



Victorian
Opera



Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets

Education Resource - Music/Drama/Theatre Studies

This resource is designed for use by teachers and students of drama, theatre studies and music. However, it is also written to be used by anyone interested in the work. An introduction to opera, including a glossary of terms, is available on the Victorian Opera website. There you can also listen to our podcast, 'The Art of Opera', and watch videos produced by the company. <http://www.victorianopera.com.au/education/learning-resources/>

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1. Introduction

The original *The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets*, was created as a collaboration between theatre director Robert Wilson, American singer-songwriter Tom Waits and poet/writer William S. Burroughs. They took a German myth and the 19th-century opera by Carl Weber, *Der Freischütz* (*The Freeshooter*) about a young forester and his misguided use of magic bullets (which Weber used as the basis for *Der Freischütz*) and expanded it musically. Referencing German Weimar, vaudeville and New York musical theatre, they created a music drama about a poet who makes a tragic deal with the Devil to become a hunter.

First staged in 1990 at Hamburg's Thalia Theatre, starring Dominique Horwitz, Annette Paulmann and Stefan Kurt, it was revived as an English-language version under Robert Wilson's direction in London in 2004. This production starred Marianne Faithfull as Pegleg and Canadian singer Mary Margaret O'Hara as Käthchen. *The Black Rider* was last performed in Australia as part of the Sydney Festival in 2005.

This co-production between Malthouse Theatre and Victorian Opera has brought together an innovative creative team and a 'dangerous and entertaining' cast to interpret this extraordinary work.

2. Creative Team

Direction Matthew Lutton

Original Music and Lyrics Tom Waits

Text William S. Burroughs

Musical Direction Phoebe Briggs

Musical Supervisor Iain Grandage

Set and Costume Design Zoe Atkinson

Lighting Design Paul Jackson

Sound Design Jim Atkins

Soundscape Design Jethro Woodward



Robert Wilson, Tom Waits and William Burroughs
Photography by: Ralf Brinkhoff, 1993

3. Cast and Characters

Character	Singer	Voice type
Pegleg	Meow Meow	Female baritone
Bertram, the Forester	Richard Piper	Baritone
Anne, his Wife	Jacqueline Dark	Mezzo-soprano
Käthchen, their daughter	Dimity Shepherd	Mezzo-soprano
Wilhelm, a Clerk	Kanen Breen	Tenor
The Duke/Old Uncle	Le Gateau Chocolat	Bass-baritone
Robert	Winston Hillyer	Tenor
Ensemble - Man on Stag, Georg Schmid	Paul Capsis	Countertenor



Black Rider cast members “need to be a shape shifter, able to be dangerous, able to entertain”.

Matthew Lutton - Director

“To a person, the cast is seasoned, embittered and dark; they are beautiful humans.”

Iain Grandage - Music Supervisor

4. Synopsis

Pegleg, the Devil, invites the audience to 'come along with the Black Rider' for 'a gay old time'.

Bertram, a forester, is not happy that his daughter Käthchen wishes to marry the file clerk Wilhelm. His wife Anne reminds him that Käthchen is allowed to love whomever she wishes, even if he can't provide for her. Despite Bertram's disapproval, the young couple love each other and want to be together.

There is however, another more highly regarded suitor for Käthchen's hand – Robert, who is a good hunter but also a self-absorbed show-off.

Pegleg enters the forest and waits. Wilhelm is determined to prove that he can be a competent marksman and earn approval to marry Käthchen. He finds a gun strategically placed by Pegleg and fails in his attempts to use it. Pegleg teases him, and eventually offers him magic bullets.

Käthchen awakens from a traumatic dream to find her room filled with dead game. She discovers Wilhelm sleeping near a carcass and rejoices at his newfound skill. Bertram and Anne bless the union.

Wilhelm accepts Pegleg's offer of more bullets, but accidentally kills Käthchen's goose. Käthchen is having another nightmare, as Anne brings in the wedding dress. Wilhelm returns with the dead Goose.

