

NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS

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ABSTRACT

Marli van der Bijl, Drama and Theatre Arts, University of the Free State

Abstract of Master's Thesis Proposal, Submitted February 2018:

NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS

The purpose of this study was to create a Combined Framework consisting of narrative and structural characteristics identified in concept musicals, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows to facilitate the case studies of three South African one-person musicals. A better understanding of the narrative and structural characteristics in one-person musicals could contribute to a secondary observation that the one-person musical appears to be an amalgamation of the three informing subgenres.

Section A served as an introduction to the study. In Section B, research was conducted on the three subgenres of the concept musical (Chapter 2), cabaret (Chapter 3) and the one-person dramatic show (Chapter 4). The research involved literature studies of the subgenres regarding their historical backgrounds, their affiliation to the revue, which they seemed to resemble in structure, and their association with the modernist techniques utilised by Bertolt Brecht in his *Epic Theatre*. The background information supplemented further investigations into the narrative and structural characteristics of the three informing subgenres, which was structured around the six elements of drama identified by Aristotle (plot, theme, character, language, music, spectacle). From the literature studies, the Combined Framework was constructed in Chapter 5 to direct the proposed case studies on the selected South African one-person musicals. In Section C, three South African one-person musicals were evaluated for their narrative and structural characteristics using the Combined Framework. They were: Amanda Strydom's *State of the Heart* (Chapter 6), Nataniël's *COMBAT* (Chapter 7) and Elzabé Zietsman's *Agter Glas* (Chapter 8). Section D was devoted to the summary and conclusion of the study.

In the literature studies of Section B, it was established that the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show all indicate a presentational, anti-naturalistic approach to theatre. They aim at intellectual entertainment, engaging in strong socio-political themes

and challenging their audiences into critically evaluating society. Techniques used in all three subgenres can often be linked to Brecht's *Epic Theatre* and the non-linear construction of all three subgenres also show similarities to the structure of the revue. In the case studies of the three South African one-person musicals in Section C, similar narrative and structural characteristics were observed. The one-person musicals seemed to indicate strong similarities to all of the informing subgenres, which leads to the conclusion that the one-person musical appears to be an amalgamation of the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show.

It can be concluded that the Combined Framework demonstrated efficiency in facilitating an evaluation of the narrative and structural characteristics of South African one-person musicals. The three informing subgenres, namely the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show, were also deemed suitable for comparison with each other and one-person musicals. Characteristics of all three subgenres manifest in the one-person musicals explored, producing a hybrid musical theatre form. The question is raised whether musical theatre in South Africa should be re-evaluated in terms of nomenclature, specifically with regards to the use of the word cabaret to denote one-person musicals. Further academic conversation in the field is welcomed, and the Combined Framework seems to present the potential to facilitate the evaluations of other one-person musicals or musical and musical theatre productions in the broader spectrum of the arts.

KEYWORDS: one-person musicals, concept musicals, cabaret, one-person show, solo theatre, South African musical theatre, Nataniël, Amanda Strydom, Elzabé Zietsman, Bertolt Brecht, revue, modern theatre

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“In 'n onderhoud met Coenie de Villiers in *De Kat* sê Aucamp dat *Oudisie!* sy laaste is, want kabarettetekste verkoop moeilik in Suid-Afrika en mens hou iewers op baklei omdat jy nie onbepaald kan testamente skryf nie. Hy se ook dat die nuwe Suid-Afrika waarskynlik iets anders wil hê. Mens dink onwillekeurig aan die refrein uit *Oudisie!* "Die waarheid is soms ekstra bitter/ Die groot publiek soek 'glam' en 'glitter'/wil vere hê en skuim en skyn/wat werklikhede laat verdwyn" (Maart 1992:72). Maar Aucamp bly vol hoop, baie hoop vir kabaret. Hy hoop ook vir die volgende logiese punt, die musical, wat hy in kategoriee plaas: daar is die musiekblyspel, of die musiekdrama, of die musiekmelodrama (wat dan toe ook later gerealiseer het as *Brommer in die Boord*) (Etienne van Heerden Julie 1988: 77 - 78)”.

Die Poëtika van die liriek in die Afrikaanse literêre kabaret
Amanda Swart (1993:106)

SECTION A

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

The one-person show has undergone various metamorphoses from a mere vehicle for informal, entertainment-orientated storytelling in Ancient Greece and African cultures into the full-blown, scripted and critically acclaimed theatrical production of today (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2002a:697). Artists have chosen this field of performance for various reasons of which two seem to stand out. Firstly, performing alone (generally) has safer financial implications, because one-person shows normally have small companies consisting of a performer, a director and (maybe) a small technical team. Sets are often minimalistic and mobile, making it easy to travel and perform in a large variety of venues (Alekson 2018; Alterman¹ (2005:xx). Another reason is the rewarding feeling of enrichment after a successful solo performance, as Nemy (1984:1) explains:

In the world of the theater [sic], the [one-person] show is perhaps the closest thing to having it all, a supreme test of assurance and ability, of magnetism and charisma. The format is both seductive and frightening; there's no one to play against, to lean on, to share the criticism. But, for an actor, the prize at the end of a successful solo performance is not only applause but also acclaim - unshared.

The term one-person show² is used here in a collective sense, synonymous with the term 'solo production'. Two types of solo productions are distinguished in this study: the one-person dramatic show³ and the one-person musical. The one-person dramatic show entails the performance of dramatic material by a single actor (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2002a:697). The one-person musical includes both dramatic and musical material carrying virtually the same weight, or with the latter proving superior.

According to Alekson⁴ (2018), the last 50 years have seen an increase in the number of solo-productions, partly due to its popularity as an art form and partly for the economic reasons already explained. Numerous solo productions appear annually on various South

¹ Glenn Alterman is the writer of multiple books on auditioning and monologues for theatrical artists, as well as a playwright. His book, *Create your own monologue* (2001), is a valuable source for this study.

² To avoid gender prejudice, the term 'one-person show' will mostly be used, instead of the popular term 'one-man show'. Where direct quotes are involved, the 'one-man' or 'one-woman' prefix will be kept in its original form.

³ The researcher chose the term one-person dramatic show to distinguish between a one-person show without music, and a one-person show with music, which is referred to as a one-person musical in the study.

⁴ Paula T. Alekson is the Artistic Engagement Manager at the McCarter Theatre Company of Princeton University in the United States of America. Her article *A Cast of One: The history, art and nature of the one-person show* first appeared on the McCarter Theatre Company's website and has since been used in its entirety by the Southwest Shakespeare Company's teaching notes for *Beowulf*.

African arts festivals' theatre programmes⁵ and there are now several international festivals devoted solely to the art of solo-performing. These include New York's *United Solo Festival*⁶, the *Solo Festival* in London and Moscow's *SOLO, International Theatre Festival of Solo Performances*. Closer to home, the Wits Theatre in Johannesburg launched its first *So Solo* festival for solo performers in 2014⁷.

A phenomenon appearing on the international musical scene for the past few decades, and locally in South Africa, is the one-person dramatic show's musical counterpart: the one-person musical or solo-musical, a musical theatre production performed by a single actor. It is in this form of theatre that the proposed study takes particular interest. More specifically, this study is devoted to the narrative and structural characteristics of the one-person musicals performed by South African artists such as Amanda Strydom (1956-), Elzabé Zietsman (1961-) and Nataniël (1963-).

There seems to exist a lack of academic documentation regarding the one-person musical (Nel 2011:13). More information is, however, available on three theatrical subgenres which appear to show combinations of the narrative and structural characteristics observed in the one-person musical. These subgenres are the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show.

The first subgenre relevant to this study is the concept musical⁸, a subgenre of musicals which is hard to define due to its innovative quality. The term is generally used to describe musicals where the theme or concept behind the musical drives the narrative, instead of a linearly constructed plot. This often results in a fragmented⁹, episodic structure of events

⁵ The festival programme of the Grahamstown *National Arts Festival* in South Africa feature around 50 one-person shows in 2013, as well as 2014, of which around 30 are not stand-up comedy, but of a dramatic or musical nature. From 2013 to 2016, The *National Arts Festival* hosted *Solo Theatre* as part of its main programme in which a selection of solo shows were chosen and marketed. Festivals such as the *Vrystaat Kunstefees (Free State Arts Festival)*, *Woordfees*, *Aardklop* and *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* also feature several solo-productions each year.

⁶ The United Solo Festival is deemed "the world's largest solo theatre festival" on its official website (unitedsolo.org/us/). More solo theatre initiatives in New York include the *All for One Theatre Solo Collective* and *The One Festival*.

⁷ The *So Solo Festival* has been running for 4 years as a theatre initiative of the University of the Witwatersrand. It was established in 2013 by Gita Pather, Director of Wits Theatre. According to the University's website, this festival "celebrates the one-person play and offers audiences a diversity of thought provoking theatrical experiences from some of South Africa's most talented actors".

⁸ The term 'concept musical' was coined in the United States of America in the 1970's, an honour generally accredited to theatre critic Martin Gottfried (Jones 2003:270; Wollman 2009:73), due to the fact that the central concept or theme behind the production is the key element around which the narrative and the rest of the production is built.

⁹ Jones (2003:270) suggested the use of the term "fragmented musical" as an alternative to "concept musical" to describe musicals with a fragmented nature, built around a central theme or character.

(McMillan 2006:22; Lewis 2010:22). *Company* (1970), by composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim¹⁰ (1930-) and director Harold (Hal) Prince¹¹ (1928-), and *A Chorus Line* (1975) by director-choreographer Michael Bennett¹² (1943-1987) are commonly considered the epitomes or prototypes of the concept musical (Block 1997:277; Trevens 1984:461).

Cabaret¹³ is the second subgenre under investigation. It typically takes place in more intimate venues where a performer can converse with an audience in an intellectual way through satirical songs and sketches with a political undertone. According to Appignanesi¹⁴ (2004:6) and Pretorius¹⁵ (1994b:72), the atmosphere is simultaneously intimate and hostile. In South Africa, cabaret is mostly associated with the work of South African writer Hennie Aucamp¹⁶ (1934-2014), who created *Met permissie gesê* (1980), *Slegs vir Almal* (1985), *Oudisie!* (1991), among others.

The third subgenre related to the one-person musical is the one-person dramatic show. As previously explained, this subgenre entails a single performer delivering a theatrical piece to an audience. Alterman (2005:4) uses the word “monodrama” to describe this art form:

¹⁰ Stephen Sondheim has been contributing to the international musical theatre industry for more than 60 years as conceptualist, composer and lyricist for often ground-breaking and award-winning new musicals. For the researcher, his concept musicals serve as a testimony to the endless possibilities of musical theatre as a serious art form and how its boundaries can be pushed.

¹¹ Generally known as Hal Prince, this pioneering conceptualist, director and producer has been part of the creation of the musical theatre canon for more than half a century. He is the individual with the most Tony Awards behind his name – twenty-one, to be exact. Collaborating with different pioneers in the industry, Prince has been one for the musical practitioners that played a vital role in re-imagining what the musical can achieve.

¹² Michael Bennett was an award-winning director, writer, choreographer and dancer for several ground-breaking Broadway musicals, most notably *A Chorus Line*. Interestingly, Bennett was the choreographer for Sondheim and Prince’s *Company* and *Follies*, two of the prominent concept musicals discussed here.

¹³ The term “cabaret” comes from the French word meaning “tavern” or “drinking place” (Hepple 2002a:122). In nineteenth-century Paris, the entertainment at these taverns, called café-concerts by Appignanesi (2004:5), grew into more artistic and intellectual forms of expression for artists, now known as cabarets.

¹⁴ Lisa Appignanesi (1946-) is a writer, critic, translator and broadcaster. Her book about a cultural history of cabaret, titled *The Cabaret*, is one of the corner stones of cabaret history and of this study, cited by the majority of other sources consulted on the topic.

¹⁵ Herman Pretorius (1948-) was the Head of the Drama Department of the University of Stellenbosch during the 1980’s when Hennie Aucamp started experimenting with the political cabaret form, using drama students to act in his cabarets. Pretorius played a pivotal role as director and has contributed academic articles on the topic as well, one of which was published in a special cabaret edition of the *South African Theatre Journal* in 1994. Other writings by Pretorius consulted in this study were found in the published script of Aucamp’s *Slegs vir Almal* (1986), for which Pretorius wrote an introduction and extensive notes on cabaret.

¹⁶ Hennie Aucamp was an Afrikaans cabaretist, academic and writer of poetry and short stories. He started writing literary cabarets around the 1980’s and experimented with the form until 1991, when he announced his retirement from the cabaret circuit to pursue other interests, like the short story and the essay (Aucamp 1994:75). He went on to write a number of valuable essays and reviews in South African literature. Shortly before his death in 2014, one of his oldest manuscripts with essays on cabaret, *Koffer in Berlyn: essays oor kabaret* (2013), was released and serves as an important source of information in this study.

Monodramas are like all plays in that they have a beginning, middle, and end; contain concise dialogue; and express the writer's personal vision. [...] Although there is only one actor on stage, he can bring many characters into the piece by assuming their personalities and voices.

Internationally, the works of Anna Deavere Smith¹⁷ (1950-), Spalding Gray¹⁸ (1941-2004), and Lily Tomlin¹⁹ (1939-), among other solo performers, are of note.

From preliminary research, it appears as if the afore-mentioned subgenres share characteristics with the one-person musical in different areas of performance, narrative and structure. These characteristics might prove helpful in the investigation towards the narrative and structural characteristics of South African one-person musicals.

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is particularly interested in the structure of one-person musicals, and in the different structural components and how they function within and complement the work. *Structure* is defined as “the arrangement and interrelationship of parts in a construction”²⁰. The Ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle²¹ (384 BC-322 BC) wrote that theatrical pieces consist of six basic structural elements (or parts). He listed these elements in order of importance as plot, character, thought, diction, song and scenic elements (Butcher 1898:25). For the purpose of this study “theme” is preferred to Butcher’s “Thought”, “language” to his “Diction” and “music” to his “Song”. “Scenic elements” is replaced by “spectacle”, which includes all visual aspects of a production. “Plot” or “narrative” will be used to describe the arrangement of the incidents, as Aristotle described it (Butcher 1898:25).

