

LE MICK
Trente deux
Janvier
2007



EDITORIAL VOMIT



The band are contacted by a medium who has herself been contacted by morally corrupt performers deemed dead a century or so, that are now demanding the band replicate a notorious performance of theirs.



However, only a fool believes things are genuinely ever that simple.

Why, who, what, where and how we must explore.

Come on.....

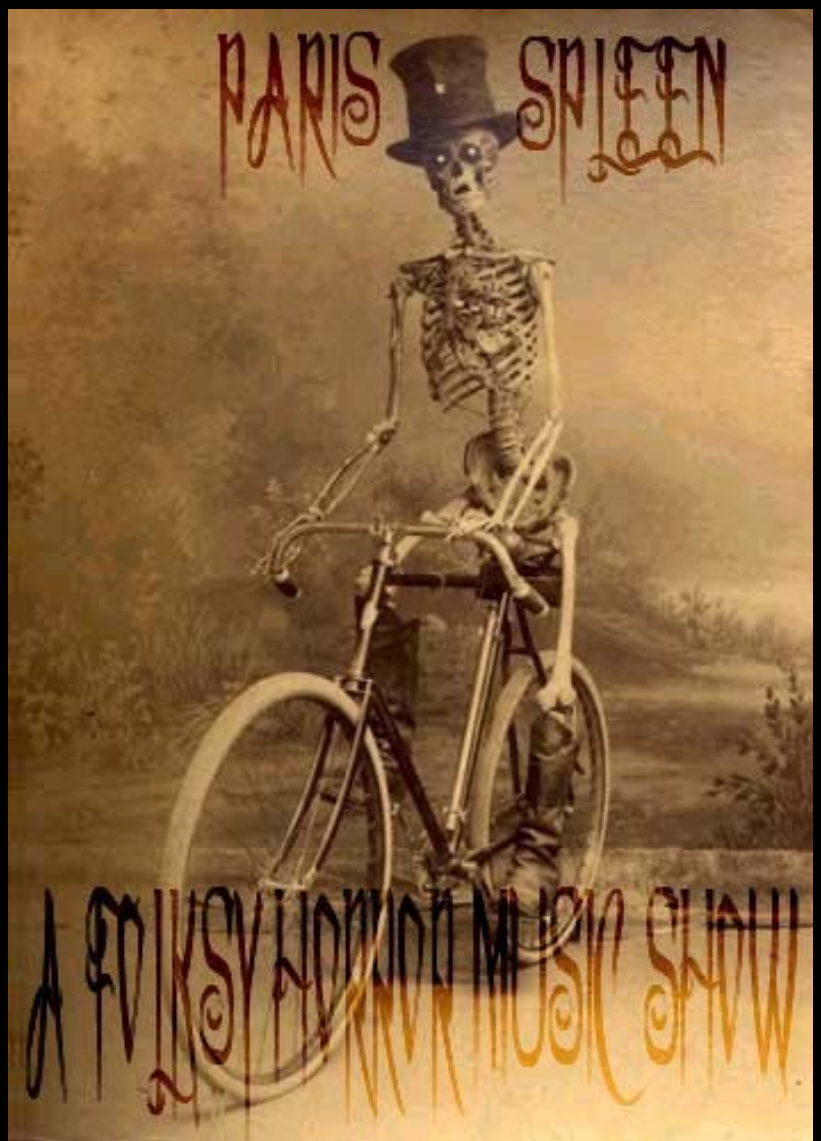
When you're a Grail Stakeholder I guess it's only natural you to start to view the world differently. Some might argue you start to see the world differently, although I would look blankly at you and say it's like you never want to see it again. It wouldn't mean anything, but it sounds good.

Now here's the thing. When I was sent their 'Paris Spleen' CD to review I also received from Ataraxia some other paper items that I have chosen to share here with you, either in full, or the most relevant fragments. I would draw your attention to the handwritten notes which were on the reverse of one of the pages and cannot possibly have been meant to be seen. It seems inevitable that in there, somewhere, lies the key to this whole mystery.

I have also taken it upon my self to do what they have. They admit they have taken their lyrics freely from Baudelaire's own *Le Spleen De Paris*. I, noticing the lyrics on the website are in either French or Italian, have made free of the Babelfish translation service to create an English version which I know will be at best vaguely accurate and at worst, and therefore even better, fairly surreal.

With their website's new layout being a bit weird, and with the artwork dark and dense I have tried to make it more user-friendly, and open access. The story they tell is impressive and it's a shame it's a little buried on the site, a little dark and mysterious in the CD booklet, so I have tried to spread it out a little here to highlight the scope of the work that has gone into this.

The story *seems* simple enough.



Ladies and Gentlemen,
Signori e Signore,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

w e l c o m e t o T h e H e l l ! ! !

We are proud to present you
a new terrific cabaret show
created, played and interpreted by

A T A R A X I A
and
C I R C U Z K U M P

with the extraordinary participation of...
Safran UdU and Gabor Szebedei Szentendrei
directly come from the Vault of the Dead and
the Intoxication Room of the Cabaret of Nothingness...

From the Cabaret of Crooks
the musician and magician J. Amphora
and the young illusionist Lunette Namair...
No, no, no, no, we haven't forgotten him,
from The Heavens, beside us,
the well-known philosopher, mathématicien and clair-
voyant

Sibelius P...

At last, directly from our cabaret,
the lady-killer and grave digger
Rêverie de Bal D. Rak...
and.....with her sharp surgical instruments
the Grim-Reaper
known also as Geneviève de Saint Maur, Bianca Pergolesi,
Cécile Dubois, Fosca Scarlatti, aliaaas.....

MADAME BISTOURI
or
LADY SCALPEL

The whole staff of The Hell wishes you a great exciting
evening with P A R I S S P L E E N...
Buon diverrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrtimento !

Forgetting themselves for a moment, the band explain what has created this netherworld:

