "finale" takes advantage of the libretto's blanks in interpretation[47] and weighs on the audience's reaction to this stretch of interpretation. Mendes's gesture also re-placed *Cabaret* within the frame of contemporary issues tackled by other musicals, such as *Rent* (1996), for instance, with its open discussion of homosexuality and AIDS. Amidst the crisis and controversies stirred by the media frenzy surrounding the epidemic, it is highly probable that Mendes's production aimed to add this extra political layer in order to inscribe *Cabaret*'s politics within an immediate moment. Mendes's shocking and harsh production is one example of *Cabaret*'s gradual destruction of the genre's "myth of entertainment," but also of its shifting politics, adaptation after adaptation.

47 About a staging of *Lorenzaccio* in which Lorenzo and the Duke are presented as gay, Florence Naugrette writes: *"[…] le metteur en scène pousse le texte dans ses retranchements. On ne saurait dire qu'il le force ou qu'il le trahit, puisque précisément le texte ne dit rien de la gestuelle et de la proxémique des deux personnages, qui reste à inventer."* ("… the stage director pushes the text to its limits. But neither does he force or betray it, precisely because the text bears no mention of the gestural or proxemic code between the two characters, which has yet to be invented.") (Florence Naugrette, *Le Plaisir du spectateur de théâtre,* Rosny-sous-Bois, Bréal, 2002, p. 168.)

The many lives of *Cabaret* on screen and on stage have precipitated the musical's redefinition of the genre. This re-definition was perhaps inherent to the story and its lacklustre yet intriguing characters. By pushing its sombre politics further and further and by gradually un-polishing the performances, film *and* stage adaptations of *Cabaret* shed light upon this musical's disruptive capacity. Moreover, each adaptation, first on screen, and then back on the stage, was already a disruption of a preceding version, deeply marked by contemporary sensibilities, but also by the director's vision. Indeed, Fosse's film as well as Sam Mendes's stage revivals confirmed what Hal Prince's original 1966 production had enunciated—that the director's role was of paramount importance in order to create innovative musicals.

Fosse's *Cabaret* endowed the musical with a darker and more ambiguous interpretation than Prince's, disrupting most of the film musical's conventions. By allowing the realm of cinema to pervade and invade what used to be a theatrical space, making it more realistic, Fosse's screen adaptation made the musical acknowledge its theatrical dimension. His cinematic aesthetics, such as choreography and montage, surely inspired later stage revivals, especially those directed by Sam Mendes. The film's accessibility for audiences also emphasized a "co-dependency" between film adaptations and stage revivals—the latter being often made to "resemble more closely the film versions".[48] If Mendes went further than Fosse on many levels, it is because the screen adaptation itself allowed for a complete transformation of the material, but also because of shifting context and audience, thus proving that *Cabaret* could generate new meaning.

The circularity of *Cabaret*, from stage to screen and back on the stage again, shows how fertile these circulations between mediums are. The assumed inadaptability of *Cabaret* proves even more amusing if we consider its contemporary meaning, which transcends 1930s Germany and still addresses 20th- and 21st-century issues, following the evolutions of the 1970s, 1990s and 2000s. Therefore, more than circularity, perhaps one could read *Cabaret* as a musical of circulation, whose numerous adaptations throughout the years have had the capacity to echo other musicals which also challenged the traditional formulas of the genre. The disruptive dimension of *Cabaret*'s shifting politics is the one element that allows these adaptations to exit the constraints of the musical and to transform the genre, by playing on audience expectations and reactions. *Cabaret*'s many adaptations, none of them quite resembling one another, emphasize the unfixed dimension of this musical, constantly redefined, and constantly redefining.

48 Raymond Knapp and Mitchell Morris, "The Filmed Musical," art. cit., p. 142.

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NOTICE

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ABSTRACT

Cabaret's iconic position in the Pantheon of musical theatre tends to obliterate its tumultuous genesis. Amidst a crisis of the genre, which drove audiences outside of theatres and cinemas, the original 1966 stage production of *Cabaret* directed by Harold Prince redefined musical theatre as a whole. This article aims at showing that the film adaptation of a musical as uncanny and striking as *Cabaret* is central to the history and evolution of the genre itself. Bob Fosse's 1972 film adaptation was a reinvention which asserted the director's important role and redefined many structuring principles of the musical film. By doing so, this adaptation paved the way for multiple reinventions and revivals, which enhance a continuity and circularity of sorts between film and theatre.

Keywords

musical theatre ; musical film; *Cabaret*; adaptation; revival; Harold Prince; Bob Fosse; Sam Mendes; stage director; film director

RÉSUMÉ

Il paraissait presque logique qu'une comédie musicale aussi populaire que le fut *Cabaret* en 1966 (mise en scène par Harold Prince) soit portée à l'écran. Et pourtant, la comédie musicale faisait face à un moment de désaveu et d'essoufflement du genre, au cinéma comme au théâtre. Dans cet article, la question de l'adaptation à l'écran d'une comédie musicale aussi intrigante que *Cabaret* est placée au cœur d'un moment de redéfinition du genre de la comédie musicale. Il s'agira de montrer que l'adaptation de *Cabaret* à l'écran par Bob Fosse en 1972 redéfinit les codes structurels du genre, ainsi que le rôle du réalisateur, qui gagne en importance et ouvre la porte à de multiples réinventions. Ceci m'amène à questionner les circulations entre théâtre et cinéma, notamment à travers ces réinventions scéniques que sont les *revivals*.

Mots-clés

comédie musicale ; film musical ; *Cabaret* ; adaptation ; Harold Prince ; Bob Fosse ; Sam Mendes ; metteur/se en scène ; réalisateur/trice

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