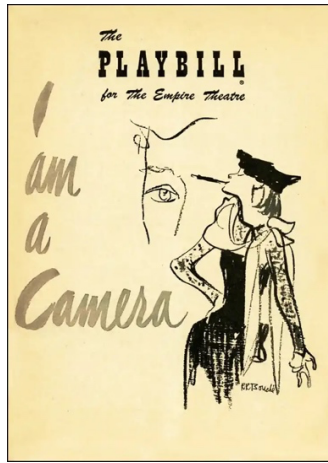


Cabaret

In wrapping up our “London 1” portion of the Maymester, we will end where we started: the commercial theatre. Kander and Ebb’s *Cabaret* is a musical that always comes back around on Broadway and the West End. As an adaptation, *Cabaret* has had two previous lives: Charles Isherwood’s novel *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939) and John Van Druten’s play *I Am a Camera* (1951). Although it has been deemed a musical classic, for some spectators (especially in the premiere nearly 50 years ago), it was controversial due to the content openly representing human sexuality and the sensual nature of performance. Therefore, some may believe this was not representative of performers promoting the stereotype of an immoral performer. However, this is the story of an individual and the complicated given circumstances folk of differing backgrounds must contend with to survive. Therefore, as we think about individual tastes, we can also start to consider how over time public taste shifts. Please note, the unspoken character in this musical is the rise of Adolf Hitler and antisemitic images and language portrayed may be triggering.



We have done a lot of reflecting on our individual tastes and why we are drawn to performances. I’d like to continue to encourage us from moving away from a “This was good/bad” binary and instead reflect on our intersectionality and why/why not a certain performance resonates with us. This concept is inspired by scholar Jill Dolan’s “critical generosity” (which some of you are familiar with), where we consider a new framework for audience reception to move beyond the good/bad binary. She offers the following:

“*Why* does a production work? *How* does it seem to reach its audience? *How* can we tell that an audience was moved? *How* do we think about efficacy outside the theater or the performance, even as we propose that something tangibly moving (emotionally and politically) happened within it? In other words, critical generosity doesn't devolve into nonspecific "It was good" pablum but tries to parse how and why a performance seemed to work in a way that generated a productive kind of political hope through its aesthetic strategies.” (Dolan <https://public.imaginingamerica.org/blog/article/critical-generosity-2/>)

Assignment:

- For your *Cabaret* assignment, pair up with a peer and come with a thesis statement answering one of the questions posed by Dolan. You may have a lot to say here, but the goal and challenge is to be succinct. For Instagram, for the image, consider posting one WORD to represent that thesis statement with the thesis statement as the caption.