Bertram tells the story of Georg Schmid who had accepted the Devil's bullets.

Wilhelm heads to the crossroads to summon a final bullet, needing one for the Duke's marksman's challenge. The Devil offers seven, 'six are yours, and hit the mark; one is mine and hits the dark.'

At the wedding, in front of all the assembled guests, Wilhelm aims and shoots at the wooden dove, but the bullet instead finds Käthchen, his love.



5. Background Information

Folk tales are a part of every culture across the world. They are central to storytelling traditions, and Australia is a melting pot of cultural storytelling.

Tales of making deals with the Devil to achieve personal ends have been around for centuries, especially in countries with predominantly Christian traditions. One of the most famous is that of Dr Faustus, whose tale of deal-making has been part of legend since the 1500s.

Many versions of characters making pacts with the Devil have been interpreted in contemporary culture, in film and television, literature, games and in live performance. *The Black Rider's* interpretation of the old German folktale, *Der Freischütz*, is one of these. This story is about the implications of choice and consequence, and also about love, rivalry, family expectation, desperation, and the value we place on the old and new ways of living. All of these concerns are still keenly relevant to contemporary life.



Tom Waits is a legendary American singer/songwriter born in 1949. His distinctive voice is often described as a growl; gravelly from too many cigarettes and years of being soaked in liquor. He released his first album in 1973 and released his most recent solo album in 2011. His music shows the influence of jazz and blues, and his lyrics often reference the alternative or 'darker' side of life. He has performed in many films including *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992). He has composed for film and musicals, and was nominated for an Academy Award for his soundtrack for *One from the Heart* (1982). His projects are listed on his website, www.tomwaits.com.



William S. Burroughs was a key member of the Beat Generation. Born in 1914, his poetry is particularly known for its non-traditional expression. His book *Naked Lunch* (1959) earned him recognition as a writer. He was a colourful though troubled character, living at that time as a bi-sexual, and with a heroin addiction; in 1951 he accidentally shot and killed his wife Joan Vollmer. After the death of his wife, he was compelled to write and continued to write, paint, photograph and collaborate with other artists in theatre, film and music until late in his life. He died in 1997 in sober seclusion. His influence on writers, musicians and artists is well-documented.



Robert Wilson is a significant director and visionary in the world of experimental theatre. Born in Texas in 1941, he studied business administration, architecture and painting, before discovering the world of contemporary performing arts in New York City in the mid 1960's. He formed the Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds (an experimental performance company) in 1968. In 1970 he began working in opera with Philip Glass, and has continued to create award-winning experimental performance to this today. His current projects are listed on his website, www.robertwilson.com.



The Beat Generation

In 1944, in New York City, a group of people would regularly gather in the apartment of Jean Vollmer and Edie Parker. These men and women were the beginnings of the Beat Generation. They were mostly university-educated poets, writers, thinkers and artists. These people were experimenting with drugs, free in their attitudes to sexuality and sex, and challenging the norms of American society at the time.

The key players at the beginning of this movement were Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, Lucien Carr and Alan Ginsberg. Jack Kerouac was the husband of Parker, and Burroughs eventually partnered with Vollmer.

This group, the movement it spawned and the subsequent years of exploration, discussion and writings, are seen as key in influencing American literary culture, the hippy movement and the music associated with it.

In 1982, Ginsberg published a summary of “the essential effects” of the Beat Generation in his article *A Definition of the Beat Generation*, as published in *Friction*. These included spiritual liberation, sexual “revolution” or “liberation,” i.e., gay liberation, somewhat catalysing women’s liberation, black liberation, and Gray Panther activism.