¹⁷ Anna Deavere Smith is an actress, playwright and professor from the United States of America whose work in solo theatre is particularly important to this study. She developed a signature form of theatre, described as biographical docudramas by Teachout (2012), in which she re-enacts characters based on real interviews that she conducted with people who are directly or indirectly affected by a certain social or political issue. According to her website, she is currently working on a project called *The Pipeline Project*, concerning issues like poverty, as well as physical and mental health (www.annadeaveresmith.org).

¹⁸ Actor, playwright and screenwriter, Spalding Gray, is best known for his autobiographical monologues that “delve deeply and comically into the dark reaches of his own anxious mind” (<https://www.biography.com/people/spalding-gray-10470489>). Two of his autobiographical one-person shows, *Monster in a Box* and *Gray's Anatomy*, were turned into feature films. Gray tragically committed suicide in 2004.

¹⁹ Lily Tomlin is a versatile American actress, comedian, and writer known for her work in film and television, as well as stage productions. Of most concern here, is her solo performance in *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, of which a film version also exists.

²⁰ This definition is found in the *Collins Concise Dictionary: 21st century edition* (2001).

²¹ Aristotle was one of the most important intellectuals and philosophers of his time and is still considered one of the most influential thinkers in Western history. His writings on drama and poetry, known as the *Poetics*, form the basis for the structure of the investigation into the narrative and structural characteristics of the different subgenres in this study.

Whereas plot and character are considered superior by Aristotle, the adding of music to the dramatic material is the deciding element that distinguishes the musical from a purely dramatic production. Music and song are the attributes that all musicals – including one-person musicals – share, as pointed out by Young²² (2008:35) and Mordden²³ (2003:7). Another element present in most ensemble musicals is dance, which is a form of spectacle.

Song and Spectacle [author's capital letters] rank at the bottom of Aristotle's priority list of tragedy's components, as though they were separable from the top categories of Plot and Character [author's capital letters]. A theory of the musical cannot do this. It has to regard songs and dances as basic elements, equal to plot and character and influential on both (McMillin 2006:7).

The elements in theatrical productions interrelate and drive the production forward, determining the quality of the whole (Butcher 1898:25). Aristotle called for an organic connection between the elements (Butcher 1898:35). This reminds of Richard Wagner's²⁴ (1813-1883) idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* or "total theatre" in which "nothing exists purely for itself without connection to the whole" (Allain & Harvie 2006:176; Jones 2003:295). Contrarily, Bertolt Brecht²⁵ (1898-1956), one of the pioneers for modern theatre and the avant-garde movement²⁶, believed that a fusion of the elements would equally degrade them

²² Christine Young's dissertation on the concept musical has since been published in a shorter form in the journal, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, in 2010, but the complete dissertation was more accessible and of more value to this study.

²³ Ethan Mordden (1947-) is a musical theatre critic and historian. He has written more than six books chronicling the history of the Broadway musical. Two of his books serve as key history sources for the concept musical in the literature study. They are *Broadway babies: the people who made the American musical* (1983) and *One more kiss: the Broadway musical in the 1970s* (2003).

²⁴ Richard Wagner was a German dramatic composer and theorist best known for his epic operas and music dramas. Wagner had a revolutionary influence on the course of Western music, especially with regards to his insistence on combining different art forms to create a total, unified work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*).

²⁵ Eugen Berthold Friedrich "Bertolt" Brecht was an avant-garde theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet from Germany whose work in theatre played a pivotal role in the emergence of Modernism, culminating in the theatrical movement known as *Epic Theatre*, aimed at political, intellectual and didactical entertainment. *Epic Theatre* introduced innovative theatre techniques which are still used in theatre today. Brecht's work in theatre and his *Epic Theatre* techniques are important aspects to consider in the literature studies to be conducted.

²⁶ The main drive behind the avant-garde movement was to introduce new, non-Aristotelian structures to the theatre, as Aronson (2002:202) explains:

[The] century long project of the avant-garde [was] to undermine structures of linear thought, objective imagery, and psychological associations [... bringing about that] the Aristotelian-Renaissance model of the linear narrative and unified frame has been largely supplanted by an image-driven associative model of structure. [...] Linearity, narrative coherence, even stability of characters from moment to moment, is irrelevant.

all (Hulfield 2013:26). Taylor²⁷ (2009:79) explains that in his Epic Theatre²⁸, Brecht rather sought a non-Aristotelian, non-Wagnerian approach of radically separating the elements so that each comment on the others.

The study takes an interest in the connection between the three informing subgenres and Bertolt Brecht's Epic theatre, particularly with regards to its non-linear, montage structure and the innovative ways in which the six elements interrelate within the style²⁹. These innovations are prominent in the different alienation techniques³⁰ used to produce the *Verfremdungseffekt* in which the audience is distanced emotionally from the production and forced to remain objectively and intellectually involved as opposed to being carried away by engaging with the material from an emotional perspective (Leach 2004:119).

According to Leach (2004:119), Brecht found the interruption of the narrative through song particularly valuable as a distancing technique. As stated by Knapp (2005:12), the use of music, song or dance to intensify an emotion in a straight and realistic dramatic situation creates an artificial, distancing effect which urges the audience to see the performer behind the character being portrayed. McMillin (2006:25) asserts that the interruptive qualities found in the musical and the revue³¹ interested Brecht. He also admired cabaret's "absence of formality, its music hall format, its exploitation of zany elements in colloquial speech [...] [and] its possibilities as a vehicle for social and political satire" (Hodgson 1988:46). In due course, these art forms informed a lot of Brecht's essays and techniques, which seemed to inform the concept musical and, significantly, the one-person musical.

²⁷ Millie Taylor is a Professor of Musical Theatre credited as a musical theatre analyst, historian and dramaturg. She is also a musical director and author of musical theatre books. Taylor has published numerous articles, chapter contributions and books, including *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment* (2012), *Studying Musical Theatre* (2014) and *British Musical Theatre Since 1950* (2016), the latter two as co-author. Her article, *Integration and distance in musical theatre: the case of Sweeney Todd*, is especially valuable here due to its insight into the *Verfremdungseffekt* (see 1.9.5.) in musical theatre. A full list of publications can be found on her website at www.millietaylor.co.uk.

²⁸ Epic Theatre will be explained in more detail under Clarification of Concepts.

²⁹ McMillin (2006:25) goes as far as nominating Brecht in the place of Wagner as an edifying force in the development of the musical.

³⁰ The alienation techniques are explained under *Verfremdungseffekt* under Clarification of Concepts (see 1.9.5.).

³¹ The episodic structure of the revue is thought to have had an influence on the narrative structure of the concept musical. Trevens (1984:461) and Knapp (2006:294) acknowledge the structural similarities between the two subgenres where narrative and theme is concerned, while Everett and Laird (2008:73) even regard the concept musical as a descendant of the revue. It is interesting to note that Senelick (1995:918) considers the one-person show and cabaret, together with television, as the vehicles through which the revue format now lives on. For financial reasons the revue, once a lavish, expensive theatre programme consisting of episodes ranging from songs and sketches to dance and instrumental music, is often reduced to solo productions showcasing the talents of a single composer, musician or singer.

The musical play or book musical, typified by composer Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II³² (1895-1960) with musicals such as *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945) and *The Sound of Music* (1959), is often commended for the seemingly seamless integration of its elements. According to Wilson and Goldfarb (2004:506), “[the musical play] seamlessly brought together the story, music, lyrics, and dances so that the production combined tone, mood and intention in a unified whole”. Scott McMillin³³, however, disputes the use of the term “integrated” to describe the interrelationship between the different elements in musicals:

[A successful musical] does not mean that the product of all this cooperation has been smoothed out into a unified work of art. When a musical is working well, I feel the crackle of difference, not the smoothness of unity, even when the numbers dovetail with the book. It takes things different from one another to be thought of as integrated in the first place and I find that the musical depends more on the differences that make the close fit interesting than on the suppression of difference in a seamless whole (McMillan 2006:2).

The musical’s narrative or book, which gains momentum through cause and effect, are constantly interrupted by songs. This signals a change in mood, rhythm and time-structure, as book time is suspended in favour of lyric time (McMillin 2006:9). McMillin (2006:25) hypothesises that audiences find pleasure in this alteration between book and song, rather than the integration thereof.

Taylor (2009:75) is of the opinion that “integration” in musicals rests on the audience’s perception of the whole. Although audiences may experience more of a through-line and “coherent narrative” in traditional book musicals, Taylor suggests that the main elements of the musical – song, dance and narrative – are separate art forms each communicating through a different language and influencing audiences on distinct levels. The combination of separate parts is perceived by audience members as linear, or at least coherent, although the very nature of the musical is in fact disconnected.

[It is possible to argue] that each of the constituent elements of music, dance, lyrics, plot, performance and so on offers a different perspective adding up to a single understanding of the combination of all the parts [...] [This brings about that t]he

³² The songwriting team, Rodgers and Hammerstein, wrote eleven musicals between 1943 and 1959, most of which received unprecedented critical acclaim for steering musical theatre into new directions. Interestingly, Oscar Hammerstein II was a mentor and father figure to Stephen Sondheim, whose concept musicals are imperative to this study. Sondheim gained a lot of his knowledge on lyric writing from Hammerstein (Gordon 1992:13).

³³ Scott McMillan (1934-2006) was an English professor at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, who brought valuable new insights into the academic perception of the musical, highlighting its potential as drama, instead of simply being a form of escapist entertainment.

musical simultaneously signifies itself as 'authentic' or 'realistic' and is written in ways that promote the idea of integration and the suspension of disbelief, while in fact being disjunctive and diverse (Taylor 2009:75, 79).

Ironically, it is in the disjunctive nature of the musical that its appeal lies (Taylor 2009:78). This study proceeds from the same standpoint, recognising a disjoint, non-linear, episodic structure as a key feature in the narrative and structural characteristics of one-person musicals, as well as the three subgenres at hand.

It seems as though the method of alienation is used deliberately in the concept musical and cabaret, brought about by its non-linear, episodic structure. The *Verfremdungseffekt* appears to arise inevitably out of the disjunctive nature of the one-person dramatic show in which, owing to its roots in the ancient art of storytelling, the fourth wall convention is often disposed of and the performer behind the character exposed and acknowledged (Gentile³⁴ 1989:200). Subsequently, prior research suggests that South African one-person musicals' narrative and structural characteristics might be a combination of those found in the various subgenres.

1.2. RATIONALE

The researcher is particularly intrigued by one-person musicals as they appear on stage in South Africa, and considers writing and performing in this subgenre. The research is founded on a belief that a detailed investigation into the narrative and structural characteristics observed in South African one-person musicals might provide a better understanding of the subgenre for analytical and writing purposes.

The researcher recognises a gap in the academic documentation of South African one-person musicals and wishes to undertake a study that could initiate more academic research into the field. A more extensive academic database for the one-person musical could aid more artists who wish to write for or perform in the subgenre.

Three subgenres, which show relation to the one-person musical with regards to structure in various ways, are expected to yield valuable information regarding the narrative and structural characteristics of South African one-person musicals. Firstly, the concept musical

³⁴ John S. Gentile is a professor at Kennesaw State University, holding a Ph.D. and M.A. in Performance Studies. He teaches performing literature, storytelling studies, the adaptation of literary texts for stage performance and performance art. Although his book, *Cast of One*, was written in 1989, it serves as one of the primary sources for historical background on solo performance, since numerous scholars writing about solo theatre refer back to Gentile in their writings.

utilises a non-linear, fragmented structure in which music, character and theme seem to be pivotal elements. As previously discussed, music is the key element that qualifies the musical. Jones³⁵ (2003:272) recognises the importance of character in concept musicals as the structural element that seems to distinguish it from revues, which share concept musicals' fragmented narrative structure. Theme or metaphor is considered a driving force behind the narrative progression in concept musicals (McMillin's 2006:22). The second subgenre, cabaret, shares the disjunctive nature of the concept musical in its fluctuation between dramatic sketches and songs. The performer behind the characters or caricatures in cabaret is of more importance than the characterisation³⁶. It seems as though language, theme and music take the lead in cabaret. Jones³⁷ (2012:963) stresses story with strong themes in which social and emotional truths are exposed, together with song and voice – which seems to be a delicate balance between performer and language³⁸ – as important elements. Lastly, one-person dramatic shows regard both performer and character as central to the success of the production. Gentile (1989:142-143) recognises character as the most important structural element in the one-person dramatic show, closely followed by theme and language. "Simply to avoid distracting the audience from the lone performer, the solo form minimizes [sic] the other three elements – plot, spectacle, and music". The element of music, however, cannot be minimised in the one-person musical, nor the concept musical and cabaret, due to it being the essential feature within the definition of a musical.

In South Africa, the one-person musicals performed by artists like Nataniël, Amanda Strydom and Elzabé Zietsman, which seem to follow a structure close to that of the concept musical, are often categorised as "solo-cabaret". The term "cabaret" is problematic for Pretorius (1994b:76), van der Merwe (2010:31) and Amanda Strydom herself, who does not consider her work to be cabaret (Roggeband 2009:11). Pretorius (1994b:76) states that the local cabaret is rather a hybrid art form fusing African storytelling techniques with the traditional European modes of cabaret, forming a uniquely South African form of theatre – a

³⁵ John Bush Jones (1940-) has written widely on musical theatre. He is now a retired professor who taught theatre arts at Brandeis University for more than twenty years. Moreover, he is a theatre director and former theatre critic.

³⁶ Jones (2012:962) explains that in cabaret the performer remains a performer, and it is the special intimacy between the performer and the audience that gives cabaret its unique quality as an art form.

³⁷ Barbara Jones, not to be confused here with the author John Bush Jones, is a transpersonal psychologist who wrote an interesting article for the *Journal of the American Philosophical Practitioners Association* in which she investigated cabaret as a philosophical practice.

³⁸ "The true master of the voice is not just master of technique or language, but of himself. He can sit serenely in the center [sic] of that space while performing his actions to perfection" (Jones 2012:964).

South African cabaret. The researcher wishes to suggest further that the South African one-person musical is an amalgamation of the three subgenres vital to this study.