We are inspired by poetry, mainly the one that transforms the

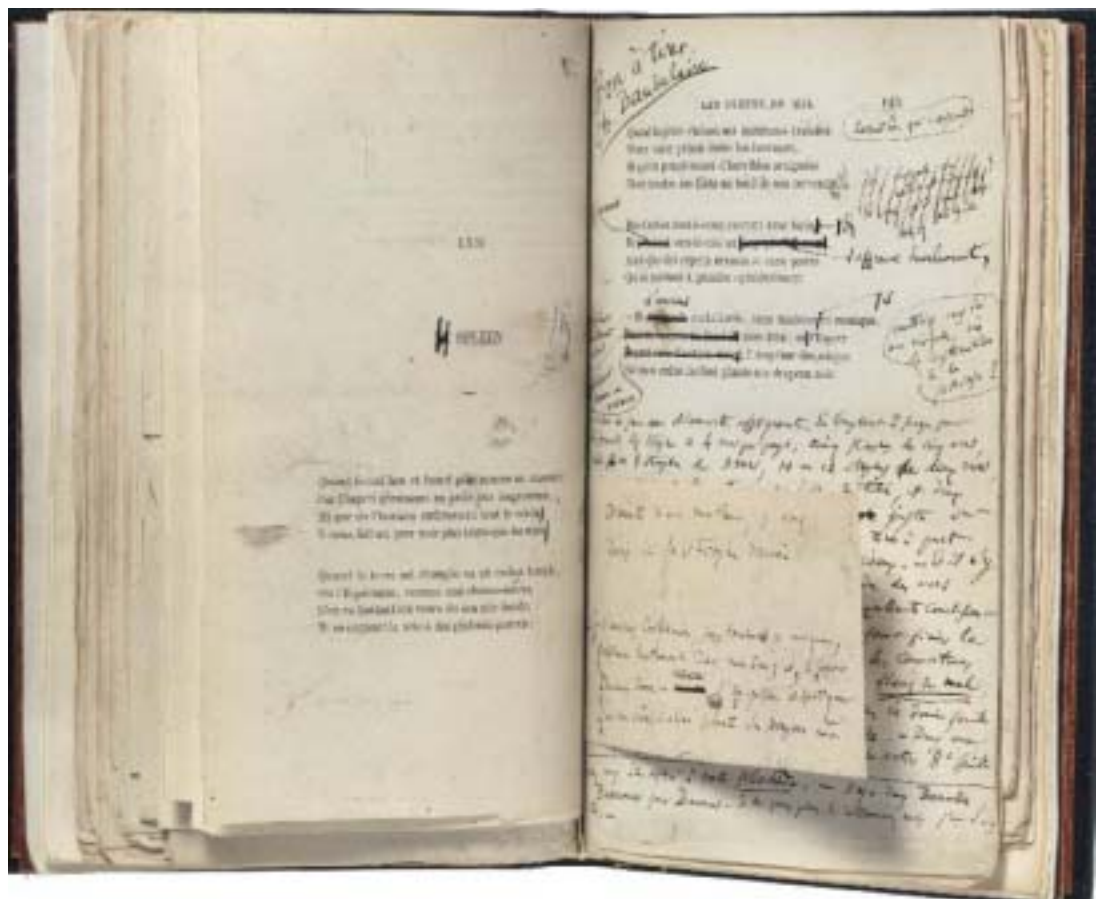
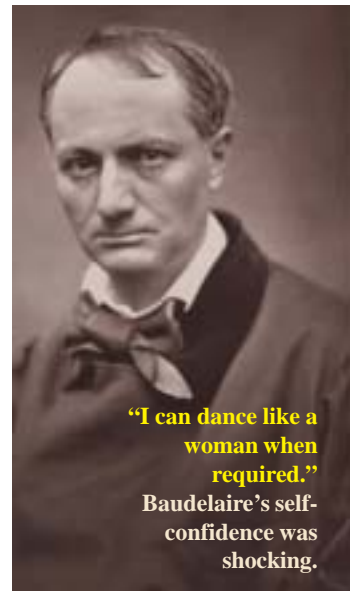
most turbid and tormented reality, the one of the wretches, the freaks, the buskers and the buffoons in a sort of lyrical revelation. Two years ago we started exploring an historical period and environment that have always appealed to us : the 'cabarets macabres' and fun fairs of the beginning of the XXth century in Paris. We felt the urge to turn into music the universe of Atget, an anomalous artist who, unlike his contemporaries, felt the wish,

through his photographic objective, to capture the state of grace of some places, persons and situations that till that moment had always been considered of scarce interest. And who, better than Baudelaire, has managed to portray that peculiar universe within his verses ? "The spleen of Paris" has been our guide and some of its lines have become the lyrics of our songs. Carrying out an accurate research about the 'ghost cabarets' that animated the nights of Boulevard de Clichy, we disappeared into a nocturnal environment both gloomy and sparkling of innatural colours, a distorted dimension where each mask, drama, jest and tear turned into a grotesque and amplified representation of life. Men, dogs, exotic perfumes, acrobats in decay, green-eyed enchantresses, cloud sellers, heavenly places come into existence behind the threadbare fabric of a torn curtain rather than on the unnailed planks of a

worm-eaten stage.

Identifying ourselves with the artists of that time, we have written a collection of songs that could have been played at the beginning of the XXth century in the Cabaret of Heaven rather than in the Tavern of Crooks. Thanks to the sound of bandonéons, musettes, trombones, violins, big-drums and cymbals and the dramatic and guttural voice of our singer, we have sung Baudelaire who, in his turn, had sung Paris of the imaginative and under-privileged artists of Montmartre. Anyway, this is not the first time we set to music the verses of some decadent French poet like Mallarmé, Apollinaire or Baudelaire himself helped by Nicolas R. who, since several years, help us setting our performances. This music show features four musicians and a performer who bring back to life the grotesque, bitter and irriverent words of "Le Spleen de Paris".

"Vous n'avez pas de verres de couleur, de verres roses, rouges et bleus, de vitres magiques de paradis? Impudent que vous êtes!" C.B.



Now that's what I call earwax!



some kind of grave diggers, swindlers, musicians, opium and laudanum consumers, fervent believers, occultism and ritual magic practicers. They are called CircuZ KumP and they are headed by a bloodthirsty and irriverent creature, a certain Madame Bistouri. A century ago, they have staged an indecent show inspired by some Baudelaire's verses and they have performed it just one time at the cabaret

At the end of November 2005, Madame Joséphine Corelli (below), a medium from Toulon, got in touch with ATARAXIA after having been persecuted night and day by a group of cabaret artists disappeared at the beginning of the XXth century. They wanted ATARAXIA to bring back to life, take part and record the unique performance they gave at the Cabaret de L'Enfer at the very beginning of 1906.

The odd ensemble was headed by a gloomy, enigmatic figure owning several identities all leading to the name of Madame Bistouri. ATARAXIA accepted both to play and record the music belonging to "Paris Spleen" (that's the name of the performance inspired by Baudelaire's verses) and narrate the history of that peculiar company known as CircuZ KumP.

"Paris Spleen" CD is the testimony of that bloody forgotten evening in far January 1906, "Paris Spleen" is the first concert recorded by alive and dead musicians, "Paris Spleen" is a crazy music show featuring ATARAXIA & CircuZ KumP with the extraordinary participation of Madame Bistouri. In the eccentric frame of the Cabaret of Hell you can enjoy 45 minutes of music played by accordéon, guitars, trombone, big drum and cymbals, bandonéon, bass-guitar, bells, glockenspiel, violin, percussions + several recited acts.

"I'm frightened, I can't defend myself any longer. Night and day, they're torturing me with apocalyptic visions. They say they are



L'Enfer in Montmartre. Then they have vanished, or maybe nobody wanted to talk about them anymore. They diabolically enter my dreams to force me to get in touch with some Italian artists. They want we gather for some séances in order to bring back to life what happened that cursed evening. I am on the verge of a nervous breakdown, I can't resist anylonger, I have no choice, tomorrow I'll contact these musicians, Ataraxia, I don't know who they are but I absolutely must stop this torment."

Toulon, November 23rd 2005,
from the daily journal of the medium Joséphine Corelli, better known as Mme Ratatouille

Friends of the band also recollect how badly things affected them....

"Ataraxia are going mad, yesterday they told me they were leaving for Toulon. A sudden decision. They explained me that they had to meet a woman, a sensitive who asked them to take part in some séances where a few criminals, who were used to perform in the most ill-famed cabarets of Montmartre, at the beginning of last century, will materialize.

They want Ataraxia in order to live again, a century later, a well-known bloody evening at 'L'Enfer', an evening which was passed over in silence since the very day after. Those ridiculous cabarets artists, those buffoons want Vittorio and the whole band to take part, play and record that sort of musical séances.

They have expressly affirmed that they want to perform the first concert of the alive and the dead. I can't calm down, I'm worried about my friends, I hope I can reach them before it's too late."

Honfleur, November 25th 2005 - reported by C.T., Ataraxia's collaborator and friend

“Are we doing this
fanzine or what?”



“They have come back yesterday after having spent forty five days at Mme Ratatouille’s in Toulon. For goodness’ sake, I don’t know what has happened during this lapse of time, they don’t want to speak of this with anybody.

They have come back with several minutes of recorded stuff but I’ll never say, even if menaced, which was the content of those tracks. Anyway, even if I did I wouldn’t be able to describe the disgust I felt while listening to those evil litanies, revolting death-rattles, insane howls and agonizing cries. Giovanni and the whole band have saved the first half of those recordings, when music was still played in a natural and tolerable way, and they have destroyed all the rest.

the company

“My name is **Safran**, Safran UdU and I’m born in Alexandria of Egypt. My dynasty follows the Isis and Osiris cults since centuries. I’ve read a lot of books, forbidden books that everybody believes to be lost. I’ve travelled along the Orient old ways, as far as India where many persons are sure I died blinded by dreadful visions. Now I live in Paris, I devote myself to esoteric practices and, more concretely, I earn my living creating and setting in motion a good deal of optical stage trickeries in the Vault of the Dead of the Cabaret of Nothingness.