These “essential effects” were:

- Liberation of the world from censorship.
- Demystification and/or decriminalization of cannabis and other drugs.
- The evolution of rhythm and blues into rock and roll as a high art form, as evidenced by the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, and other popular musicians influenced in the later fifties and sixties by Beat generation poets’ and writers’ works.
- The spread of ecological consciousness, emphasized early on by Gary Snyder and Michael McClure, the notion of a “Fresh Planet.”
- Opposition to the military-industrial machine civilization, as emphasized in writings of Burroughs, Huncke, Ginsberg, and Kerouac.
- Attention to what Kerouac called (after Spengler) a “second religiousness” developing within an advanced civilization.
- Return to an appreciation of idiosyncrasy as against state regimentation.
- Respect for land and indigenous peoples and creatures, as proclaimed by Kerouac in his slogan from *On the Road*: “The Earth is an Indian thing.”

The influence of the Beat Generation on *Black Rider* is apparent in the content, the interpretation of the original tale, and Burroughs’ personal life.

6. The Vision - In Conversation with Matthew Lutton, Iain Grandage and Phoebe Briggs



Costume designs for the character Wilhelm from the sketch book of Zoe Atkinson

How would you describe your role in this production?

Matthew – As the director, I think of my role as assembling the team, then working with them on the various components of the show, particularly for this work; working on the staging, the creation of the images of the show, the performances, the language of the show, the physicality and how that connects to the Tom Waits music and the music with Iain and Phoebe. My role is working with everyone, but basically tapping in to the spirit of what Tom Waits and William Burroughs have created.

Iain – As the music supervisor, my role is to work with Matt and Phoebe on casting, on stage and in the pit, selecting the right sort of musicians, because this is a show where each person brings a lot of themselves to it. It's not a colour by numbers show, and it's a series of unique qualities that we're looking for amongst cast members and musicians. So we want people who

aren't afraid of making a less attractive sound, who bring character in the way they play music or in the way that they sing music, or who cannot just perform what's written on the page because what's written on the page is, in these instances, a guide rather than a prescriptive formula. I'm also finding the right colours in orchestrating what's there or finding extra colours, finding ways of keeping the band happy and busy by finding more moments for them within the music.

Phoebe – Once Matt and Iain's vision for the piece is set, then my role will be coaching the singers and playing in the rehearsals. In the performance I will be playing in the pit. There is no conductor but I will be leading from the harmonium, keyboard and the piano.

Iain – In this context Phoebe is the musical director and she gives me a lot of power in that conversation, we are very much equals in envisaging how the music runs in this particular show.

What is *Black Rider*?

Matthew – It's hard to know what genre you want to call it because it's a real grab bag of a lot of genres musically, whether it's a musical, or an opera... originally it's a collaboration between a poet, William Burroughs, a composer/musician/singer, Tom Waits, and an avant garde theatre director Robert Wilson. The three of them started the piece and they took a German myth that had been turned into an opera (*Der Freischütz* – Weber) as the starting point, and they made a theatre collaboration based on that. You can tell they are telling a story, narratively they're telling *The Free Marksman*, which is about a poet who makes a deal with the Devil to become a hunter. He has bullets that will shoot whatever he wants but unbeknownst to him, the cost of that is his lover. But then they've expanded it, musically it is expanded out to lots of different referencing from German Weimar to vaudevillian to a New York musical. The stories do that as well. In that story we also have a back story that goes into the history of the fairy-tale. There is a lot of referencing to Burroughs's autobiography as a heroin addict, which influences it all the way through. And then it spirals out into other stories, other types of Devil's bargains, and other types of addiction. It's all done with fun. There's a great sort of constant entertainment.

Iain – I call it music drama. There is drama there, driven by the music so that you don't need to call it opera or music theatre in the way people usually know those things. It's highly informed by contemporary cabaret, which is not all bells and whistles, sequins and footlights; it's actually an inspection of the human condition and the songs in this are stand-alone, wonderful songs, delivered by high calibre artists who mine their own experiences in order to bring truth to the roles.

How would you describe the style in which you are going to be presenting this version of *Black Rider*?

Matthew – the original music drama was created with a very clear theatrical style, quite new

at the time, which is a sort of Bauhaus, all about the body as lines and sculpture, all about the body as a piece of architecture, very stylized and all about anti-emotion. That whole type of performance has the body separated from the psychological, which comes from that Brechtian tradition and Robert Wilson co-production, where he would always say that the image and what we're singing don't align - they say different things.