Parallels can already be drawn between the concept musical and the hybrid South African cabaret. Words used by Hischak³⁹ (2008:166) to describe the concept musical include “bold”, “original in some aspect”, “unpredictable [with a] tendency to surprise”. These words are synonymous with Pretorius’s “oorspronklik [original], gewaag [bold], onkonvensioneel [unconventional] en opwindend nuut [excitingly new]” in an attempt to define the structure of the South African cabaret (Pretorius 1994b:68). Further parallels are expected to arise between the related subgenres as the study unfolds.

1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Preliminary research indicates a lack of academic documentation concerning the narrative and structural elements of South African one-person musicals. After viewing one-person musical performances and scripts to determine how Aristotle’s six elements interrelate in these shows, it appears as if one-person musicals present features that suggest a combination of the narrative and structural characteristics found in concept musicals, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows.

The methods of Brecht’s Epic Theatre are observed in all the subgenres mentioned above, with some indications towards the revue as well. This study emerges from the presumption that modern and postmodern theatre influences the way in which the six elements are utilised in the subgenres at hand and that a literature study into the narrative and structural characteristics of the informing subgenres might yield a better understanding of the structure of the one-person musical. The most effective way to test this presumption is to construct a framework from the literature study of each informing subgenre and apply it to South African one-person musicals.

The main research question is:

- How can the structural elements of the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show aid the construction of a framework which could facilitate the analysis

³⁹ Thomas Hischak (1951-) is an internationally recognised author and teacher in the Performing Arts. Apart from being an award-winning playwright, Hischak has also authored twenty-four non-fiction books in the fields of theatre, film, and popular music, of which several inform the literature study about the concept musical.

of South African one-person musicals in terms of their narrative and structural characteristics?

Secondary questions that emerge, are:

- What are the typical narrative and structural elements followed within the field of the concept musicals?
- What are the typical narrative and structural elements followed within the field of cabaret?
- What are the typical narrative and structural elements followed within the field of one-person dramatic shows?
- How can the analysis and comparison of the typical narrative and structural elements in the abovementioned subgenres facilitate the investigation towards the aim of the main research question?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to establish a framework to facilitate the evaluation of certain South African one-person musicals to identify their narrative and structural characteristics. The framework will be informed by the narrative and structural elements of the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show scrutinised as part of the literature study section. If the framework presented is deemed successful in reaching the main objective, this study would propose for the framework to be applied to other one-person musicals or perhaps other subgenres to test its effectiveness in a broader sense.

Moreover, the findings in this study could start an academic conversation about musical theatre as a theatrical form in South Africa. Many subgenres exist within the musical theatre realm and it seems as though local South African scholars lack a substantial theoretical, academic foundation from which to construct their studies.

The study aims subordinately to use the apparent disadvantage of problematic demarcation for the concept musical and cabaret to its advantage by identifying similarities and possible links between these two subgenres within the South African context. Familiarities in characteristics and structural elements of these two diverse forms of musical theatre may reveal that “solo-cabaret” has been used in South Africa to describe a one-person musical built on a combination of the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show.

1.5. VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

The value of this study lies in the possibility that it can provide scholars and artists with academic knowledge and artistic insight into the typical narrative and structural characteristics of not only one-person musicals, but also of the different subgenres investigated during the study.

The framework that this study seeks to establish may be a valuable tool that future scholars can use to evaluate certain productions or subgenres. This study also hopes to be of further value within the academic field in South Africa by encouraging further conversation with fellow-scholars on the topic of South African musicals generally and inspiring further academic investigation on the field.

This study could also be of value on a more practical level. By identifying and applying the appropriate and typical narrative and structural elements of the one-person musical, according to the findings of this research and according to Aristotle's six structural elements, writers or writer-performers might be assisted in creating new, original one-person musical theatre shows.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Within the qualitative research paradigm, an exploratory study, as well as a descriptive study, is undertaken. The chosen research design for the first section of this study is a literature review in which literary sources such as academic books, journals, performance reviews and scripts of relevant theatrical productions will be consulted. The research is not restricted to written material. Multimedia material of productions and informative documentaries also serve as valuable sources. Personal communication with theatre practitioners such as Gera Phielix⁴⁰, Nataniël, Elzabé Zietsman, Pieter-Dirk Uys and Roland Perold⁴¹ will further inform the study. The literature review will aim towards the construction of a Combined Framework to facilitate the next part of the study, which will take the form of case studies.

⁴⁰ Gera Phielix is an upcoming musical theatre artist in South Africa whose knowledge and experience in the field of one-person musicals are of specific interest to this study. She is best known for writing and performing *Trek* (2013), a one-person musical with which she has travelled around the country.

⁴¹ Roland Perold is a singer, musical theatre performer, writer and producer at his own production company, ROLSKA Productions. He holds a Masters Degree in Music from Bath Spa University and has been associated with the Waterfront Theatre School in Cape Town and the Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSA).

Every case study focuses on one particular one-person musical by selected South African performers. The case study involves an in-depth and detailed investigation into the narrative and structural characteristics of the specific theatrical production within the context of the Combined Framework. Since the case studies of the theatrical productions all involve the evaluation of performances on DVD, occasionally aided by the script, the researcher will also have to engage in methods associated with performance analysis. Individual signifiers of performance, such as the *mise-en-scène* and performance choices by the performer cannot be ignored, since these performance elements ultimately expand the semiotics of the production due to the meaning assigned to it through audience interpretation. The analysis of a performance and its semiotics inevitably relies on subjective interpretation, in this case by the researcher. This does, however, still fit within the qualitative research paradigm, which allows for subjective dealings with the subject matter.

Since this study involves a rather extensive process in order to arrive at a conclusion, a choice has been made to divide the study into four sections to better organise the research and methodology. Section A is this introductory chapter. Section B involves the literature study which concludes with a Combined Framework constructed from the information gathered as part of the literature study. In Section C the Combined Framework will be applied to three different productions in the form of case studies. The study closes with Section D, which involves the conclusion and review of the results of the entire study. Each section is divided into a number of chapters which is described under the next heading.

1.7. CHAPTER LAYOUT

Section A comprises of Chapter 1, which involves the research proposal and includes the background of and reasons for the study based on a preliminary literature study. The research problems and questions are identified, followed by the objectives of the research, the value of the research and the research design and methodology. The demarcation of the study is then laid out and the key concepts clarified.

Section B is made up of four chapters (Chapters 2-5). In Chapter 2, the concept musical is explored in terms of its narrative and structural characteristics. These characteristics can be determined by exploring the subgenre's historical background, its modernist or postmodern tendencies, especially with regards to Brecht's Epic Theatre, and its affiliation with the structure of the revue. A thorough investigation into the interrelationship between the six

basic elements of drama, as determined by Aristotle, in exemplary shows within the subgenre can further aid the literature studies.

Following the same procedure, Chapters 3 and 4 strives to shed light on the cabaret subgenre and the one-person dramatic show respectively. In Chapter 3, cabaret is first scrutinised for its European origins and its direct affiliation with Bertolt Brecht and the rise of the avant-garde movement, and its relation to the revue. Due to the reasonable academic documentation of the history of cabaret in South Africa, a section is included to explore the development of the subgenre locally. An exploration into the interrelationship between the six elements follows the historical overview, providing more information on the narrative and structural characteristics of the subgenre.

Chapter 4 involves the one-person dramatic show and the narrative and structural characteristics typically associated with the art form. The historical background traces the development of the subgenre in the United States of America and the United Kingdom and, once again, includes reference to the revue and how it shows structural similarities. The modernist and postmodern ideas found in Brecht's Epic Theatre are compared to those found in the one-person dramatic show, and additionally, the work of modernist Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) comes into question due to his experimentation with the solo form to expose the inadequacies of language and memory. Routinely, the six elements are investigated for the way in which they interrelate within the subgenre.

It is important to note that the historical outlines of each subgenre presented in Section B is aimed at providing a well-developed chronology for the reader. The researcher presents extensive background from which necessary conclusions regarding structural components can be contracted. Readers who would like to familiarise themselves with the basic historical facts before moving on to the descriptions of the six elements would find these sections particularly helpful.

The final chapter in Section B, Chapter 5, will combine the literature study on the narrative and structural characteristics of the three informing subgenres into one Combined Framework. In table format, a wide range of possible characteristics identified in the subgenres will be presented. This will inform the evaluations to take place in Section C.

Section C is devoted to the case studies in which three South African one-person musicals will be applied to and evaluated according to the Combined Framework established at the

end of Section B. Chapter 6 will be devoted to the case study of Amanda Strydom's *State of the Heart* (1993). After an overview of Strydom's career and a brief outline of the production, *State of the Heart* will be evaluated for its narrative and structural characteristics by applying it to the Combined Framework. This process will be repeated in Chapter 7 for Nataniël's *COMBAT* (2011) and Chapter 8 for Elzabé Zietsman's *Agter Glas* (2008).

Section D comprises of the concluding Chapter 9, which reflects on the outcome of the study as it was proposed in Chapter 1. In the final chapter, it will be determined whether the research questions were answered, the objectives of the research were met and the methodology followed was successful in reaching the goals set in Chapter 1. The efficiency of the Combined Framework as an instrument for the evaluation of South African one-person musicals, facilitating an investigation into the narrative and structural characteristics thereof, will be reflected on. Suggestions for further research possibilities in this field will also be indicated.

1.8. DEMARCATION

The study is concerned with the narrative and structural characteristics of the South African one-person musical, the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. The six elements found in Aristotle's *Poetics*, namely plot, character, theme, language, music and spectacle are explored in terms of their interrelation and function towards the structure of productions within all of the afore-mentioned subgenres. For the purpose of this study, avant-garde, modernist and postmodernist techniques, primarily those found in Bertolt Brecht's work on Epic theatre, also directs the way in which the six elements are investigated.

The main focus is directed towards the one-person musical in South Africa. The case studies concentrate on three theatre productions by three South African artists who started their careers mainly within the Afrikaans theatre circuit and have established large followings within the Afrikaner community. However, these artists and their productions have since reached audiences from different backgrounds, including international followings, and their productions are all bilingual – English and Afrikaans. These specific productions are chosen because the artists have been popular and commercially successful in their performance careers, and information on their work, including DVD's of live shows, are available.

Due to a lack of academic documentation on the concept musical and the one-person dramatic show subgenres in South Africa, international sources mainly inform the background study – in particular, these subgenres’ development in the United States of America, and to a lesser extent in the United Kingdom. Where applicable, connections to African theatre are acknowledged. Cabaret’s development in Europe directs most of its historical background in Chapter 3. However, a substantial amount of academic data exists for cabaret in South Africa, especially during the tumultuous political climate in the 1980’s, which is one of the reasons why a compact literature review of South African cabaret is included in the third chapter. Another reason for the appropriacy of a South African background in the Cabaret-chapter is that the South African one-person musicals in question are often referred to as a solo-cabaret. This is due to the fact that the artists practising in the one-person musical primarily come from cabaret backgrounds. It is, however, usually a mistake in nomenclature – a mistake that this study aims to address.

The concept musicals in question are not chosen because they are the most recent examples of the subgenre, but because they were the first of their kind, thus providing a prototype on which future concept musicals could be based. Even though the concept musical emerged as an ensemble production, and cabaret has its roots in Europe and employs both ensemble and solo performance, the structure of these subgenres is of the essence and does seem relevant for application in the one-person musical in South Africa.

1.9. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS / TERMINOLOGY

1.9.1. The concept musical

The concept musical has proven to be problematic for numerous academic writers with regards to the formulation of an accurate, all-encompassing definition, resulting in different names given to the same form and even sub-groups emerging within the subgenre. Synonyms for the concept musical include “frame-story” (Swain⁴² 1990:311), “musical of ideas” (Citron⁴³ 2001:299) and “the fragmented musical” (Jones 2003:270).

⁴² Dr. Joseph Swain (1955-) is an associate professor of music and the Chairperson of the Music Department at Colgate University. His interests lie in music criticism and critical theory, cognitive science and the American musical theatre, among others, according to his online profile at Colgate University (available at: <<http://www.colgate.edu/facultysearch/facultydirectory/jswain?>>).

⁴³ Stephen Citron (1924-2013) was a song-writer and teacher of songcraft who avidly wrote about the musical theatre, including the work of Noël Coward, Cole Proter, Oscar Hammerstein II, Alan Jay Lerner and a book entitled *Sondheim and Lloyd Webber: the new musical* (2001), which is a particularly valuable history source for the literature study about concept musicals to be conducted.

For this study, a combination of two definitions directs the investigation into the concept musical. These two definitions combine the keywords found in most definitions of the concept musical. The first definition describes concept musicals as:

[I]ntegrated [musicals] in which a psychological theme or life event becomes the central unifying device, as opposed to a narrative plot. A descendant of the revue, concept musicals often employ songs as soliloquies and stress non-linear dimensions of time (Everett & Laird 2008:73).

Mordden (2003:127) elaborates on the definition by focusing more on the “how” than the “what”:

[A concept musical] is a presentational rather than strictly narrative work that employs out-of-story elements to comment upon and at times take part in the action, utilizing [sic] avant-garde techniques to defy unities of time, place and action.

Four subgroups are laid down by Miller⁴⁴ (2000:187):

- Musicals built upon a central concept (usually an important social issue) instead of a linear story.
- Musicals that still employ linear plots, but whose central concept is most important.
- Musical character studies with no linear plot but no unifying concept either.
- Musicals that do not fit into any other categories.

Apart from the fragmented narrative structure of concept musicals, most critics agree on certain key phrases within their respective definitions for the concept musical. In general, descriptive words such as innovative, unconventional and controversial are used. Researchers such as Hischak (2008:166) also recognise the modernist approach in concept musicals, especially with regards to Bertolt Brecht’s Epic theatre methods. Essential to this study, there is a common suggestion that the six dramatic elements (plot, character, theme, language, music, spectacle) are often used in revolutionary ways. Critics do not overlook the concept musical’s correlation with the much older subgenre, the revue, regarding its disjunctive nature and discarding of a formal plot structure, as described by Hischak (2008:619).

