

FROM THE END OF WORLD WAR ONE TO 1933 AND THE RISE OF HITLER, Jews were at the heart of every aspect of German cabaret. Though the majority of these composers, lyricists, and performers did not consider themselves “Jewish artists,” the form itself -- satiric, cosmopolitan, questioning without expecting answers, shifting constantly between longing and irreverence -- is Jewish by its very nature. For this reason, the Nazis labeled cabaret “degenerate, asphalt art” and violently suppressed it. Most of Germany’s cabaret artists fled during the first weeks following the rise of Hitler. Those who escaped to America survived; those who unluckily fled to Holland, often did not.

*“There’s gold
in this show!”*

-- John Richard Thompson:
Author/Director of MAC
and Bistro Award winning
“Indigo Rat:
Ein Berliner Kabarett”

Degenerate illuminates the lives and critical choices of four of Berlin’s biggest stars -- Kurt Geron and Camilla Spira, performers; Kurt Tucholsky, lyricist; and Friedrich Hollaender, composer. Uniting the era’s best comedic sketch material with historical texts and cabaret songs in German, Yiddish and translation, **Degenerate** pays homage to these brave and brilliant artists of pre-war Berlin. Together, we travel: to freedom in America; to exile and eventual suicide in Sweden; from the cabaret of Theresienstadt to death in Auschwitz; and, via the holding camp of Westerbork’s cabaret, to a secret new life in Amsterdam. We traverse the darkening landscape of the times, and witness these artists’ unquenchable passion, reckless bravery and ferocious wit.



Degenerate
Four German-Jewish cabaret artists,
from Weimar through the Holocaust

Conceived and written by
Rebecca Joy Fletcher.
Performed by Ms. Fletcher with a male counterpart
and piano accompaniment.

Degenerate is best staged in a cabaret setting.
Running time: Approximately an hour and a half, with an intermission.