They keep saying no but I know they have made a promise. I don’t know if they were forced or, overwhelmed by a morbid excitement, they agreed with enthusiasm in bringing back to life “Paris Spleen” (or at least a part of that show) and narrating the history of those damned, impenitent adventurers known as CircuZ KumP. May Ataraxia find their peace of mind again and those sneaky CircuZ KumP be damned!”.

*Ventoso, December 20th 2005
taken from a piece of writing of
U.B., Ataraxia’s friend and
photographer*



Safran, at work

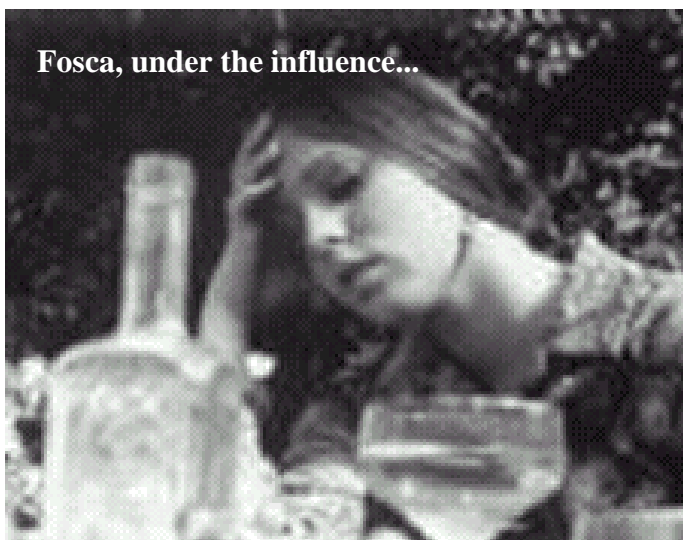
There, I met the Grim-Reaper who, more than once, helped me with my optical experiments in front of an astonished audience. One of those evening she asked me to take part to her project, 'Paris Spleen', and, obviously, I accepted. “

*words of **Safran UdU**, skilled musician, occultist and master of optical stage trickery*



“My name is **Gabor Szentendrei** (*above right, serving absinthe*), I’m born in Budapest and I’m the only son of the owner and puppeteer of the well-known Szebedei Circus. I detested his lashes, he was used to tell me that he had to tame me like a wild beast to make me become, in my turn, a good tamer. One night, I smoked opium, took laudanum, morphine and gulped down several glasses of absinthe and I fell into oblivion. I found myself in Paris to work in the Intoxication Room of the Cabaret of Nothingness. I was good at mixing potions, I enjoyed observing and analyzing all those poor wretched, addicted to any kind of substances. One evening I met her, she had glassy eyes, she was befuddled by haschisch, her name was Fosca Scarlatti. She seized me by the arm without looking at me and she told me : ‘I had to go to the circus that day but someone found the owner torn into pieces by a wild beast, there were pieces of bones and muscles everywhere. His son had vanished. Do you think you are worthy of taking part to my project?’. I followed her, speechless.”

*referred by **Gabor Szebedei Szentendrei**, skilled mixer of hallucinogenic substances, tiger tamer and visionary musician*

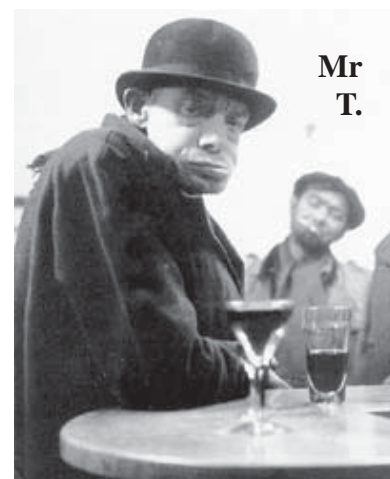


Fosca, under the influence...



“My name is **J. Amphora** (*sixth from left, above*) and I’m born in Edinburgh. My father was a gambler and so my grandfather and all the men’s lineage of my family from several generations. I had to leave my town after a regrettable game accident, so I decided to get ahead with my career at the Tavern of Crooks in Montmartre.

I emptied many customers’ pockets till the owner, a certain Monsieur T., discovered me and kindly asked me to work for him if I didn’t want to spend the coming years in a dark and damp cell of the prison in Bd. de Clichy. So, from that very day on we started sharing my earnings but, at least, I didn’t have to worry about changing job. One night I met a very elegant lady, Mme Cécile Dubois. As her name foretold, she was a great lover of bel canto and we spent more than one evening playing and singing delightful Italian opera airs. Then she vanished for several months. When Cécile got back, I promised her that if



Mr T.



Cecile

she had sung for me once more I would have done everything for her. She took me at my word, she sang and I followed her to keep my promise. When I discovered that she was nothing but the notorious Madame Bistouri, it was too late..."

*tale of **Jay Amphora**, famous gambler, swindler, good musician, adventurer and expert of prestige*

gambess

"I am born in Arles and my name is **Lunette** (bottom left outside Cabaret Of Crooks) , Lunette Namair to be exact. This nickname has been stuck on me as soon as I reached Paris and, to earn my living, I started working as a dishwasher at Père Lunette's. In that ill-famed cabaret, each night a man was killed and never, not even one time, we had the chance to see a bobby. One evening, between love and death I chose love, the love of an innocent maiden, a certain Bianca Pergolesi, daughter of the wine-merchant who was used to supply the tavern. That night Monsieur Pergolesi was sick and, in his place, he sent the girl. To safeguard her virtue from a gang of good for nothing, I was forced to kill and run away. Alas, I would have followed Bianca up to the hell and so I did. Curse me! I sell my soul to a woman who was nothing but Madame Bistouri..."

*confession of **Lunette Namair**, young poet, aspirant myopic illusionist and budding musician*



"I am called **Sibelius** and I am born in Saint Petersburg. After my studies I moved to Moscow and I became the trusty counsellor of the Tzar. I have always been an ardent son of the Orthodox Church and I protested in vain when the Tzarina stroke up a dubious friendship with an ambiguous individual called Rasputin. The Tzar didn't heed my advices, he didn't want to believe me so, by night, I had to quit my country, the Holy Mother Russia, like a bandit, leaving all my memories and properties.



When I got Paris I was forced to steal in order to feed myself and I ended up in jail. Those endless months of reclusion enlightened my soul and I decided to purify me transforming one of those awful cabarets, that were spreading in town as a purulent plague, in a place of prayer and redemption. My cabaret would have looked like a cathedral and its name would have been 'Le Ciel', the heavens. With our nocturnal liturgies we would have fought the evil deeds that were committed in the cabaret beside us, 'L'Enfer', the hell, owned by a blameful ex-religious who, among other things, was used to sell his wines at a very high price. Every evening, a pious soul came to 'Le Ciel', her name sounded like the one of Saint Patron of Lutetia, she was called Geneviève de Saint Maur. Her virginal and limpid glance, her fervour and devotion moved me deeply. One night she asked me to take part to a moralizing action organized in favour of the sinful customers of 'L'Enfer'. Naturally, I agreed with inflamed enthusiasm. As soon as I entered that abominable place, I understood that Geneviève was nothing but that vicious and nauseating creature so talked about in town, the unnameable Madame Bistouri! I pray God to forgive me, I, Sibelius the Saint, fallen in the flames and abyss of the hell."

*narrated by **Sibelius P.** (below, left) , erudite mind, philosopher, mathématicien, clair-voyant, ardent believer and inspired musician*





“I am a dandy, a lover of carnal pleasures, of vices and any kind of luxuries, and I’m proud of it! Anyway, dignity bores me to death! I am born in Versailles in a dull wealthy and aristocratic family. In a pair of lustres I’ve squandered everything, my dowry, life annuity and all my family’s properties and fortune. I’ve sold my furniture and sumptuous abode, as well. I also would have sold my soul if someone had wanted it! I loved refined garments, expensive perfumes, nights and days spent with the most exquisite courtesans.