⁴⁴ Scott Miller is the founder and artistic director of New Line Theatre since 1991, which is an alternative musical theatre company. Miller has been working in the musical theatre industry since 1981 and, apart from writing musicals, he has written six books on musical theatre, including *From Assassins to West Side Story* (1996), *Rebels with Applause: Broadway’s groundbreaking musicals* (2001), *Let the Sun Shine In: The Genius of HAIR* (2003), *Strike Up the Band: A New History of Musical Theatre* (2007) and *Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll, and Musicals* (2011).

1.9.2. The revue

The format of the typical revue can be explained as an “[e]pisodic programme of songs, comedy sketches, mime, dance and instrumental music, ostensibly organized [sic] around topical and satirical subject-matter, occasionally connected by a single theme or master of ceremonies” (Senelick⁴⁵ 1995:917).

Different types of revues surfaced as the twentieth century progressed.

- Spectacular revues were exemplified in America by the impresario Florenz Ziegfeld’s elaborate showcases of large amounts of women between 1907 and 1932 in productions known as *The Ziegfeld Follies*. The ladies wore tight-fitting, but tasteful, extravagant costumes and delighted audiences with colourful, topical sketches and songs by the best composers. These productions were staged as musical entertainments, not dramatic literature, to “glorify the American girl” by emphasising the beauty of Ziegfeld’s showgirls, as they were called (Kenrick⁴⁶ 2008:123; Bordman⁴⁷ 2002:646).
- Topical revues were more intimate forms of entertainments which took after the French form of entertainment that served as an end-of-the-year review of the events that occurred during that year. Hartnoll (1983:690) explains that “revue” is a French word for “survey”. The organising device in topical revues was a satirical review of the headline events of the year (McMillin 2006:11). According to Senelick (1995:917), the topical revues were later absorbed into cabaret and chamber theatre.
- A new type of revue surfaced around 1970, best described as “surveys” or “retrospectives” of the works of particular composers. Examples of these intimate revues are *Side by Side by Sondheim* (1976) or *Ain’t Misbehavin’* (1978), the latter showcasing Fats Waller’s music (Bordman 2002:646; Senelick 1995:918).

⁴⁵ Laurence Senelick (1942-) is an experienced translator, director and actor occupying the position of Fletcher Professor of Drama and Oratory at Tufts University.

⁴⁶ John Kenrick (1959-) is a film historian, author and musical theatre history teacher at New York University, University of the Arts in Philadelphia and The New School. He is the curator of *Musicals101.com: The Cyber Encyclopedia of Musical Theatre, TV and Film* online, and has published an extensive history of the musical theatre in 2008 with the title, *Musical theatre: a history*.

⁴⁷ Gerald Bordman (1931-2011) was a theatre historian especially known for his writing in musical theatre, having authored *The American Musical Theatre* (1978), a standard reference volume in the field.

1.9.3. Cabaret

Like the concept musical, finding a precise definition of cabaret is challenging. Jelavich⁴⁸ (1993:2) proclaims that cabaret was always subject to change. Some aspects of cabaret seem to remain constant: topical satire, political content or *protest* and avant-garde principles, coupled with a unique informal relationship of intimacy and intellect between the performer and the audience (Appignanesi 2004:6; Kenrick 2003a). Appignanesi (2004:6) adds that the performer in cabaret defies the fourth wall convention and performs directly to the audience. Cabaret performers remain performers. As in Epic theatre, they do not attempt to make audiences believe that they have become a different character on stage.

Jelavich (1993:2) attempts to shed some light on the structure of cabaret by presenting an explanation of what an “ideal cabaret” would look like:

It consisted of a small stage in a relatively small hall, where the audience sat around tables. The intimacy of the setting allowed direct, eye-to-eye contact between performers and spectators. The show consisted of short (five- or ten-minute) numbers from several different genres, usually songs, comic monologues, dialogues and skits, less frequently dances, pantomimes, puppet shows, or even short films. They dealt in a satirical or parodistic manner with topical issues: sex, [...] commercial fashions, cultural fads [and] politics. [...] The presentations were linked together by a confrencier, a type of emcee who interacted with the audience, made witty remarks about events of the day, and introduced the performers.

1.9.4. The one-person dramatic show

The researcher finds the following description of the one-person dramatic show to be a useful summary of this powerful and diverse art form:

[W]ork that is more poignant than stand-up comedy, more intimate than a monologue, more hopeful than a rant and as powerful as the freedom with which [citizens] embrace the right to individual expression (National Arts Festival 2014).

Kearns (2005:ix) excludes book readings, poetry readings, karaoke and rants from his definition of “solo performance”. This study supports Kearns’ omission of these forms of entertainment, focusing on solo productions that follow the same structure as plays, with a

⁴⁸ Peter Jelavich (1954-) is a Professor of History at the Johns Hopkins University, specialising in cultural and intellectual history. According to the John Hopkins University’s website, Jelavich’s interests lie in the popular or mass culture and its interaction with elite culture and the media. He is the author of *Munich and Theatrical Modernism: Politics, Playwriting, and Performance, 1890-1914* (1985) and *Berlin Cabaret* (1993), both of which serve as important historical background in cabaret for this study, since other key sources also cite Jelavich as an important reference.

beginning, middle and end⁴⁹. It is, however, important to note that book and poetry readings were the types of performances from which the solo theatre form evolved until it was accepted as a legitimate form of theatre (Catron 2009:7).

The one-person dramatic show can be divided into the monologue drama⁵⁰ and monopolylogues. In the monologue drama “a single character speaks to a silent listener [...] for the duration of a piece; in a monopolylogue (which more resembles a drama) multiple characters speak although all are performed by one actor”⁵¹ (Gentile 1989:108).

The monologue drama form includes the following types of shows:

- Biographical one-person dramatic shows, or biographical docudramas as Teachout (2012) calls it, in which a performer takes on the character of a historical figure or a famous person. Gentile (1989:130) describes it as an attempt at a living biography. A performer speaks from the character’s perspective and presents the audience with a slice of the figure’s life aided by letters, documents and other historical material.
- Autobiographical one-person dramatic shows, involving the performer sharing a personal life event or their life-story with the audience without donning a character (Alterman 2005:4).
- Storytelling, a type of monologue in which a fictional character tells a story to the audience (Alterman 2005:6).

1.9.5. Epic Theatre

According to Hodgson⁵² (1988:121), Epic theatre involved an audience intellectually by constantly interrupting their emotional connection to the material, aiming to awaken their

⁴⁹ Compare the full definition by Alterman (2005:4) used in the Introduction section of this chapter.

⁵⁰ This is a very helpful term used by Wallace (2006:4), acknowledging the presence of a dramatic element. While the term “dramatic monologue” may also seem appropriate, this literary term serves a different purpose within the fields of poetry and prose and could, therefore, cause confusion. The dramatic monologue is briefly dealt with in Chapter 4 of this investigation.

⁵¹ There seems to be different understandings of the word “monopolylogue”. According to *The Anthem Dictionary of Literary Terms and Theory* by Peter Auger, the word is an archaic Greek term which translates directly to “single-many-speech”. It implies one actor speaking many parts. Gentile (1989:108) seems to limit the term to actual conversations, or dialogue, between different characters on stage. This entails the single actor fluctuating from one character to the other. Dolan (2005:66) sees the term as more inclusive, regarding any solo play in which the single performer portrays several characters to be a monopolylogue, whether in dialogue form or in mono form, where a series of episodes or monologues each features a different character.

⁵² Terry Hodgson is a Senior Lecturer in Literature and Drama at the University of Sussex. His book, *The Drama Dictionary* (1988), provides useful definitions to a wide range of terms used in the theatrical spectrum.

political judgement rather than clouding it with sensation. This was to be achieved by preventing the spectator from becoming overly involved with their emotional interpretations of the action and defying what Brecht called Aristotelian drama, in which the characters seemed to be trapped in a plot or fate which they cannot change.

Brecht wrote many essays on his work and its non-Aristotelian approach. Gray (1976:81) holds Brecht's discontent with the Aristotelian catharsis as one of the main reasons behind his choice to contrast himself with Aristotle:

Through catharsis, the spectator is restored to health, is no longer troubled by the conditions of actual living, and cease to have the desire to change them. 'In metaphysics', it has been said, 'everything always is all right', and the same might be said of the Aristotelian theatre as Brecht conceived it to be.

Instead of purging audiences' emotions by allowing them to associate with the characters' situations subjectively, Brecht wanted an objective attentiveness from his audiences which could urge them to change the social or political problems addressed by his dramas. Brecht aimed to bring about this change by distancing his audience emotionally from the theatrical production using different techniques of alienation to produce the *Verfremdungseffekt*.

1.9.5.1. *Verfremdungseffekt*

The *Verfremdungseffekt* is achieved when audiences are constantly aware that they are viewing theatrical productions instead of believing in the fictional world depicted on stage (Wilson & Goldfarb 2004:450). Leach (2004:119) identifies the use of the half-curtain and visible stage equipment as a means of achieving this distancing effect. The narrative structure in Epic theatre is also episodic or non-linear, with time-gaps to give the audience time to think. Each scene exists for itself instead of serving the other (Hodgson 1988:122).

Apart from the episodic structure, or "montage", explained above, other alienation techniques are indicated by the British Broadcasting Channel's educational website, Bitesize⁵³ (Anon 2018e):

- Narration
- Direct audience address
- Song and dance

⁵³ The techniques provided by Bitesize are in accordance with other published sources on Brecht and is chosen for its compact, summative and inclusive list of Epic Theatre methods, which is useful for the clarification of the concept of Epic Theatre.

- Coming out of role / third person narration
- Multi-roling⁵⁴, when one actor portrays more than one character in a single theatrical production (Porter 2012:1)
- Split-roling, which entails two or more actors portraying the same role
- Using placards to announce different scenes
- Minimal set, minimal costume and minimal props
- The use of symbolic props and
- Speaking the stage directions

1.9.5.2. *Historisierung*

Brecht introduced the term *historisierung*, or historification, which involves the depiction of a character or an incident as relative or changeable by depicting it in a social, historical light (Pavis⁵⁵ 1998a:171). Leach (2004:117-118) elaborates on the term:

[Epic theatre] presented [a situation] as something that *had happened*. Brecht wanted his theatre to 'historicize' [sic] the events portrayed: *Historicizing* involves judging a particular social system from another social system's point of view [...] Understanding one system through watching another, or the present through seeing the past, also of course suggests possible futures.

Wilson and Goldfarb (2004:451) explain that Brecht set his plays in the past, his characters functioning within a historical milieu and a social system other than that of the audience, as a means of distancing the audience. The events are, however, paralleled to contemporary issues and the audience, recognising similarities between past and present, view the events objectively, critically and politically.

1.9.5.3. *Gestus*

Brecht's Epic Theatre is known for its urgency to provide social and political commentary. A very effective, seemingly simple method of commentary in Epic theatre is *gestus*. *Gestus* is a gesture or movement associated with a specific character in which the actor can either present a generalisation of a certain character type or social role, a social comment by means of a single gesture, or capture and evoke a single attitude or moment in time⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ The term, "multi-roling" is not a dictionary term, but is a useful and to-the-point term that can describe one actor portraying multiple roles. "Multi-" here, of course, refers to numerous amounts, and "-roling" stems from the word "role", as in a theatrical role or character in a production. The same situation holds for the use of the word "-roling" in "split-roling", where multiple actors portray the same character.

⁵⁵ See footnote no. 170.

⁵⁶ The explanation of *gestus* is found on the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) Bitesize webpage, which provides online study support for students (Anon 2018e).

1.9.6. The six elements

Aristotle identified six structural elements as the components of a theatre production. He identified three internal elements:

- **Plot** is “the arrangement of the incidents” (Butcher 1898:25).
- **Character** is a person through which moral purpose is revealed (Butcher 1898:29). Character is one of the personal agents through which the plot unfolds (Butcher 1898:25), the other being theme.
- **Theme** is described by Aristotle as a vehicle through which “general truths about the human condition are expressed” (Butcher 1898:25).

The advancement of the internal elements of plot, character and theme occurs through the creative external elements of language, music and spectacle (Butcher 1898:2).

- **Language** is described as “the metrical arrangement of the words” or “the expression of our meaning in words” (Butcher 1898:25, 29). Aristotle distinguishes between prose and verse, which is embellished language into which rhythm, harmony and song enter. Verse can be executed with or without the accompaniment of music (Butcher 1898:11, 23).
- **Music** for Aristotle means embellished language, or “language into which harmony, rhythm and song enter”. Music forms part of the embellishments of a production, together with spectacle (Butcher 1898:23).
- **Spectacle** is described as the scenic accessories of a production (Butcher 1898:25). Thus, what is of concern here are the visual aspects surrounding the characters – for example, movement, gestures, choreography, costuming and make-up – or the visual design – including décor, props and lighting.

1.10. CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter serves as the starting point of the proposed study into the narrative and structural characteristics of South African one-person musicals. After providing a detailed description of the background to the study and the rationale behind the proposed study, the researcher could proceed to lay out the research questions and objectives towards which this study will be structured. Primarily, this study will be focused towards the development of a Combined Framework, informed by literature studies of the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show, according to which three one-person

musicals from South Africa can be evaluated in terms of their narrative and structural characteristics.

The research design, methodology and Chapter layout has been revealed, with this study comprising of four sections, the first of which is this introductory first chapter. Section B comprises of three chapters of literature studies and a fourth chapter in which the intended Combined Framework will be constructed. The third part of the study, Section C, entails three case studies in which three one-person musicals from three different South African artists will be applied to the framework. Section D will be the conclusion and discussion of the results of the entire study. Finally, this chapter described the demarcation of the proposed study and proceeded to clarify some key terms to be explored in the proposed study.

With a clear idea of the goals and driving force behind the study, aided by a thorough understanding of the preliminary background study, the researcher can commence with Section B, which is the literature study. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, the concept musical subgenre will be explored for its narrative and structural characteristics and how these features could assist the researcher in establishing a framework against which South African one-person musicals can be evaluated.

SECTION B

TOWARDS A COMBINED FRAMEWORK: A LITERATURE STUDY

CHAPTER 2:**THE CONCEPT MUSICAL AS GUIDELINE FOR THE NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION OF SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS**

The concept musical is one of the most challenging subgenres of musical theatre to define. A variety of musicals have been dubbed concept musicals for different reasons, causing difficulty in the formulation of a definitive definition. Miller (2000:188) declares that the term concept musical “is a term with as many definitions as there are people using it”. In the introductory chapter to this study, an attempt was made to establish a definition of the concept musical that could inform the literature study to be undertaken here into the subgenre (see 1.9.1.).

