

Visions and Voices and the USC Libraries have collaborated to create a series of resource guides that allow you to build on your experiences at many Visions and Voices events. Explore the resources listed below and continue your journey of inquiry and discovery!



Queer Cabaret

PHRANC AND MY BARBARIAN | Friday, October 24, 2008, 7 p.m.

JOHN KELLY AS JONI MITCHELL | Friday, April 17, 2009, 7 p.m.

USC LIBRARIES RESOURCE GUIDE

The two-part performance series “Queer Cabaret” was organized by **RICHARD MEYER** and **DAVID ROMÁN** of **USC COLLEGE**. It features performances by lesbian punk folksinger Phranc and L.A.-based art/performance troupe My Barbarian on October 24 and John Kelly’s Obie Award-winning reinterpretation of Joni Mitchell on April 17. The series explores how influential queer artists have contributed to the revival and reinvention of the cabaret genre in recent years. Meyer, Román, and **ROSS SCIMECA** of the **USC LIBRARIES** have selected a variety of resources to help you explore the history of the cabaret and its transformation by queer performers.

The modern origins of the cabaret art form can be traced back to 1881 at a tavern called *Le Chat Noir* (or The Black Cat) in the Montmartre district of Paris. Afterwards, cabaret acts quickly spread to major European cities during the 1890s. Typically performed in intimate social spaces like *Le Chat Noir*, cabarets featured variety acts that satirized political, social, and sexual mores. The online *Gale Virtual Reference Library*—which you can access via the USC Libraries’ electronic resources page—features several articles about the history and cultural influence of the cabaret form.

From the beginning, gay and bisexual performers and impresarios played a vital role in the development of the art form. The well-known Bob Fosse film *Cabaret*—based on Christopher Isherwood’s *Berlin Stories*—evokes this long history, which Phranc, My Barbarian, and John Kelly draw from in highly imaginative ways.

About the Performers

- **PHRANC** is a lesbian punk folksinger with a devoted following. She got her start in the late '70s synth rock band Nervous Gender. She has a Myspace page and a blog at phrancthecardboardcobbler.blogspot.com.
- **MY BARBARIAN** is an art-performance troupe that stages rock operas, folk plays, theatrical situations, and music videos. They will perform *Non-Western*, a “historiographic fantasia about L.A. in the 1840s.” You can visit their Web site at www.mybarbarian.com.
- **JOHN KELLY** is a performance and visual artist whose work began in New York’s East Village clubs in the early 1980s. Since then, he has created more than 30 performance pieces, including *Paved Paradise*—about Joni Mitchell and progressive social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. You can find his Web site at www.johnkellyperformance.org.

Further Reading and Viewing

Cast Out: Queer Lives in Theater

By Robin Bernstein

University of Michigan Press, 2006

Doheny Library PN1590.G39C37 2006

Impossible Dance: Club Culture and Queer World-Making

By Fiona Buckland

Wesleyan University Press, 2002

Doheny Library HQ76.3.U5B83 2002

Utopia in Performance

By Jill Dolan

University of Michigan Press, 2006

Doheny Library PN1936.D65 2005

Cabaret

By Bob Fosse

Leavey Library LVYDVD 53

The Berlin Stories

By Christopher Isherwood

J. Laughlin, 1945

Grand Library 820.I79tb

Staging Desire: Queer Readings of American Theater History

By Kim Marra

University of Michigan Press, 2002

Doheny Library PS338.H66S73 2002

Performance in America: Contemporary US Culture and the Performing Arts

By David Román

Duke University Press, 2005

Doheny Library PN1590.S6R66 2005

O Solo Homo: The New Queer Performance

By David Román and Holly Hughes

Grove Press, 1998

Doheny Library PS627.H6702 1998

The Scene of Harlem Cabaret

By Shane Vogel

University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2009

The Queerest Art: Essays on Lesbian and Gay Theater

By Alisa Solomon

New York University Press, 2002

Doheny Library PN2270.G39Q44 2002