Now, I sell myself, my virtue, ahah!, if possible to mature women with considerable liquid assets who are used to come to ‘L’Enfer’, where I practise. But, alas, money is never enough and I’m forced to dig graves and sell corpses of executed men, murderers and poor wretched who committed suicide in the Seine to medical students who need to do their training.

One night, Madame Bistouri (yes, she introduced herself with her true name) was waiting for me at the cemetery of Rue Saint Vincent to ask me to work for her (who knows, maybe she would have liked working at the morgue to dissect the many moralists of Faubourg Saint Honoré). Obviously, I promptly accepted and I also helped her staging ‘Paris Spleen’ and entrapping, one after the other, the unaware future interpreters of that peculiar show. What an exciting thing to put on the decadence and vices of the inhabitants of this sick and charming town!

The dark side of each of us, that only a few have the courage to admit and reveal, performed on a stage in front of all those hypocrites... Maybe we exaggerated, we touched emotions hidden in the deepest ego, maybe we helped to set those bodies and souls free, we pushed people towards the sabbat of vice and excess, maybe we unconsciously evoked whimsical and evil spirits but that night of January 1906, half an hour after the beginning of the show, the malestrom started.

A series of strange, violent, ineluctable events followed one to another. From the very day after everything was hushed up, passed over in silence, a thick curtain of fog was drawn over those puzzling happenings, no more trace of the show, no more trace of us. All of this before today, before this new spiritistic performance! Tremble, you all, CircuZ KumP are back! Ladies and Gentlemen, Signori e Signore, Mesdames et Messieurs, bienvenus à L’Enfer!”

*declaration of **Rêverie de Bal D. Rak**, impoverished nobleman, broke dandy, young mercenary seducer and lady-killer, impenitent leacher, depraved cynic, grave digger and talented musician*



And so the record, reviewed on my journal, which will also reappear in THE MICK 33.

Naturally it is to be hoped that in investigating the lyrics we may be able to ascertain a little more of the enigmatic turmoil involved in this story and how it all ends up. That said, I have used babelfish, the online translation device, so things may get a tad murky. There are also the extra promo sheets I was sent which you can sift through for added atmosphere. I have done my best here to help you out. The rest will be up to you.



WHERE DO THE DOGS GO?
(OÙ VONT LES CHIENS ?)

Where do the dogs go? They go to their business
Where do the dogs go? They go to their business

Business appointment, go of love, through the fog, snow,
through droppings, under the corrosive rain, the heat
wave, the corrosive rain....

They go, they come, they trot, they pass, they run....
ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah Where do the dogs go?
They go to their business

freely taken from Baudelaire

ANYWHERE!
(N'IMPORTE OÙ !)

You do not have coloured glasses, pink, red and blue
glasses, magic panes of paradise? Impudent how you
are!

Dreams, always of the dreams, my natural amount of
opium always of the dreams.....

AAA Let us go further still AAA Allons further still with
the extreme end of the Baltic even further from the life if
it is possible let us install us with the pole even further
from the life

There we will be able to take long baths of darkness and
the aurorae boreales we will send their pink sheaves
Anywhere Anywhere Anywhere Anywhere Anywhere

Anywhere Anywhere Anywhere Anywhere Anywhere If it
is possible, if it is possible...

freely taken from Baudelaire

MY DEAR DOGGIE...
(MON CHER TOUTOU)

My beautiful dog, my good dog, my dear doggie
approach and come to breathe an excellent perfume
bought in the best perfumer of the City of Light

Ah! Poor wretch dog, if I had offered a package of
excrements to you, you would have smelled it (with
delight) and perhaps even devoured. Thus yourself you
resemble to people for which one never should present
delicate perfumes who exasperate them but quite
selected refuse but quite selected refuse quite selected

freely taken from Baudelaire

**THE MERCHANT
OF CLOUDS**
(LE MARCHAND DE
NUAGES)

They had strange
faces there men and
women, marked of a
fatal beauty, that it
already seemed me
to have seen at
times and in





... Enfin it descended its staircase from clouds and passed without noise through the glazing Then it extended on him with tenderness and deposited its colors étincelantes on its face

freely taken from Baudelaire

THE QUEEN OF THE MEN TO THE GREEN EYES (LA REINE DES HOMMES AUX YEUX VERTS)

You will like all that I like and all that likes me, which likes me water, clouds, silence and the night immense and tumultuous sea You will like all that I like and all that likes me, which likes me the place where you will be never the lover that you will not connaître you will be the queen of the men to the green eyes of those which like the immense and tumultuous sea

You will like all that I like and all that likes me, which likes me water, the clouds, silence and the night the immense and green sea the place where you will be never the lover which you will not connaître formless and multiform water the immense and tumultuous sea

you will be the queen of the men to the green eyes of those which like the immense sea, tumultuous and green When I mordille your hair elastic it seems to me that I eat memories...

freely taken from Baudelaire

TANGO DISASTERS (TANGO DES-ASTRES)

With the last fair of the village, I saw four men who live as I would like to live. Their large eyes became brilliant while they made a music if surprising that it sometimes gives desire for dancing, to cry, or to make both at the same time.

One, by trailing its bow on its violin, seemed to tell a sorrow, and the other, while making hop its hammer on the cords of a small piano seemed to make fun of its neighbor, while the third struck its cymbals with an extraordinary violence.

Lastly, they collected theirs under, charged their luggage on the back and left. I understood only then, that they did not remain nowhere. But they fell asleep, the face turned towards stars. Tango of the stars, tango disaster. The children separate, each one going, without its knowledge, according to the circumstances and the chance, to mature its destiny, to scandalize its close relations and to revolve towards glory or dishonour!

freely taken from Baudelaire

A LONG TIME PEBBLE Of The EAST (LONGTEMPS PIERRETTE D'ORIENT)

Let me breathe a long time the odor of your hair there to plunge all my face and to agitate it to shake memories in

countries of which it was impossible for me to remember me...

I like the clouds, the clouds which pass... over there, over there, the clouds...

freely taken from Baudelaire

THE DECREPIT TRAVELLING ACROBAT (LE SALTIMBANQUE DÉCRÉPIT)

It did not laugh it did not cry it did not dance the poor wretch It did not shout it did not sing it did not beseech the poor wretch

It was dumb motionless it had given up Its destiny was made It had abdicated

But which glance which glance deep and unforgettable it walked on crowd and on the lights whose flood stopped with some steps of its misery a ruin of finished stunned decrepit man

Ah that to make what good is it to ask unhappy which wonder which joke it had to show in this darkness puantes behind its curtain torn ah the life swarms with innocent monsters

I sing the dogs the crottés dogs the dogs without residence the dogs flâneurs travelling acrobats the calamitous dogs those which wander solitary in the sinuous gullies of immense of gray of the cruel metropolises

the air. If you could know all that I see! all that I feel!
Pebble of the East... Pebble of the East...

Your hair contains a whole dream they contain large
seas where space is deeper in the night of your hair I
see resplendir infinite azure on your shores I enivre a
long time, Pierrette of the East...

Let me breathe a long time the odor of your hair to
plunge there all my face in the night of your hair My
heart travels on the perfume like the heart of the other
men travels on the music. If you could know all that I
feel! all that I see! Pebble of the East... a long time, a
long time Pebble of the East...

I enivre a long time, a long time Pebble of the East...
Pebble of the East...

freely taken from Baudelaire

OH RHADAMANTE (OH RHADAMANTE)

Did Oh Rhadamante, why so tenderly so tenderly you
tighten me with the throat? Oh Rhadamante, why, why,
why?