We've actually brought more emotion and psychology back into it, and in some ways we're making a much messier production. The aim is to create a production where the Devil feels like he's got a carnival, hurdy-gurdy on stage, that's a big machine that traps souls, and that once you set it in motion, it starts to play out even though those in it aren't aware of the machinations. We're sort of putting a visual, theatrical, metaphorical machine over the top of it which isn't how it was conceived. We're doing a much messier, much fleshier, human, dirty production, whereas the original one is more a series of paintings and more austere.

What has influenced you in your interpretation of this production?

Iain – I am always looking for truth, an emotional integrity on stage. That is generally what I aim for. Whilst I do a lot of things with a lot of performers utilising Brechtian alienation techniques, most of the time I am chasing authenticity; so why I react to music theatre in a not so good way is because the quality of the way things are framed annoys me immensely. Strangely I find there to be a lot more truth within operatic voices and productions than I do in music theatre. That is why I put this in neither of those worlds, I put it into the cabaret world, hence each person speaking to us directly in the context of a character in a broader story. I'm taking my lead completely, in any musical reimaginings that I am doing, from Tom Waits' back catalogue. He is someone who is alive in the backyard tool shed bringing all sorts of noises into a sound world that reflect the mechanics of his strange and wonderful mind. It's those sounds that come from all sorts of unexpected places that make it a complete sense of the human. And this world is filled with a series of mechanics that reveal the human heart and that is what we're chasing in the musical.

Phoebe – It is also about what each individual performer can bring to the rehearsal. Each person that is cast brings so much to the table and it will be what happens when we're all together that will be the exciting to be part of.

Iain – And that is the bespoke nature of this particular production. I can't imagine it. It's cast with almost every single person as first choice. We've gone 'that's the perfect person for this' and they've said yes. It's very rare for that to happen, it's very exciting. And they are a bunch of generally transgressive performers who don't exist happily inside in a particular type as it were.

Phoebe – They are constantly breaking down walls artistically.

Iain – They might be opera singers but they do other things.

Matthew – Rebels.

Phoebe – The challenge will be to actually contain it!

Matthew – It's how to create a holistic world knowing that that world has multitudes in it. It's eclectic and wild and moves around, but should have a logic that you feel.

Does that mean that the rehearsal process you are about to undertake is going to be improvisational and collaborative, or is there a really clear 'this what each of these people is needing to do' and yet they have a certain amount of room within that?

Matthew – There's both. There's clear frames and there's a huge amount to explore within the frames. Just like a song is a frame and the way that that can be interpreted and the colour that can come out of that and the subtext of it can be shifting. Even the stage, Zoe Atkinson, the designer and I, this is the fourth or fifth music drama that we have created together. We know what the major image of each song is, but the details of it and how it's realised is a relationship with the performer. A piece like this for me is having performers that on stage are very authentic, it is almost like dreaming and being awake at the same time. So their dream, or their nightmare is on stage with them simultaneously and how to constantly do that is for me the way the music operates; they constantly go into dreams or nightmares and they have to be very authentic in that, but at the same time be incredibly heightened. The stage needs to follow with them and that needs to come from somewhere very personal but also somewhere quite extreme, so it's a big playground, but at the same time there are some clear rules and parameters.

Iain – it's interesting, that dichotomy that Matt talks about is intrinsic in Tom Waits' music. In the hands of a different voice, which is where we need to be really careful, the songs are incredibly simple and in danger of being trite almost. It's his voice, because it's delivered with such a raw rough, and lived-in voice, that you buy it. But actually the notes written on the page are really almost banal. And so it's about finding the acid to offset the sweetness. Hence the pair of characters that Matt describes, as having this alter ego. It's almost intrinsic to Tom Waits' performance of his own music.