This chapter is not devoted to finding an accurate definition for the concept musical, but rather identifying typical narrative and structural characteristics that can assist the process towards a Combined Framework to which South African one-person musicals can be applied for evaluation. The framework will combine characteristics found in this chapter with those of cabaret and one-person dramatic show, which will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

What is of value in this chapter are the structural innovations introduced by the concept musical subgenre and the new possibilities it brought to the musical theatre scene. McMillin (2006:25) is of the opinion that the concept musical made the most unusual and unthinkable topics acceptable in musical theatre, which was an art-form known for its escapist value rather than its serious subject matter and social commentary. It is also true that the concept musical introduced new possibilities with regards to the incorporation of the six structural elements in musicals, presenting an alternative to the Rodgers and Hammerstein-style traditional book musical in which plot reigned supreme (Citron 2001:172). It seems, however, as if the new subgenre needed to emerge alongside the mainstream, commercial musicals of New York’s Broadway to qualify for critical analysis. The concept musical favours theme and character over traditional linear plots, throwing the conventional writing process off course. As Miller (2000:187) states: “[T]here is no easy, logical framework on which to hang the songs and characters”. Concept musicals tend to be non-linearly

structured, containing a series of fragmented scenes, or vignettes, and songs⁵⁷ (Wollman 2009:74).

The investigation launched here into the concept musical commences with a historical background on the emergence of the subgenre in the United States of America. Three musicals considered by most to be early concept musicals are expounded. They are *Allegro*⁵⁸ (1947) by Rodgers and Hammerstein, *Love Life* (1948) by Kurt Weill and Alan Jay Lerner⁵⁹, and *Cabaret* (1966) by the songwriting team, John Kander and Fred Ebb⁶⁰. This is followed by a brief historical overview of concept musicals associated with Stephen Sondheim and Hal Prince, as well as concept musicals from other teams and directors and their innovative qualities, for example, Michael Bennett's *A Chorus Line* and *Chicago* (1975), also by Kander and Ebb. After that, the revue as an art form is explored for its direct impact on the development of the concept musical. The last section of the historical background concern's Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre. Special attention is given to the structure of his productions and his how its *Verfremdungseffekt* and alienation techniques have been incorporated into the concept musicals of note.

The concept musical as a subgenre is then studied for its narrative and structural characteristics by exploring the use of the six elements within its narrative structure, taking examples from the concept musicals identified in the historical background. These structural features will be utilised in the construction of the proposed framework in Chapter 5, which will aid the researcher in evaluating South African one-person musicals with regards to their narrative and structural characteristics.

Concept musicals seem valuable for research into one-person musicals since both of these subgenres seem to present a different outlook on what musical theatre could be. Miller

⁵⁷ The non-traditional structure for a musical may have been in use in other parts of the world before the term concept musical was coined. The South African musical *King Kong*, that travelled to London's West End in 1961, was first envisioned by writer Harry Bloom as a series of vignettes connected by songs with guitar; a style indebted to the loose structure of black vaudeville and controversial burlesques staged by Alfred Herbert in the 1950's (De Beer 1960:11; Dalamba 2011:96).

⁵⁸ Interestingly, *Allegro* was the first professional theatre production of which Sondheim was part of. The seventeen-year-old Sondheim was hired as a gofer and coffee-boy during rehearsals (Citron 2001:40).

⁵⁹ *Love Life* was the only Weill-Lerner collaboration, but Weill and Lerner are both known for their collaborations with other artists. Weill had a number of successful collaborations with Bertolt Brecht, including *The Threepenny Opera*, which delived the famous song, *Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*, known in English as *Mack the Knife*. Lerner is best known for his collaborations with composer Frederick Loewe, of which *My Fair Lady*, *Camelot* and *Brigadoon* are arguably best known.

⁶⁰ Kander and Ebb are known for their colloborative work on *Kiss of a Spider Woman*, which opened on London's West End in 1992, as well as *Cabaret* and *Chicago*, both of which were turned into award-winning films.

(2000:19) acknowledges the rising interest in solo performers and monologists as an indication of where musical theatre might be heading while asking valuable questions that could be linked to the solo art form:

Does a musical have to have a linear plot? Are there other ways to tell a story? Why must scenes follow in a logical sequence? Can we tell a story out of chronological order? [...] How can we follow the lead of developing technology by making musical theatre truly interactive? Or, conversely, can we shed all the trapping of technology and go back to the basics of the empty stage?

It seems as if the rise of the concept musical was the first step towards new directions in musical theatre. An exploration of the history of the concept musical and how its innovative qualities have influenced the musical theatre industry will now be undertaken.

2.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Until the middle of the 1960's the traditional, integrated book musical had enjoyed critical as well as commercial success on Broadway. These musical plays, including *Oklahoma!* (1943), *West Side Story*⁶¹ (1957) and *Fiddler on the Roof*⁶² (1964), touched on more mature subject matter than the earlier musical comedies of the 20th century, and established a shift toward the integration of music, story and dance – the main elements – within the musical theatre genre (McMillin 2006:1). The musical as an integrated art form would, however, polarise even further into other forms which sought different means of integration as a new decade dawned. According to Gänzl (2002:526), the traditional American musical showed signs of stagnation from the start of the 1960's and was in decline. The musical theatre had to renew itself to rise as a dominant art form once again.

Musicals, like any theatre form, often reflect changes happening in society or the performing arts industry (*Broadway: The American Musical* 2004). In the decades leading up to the traditional American musical's decline in the 1960's, modernist approaches and experimental, modernist theatre practices co-existed with musical theatre without actually influencing its style. Knapp (1995:774) mentions that alternative theatre pieces incorporating rock music emerged around the middle of the century, as well as several experimental

⁶¹ *West Side Story* was Stephen Sondheim's first significant entry into the musical theatre scene on Broadway. He wrote the lyrics for the musical, with Leonard Bernstein providing the music. Hal Prince was also co-producer for the production. The musical was based on William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, re-imagined in a contemporary idiom.

⁶² *Fiddler on the Roof*, a very successful musical about Jewish tradition, was one of the numerous productions that Hal Prince produced.

musicals from Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway⁶³. These novelties challenged the conventional forms utilised in musical theatre. Rock music, in particular, came as a threat to the popular show tunes of musicals and revues, replacing the musical theatre as the primary source for popular music (Trevens 1984:461).

The 1970's would see formidable progress in the maturity of the musical and its shift towards modernist techniques. In the 25 years leading up to the arrival of what Swain (1990:320) calls "mature musicals" in 1970, the musical theatre scene had to be prepared by a few productions that began to stretch the boundaries. Early concept musicals, the revue and Brecht's Epic theatre all seemed to pave the way for these mature concept musicals on Broadway.

2.1.1. Early concept musicals

With *Oklahoma!*, Rodgers and Hammerstein introduced more serious themes into the musical theatre by weaving it into the plot-driven narrative (Mordden 1983:139). However, their experimentation with theme as the pivotal element of the production in *Allegro* (1947), instead of the traditional plot, was a bite too big for its audience to swallow. Likewise, *Love Life* (1948), failed to appeal to the populist audiences who patronised Broadway musicals.

Allegro is often retrospectively cited as the first concept musical, although the term had not been in use at the time of the musical's conception (Everett & Laird⁶⁴ 2008:6). The musical follows a physician-turned-politician from birth through maturity; a lifetime in which ambition almost ruins him (Kenrick 2008:251; Mordden 1983:135). The innovation of *Allegro* lies in its method of story-telling. The philosophy behind the story – that success can lead to destruction – carries more weight than the storyline per se (Citron 2001:41). An omnipresent chorus comments on the action, characters return from the dead, and the staging includes minimal set and screen projections on the back wall (Mordden 1983:135). Such novelties on Broadway would only be appreciated decades after its original conception, where it is now

⁶³ Off-Broadway provided an experimental platform for musical theatre, but when it turned out to become a commercial institution, "Off-Off-Broadway became what Off-Broadway was not – a forum devoted to new American plays, a laboratory [...] and a home for the artistic expression of heterodox social and political thought" (Jenner & Brandt 1995:1146).

⁶⁴ William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird share a special interest in musicals and have published several books on the subject, both together and separately. Everett and Laird are both musicologists and they teach music history at the University of Missouri and the University of Kansas, respectively.

considered an important step towards the maturity in musicals, together with the next innovative musical of note, *Love Life*.

Love Life appeared a year after *Allegro*. *Love Life* falls into Miller's first category of concept musicals, those revolving around a central concept, which he calls "pure" concept musicals (Miller 2000:188). According to Miller (2000:188), the non-linear plot comprised of vignettes strung together by a 150-year relationship from the 1790's to the 1940's. The couple and their children struggle to remain optimistic as the outward forces of the American life inevitably influence their relationships. Using vaudevillian devices, variety acts would interrupt and comment on the action of the main story, breaking the fourth wall (Everett & Laird 2008:201). Miller (2000:188) notes that these commentary songs and their ultimate effect of alienation (emotional disconnection of the audience) were also used by Weill, *Love Life*'s composer, when he worked with Bertolt Brecht on *The Threepenny Opera*. The modernist approach in staging, which involved the defiance of the fourth wall convention, the innovative use of time and the intellectual approach was somewhat unconventional for Broadway musicals and would only be attempted again in 1966, with *Cabaret*.

Cabaret marked director Hal Prince's departure from the work of his forerunners and contemporaries. This bold concept musical aimed to take a political standpoint against the social prejudice and racism of America in the 1960's, but disguised it in the metaphor of 1930's Berlin and the rise of Nazism (Lundskær-Nielsen 2008:30). Two worlds/dimensions are present in *Cabaret*. McMillin (2006:23) describes it as the two lives lead by the main character, Sally Bowles. The first dimension follows the personal life of Sally in a traditional book musical format. This is what Lundskær-Nielsen (2008:33) calls the "real world", as opposed to the other dimension, the "limbo area", which is Sally's life as a cabaret singer in a nightclub. In this world, there also lives an Emcee⁶⁵ and a chorus who frequently interrupt the course of the traditional storyline to dance and sing in commentary musical numbers symbolic of the growing Nazi invasion. These commentary songs give *Cabaret* its political

⁶⁵ Emcee is a name derived from the abbreviation for Master of Ceremonies (MC). The Master of Ceremonies is a feature that occurs several times during this study, especially due to its specific purpose in the cabaret subgenre. Fittingly, the figure is also present in the musical *Cabaret* where he appears in the parallel world of the musical theatre numbers, which comment on the action in a smarmy cabaret style from a "early obscene reflection of the real world" (Everett & Laird 2008: 45). The actor, Joel Grey, originated the role on Broadway and was met with raving reviews. His rendition has since become the prototype on which many successive Master of Ceremonies are based.

edge and highbrow quality that separates it from traditional low-brow musical theatre (McMillin 2006:23; Everett & Laird 2008:xlili).

By 1966, with *Cabaret*'s arrival, audiences seemed to have grown more accustomed to the new directions in musical theatre. Kenrick (2008:269) recognises that the musical theatre audiences in 1947 and 1948, when *Allegro* and *Love Life* surfaced, were not quite ready for innovation of such magnitude. Audiences need to be eased into new directions within the theatre, especially in a populist art form such as the musical theatre, where the cerebral material appears to baffle an audience habituated to being entertained instead of challenged beyond what is familiar (Citron 2001:394). The metaphorical *Cabaret*, with its metaphysical and mirroring quality and deep social message, seems to McMillin (2006:24) like the turning point for the concept musical, which made it possible and acceptable for a musical to address important social issues in innovative ways. *Allegro*, *Love Life* and *Cabaret*, paved the way for more intellectual, less-linear, avant-garde musicals in the 1970's.

2.1.2. The concept musical on Broadway from 1970

In the words of McMillin (2006:24), "concept musicals are avant-garde Broadway book shows". This subgenre is now primarily associated with two modern musical pioneers, Stephen Sondheim and Hal Prince, who find themselves in the rather contradictory position of being "avant-garde artist[s] in *the* populist art form [original italics]" (Gordon 2000:1). This fusion of traditional musical theatre forms with an avant-garde world gave Sondheim and Prince the ticket to drive the musical forward in new ways which could challenge audiences and convey serious messages by shocking and unnerving them, rather than comforting them (Lundskaer-Nielsen 2008:31). Sondheim and Prince's *Company* (1970) marked the arrival of concept musicals on Broadway⁶⁶ (Hischak 2008:166).

Lundskaer-Nielsen (2008:21) calls *Company* a "thematic musical", driven by the theme of marriage. A bachelor, *Bobby*, is surprised by his friends on his 35th birthday. These friends consist of five married couples that we get to know in private conversations with *Bobby* as the play progresses, exposing the truths about their marriages (Citron 2001:161). This is, however, not the romanticised outlook on marriage that the typical musical depicted, but rather a cynical one. *Company* exposes the difficulties of marriage, as well as the struggle to connect emotionally in a dehumanised society such as Manhattan (Olson 2000:53).

⁶⁶ McMillin (2006:24) states that by 1975, the concept musical had arrived and settled in the mainstream of Broadway.

The next Sondheim-Prince collaboration, *Follies* (1971), was just as unsettling as *Company*. *Follies* employs the glamorous world of the revue to reveal with a hint of cynicism the contrasting reality of its protagonists' de-glamorised lives. Two former Ziegfeld-girls, who performed in Ziegfeld's lavish 1920's revues, attend a reunion at their old theatre which is about to be demolished (Kenrick 2008:327). The younger versions of the veterans soon appear on stage with their present-day selves, encumbering them with haunting memories and regrets of personal choices made throughout their lives (Fisher 2000:74).

Pacific Overtures (1976) turned out to be Sondheim and Prince's most audacious and innovative concept musical (Kenrick 2014). Staged in a Kabuki-style, the musical explores the commercialisation of Japan from Commodore Matthew Perry's first unwanted 1853-visit to the Japanese shores – hoping to set up a trading agreement between the United States of America and Japan – through to the (then) present-day 1976 Japan with its technological and industrial advances (Citron 2001:214). Kenrick (2014) indicates that this unique but highly intellectual musical seemed to baffle audiences too much for it to become a commercial success.