I kept some for always the desire for crying...

freely taken from Baudelaire

SMALL SONG LYCANTHROPE (PETITE CHANSON LYCANTHROPE)

The houses seem to dream one would say them gifted of
a somnambulic life like the plant and the mineral the
streets speak, like the flowers, the ciels, the suns

The content heart, I am assembled on the mountain from
where one can contemplate the city in his width hospital,

brothel, purgatory, hell, bagne hospital, brothel,
purgatory, hell, bagne

That you sleep in cloths of fine gold or that you pavares
in the veils of the evening is known that all is nothing
time disappeared, it is the eternity which reigns
multitude, loneliness

But like an old ribald of an old mistress, I wanted to me
enivrer enormous trollop whose infernal charm
renovates me unceasingly That you sleep in cloths of
fine gold or that you pavares in the veils of the evening
is known that all is nothing

A fairy insufflated in its cradle the taste of the dressing-
up and the mask I love you, O capital infamous!
courtesans and gangsters, often you offer pleasures that
the vulgar laymen do not include/understand time
disappeared, it is the eternity which reigns Multitude,
loneliness time disappeared, it is the eternity which
reigns multitude, loneliness time disappeared, it is the
eternity which reigns multitude, loneliness

freely taken from Baudelaire

WITH YOUR OWN WAY!

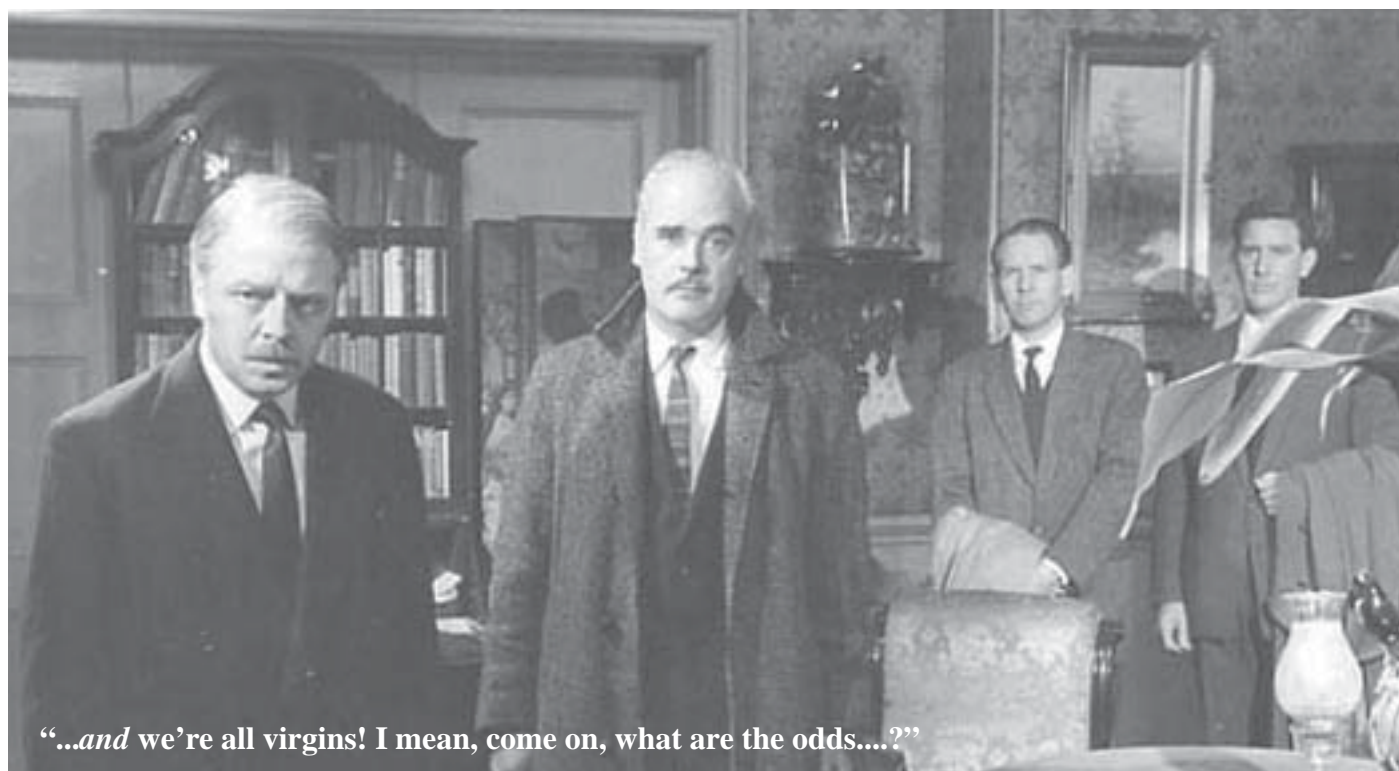
(À VOTRE GUISE !)

It is necessary to be always drunk All is there! It is
necessary to be always drunk drunk It is necessary to be
always drunk All is there! It is necessary to be always
drunk drunk

Ask the wind with vagueness, star, the bird, the clock
with all that flees with all that groans with all that rolls to
all that sings

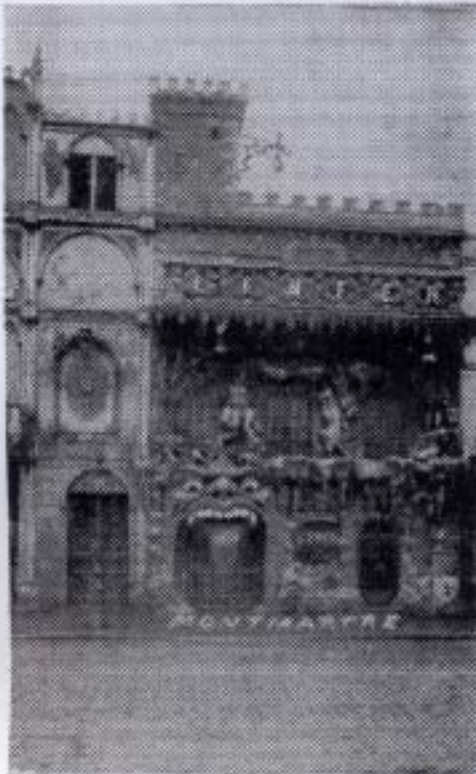
Enivrez you not to be not martyred slaves of the time
which breaks your shoulders unceasingly, unceasingly,
unceasingly, unceasingly A your own way!

freely taken from Baudelaire



“...and we’re all virgins! I mean, come on, what are the odds....?”

Cafe De L'Enfer



Situated on Boulevard De Clichy beside Hotel de Place Blanche. One of many theme cafes opened in Montmartre towards the end of the 19th Century.

There are a number of accounts of what this cafe had to offer:

Bohemian Paris --Jerrold Seiger
Viking Penguin 1986
Chapter 8 Publicity and Fantasy:
The World of the Cabarets
Pg.240

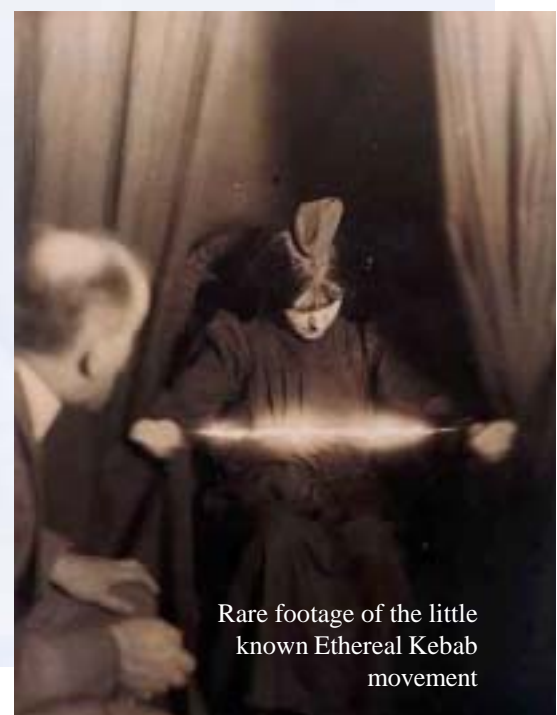
"One cabaret dubbed itself "Heaven," placing its visitors among clouds, angels, and harps. Its opposite, the Cabaret de l'Enfer, draped itself in the trappings of hell, its waiters dressed in devil costumes. Clients entered its doors through the gaping mouth of a monster, cut into the facade whose misshapen windows were set off by what seemed a kind of solidified primal ooze, within which the nude bodies of sinners were suspended. "

Bohemian Paris of Today
by W.C. Morrow & Edouard Cucuel
(London, 1899)
[see chapter called "A Night in Montmartre]
(pg 276 to 285 & 2 line drawings)

"..we will explore hell." Mr. Thomkins seemed too weak, or unresisting, or apathetic to protest. His face betrayed a queer mixture of emotion, part suffering, part revulsion, part a sort of desperate eagerness for more.