The orchestrations as they stand show the speed at which they had to get this up the first time. We have kind and generous people everywhere, and time to envisage more Waits in the context of this score.

So, this is not going to be a museum piece, not reproducing the Hamburg production, you are producing something that has well and truly evolved?

Iain – It's old now, it was avant-garde then. But that's the trouble with avant-garde, it doesn't last there.

Matthew – It's a document that asks for interpretation. It invites it. Our production will be significantly shorter, just because we make choices.

Iain – What Wilson did, was go into a state of existential angst, represented in that Germanic

tradition that goes on and on and on, because he's aware that the audience is aware of that highly heady Germanic kunst. He inspected in a certain way that we don't need to do, well we always need to do that, but we can do it quicker now.

Phoebe – Also, I think it's begging to be explored again, because you don't want to copy something that's been done. Even if you imitate it and change it slightly, that doesn't seem quite right now. It needs a completely fresh approach that's way truer to our generation.

How are you going to create a safe space for this show for the performers so they can tap into that angst? How do you go into that traumatic space for a performer to create these characters and make it safe for them?

Matthew – Many times I've seen performers enter into things and then become confused about what they're experiencing on stage and what's happening off stage and the anxiety that they're playing becomes an anxiety that they carry off stage, and that influences their process in the rehearsal room. For a work like this, it's part of my job to be watching and alert to that. There are several performers in this that I don't have an existing working relationship with, and part of my job is to very quickly get to know them well enough to know when someone on stage is feeling uncomfortable and when someone is just working hard; to know the difference between someone who is expressing their anxiety or someone just going through their creative process of doubt. It's trying to learn, and it happens every time you direct a show; you learn the psychologies of the people you are working with in order to respond to them.

Iain – This production is cast, to a person, with highly experienced performers and somewhere between the fact that it's highly stylised and they are highly experienced - there are many shows that I do where I am deeply worried about the psychology of the people involved, this isn't one of them. I have no fears with this one at all. The fantastic is so imbedded in it that the honesty that we are asking people to mine is might be attached to a real experience but it's not going to trigger. To a person, the cast is seasoned, embittered and dark; they are beautiful humans.

What were the qualities you looked for in the casting of Black Rider?

Matthew - you need to be a shape shifter, able to be dangerous, and to entertain. There's a particular type of skill, it's a musicianship where you have enough skill to throw away the skill, enough skill to be messy or rough and still control it.

What do you see as the strengths of this work? And what are the challenges of doing this work?

Iain – Strengths - they are beautiful, beautiful songs, challenges - they are beautiful, beautiful songs. You can make them more beautiful and that's not always the right choice. Because of the aesthetic of Tom Waits, you can overplay your hand. It's about the balance, all the time, like having the conversation inside, where there are lots of very fine choices in this because it feels somewhat incomplete, it's in the gaps that the meaning lies. And in filling in some of those

gaps you have to be careful that you don't do it too accurately because then it takes away the agency of the audience to bring themselves to it.

Matthew – Because there is so much pleasure in all the music and the songs in *Black Rider*, the challenge for me is actually in the balance between the clarity of the story vs the strength of the experience of the songs. It's a story that can become very obscure or become quite detailed and clear, depending on how you interpret what's in the script. I'm interested in bringing up more clarity without overdoing it so you don't feel bashed over the head. It's that combination of feeling like you are in a nightmare or a dream the whole time, but you still know what's happening, and trying to get that balance is the challenge.



Costume designs for the character Anne from Zoe Atkinson's sketchbook

7. The Design

Zoe Atkinson and Matthew Lutton began the design conversation with the idea that Pegleg, the Devil is the puppet-master, with all of the characters in the story caught in her giant machine.

With that idea in mind, the design for the set needed to create the sense that the characters are in a world in which Pegleg is in control. The set will be a big box with a 'slapped together' feel. It will be stained and built up with the detritus of all the performances over time. It has 27 (at last count) orifices from which characters and set pieces emerge.