Not all of the Sondheim-Prince collaborations were strictly concept musicals. According to Citron (2001:201), *A Little Night Music* (1973) is considered to be more of an operetta, a subgenre that dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. The pair's musical thriller, *Sweeney Todd* (1979) follows a more traditional linear structure⁶⁷ but is still of importance in this study for its innovative content⁶⁸, political undertone and use of alienation techniques that demonstrate Prince and Sondheim's inclination towards modern theatre practices.

Prince and Sondheim also worked separately in other collaborations, yielding more musicals that have a predominantly linear plot development, but innovative directions in terms of how the productions are executed. Prince directed *Evita* (1979), created by British songwriting team Andrew Lloyd Webber⁶⁹ (1948-) and Tim Rice (1944-), about the historical figure Eva

⁶⁷ Taylor (2009:82) stresses the fact that the linear storyline is constantly disrupted by different theatrical elements, which could bring about that the production is perceived as fragmented. Schlesinger (2000:128,130) attests this viewpoint, noting that the many plot twists, puzzles and unexpected revelations makes for a non-linear experience for audience members, even when the narrative of the musical unfolds linearly.

⁶⁸ Reminiscent of Grand Guignol style, *Sweeney Todd* deals with madness, revenge, murder and cannibalism, subjects considered taboo for musical theatre (Everett & Laird 2008:337-338).

⁶⁹ Andrew Lloyd Webber is one of the most important composers of the second half of the twentieth century. Many of his musicals, including *Cats* and *The Phantom of the Opera* have enjoyed record-breaking runs on Broadway and London's West End. Citron (2001:4, 18) draws attention to the fact that Lloyd Webber and Stephen Sondheim both presented the musical theatre industry with a new musical, but followed opposite approaches. Lloyd Webber, the

Perón (1919-1952), controversial first lady of Argentina from 1946-1952. A range of Brechtian techniques is present in this “high art concept production”, as Mordden (2003:239) calls it, which will be discussed during this chapter. Sondheim collaborated with librettist-director James Lapine (1949-) to create *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), inspired by the historic painting, “Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte”, by Georges Seurat (1859-1891). The musical explores art and the creative process using innovative artistic methods (Everett & Laird 2008:335).

Sondheim’s *Assassins* (1990), a collaboration with librettist John Weidman (1946-), took on the delicate subject matter of presidential assassination. This is a musical about the criminals who were convicted of the assassination or the attempted assassination of past American presidents, starting with Abraham Lincoln (Everett and Laird 2008:16). According to Hischak (2011:265), some patriotic critics (mistakenly) thought of the show as a political statement in which assassins were admired for their deeds. *Assassins* was not produced on Broadway at first⁷⁰ but enjoyed a short run Off-Broadway. It did, however, find a life in London and outside of New York (Miller 2000:20).

Kander and Ebb, the creators of the early concept musical, *Cabaret*, brought the stylish *Chicago* to Broadway in 1975, which also dealt with criminal acts. To a great extent a combination of *Love Life* and *Cabaret*, vaudeville-style songs commented on the rather traditional plot about murder and the corrupt judicial system in the 1920’s Chicago (Kenrick 2008:330). The musical was co-written, directed and choreographed by Bob Fosse⁷¹ (1927-1987) and was very successful despite stiff competition from another concept musical, *A Chorus Line*, which opened on Broadway that same year (Everett & Laird 2008:63).

While most concept musicals receive critical acclaim for the experimental nature thereof, few are financially successful (Miller 2000:187). One singular sensation, conceived and directed by Michael Bennett, seemed to be an exception to the rule. *A Chorus Line* enjoyed

sentimentalist, presented “oversized theatricality” or megamusicals, while Sondheim, the cerebralist, brought an intellectual, modernist approach to the musical theatre.

⁷⁰ Everett and Laird (2008:16) reports that a revival of *Assassins*, starring Neil Patrick Harris as *Bobby*, was produced on Broadway in 2004. A revival was initially scheduled for the autumn of 2001, but was cancelled after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 2001.

⁷¹ Award-winning dancer and director-choreographer, Bob Fosse, was one of the revolutionaries in the Broadway musical, developing a range of signature dance moves still distinguishable today. Fosse also directed the award-winning film version of *Cabaret* in 1972.

a 15-year-run on Broadway and a revival of 759 performances from 2006 to 2008⁷². Composer-lyricist Maury Yeston described the musical to the *New York Times*:

It altered our concept of the relationship of a book to a score. Instead of having to tell a story in a specific way - [...] where every event led to another event – it created a form in which a series of monologues linked by an idea could support an evening of theatre (Rothstein 1990).

According to Swain (1990:309-310), *A Chorus Line* is essentially a show about the personal experiences of chorus dancers on Broadway. Bennett gathered the material for the show by interviewing a group of actual chorus dancers and recording the conversations. Swain (1990:311) explains further that, in this concept musical, a series of vignettes are structured around an audition process in which the auditionees are requested by the voice of the invisible director to share personal stories with him, each other and, consequently, the audience.

From this historical overview, it can be deduced that concept musicals often recall the traditions of earlier musical theatre subgenres, either in presentation, subject matter or format. *Cabaret*'s musical numbers resemble the 1930's Berlin cabaret, the songs in *Love Life* and *Chicago* reside in variety acts reminiscent of a vaudeville show, and *Follies* uses the *Ziegfeld Follies* revues as the starting point for its subject matter and presentation. Everett and Laird (2008:16) identifies features of both the revue and the concept musical in *Assasins*. In fact, the fragmented nature of the revue subgenre is thought to have influenced the narrative structure of concept musicals in general.

2.1.3. The influence of the revue on the concept musical

A detailed description of the revue subgenre was provided in Chapter One of this study (see 1.9.2.). According to McMillin (2006:24), concept musicals recall the revue tradition in some ways, but also incorporate elements of the seemingly more refined book musicals of the previous era, especially with regards to character. Whereas the revue featured different performers and characters in almost every episode, concept musicals' "leading characters remain throughout the show and their lives change" (McMillin 2006:24). Sondheim proclaims to Lipton (1997:5) that he explored the area between revue and the book musical in many of his concept musicals. Knapp (2006:294) and Trevens (1984:461) acknowledge the structural similarities between the two subgenres where narrative is concerned, which is

⁷² This information is found on the *Internet Broadway Database* profile for *A Chorus Line*.

where the researcher's particular interest lies. Three concept musicals resembling the revue structure are discussed under this section, namely *Follies*, *Hair* (1968) and *Cats* (1980).

The diminutive libretto⁷³ in *Follies* emulates the typically fragmented revue structure of the *Ziegfeld Follies* (Fisher 2000:74; Citron 2001:183) but is categorised as a concept musical and character study, because its characters remain present until the closing scene (Miller 2000:190). Citron (2001:178) points out that the disjointed nature of *Follies* arises from its main characters entering the stage to do mostly individual songs in separate scenes tied together by a minimalistic plot and an overall theme. Fittingly, the main characters are former Ziegfeld-girls who performed in the extravagant *Ziegfeld Follies*-revues in the 1920's. Their character songs unfold in Follies-style musical numbers. Lundskaer-Nielson (2008:133) explicates that *Follies* is driven by social commentary and makes metaphorical use of the *Ziegfeld Follies* revue format to comment on post-Vietnam America and the collapse of the American Dream.

Much like *Follies*, Galt MacDermot (1928-) and James Rado's (1932-) *Hair* can be regarded as a concept musical because its characters stay throughout, but is more of a revue in terms of structure. Miller (2000:189) categorises it as a thematic revue, while the anti-structure of this unusual, counterculture hippie-musical leans toward the format of a "happening" for Kenrick (2008:320). The scenes unfold in a series of vignettes surrounding the hippie life, sporting a "thin plot [...] [as] an excuse for vibrant musical numbers and satirical skits celebrating the counterculture that was growing in America" (Hischak 2009:184).

According to Everett and Laird (2008:xlili), *Hair's* non-linear storytelling and unconventional staging made for a very experimental theatre piece that raised a few eyebrows on Broadway but also raised the bar in terms of the wide range of subject matter that musical theatre can sing about. In true hippie-spirit, *Hair* takes on an anti-war stance in the unravelling of its minute plot. One of the characters living in the commune, *Claude*, is drafted for the Vietnam War. He dies there and is mourned by his friends. Issues of a controversial, even provocative, nature are addressed, such as homosexuality, drugs, poverty, race and sex. The staging of *Hair* on Broadway was sure to knock over some more boundaries and fourth walls. Nudity was introduced on the Broadway stage, together with the novelty of the cast entering the auditorium and interacting with audience members (Everett & Laird 2008:137).

⁷³ According to the *Odham's Dictionary of the English Language* (1965), the libretto is the book of the musical, containing the written part of it.

Additionally, performers sang over handheld microphones in true rock-show tradition (Everett & Laird 2008:xlili). As unconventional as *Hair* was, it found an audience and even some commercial success.

Cats, an even more farfetched revue-like concept musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber surprised critics with unprecedented commercial success. Based on T.S. Eliot's children's collection of poems, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, this spectacular musical, which was simply about cats, turned out to be the longest-running Broadway musical until Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera* outplayed it in 2006 (McMillin 2006:24, Everett & Laird 2008:58).

As Everett and Laird (2008:58) explain, *Cats* took on the revue-structure, held together with minimal story, minimal theme and no dialogue, but many interesting characters and spectacular musical numbers performed and danced by actors impersonating cats. Through the songs, these *Jellicle Cats* reveal the diverse personalities of several felines who could qualify for another life at the end of the *Jellicle Ball*. Citron (2001:276) claims that *Cats* "is more an experience than a show". In true revue-tradition, the impetus behind the show is entertainment and spectacle rather than social commentary.

While the revue provided the makers of the concept musical with a suitable narrative structure, it seemed to lack the intellectual substance that they were aiming to achieve. In Brecht's Epic theatre, they found a form that could explore deeper social themes within the fragmented structure of the revue-tradition⁷⁴, without losing the entertainment quality of the theatrical modes their audiences were accustomed to.

2.1.4. Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre and concept musicals

As previously mentioned, Bertolt Brecht was one of the modernist artists who introduced ground-breaking new artistic methods to the theatre, especially with his repudiation of the accepted norms with regards to the unification of the six elements. According to Hulfield (2013:26), Brecht repudiated Wagner's vision of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and wanted to make the audience aware of the different elements present in the production instead. Saddik (2007:20) exposes Brecht's antagonism towards nineteenth-century realism and Aristotle's

⁷⁴ It is interesting to note that Erwin Piscator (1893-1966), whose work influenced Brecht to a great extent, as Appignanesi (2004:188) points out, was interested in the fragmentation and the directness that the revue seemed to possess. He thought these features made it a powerful agitational platform which provided an alternative to traditional drama and the separation between actor and spectator that did not satisfy Piscator (Jelavich 1993:211).

cathartic theatre. He believed that neither of these theatrical forms allowed for political commentary and social change, an undertaking that he considered necessary in theatre.

Epic theatre is in line with the avant-garde approach of modern theatre where narrative theatre is replaced with “pastiche plays”⁷⁵ or a montage structure, as Aronson (2000:202) explains. This creates what McMillin (2006:28) refers to as “disunification” between the elements. Brecht’s Epic theatre is “a montage in which each scene has a self-contained life, and, like the segments of a worm, each is capable of life even when cut off from its neighbour” (Leach 2004:117). The montage-structure of many Brechtian productions is reminiscent of the revue and seems to be carried over in concept musicals as well.

Fragmentation through montage is one of the techniques used in Epic theatre, and consequently concept musicals, to achieve the *Verfremdungseffekt* (see 1.9.5.). As previously discussed, Epic theatre employs more alienation devices such as direct audience address, narration, multi-roling, song, dance and separate dramatic episodes which are often announced with titles (Saddik 2007:21). These devices, as well as Brecht’s *historisierung* and political commentary, are of importance in this chapter for their manifestation in concept musicals⁷⁶.

Parallels can be drawn between Epic Theatre and even the earliest concept musicals. Everett and Laird (2008:6) state that the traditionalists, Rodgers and Hammerstein, experimented with techniques of a Brechtian nature in *Allegro*, such as commentary chorus songs and minimal set with projection screens. *Love Life*, by Alan Jay Lerner and Kurt Weill⁷⁷, employed vaudeville acts as commentary numbers and an unusual time stretch in which the same protagonists entered different generations (Citron 2001:46). *Cabaret* is almost an exemplary model of a Brechtian drama, says McMillin (2006:23), with commentary songs, political references and the Emcee. *Hair* replicated the montage structure of Brecht in a series of seemingly unrelated vignettes of hippie life, defied the fourth wall convention

⁷⁵ “Pastiche” here refers to the combination of distinct styles or elements into one, according to the *Collins Concise Dictionary: 21st century edition* (2001).

⁷⁶ It could be argued that Brecht’s alienation techniques and the critical thinking and socio-political commentary it strove towards is not linked to a populist form such as musical theatre. However, this researcher is of the opinion that the concept musical, especially at its inception, is a subgenre of musical theatre that does aim at evoking critical interaction with the subject material, and does engage in socio-political commentary more than its predecessors. This statement especially resonates with the musicals of Prince and Sondheim.

⁷⁷ It is not surprising that Epic Theatre techniques would surface in *Love Life*, since its composer, Kurt Weill, collaborated with Brecht on several musical and operatic works, including *The Threepenny Opera* in 1933 (Leach 2004:109)

and carried a strong social, even political, message “[a]ttacking everything the establishment stands for” (Citron 2001:7).

According to Mordden (2003:132), *Pacific Overtures* “is Epic Theatre, complete with Alienation Effect, political footnotes, and character development set against historical panorama”⁷⁸. In true Brechtian-style a montage-structure is chosen for the narrative, using what Sondheim calls a scrapbook technique in which a personal story about two men, the fisherman Manjiro and samurai Kayama Monzaemon, is frequently interrupted by scenes depicting the historical and political climate of the country (Fleischer 2000:114). The progression in the historical events is narrated directly to the audience by a reciter who occasionally takes on the roles of other characters, the Shogun and Emperor Meiji, thus utilising the Brechtian device of multi-roling (TheSondheimFan 2013).