We passed through a large, hideous, fanged, open mouth in an enormous face from which shone eyes of blazing crimson. Curiously enough, it adjoined heaven, whose cool blue lights contrasted strikingly with the fierce ruddiness of hell. Red-hot bars and gratings through which flaming coals gleamed appeared in the walls within the red mouth. A placard announced that should the temperature of this inferno make one thirsty, innumerable bocks might be had at sixty-five centimes each. A little red imp guarded the throat of the monster into whose mouth we had walked; he was cutting extraordinary capers, and made a great show of stirring the fires. The red imp opened the imitation heavy metal door for our passage to the interior, crying, - "Ah, ah, ah! still they come! Oh, how they will roast!" Then he looked keenly at Mr. Thomkins. It was interesting to note how that gentleman was always singled out by these shrewd students of humanity. This particular one added with great gusto, as he narrowly studied Mr. Thomkins, "Hist! ye infernal whelps; stir well the coals and heat red the prods, for this is where we take our revenge on earthly saintliness!" "Enter and be damned,-the Evil One awaits you!" growled a chorus of rough voices as we hesitated before the scene confronting us.



Rare footage of the little known Ethereal Kebab movement

Near us was suspended a cauldron over a fire, and hopping within it were half a dozen devil musicians, male and female, playing a selection from "Faust" on stringed instruments, while red imps stood by, prodding with red-hot irons those who lagged in their performance. Crevices in the walls of this room ran with streams of molten gold and silver, and here and there were caverns lit up by smouldering fires from which thick smoke issued, and vapours emitted the odours of a volcano. Flames would suddenly burst from clefts in the rocks, and thunder rolled through the caverns. Red imps were everywhere, darting about noiselessly, some carrying beverages for the thirsty lost souls, others stirring the fires or turning somersaults. Everything was in a high state of motion. Numerous red tables stood against the fiery walls; at these sat the visitors. Mr. Thomkins seated himself at one of them. Instantly it became aglow with a mysterious light, which kept flaring up and disappearing in an erratic fashion; flames darted from the walls, fires crackled and roared. One of the imps came to take our order; it was for three coffees, black, with cognac; and this is how he shrieked the order: "Three seething bumpers of molten sins, with a dash of brimstone intensifier!" Then, when he had brought it, "This will season your intestines, and render them invulnerable, for a time at least, to the tortures of the melted iron that will be soon poured down your throats." The glasses glowed with a phosphorescent light. "Three francs seventy-five, please, not counting me. Make it four francs. Thank you well. Remember that though hell is hot, there are cold drinks if you want them." Presently Satan himself strode into the cavern, gorgeous in his imperial robe of red, decked with blazing jewels, and brandishing a sword from which fire flashed. His black moustaches were waxed into sharp points, and turned rakishly upwards above lips upon which a sneering grin appeared. Thus he leered at the new arrivals in his domain. His appearance lent new zest to the activity of the imps and musicians, and all cowered under his glance. Suddenly he burst into a shrieking laugh that gave one a creepy feeling. It rattled through the cavern with a startling effect as he strode up and down. It was a triumphant, cruel, merciless laugh. All at once he paused in front of a demure young Parisienne seated at a table with her escort, and, eying her keenly, broke into his speech: "Ah, you! Why do you tremble? How many men have you sent hither to damnation with those beautiful eyes, those rosy, tempting lips? Ah, for all that, you have found a sufficient hell on earth. But you," he added, turning fiercely upon her escort, "you will have the finest, the most exquisite tortures that await the damned. For what? For being a fool. It is folly more than crime that hell punishes, for crime is a disease and folly a sin. You fool! For thus hanging upon the witching glance and oily words of a woman you have filled all hell with fuel for your roasting. You will suffer such tortures as only the fool invites, such tortures only as are adequate to punish folly. Prepare for the inconceivable, the unimaginable, the things that even the king of hell dare not mention lest the whole structure of damnation totter and crumble to dust." The man winced, and queer wrinkles came into the corners of his mouth. Then Satan happened to discover Mr. Thomkins, who shrank visibly under the scorching gaze. Satan made a low, mocking bow. "You do me great honour, sir," he declared, unctuously. "You may have been expecting to avoid me, but reflect upon what you would have missed! We have many notables here, and you will have charming society. They do not include pickpockets and thieves, nor any other of the weak, stunted, crippled, and halting. You will find that most of your companions are distinguished gentlemen of learning and ability, who, knowingly their duty, failed to perform it. You will be in excellent company, sir," he concluded, with another low bow. Then, suddenly turning and sweeping the room with a gesture, he commanded, "To the hot room, all of you!" while he swung his sword, from which flashes of lightning trailed and thunder rumbled. We were led to the end of the passage, where a red hot iron door barred further progress. "Oh, oh, within there!" roared Satan. "Open the portal of the hot chamber, that these fresh arrivals may be introduced to the real temperature of hell!" After numerous signals and mysterious passes the door swung open, and we entered. It was not so very hot after all. The chamber resembled the other, except that a small stage occupied one end. A large green snake crawled out upon this, and suddenly it was transformed into a red devil with exceedingly long, thin legs, encased in tights that were ripped in places. He gave some wonderful contortion feats. A poor little Pierrot came on and assisted the red devil in black art performances. By this time we discovered that in spite of the half-molten condition of the rock-walls, the room was disagreeably chilly. And that ended our experience in hell.

House of Horrors

By Agnes Pierron

In 1897, the French playwright and *chien de commissaire**, Oscar Metenier, bought a theater at the end of the impasse Chaptal, a cul-de-sac in Paris' Pigalle district, in which to produce his controversial naturalist plays. The smallest theater in Paris, it was also the most atypical. Two large angels hung above the orchestra and the theater's neogothic wood paneling; and the boxes, with their iron railings, looked like confessionals (the building had, in fact, once been a chapel).



The Theatre du Grand-Guignol--which means literally the "big puppet show"--took its name from the popular French puppet character *Guignol*, whose original incarnation was as an outspoken social commentator--a spokesperson for the canuts, or silk workers, of Lyon. Early Guignol puppet shows were frequently censored by Napoleon III's police force.

Oscar Metenier was himself a frequent target of censorship for having the audacity to depict a milieu which had never before appeared on stage--that of vagrants, street kids, prostitutes, criminals, and "apaches," as street loafers and con artists were called at the time--and moreover for allowing those characters to express themselves in their own language. One of the Grand-Guignol's first plays, Metenier's *Mademoiselle Fifi* (based on the novel by Guy de Maupassant), which was temporarily shut down by police censors, presented the first prostitute on stage; his subsequent play, *Luil*, united a whore and a criminal in the enclosed space of a hotel room. Metenier was Guignol grown up, or grandi... *The Theatre du Grand-Guignol* was an immediate success. Without realizing it, Metenier had laid the first stone in the edifice of the Grand-Guignol repertoire, which was to last for over half a century. Little by little and almost accidentally, a new genre was born.