Wires will be strung across the set to bring set elements on and off. These should give the audience the feeling of the set being manipulated off-stage by Pegleg. Set elements will include heavy cloth drops for the cabin and the forests; these will be painted with images inspired by the 19th Century German artists Friedrich Ortlieb and Caspar Friedrich. The set cloths for the hut are changed over the journey of the story.

The costumes and make up will also have a slapdash feel, of not being quite finished, as though the characters are still in development.

There will be a feeling of another time in the design elements, commensurate with 19th century romantic influence, however Pegleg will feel as though she could also be from this time.

8. Set and Costume Design by Zoe Atkinson

What is it about *Black Rider* that excited you as a designer?

I first came across Tom Waits (on vinyl) when I was seventeen years old; it was all gamelan and bits of metal whacked and twisted, and I fell in love equally with the music and the stories that he told. So that was one thing. I'm a sucker for a good devil's pact, and that was the second thing. And the third thing was about past work, and a conversation that's still unfolding. I love the opportunity of the production- this production- as much as the story it presents on the stage.

How would you describe the style of your design for *Black Rider*?

I hold to the rule that nothing should be on the stage without an urgent reason, even if the result of that is a decision to see nothing at all. For example, the last show which Matt and I did together - *Picnic at Hanging Rock* - was comprised scenographically of three almost featureless walls, a carpet and a whole heap of moments in which the audience saw nothing whatsoever because the stage was in total darkness. By contrast *Black Rider* is a mess*. It invites us to step inside the story-machine of the devil. It's Pegleg who has crafted the world; and her sprawling, impatient, joyful and bloodied imagination has offered us a shot at a no holds barred production.

*A cathartic mess.

What is it you want to achieve with this particular design?

I always want to achieve the same thing with every design that I work on: to tell a story as eloquently as I can, in a language alongside those other ones that we use: words, music, movement, light and sound. Each of these has an equal potential and potency, and when directed in accord (and sometimes discord) our experience of theatre is all the richer.

What do you want the audience to experience through your design?

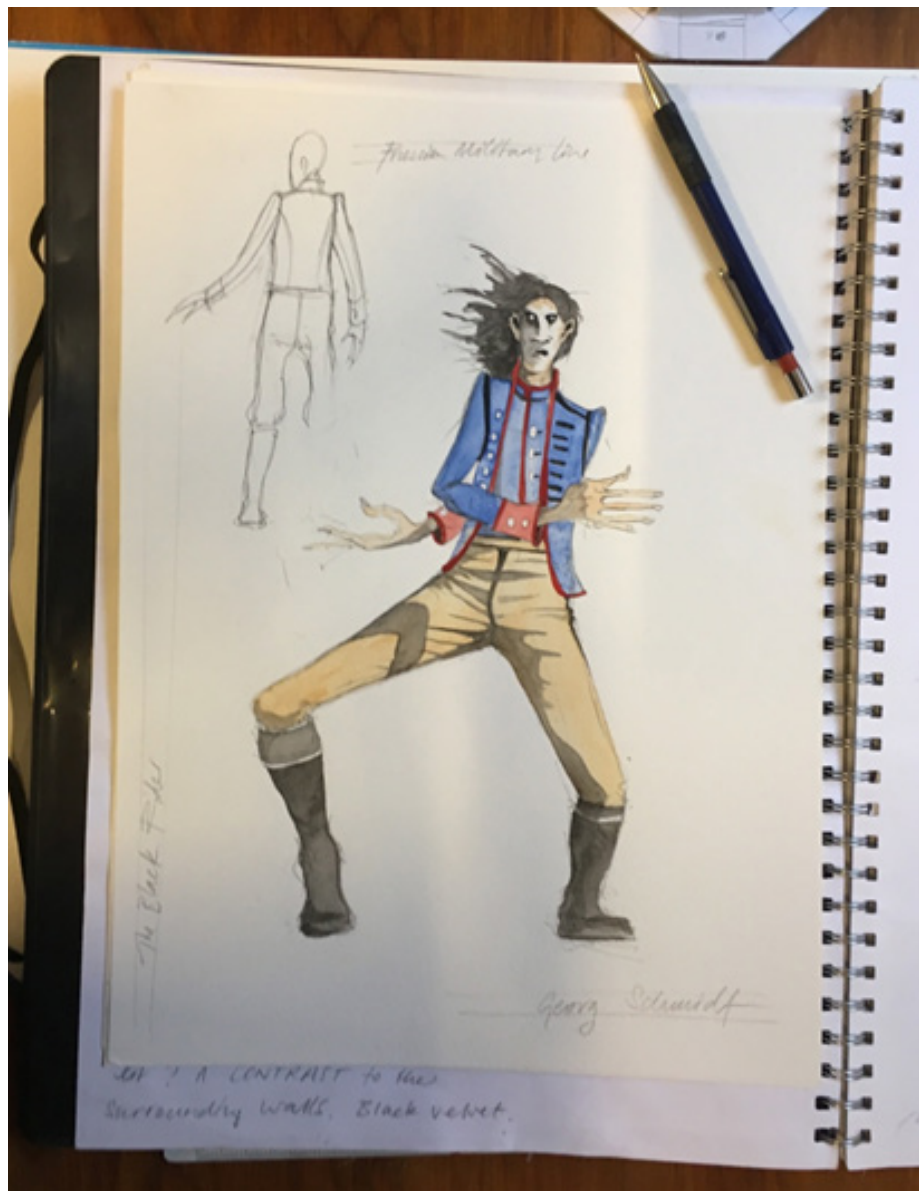
The exhilarating joy of a good tale well-told.