As previously mentioned, Hischak (2009:133) documents that Brechtian techniques are present in *Evita*, which Prince directed. Apart from a political flavour and historical setting, *Evita* features a narrator, *Che*, a revolutionary, inspired by the historical figure, Che Guevara. According to Knapp (2006:343-344), *Che* functions as a “privileged spectator”, who observes and comments on the story, providing the audience with an alternative, often grimmer perspective on the seemingly positive ventures of first lady *Eva Perón*.

Prince sees theatre as a valuable platform for social commentary in a populist form such as musical theatre and stoops to modernist, Brechtian methods to do so.

Despite Prince’s affiliation with Broadway, his approach to staging has clear parallels in the more avant-garde theatre of his day. Prince’s use of direct audience address in *Cabaret* and his repeated use of the chorus as an extension of society (and of the audience) in shows such as *Cabaret*, *Company*, *Evita*, and *Sweeney Todd* echo the preoccupation of the avant-garde theatre with confronting the audience and making them complicit in the theatrical event (Lunskær-Nielsen 2008:20).

According to White (2004:122), Brecht openly admitted that *Verfremdung* was primarily used for political motives. Sondheim admits to using alienation devices in his concept musicals *Company*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Pacific Overtures*, but denies that his work is political in the way that Brecht’s was (Savran 188:223-39). Critics, however, identify political undercurrents in most of his work. Bonahue (2000:184n8) suggests themes such as colonialism in *Pacific*

⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that Oriental theatre techniques were a major point of interest in Brecht’s formulation of his Epic Theatre. One of his major essays on alienation was entitled *Verfremdungseffekte in der chinesischen Schauspielkunst*, translated into *The Fourth Wall of China: An Essay on the Effect of Disillusion in the Chinese Theatre* (White 2004:90).

Overtures and class struggle in *Sweeney Todd*, which Sondheim attributes to Prince, who is the “more political animal” between the two of them (Savran 1988:137).

It does seem as if Sondheim also adopted a political stance for *Assassins*, his black comedy using the topic of historic presidential assassination to address the “deterioration of American innocence” (DiSanto 1997). Concept musicals set out to challenge audiences intellectually and touch on political subjects but attempt to do so without being dull and humourless, very much like Epic Theatre. Brecht considered fun and enjoyment essential to the theatre experience (Leach 2004:120). *Assassins* is a humorous theatrical endeavour about serious subject matter. This is observed in *Sweeney Todd* as well, where the political content is approached buoyantly and is, therefore, still entertaining (Trevens 1984:511).

Sweeney Todd is also an example of how Sondheim and Prince incorporated Brecht's device of *Historisierung* into their musicals. As mentioned, Brecht believed that audiences could evaluate current social systems by seeing the theatrical events unfold in a different social and political milieu, possibly moving them to change it. Many Prince-musicals are set in foreign political systems in the past and do subtly lean towards political commentary, but not to the extent of Brecht's work and the cabaret subgenre. Examples of such works by Prince, are *Cabaret*, using 1930's Nazi Berlin as metaphor for prejudice; *Sweeney Todd*, taking place in the dehumanising context of London's Industrial Revolution (DiSanto 1997); *Evita* (1979), paralleling Perón's Argentina with 1970's England where trade unions almost overthrew the government (Citron 2001:223) and *Pacific Overtures* dealing with colonialism in nineteenth-century Japan to bring audiences the agonizing truth that progress is inevitable and necessary, but costly and sacrificial (Fleischer 2000:123).

It seems as if the point of divergence between Brecht's Epic theatre and concept musicals lies in its character development. Leach (2004:123) points out that in Brecht's Epic theatre ‘the people’ and their stories should be the focus. Saddik (2007:22) maintains that the actors, however, merely represent these ‘people’ and never aim to create the illusion that they become the characters on stage. Additionally, multi-roling serves as a means of shattering this illusion. Where the cabaret subgenre, discussed in the next chapter of this study, views its characters in the same way as Epic theatre, in that the performer remains a performer, the characters in concept musicals are mostly portrayed as being ‘real people’. Sondheim admits in an interview with Savran (1988:228) that he does not like Brecht – mostly for the political agendas behind Epic Theatre already discussed, but also for its poor characters

and little space for character development. He is quoted saying to Savran (1988:228), “The thing about Brecht is that I don’t see anything going on in the way of character and that’s what I’m interested in. I believe that action is character”. Apart from the multi-roling in *Pacific Overtures*, the actors in most concept musicals each portray only one character⁷⁹.

Even though Sondheim criticises Brecht, most of his shows employ several Brechtian methods. McMillin (2006:30) attempts to bridge this contradictory situation by suggesting that Sondheim uses the features of Epic Theatre, but imagines new variations for it, in the same way that Brecht found revolutionary ways to use Aristotle’s six elements and advanced the disunified form of the revue into his *nichtaristotelisches*, political Epic Theatre.

The creators of concept musicals were equipped with an understanding of the revue format, traditional book musicals, early deviations into concept musicals at the end of the 1940’s, and the avant-garde theatre devices of the twentieth century, especially that of Bertolt Brecht’s Epic theatre. With the historical background, they could steer the musical into new directions by uniting the existing models into revolutionary pieces of art which could rethink how the six structural elements can interconnect.

2.2. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SIX ELEMENTS OF DRAMA IN CONCEPT MUSICALS

It could be said that, while Brecht used disjunction to produce exactly that – a non-unified arrangement of scenes with a distancing effect – the concept musical’s use of disjunction and separation of the elements brought about an illusion of integration to the audience (Taylor 2009:86). According to Mordden (2003:128), concept musicals possess an innate intricate interface between the integration of the elements and the separation thereof. In this, the power of the concept musical resides.

In the following section, the interrelationship between the six structural elements in concept musicals is examined. Plot and theme are discussed as the first heading, followed by the element of character. The creative elements of language and music are discussed together under the next heading, due to both elements’ affiliation with rhythm and them being co-dependent on each other in musical theatre. Finally, the visual aspects in concept musicals

⁷⁹ In some later productions of *Assassins*, the same actor portrays the *Balladeer* character and *Lee Harvey Oswald*. The original production, however, used different actors for the two roles (Miller 2000:195).

are explored under the subheading, Spectacle. Throughout, examples from concept musicals mentioned for historical background will substantiate the findings.

Theme is considered by most critics to be the crucial element in most concept musicals, just as plot was considered superior by Aristotle and in traditional book musicals. The use of theme and plot in concept musicals are explored for their hierarchical switch in terms of superiority and how these two elements are utilised or alternated in new ways.

2.2.1. Plot versus theme

Iglesias (2005:78) stresses the importance of distinguishing between story and plot in literature. This endeavour is also useful in the context of concept musicals that do not seem to follow traditional narratives, as well as cabarets and one-person dramatic shows which will be discussed in successive chapters.

Story is your creation, your art. Plot is the vehicle for telling your story in an entertaining way, your craft. Story is the deeper understanding about the human condition your reader will gain as a result of experiencing a sequence of events. Plot is the progression of these events, the way you chose to structure the story (Iglesias 2005:78).

A problem arises from numerous sources using the word “plotless” to describe concept musicals⁸⁰ because the researcher questions the feasibility of a term such as “plotless” when plot represents the way in which a writer chooses to structure dramatic events. Even if the arrangement of the incidents is non-linear and unconventional, as, in most concept musicals, there is never an absence of incidents or some narrative structure, which is what “plotless” would imply. In the light of Hirschak’s (2008:166) observation that concept musicals tend to the thematic rather than the linear, concept musicals will not be described here as plotless, but instead as theme-driven or non-linear.

Concept musicals deviate from traditional plot-driven book musicals in that they discard subplot⁸¹ (Citron 1997:139; R. Perold 2014, pers. comm. 26 September). Engel (2006:89) explains that subplots are secondary stories which can stand on their own but are linked to and run parallel with the main narrative in a production, involving characters that are in some way related or known to the protagonists. Subplots break the possible monotony of a single, thin storyline, complement or directly influence the main action and heighten the audience’s

⁸⁰ Sources using the term “plotless” include Everett & Laird (2008:xliii); Citron (2001:161); Bordman & Hirschak (2004:143); and Sondheim, a pioneer in the concept musical himself, (*Broadway! A history of the musical* 1989).

⁸¹ Fittingly, the one-person musical’s narrative is also said to function without the use of subplots, as R. Perold (2014, pers. comm., 26 September) points out. This will be explored further in Section C of this study.

interest (Engel 2006:98; 101). The omission of subplot can be successful when other elements, such as theme or character, can fulfil its function just as effectively (Engel 2006:102). Furthermore, Engel (2006:100) mentions that the absence of subplot could direct the audience back to the core of the show, which could be held as the reason why concept musicals do well without it. In the words of Citron (1997:139), “there is no need [in concept musicals] of any intrusion to divert the audience from their stories”. The need for subplots to expand thin romantic stories such as those found in traditional book musicals seems to be replaced in concept musicals by its strong theme-driven narratives.

The arrangement of the events in a concept musical is said to be determined and linked by its central, controlling theme (McMillin 2006:22). Young (2008:20) best distinguishes between the use of theme in the revue, traditional book musicals and concept musicals:

The revue *uses* a theme to unify disparate musical numbers and specialty [sic] acts. The integrated musical *contains* a theme. In contrast, the concept musical *embodies* a theme developed as the musical is written.

In concept musicals, the different elements are generally utilised in service of the focal conceptual issue or theme, as opposed to a linear plot, which was the fundamental element for Aristotle and the central element around which traditional book musicals were constructed⁸². Miller (2000:198) pronounces that “[e]verything in the show, every scene, every song, points toward that central concept, just as every scene and song in an integrated book musical supports the storyline”.

Concept musicals are mostly told in unconventional, non-linear ways that remind of the montage-structure found in Brecht’s Epic theatre and the episodic structure of revues, with time and space often fragmented (Gordon 2000:3). The fragments in concept musicals involve entertaining characters and different stories tied together by stronger and more intellectual themes than the concept musical’s escapist counterpart (Savran 1988:136-137).

⁸² Even when concept musicals stray from the Aristotelian approach of engaging plot as the deciding factor in the telling of its stories, the events are still what Aristotle would call “artistically constructed” (Butcher 1898:27), and not randomly placed without serving a purpose. Seemingly disparate events may be placed together within a plot, but the link between them should be made clear either through what Neale (2009b:172) calls a “linking narrative” pulling the fragments together, or the audience should be able to draw the connective points through association (Neale 2009b:173).

With its arrival on Broadway, *Company*, one of the prime examples of the concept musical, would stretch many musical theatre boundaries in terms of plot and theme. Mordden (2003:28) captures the essence of this first collaboration between Sondheim and Prince:

There is no exposition, no backstory, no data. The piece is made entirely of how people express themselves and how they feel, so the surface matter so common to other musicals keeps breaking apart like thin ice in this one. There's danger below: the truth.

In *Company*, the incidents are arranged in a series of related scenes or vignettes, each being an episode on its own (Everett & Laird 2008:71). Miller (2000:187) supports this statement by adding that “the songs and scenes could be in practically any order and still make as much sense”. *Company* is entertaining - at times even funny - but not escapist. After a laughter-filled evening, audience members would exit the theatre thinking about the issues dealt with, perhaps even re-evaluating their own lives (Olson 2000:65). It has been mentioned that *Company* is driven by the theme of marriage and the disconnection between people in a world becoming more dehumanised⁸³. More novel ideas addressed by *Company* are ambivalence, desperation and seduction (Citron 2001:12).

Fisher (2000:74) indicates that the thin revue-like libretto in *Follies* allowed for a deeper concentration on the many thematic layers of the production, which were expressed through the other elements of character, language, music and spectacle. The resemblance between *Follies*' fragmented narrative structure and that of the revue has been discussed as part of the historical background to this chapter. Regarding theme, *Follies* metaphorically addresses the disillusionment of a crumbling American dream through the loss of innocence in its characters, as Sondheim indicates in an interview with Lipton (1997:6).

As previously discussed, *Assassins* also addresses the failed American dream but does this through the biographical subject matter of notorious historic criminals. The narrative structure takes shape through a series of vignettes built around an anachronistic reunion of presidential assassins (Jehan Prouvaire 2013). Their stories are told through separate dramatic scenes and commentary songs, some of which serve as small dramatic pieces themselves. As stated by Miller (2000:191), “the show examined a series of characters, most of whom had only one big moment in the spotlight”, following the same pattern as *A Chorus Line* fifteen years earlier.

⁸³ The theme of dehumanisation is also present in other musicals that Prince directed, for example *Cabaret*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Evita* (Lundskær-Nielsen 2008:42).

Michael Bennet's *A Chorus Line* features a simple plot assembled around a dance audition, which serves as the framing device of the story. Tape recordings of interviews with real dancers and their life experiences informed the subject matter.

The conception of *A Chorus Line* as a frame story enabled Bennett and his writers to preserve the individuality and honesty of the original autobiographies without having to weave them into some plausible plot (Swain 1990:311).

A line of chorus dancers presents monologues or songs as a means of sharing their individual stories, addressing several mature social issues such as homosexuality, quarrelling parents, frustration, beliefs and hope (Citron 2001:213). Like *Company* and *Assassins*, vignettes are favoured over a linear plot (Lundskær-Nielsen 2008:33).

The individual stories, which can be classified as low-level events, are emphasised at the expense of a high-level overall plot. Swain (1990:311) asserts that “[*A Chorus Line*] sacrifices high-level tension and resolution, and puts in its place a series of small dramas, little waves of tension and resolution”. These small dramas, or autobiographies, in which the characters reveal personal anecdotes, are neither subplots nor episodes in a high-level plot. Much like in Brechtian dramas or revues, the arrangement of the monologues could be altered significantly or some of the scenes could be replaced by new ones without affecting the show in its totality due to the framing device of the audition process.