Metenier was succeeded as director in 1898 by Max Maurey, who was unknown in artistic circles but had hands-on experience in the theater. It was Maurey who, from 1898 to 1914, turned the Theatre du Grand-Guignol into a house of horror. He measured the success of a play by the number of people who fainted during its performance, and, to attract publicity, hired a house doctor to treat the more fainthearted spectators. It was also Maurey who discovered the novelist and playwright Andre de Lorde--"the Prince of Terror." Under the influence of de Lorde (who collaborated on several plays with his therapist, the experimental psychologist Alfred Binet), insanity became the Grand-Guignolesque theme par excellence. At a time when insanity was just beginning to be scientifically studied and individual cases catalogued, the Grand-Guignol repertoire explored countless manias and 'special tastes': Andre de Lorde and Leo Marches's *L'Homme de la Nuit* (The Man of the Night), for example, presented a necrophiliac, who strangely resembled Sergeant Bertrand, a man sentenced in 1849 for

violating tombs and mutilating corpses. *L'Horrible Passion* (The Horrible Passion), by Andre de Lorde and Henri Bauche, depicted a young nanny who strangled the children in her care. (Like Metenier, de Lorde was often a target of censorship, particularly in England where scheduled touring productions of two of his plays were canceled by the Lord Chamberlain's censors. The theater of the time, which delighted in vaudeville and bourgeois settings, could not abide the sight of blood or corpses on stage.)



~~Neuroto~~

U.V.: clear guttae, edge guttae, bass-guttae
G.I.: Karyonof, backwoods (II), P'auo (neck 8)
D.S.: DAF, DAF, G-HAVAT, DABOIKIA
F.M.: cyphob (argus) (II)

- S.P. = accordion (I), piano (III, 7), pipe organ (I)
 - V. Vandelli = guitar (II, V, III, VII, VI), clarinet (1)
 - R. S. = CAYON (II, III, VI), GUAVAL (S), TAR (S)
 - Seta = plectrum & pauca (I, 3, IV), back vocal (2, 3, 4, VI)
 - Sibelius P. = bass guitar (I, II, IV, VI), back vocal (2, 3, 4, VI)
 - L. N. = accordion (I, IV, 7), back vocal (2, 3, 4, VI)
 - R. Kok = accordion (I, II, IV, VI), back & recited vocal (2, 3, 4, VI)
 - Seta Vola = accordion (I, II, IV, VI), back & recited vocal (2, 3, 4, VI)
 - Roderic Britan = vocal (I, 6)
 - J. Amphora = bagpipes (I, 7), cello (IV), violin (6)

Cireo

Fear of 'the other' appeared at the Grand-Guignol in countless variations: fear of the proletariat, fear of the unknown, fear of the foreign, fear of contagion (for all the blood spilled, sperm ejaculated, and sweat dripped there, the Grand-Guignol had to feel some degree of nostalgia for cleanliness). The heroes of Paul Cloquemin and Paul Autier's *Gardiens de phare* (Lighthouse Keepers) and of Robert Francheville's *Le Beau Regiment* (The Handsome Regiment) had rabies. Leprosy decimated the passengers of Max Maurey's *Le Navire aveugle* (The Blind Ship), and the servants in Roland Dreyfus's *L'Auberge rouge* (The Red Inn) fell prey to a mysterious malady. In several plays, among them Maurey's *La Fosse aux filles* (The Girls' Den), a brothel visitor was exposed to syphilis.

But what carried the Grand-Guignol to its highest level were the boundaries and thresholds it crossed: the states of consciousness altered by drugs or hypnosis. Loss of consciousness, loss of control, panic: themes with which the theater's audience could easily identify. When the Grand-Guignol's playwrights expressed an interest in the guillotine, what fascinated them most were the last convulsions played out on the decapitated face. What if the head continued to think without the body? The passage from one state to another was the crux of the genre.

Camille Choisy, who directed the theater from 1914 to 1930, brought with him a score of special effects in both lighting and sound. Under his direction, staging overtook text. Once he even bought a fully equipped operating room as a pretext for a new play. In 1917, he hired the actress Paula Maxa, who soon became known as "the Sarah Bernhardt of the impasse Chaptal." During her career at the Grand-Guignol, Maxa, "the most assassinated woman in the world," was subjected to a range of tortures unique in theatrical history: she was shot with a rifle and with a revolver, scalped, strangled, disemboweled, raped, guillotined, hanged, quartered, burned, cut apart with surgical tools and lancets, cut into eighty-three pieces by an invisible Spanish dagger, stung by a scorpion, poisoned with arsenic, devoured by a puma, strangled by a pearl necklace, and whipped; she was also put to sleep by a bouquet of roses, kissed by a leper, and subjected to a very unusual metamorphosis, which was described by one theater critic:

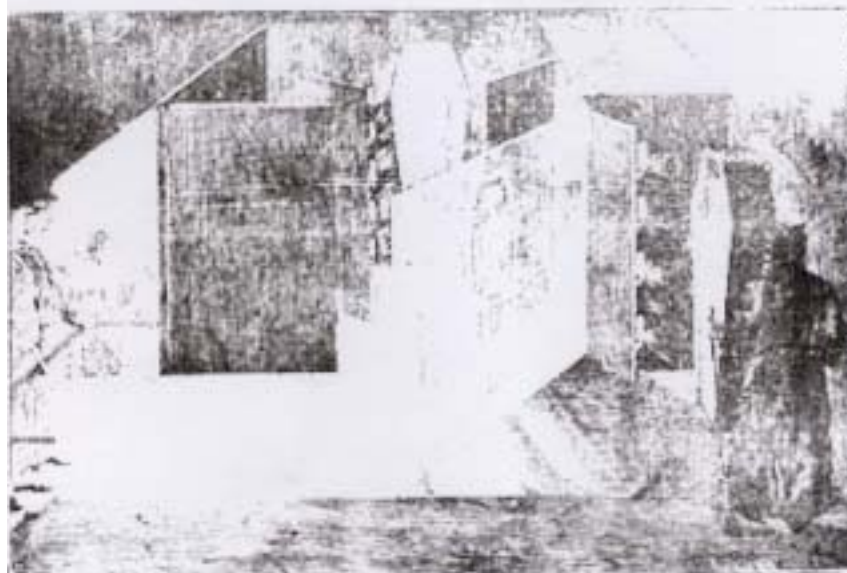
"Two hundred nights in a row, she simply decomposed on stage in front of an audience which wouldn't have exchanged its seats for all the gold in the Americas. The operation lasted a good two minutes during which the young woman transformed little by little into an abominable corpse."

To allow the audience some release from the tensions inspired by fear and insanity, an evening at the Grand-Guignol alternated drama with comedy to create a kind of hot and cold effect. Thus, after 'experiencing the horrible,' the audience was able to recompose itself with the likes

of *Ernestine est enragée* (Ernestine is Furious), *Adele est grosse* (Adele is Fat), or *Huel! Cocotte!* (Hey! Cocotte!). If the Grand-Guignol was a popular theater in both meanings of the word--it was frequented by neighborhood locals as well as the higher-brow audience of the Comedie Francaise--it was not a public affair. Going to the Grand-Guignol was less a social act than a private one and certain audience members preferred not to be seen. Some witnesses reported that the iron-grilled boxes in the back of the theater encouraged a certain 'extremism,' especially during Monday matinees when women often prepared themselves for adultery by throwing themselves, half-dead with terror, into their neighbors' arms: flirtation, Grand-Guignol-style. The cleaning staff would often find the seats stained.

With the arrival of Jack Jouvin, who directed the theater from 1930 to 1937, the repertoire shifted from gore to psychological





illuminated, the spectators witness this scene simply by looking true the glassplate.

When this the light is diminished and instead the skeleton in his coffin becomes strongly illuminated, the spectators are witnessing a transformation of a person into a skeleton.