Black Rider

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A costume design for the character Georg Schmid from Zoe Atkinson's sketch book

9. German Weimar Cabaret

Cabaret in Germany was enormously popular after WWI, during the period commonly known as the Weimar Republic, which existed from 1919 – 1933, prior to Hitler taking power. This was an era of relaxed social attitudes, a vibrant urban life, and a sense of prosperity, in part due to the increased wealth from the influx of American money. During the political upheaval taking place, many Germans chose to embrace the music, dance and entertainment available. Cabaret during this time was dominated by the themes of sex and politics. Berlin was where the cabaret scene was in its element, frequently patronised by people able to express themselves in a more open society, including transvestites, gay men, lesbians and others wishing to express their sexuality in a more open way.

Weimar cabaret includes:

- song
- comedy
- burlesque
- monologues
- political references
- nudity
- a master of ceremonies

10. American Vaudeville

This form of entertainment was popular in the USA between 1880s until the 1930s. It was a form of live variety entertainment, consisting of a series of short acts with a master of ceremonies introducing them. These acts which were on the whole ‘family friendly’, could be between 5 – 15 minutes long comprising a variety of elements including:

- singing groups
- animal acts
- magic
- contortionists
- short plays
- comedy sketches, often slapstick in nature

11. The Instrumentation

The orchestration for *Black Rider* is intended to create a diverse and atmospheric soundscape to enhance the dramatic action. The original orchestration included a glass harmonica - these are hard to come by and are usually unreliable to play; in this production a similar effect will be created with individual wine glasses and water, and synthesiser.

The orchestration features more middle and lower register instruments. There is an absence of the usual higher register instruments such as violin, flute or oboe.

The musicians chosen for the band are all excellent improvisers and are familiar with the soundscape of Tom Waits' music. They are all musicians who are comfortable both reading and improvising from scores.