Due to the glassplate, the skeleton in his coffin is seen in exactly the same position of the man. In other words, a Pepper's Ghost effect

"Look carefully at these two French Cabarets side by side in Montmartre, Paris. The one on the very left is called "CABARET LE CIEL", meaning "THE CABARET OF HEAVEN". That's fine, so far. Bumper to bumper and sharing the same wall on the right side, there is another cabaret called "CABARET L'ENFER", meaning "THE CABARET OF HELL". Just try to figure it out! One is hell, the other is heaven! Are the French crazy or what? They are crazy, alright! The truth is, they are crazy like a fox. Those two cabarets were created by two Frenchmen who hated each other. The one who owned the "CABARET OF HELL" was an ex-clergyman. The other guy who called his Cabaret "CABARET OF HEAVEN" was an ex-convict and known in the neighborhood as "The morally bankrupt." The drinks at the "CABARET OF HELL" were more expensive than the cheap drinks served at "CABARET OF HEAVEN", but the food was bloody awful. The owner explained: "Mes chers amis, my drinks are expensive because all those who are going to hell dead or alive come here. They come here, because it is more fun than the other place. There are no rules here, like in hell. In heaven, MON DIEU! there is nothing but rules! So where you would rather prefer to go? To Hell or to Heaven?"

A propos du Cabaret du Néant (apparemment le plus connu sur le net) :

"While entering the Cabaret du Néant, the following exclamation was heard by the visitors:
WELCOME, O WEARY WANDERER, TO THE REALM OF DEATH! ENTER! CHOOSE YOUR COFFIN,
AND BE SEATED BESIDE IT!"

drama. Wanting to have complete control over the theater, Jouvin ousted Maxa, who, in his opinion, was stealing the spotlight. Jouvin's lack of talent and his personal ambition triggered the eventual downfall of the Grand-Guignol. Birth, evolution, death: the genre sowed the seed of its own decline when it began to parody itself. The abundance of terrifying elements in the later plays became so overwhelming that they were no longer believable. By the Second World War, the theater was beginning to vacillate, carried away by its own excess. The war dealt it its final death blow. Reality overtook fiction, and attendance at post-war performances dwindled. In the spring of 1958, Anais Nin commented on its decline in her diary: "I surrendered myself to the Grand-Guignol, to its venerable filth which used to cause such shivers of horror, which used to petrify us with terror. All our nightmares of sadism and perversion were played out on that stage. . . . The theater was empty." In an interview conducted immediately after the Grand-Guignol closed in 1962, Charles Nonon, its last director, explained: "We could never compete with Buchenwald. Before the war, everyone believed that what happened on stage was purely imaginary; now we know that these things--and worse--are possible."

* "Commissioner's dog": the French term for a police employee who spends the last moments with prisoners sentenced to death.

Translated from the French by Deborah Treisman
Photos added by GrandGuignol.com



In the history of the cabaret, probably the two most famous are the Folies Bergère and the Moulin Rouge, resp. founded in 1869 and 1889. See some of the women who performed there.

All cabarets were rather bizarre places, although some are perhaps more peculiar than others? Three of these even more bizarre places in Paris where the Ghost Show Cabarets:

- Cabaret du Néant (Cabaret of Nothingness or Death)
- Cabaret de l' Enfer (Cabaret of Hell)
- Cabaret du Ciel (Cabaret of Heaven)

Among photo historians and collectors, the Cabaret du Néant is known from photographs made by Eugene Atget. (1857-1927)

This cabaret, located, 34 Boulevard de Clichy in Paris, was founded by Dorville in 1892.

"Death is the best invention ever by God. Since, we know we wanna live. But play with it."

Other interesting Cabaret's where *La fin du Monde*, *Le voyage à Lilliput*, *Cabaret Bruyant*, *Le Rat Mort*, *Le loup blanc*, *L'Ane rouge*, *La vache enragée*, *Les rayons X...*, etc.

Of course, the history of cabarets is interesting in his own rights. However, especially the Cabaret du Néant acquired an important place in the history of Visual Media and optical trikery. A variant of the optical stage technique "Pepper's Ghost" was performed there often.

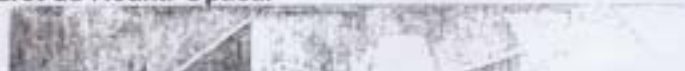
In the latter we see a man or a woman changing into a skeleton in front of our eyes, performed with the aid of, hidden, optical trickery.

In the Café of the Cabaret du Néant, "Salle d' Intoxication", (room of Intoxication or Drinking) the tables were in the shape of coffins.

While entering the Cabaret du Néant, the following exclamation was heard by the visitors:
WELCOME, O WEARY WANDERER, TO THE REALM OF DEATH! ENTER! CHOOSE YOUR COFFIN, AND BE SEATED BESIDE IT!

In the room of disintegration, see image below, the Pepper's Ghost shown is seen. A man is placing himself in a coffin and turning into a skeleton before disappearing in front of the public eyes.

Cabaret du Néant: Optical



Cabaret du Néant: Salle d'Intoxication



Here we see an optical arrangement on how the transformation of a person into a skeleton can be performed.

[illegible]

A remianing mysrery of the website remains **Who Is The True Madame Bistouri?**, and the following candidates are proposed:



Cécile Dubois

talented opera singer,
met J. Amphora in
the
'Cabaret des
Truands' on
January 6th 1906.



Bianca Pergolesi

daughter of a wine seller,
met Lunette Namair in the
'Père Lunette' cabaret on
January 21st 1906.

Fosca Scarlatti

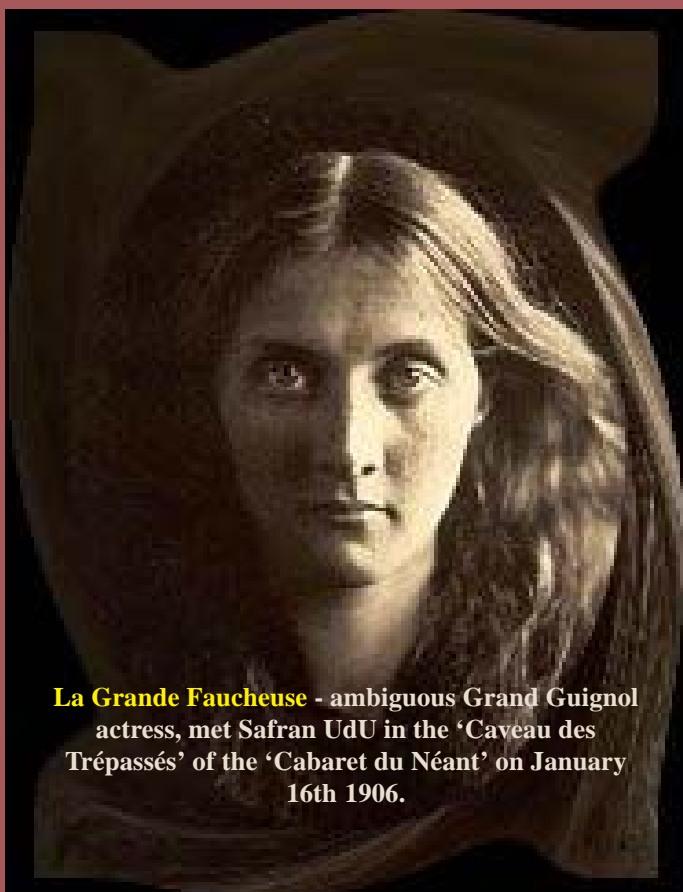
haschisch addicted and
alcoholic,
met Gabor Szentendrei
in the Intoxication room
of
the 'Cabaret du Néant'
on
January 11th 1906.



Geneviève de Saint Maurvirginal
and pious maiden,met Sibelius P.
in the 'Cabaret du Ciel' on January
26th 1906.



Madame Bistouri (with her sharp
surgical instruments) met Réverie
de Bal D. Rakin the Saint Vincent
cemetaryon June 6th 1905.



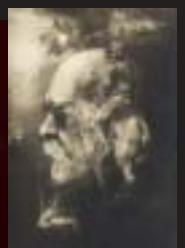
La Grande Faucheuse - ambiguous Grand Guignol
actress, met Safran UdU in the 'Caveau des
Trépassés' of the 'Cabaret du Néant' on January
16th 1906.



Sur les fils télégraphiques

Petit Pierrot sur un fil est grimpé,
 Buvant lentement sa chopine
 A la santé de Colombine,
 Voici le garde il est chopé.
 A. G.

“Pouvez vous me dire
 davantage au sujet de
 l’obscurité?”



< The Ears Of A Clown