The instruments used in *Black Rider* will be (in no particular order):

Strings: cello, acoustic bass, guitar, banjo, mandolin, ukulele

Brass: trombone, tuba, horn

Woodwind: clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, contrabassoon

Keyboards: harmonium, piano, keyboard

Percussion: singing saw, drum kit, bass drum, tam tams, woodblocks, glockenspiel, marimba, brake drum

glass found objects - wine glasses, bowl (with water)

metal found objects - aluminium quarter tone tubes

ceramic found objects – bowls

butcher's paper, paper bags (sound effects), corrugated iron

12. The Songs

1. Come along with the Black Rider
2. But he's not Wilhelm!
3. November
4. The Briar and the Rose
5. Just the Right Bullets
6. Chase the Clouds Away
7. Pegleg's Clouds
8. The Flash Pan Hunter
9. In the Morning – a,b,c,
10. News from the Duke
11. In the Morning – e
12. Crossroads (vocals without lyrics)
13. I'll Shoot the Moon
14. Oily Nite
15. Black Box 3 (vocals without lyrics)
16. Gospel Train
17. Some Lucky Day
18. The Last Rose of Summer

There is additional scored music between the songs, during which action or dialogue takes place.

13. Education Activities

Before your visit

1. Look at these images from original productions. What do they show you about the style, mood and interpretation of the production? From seeing these images what do you expect to see in the Malthouse/Victorian Opera production?

<http://www.robertwilson.com/the-black-rider/>

2. Read the conversation with Matthew Lutton, Iain Grandage and Phoebe Briggs in the Education Resource. How does this transcript affect your expectations of the production?

3. Explore the performance styles of cabaret and the designs of Zoe Atkinson.

4. Watch this recording of the original production.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzyjf9oGBBU>

5. Watch this documentary about *The Black Rider*. It is in German with the creative team speaking in English with German translation. It will introduce you to the creators and the collaborative process of the original production.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQtuQcPnlWc>

6. Listen to some of the tracks from the album Tom Waits recorded. How do these differ from the production video?

- A recording of *The Black Rider* – from the album
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHTn14moHa4>
- A recording of *T'aint No Sin* – from the album
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7C1O1tNGks>
- A recording of *The Last Rose of Summer* – from the album
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vf1am-wM8OU>

7. Read the Victorian Opera - Behind the Scenes post

<http://www.victorianopera.com.au/news/behind-the-scenes/the-devil-s-bargain-is-always-a-fool-s-bargain-an-introduction-to-black-rider/>

8. Look at the early marketing of this production. What does this tell you about the production before you come to see it?

<http://malthousetheatre.com.au/whats-on/the-black-rider-the-casting-of-the-magic-bullets>

9. Read the original tale – *Der Freikugelguss des Schreibers*

<http://www.tomwaitsfan.com/tom%20waits%20library/www.tomwaitslibrary.com/theblackrider-introduction.html>

During your visit

1. Observe the theatre and the patrons. What observations do you make about the style of The Merlyn Theatre? What do you notice about the patrons, such as their age and demographic? How do they respond to the production?
2. Observe the stagecraft elements of the production. Having watched the original recording, what do you notice about this production? What specifically did you observe about the lighting design, set and costumes?
3. How well did the musicians balance with the singers? What affect did the unusual instrumentation have on you and your reaction/connection with the story?
4. What did you enjoy/not enjoy about the entire experience?

After your visit

1. What did the critics say? Look up the reviews of the Malthouse/Victorian Opera production of *Black Rider* and see how they compare with your interpretation.

Here are some reviews from other versions of this production.

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/Reviews/The-Black-Rider/2005/01/11/1105206097667.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/22/arts/review-theater-the-black-rider-when-tragedy-becomes-the-food-of-satire.html?pagewanted=all>

<https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=10179>

<http://variety.com/2004/legit/reviews/the-black-rider-the-casting-of-the-magic-bullets-2-1200530591/>

2. Did you enjoy the production? What appealed to you? Why?
3. Which character(s) impacted on you most? What was it about this (these) character that you connected with?
4. What was it about the set/costumes/lighting that enhanced your experience/enjoyment of the opera?
5. Write a review of the production for your school newsletter or other publication of your choosing.

14. Credits

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15. References and Resources

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The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets (starring Marianne Faithful). A recording of the 2004 London production with Marianne Faithful as Pegleg, viewed June 21, 2017, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufvQ9f0X8rQ>>

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