Pacific Overtures, in turn, has an episodic, montage structure that reminds of both the revue and Epic theatre, with a thematic approach linking the episodes in this “show of ideas”, as Sondheim calls it (Savran 1988:237). Fleischer (2000:123) notes that in this history's scrapbook, some actual historical events may have been re-arranged or even omitted for creative purposes, which brings about a non-chronological, non-linear representation of history. Mordden (2003:133) makes a useful observation when he examines the disintegration found so frequently during *Pacific Overtures*:

Note that even Jonathan Tunick's orchestration is segmented; the entire show is. *Pacific Overtures* breaks this vast account into the loosest and tightest of book musicals. Loose because it allows room for so much; tight because it never relaxes its grip on how the history is happening.

Despite its fragmented structure, the production as a whole may still be perceived as linear or tight, because the elements serve a common goal – its historical theme.

Most concept musicals are known for their innovative use of time, long time frames and distortion of linearity⁸⁴. *Love Life*'s couple survives more than a century without ageing, *Pacific Overtures* covers 150 years of history and *Assassins* re-unites the assassins of American presidents across the barriers of time. Miller (2000:192) recognises the "plastic nature of time throughout the show, [which] pays off in [the final] scene, as past, present and future collide in Oswald's brain". In *Merrily we roll along* (1981)⁸⁵, Sondheim and Prince experimented with telling a story backwards – from 1981 to 1956 (Olson 2000:49).

The unusual time frame in *Company* seems to be unspecified. Although it appears to take place in the present, a surreal quality distorts the perception of time (Olson 2000:48). Sondheim states that *Company* happens as a single moment of time (Lipton 1997:5), while Fleischer (2000:119) goes as far as suggesting that it exists "out of time".

It has been previously discussed that *Cabaret* and *Chicago* also sport innovative usage of time. In both, two worlds or time frames are present. The one is more linear in structure and follows a traditional plot. The other, the world existing through the songs, interrupts the traditional storyline and comments on it, seeming to exist outside of a particular time frame (Everett & Laird 2008:63). Mordden (2003:127) indicates the resulting alienation effect reminiscent of Epic Theatre. Like Brecht, *Cabaret* and *Chicago* also take on unorthodox subject matter and social commentary. Citron (2001:12) documents issues such as promiscuity, Nazism and abortion in *Cabaret*, and a murder case as the core story in *Chicago*, satirising corruption in the judicial system with criminals turning into celebrities.

Regarding plot and theme, concept musicals certainly introduced fresh ideas and new possibilities for musicals. The non-linear, fragmented approach to the narrative is a manifestation of modernist and postmodernist movements in theatre, with special mention given here to Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre, and to some extent the revue subgenre. Unconventional use of time frames and intellectual, serious themes and socio-political commentary are also identified. The unusual structural approach to unprecedented themes and subject matter, and the interesting stories in concept musicals now just needed interesting characters and a fresh approach to characterisation to stretch the boundaries

⁸⁴ Even ghosts are not an unusual phenomenon in concept musicals: *Allegro* features characters who have passed away, such as the protagonist's mother and grandmother (Mordden 1983: 35). Sondheim's *Follies* and *Sunday in the Park with George* make use of ghosts appearing from the past and interacting with characters from the present, blurring the lines between past and present (Fleischer 2000:118; Bonahue 2000:171).

⁸⁵ *Merrily We Roll Along* was unsuccessful and signified the end of the collaboration between Sondheim and Prince. Even revivals of the show have not been able to reach commercial success (Kenrick 2008:346).

even further. Sondheim (In Savran 1988:237) is quoted saying: “[W]hat makes stories really work for me is character. [...] ‘As Wilson Mizner said, people beat scenery’”.

2.2.2. Character

While the concept musical still seems to approach characterisation in a more traditional way, with actors representing characters as individuals different from themselves, there does seem to be innovations in terms of how characters fit into and influence the overall theme and plot. Ulea (2002:13) criticises the Aristotelian view of characters as unchangeable entities controlled and smothered by the plot, unable to change their circumstances.

In Aristotle’s theory of tragedy, characters are equal to fixed physical objects ruled by laws; they are subjugated to plot development, which unfolds in compliance with these laws. In accordance with Aristotelian theory, the object cannot change the law; in the same manner, the character is unable to change the plot.

Miller (2000:195) makes a significant remark about the characters in Sondheim’s *Assassins* when he writes that “the assassins are aware of *Assassins* the musical as their vehicle, as their medium to communicate their message to America”. These characters are, therefore, not controlled by their plot, but in control of it⁸⁶. The assassins ultimately drive the musical’s narrator, the *Balladeer*, off-stage to take matters into their own hands, powered by their ideologies and the central theme of a crumbling American dream (Miller 2000:194).

The concept musical’s preference for theme over linear plot enables its characters with the freedom that their creators desired. Young (2008:48) states that “without the encumbrance of a linear storyline, [characters are] free to move through time and space in their exploration [of the central theme]”. Instead of being caught up in or restricted by the plot, the characters become the fundamental agents in the progression of the theme while, conversely, being developed as they explore the thematic foci (Young 2008:32).

In the words of Young (2008:35), “character and theme work together to create cohesion for the concept musical”. In musicals such as *A Chorus Line* and *Company*, the characters provide the viewpoint through which the theme is explored. The dancers in *A Chorus Line* are responsible for relating the different personal stories within the framing device of an audition process. Similarly, *Company* utilises *Bobby*, the unmarried protagonist, to develop the theme of marriage and relationships. The various stories, each revealing different

⁸⁶ Hodgson (1988:121) affirms that Brecht also found this Aristotelian outlook on character too passive for his politically driven Epic theatre shows. He rather aimed to expose that the human condition is governed by political and social forces and is, therefore, changeable (Saddik 2007:21).

aspects of the focal concept, are unified by *Bobby*, and his character development takes place through it (Young 2008:34). Sondheim uses the songs in *Company* as character and situation sketches to support the theme, but also to drive *Bobby* into self-discovery (Mordden 2003:25). Fleischer (2000:119) and Hischak (2009:90) are in accord that this self-discovery involves a realisation that emotional commitment might be necessary to feel truly alive.

Company also involves the self-reflection of the other characters. Young (2008:38), however, calls attention to the fact that “characters do not comment upon their own feelings or actions; the commentary is carried out by characters not involved in the scene”. The characters are all aware of each other’s underlying emotions. They witness the situations unfolding on stage and reflect on it from an outside perspective through the use of commentary choral numbers, much like *Allegro*’s chorus songs. Concept musicals differ from traditional book musicals in that they do not employ anonymous chorus members, a position that the characters in *A Chorus Line* happen to be auditioning for.

While the dancers in *A Chorus Line* enter the stage as anonymous auditionees, their identities are revealed as each of them shares an individual, personal story either through songs or monologues. They then become distinct and developed characters instead of an undistinguishable chorus line (Young 2008:33). Swain (1990:311) terms the process “a psychological striptease...[where] slowly the kids undress in a series of sad if funny vignettes”. The nakedness of the dancers’ confessions draws the audience in, and they start rooting for every character to get the job, although they know that only a few will get chosen (Swain 1990:312). Young (2008:34) elaborates by stating that the audience hardly remembers the list of names that ultimately passed the audition, but can recall the separate life stories they shared with the audience, the director and each other.

In concept musicals, characters often defy the fourth wall convention, addressing the audience directly or narrating stories or commentary to them in a Brechtian fashion (Dvoskin 2014:398). *Cabaret*, *Assassins*, *Pacific Overtures* and *Evita* make deliberate use of specific characters to comment on the action from a place of existence out of time. The omnipresent, all-observing *Emcee* in *Cabaret*, with the help of chorus members from the cabaret, The Kit Kat Club, provides commentary through musical cabaret numbers to drive the theme of the show (Lewis 2010:25). In *Assassins*, the *Balladeer* aids the three successful assassins in telling their stories to the audience. Dvoskin (2014:399) writes that “he both interacts with and comments on the assassins from a sort of vaguely defined ‘future’”. Miller (2000:194)

adds that, while trying to keep the narrative going, he delivers songs and speeches to the audience from an outsider's point of view. He represents the American public who are happy to oversimplify and see situations in black and white (Miller 2000:193). However, as cracks in his character surface, the audience starts distrusting his utterances, and he is ultimately overruled as the assassins gain control of the show. As previously discussed, the reciter in *Pacific Overtures* mainly views and comments on history as an outsider, providing perspective as the incidents unfold, but occasionally takes part in the action. In *Evita*, the Argentine leftist revolutionary, *Che* (Guevara), appears as a narrator that comments on the action and interacts with Perón on a psychosomatic level. However, in real life, Guevara “was not in Argentina during the Perón era—this was creative license on the part of the authors (Everett & Laird 2008:97)

Although shows like *Evita*, *Assassins* and *Pacific Overtures* are driven by historical events, their creators are more interested in how the characters can make the narrative progress than they are in the historical accuracy of their characters. Miller (2000:192) underlines that, in *Assassins*, the psychological accuracy of the characters enjoys preference over the historical accuracy. Here, historical figures that lived in different centuries in real life speak to one another. For *Pacific Overtures*, Sondheim, and the rest of the creative team, wanted to introduce character development for human interest, exploring how the overall idea of the production influences specific characters. The personal story of *Manjiro* and *Kayama* was inserted for these reasons (Citron 2001:215). Mordden (1983:193) and Hirschak (2009:348) agree that the personal relationship between the two men, in which one represents progression (Westernisation) and the other conservatism (anti-Westernisation), personifies the historical struggle depicted in the production. However, neither their causes can win: “they have been swallowed up by the pressure of history” (Mordden 1983:193).

Using certain characters in a metaphorical rather than literal sense, as is observed in *Pacific Overtures*, is common in concept musicals (Dvoskin 2014:398). *Follies* and *Chicago* arise as prime examples. “[In *Follies*] the characters – and by extension, the America of the seventies – confront their inner pain and come to terms with the limitations of ordinary life” (Gordon 1992:109). The characters appear on stage with younger versions of themselves, contrasting the idyllic past with the disillusioned present. Their loss of innocence constitutes the theme of the show, metaphorically personifying the fall of the *Follies* tradition, as well as the country, as Fisher (2000:74-75) elucidates:

Sally and Buddy, married and living a lower-middle-class life in the Southwest, represent the failure of the “American Dream” of economic success in the postwar years for some of their generation. [...] Ben and Phyllis, married and living a materially successful existence in the upper echelons of New York society, have each lost their way, spiritually and morally.

The theme of reality versus appearance also filters through the characters in *Chicago*, where *Velma* is the bonding agent linking the plot with the focal conceptual issues of corruption and people performing their lives. All the characters deceive each other by playing certain roles, which symbolises corruption in society on a higher semiotic level: the murderesses play innocent, but demonstrate how society finds decadence entertaining; *Billy*, the lawyer, pretends to be the common man fighting for justice, while indulging in “celebritising” criminals; *Mama Morton* two-times as the dedicated public servant, but she is guilty of corruption; and the sensationalist reporters hide behind a façade of objectivity. They all get away with it, while *Amos*, the only honest character, is cheated (Miller 1999). Appropriately, the characters’ pretentious lives unfold through vaudeville acts in which they perform.

It appears as if the presentational style of the modern theatre has given the creators of concept musicals the license to add another dimension to the way in which their characters function. Although a traditional approach to the process of characterisation is observed, the resulting characters often function in a meta-theatrical way in which they are aware of the audience and the musical that they are placed in. They choose to tell their stories or comment on situations directly to the audience, whether through the language of spoken sections, song or even dance. The chosen language of communication in concept musicals is carefully constructed to best reveal its characters and themes. The importance of the music and the language of the musical should never be undervalued because it inevitably links to the way in which the elements of plot, theme and character is perceived and can make or break a production.

2.2.3. Music and Language

Mordden (2003:232) makes an important observation when he remarks that “[it is] not the idea: it’s the execution”. A story, theme or character can seem like a good idea, but without the correct execution thereof – through the creative aspects of the libretto, songs and visuals – the musical could ultimately fail. The concept musical appears to follow a number of Brechtian methods with regards to execution. Alienation techniques such as commentary musical numbers delivered directly to the audience are prevalent in the concept musical, as

well as the disruption of spoken language through song to create a sense of fragmentation⁸⁷, which is also reminiscent of revues. The concept musical does, however, seem to achieve an emotional response through its implementation of music and language.

Music is the deciding element in musical theatre because it is the one attribute that all musicals share (Mordden 2003:7). The element of language here refers to the spoken dialogue or monologue, as well as the lyrics of the musical, holding the same essence in both. Swain (1990:323) pronounces music to be the language of feeling, while lyrics speak to the mind.

In Sondheim musicals, he is both the lyricist and the composer for each song, which could be the reason for the effectiveness of the final products he brings to the stage. Sondheim combines his poignant music with his sensitivity to language in lyric writing to create a holistic musical experience:

Sondheim, in his scintillating lyrics and complex harmonies, has evolved a compelling synthesis of musical idiom and the American language and thought patterns. Words and sound blend, contrast and complement each other, and create an appropriate theatrical moment, a valid expression of a particular character's personality. Word and note are inseparable (Gordon 1992:12).

This special amalgamation of music and lyrics into emotively and intellectually loaded songs, distinguish concept musicals from traditional book musicals and revues. Gordon (1992:8) explicates that Sondheim's music and lyrics are extensions of the inherent dramatic concept behind the musical. Where other musical theatre forms would use songs to *reflect* the certain aspects of the production, these songs *become* part of the production, simultaneously collaborating with and intruding on the narrative (Mordden 2003:27). Young (2008:36) highlights the significant differences between the songs in concept musicals and that of other musical theatre forms:

⁸⁷ As discussed in Chapter 1, McMillin (2006:25) is of the opinion that the musical's appeal as a dramatic form depends on the alteration between the spoken word found in the book scenes and the musical numbers, in which music and lyrics combine into theatrical songs with important dramatic functions. Knapp (2005:12) observes that this alteration between elements with varied means of communication and different time-structures creates a fragmented experience which could affect an audience in remarkable ways:

[T]he effect of adding music to a dramatic scene that might otherwise play naturalistically serves to exaggerate its content, adding a dimension of artificiality at the same time that it often also strives to tap into a deeper kind of reality, one accessible only through music.

This statement also confirms the musical theatre's potential to not only entertain, but to achieve a deeper consciousness through which an audience could be led into questioning and dealing with serious issues.

While musical comedy and revue use song to showcase performers and the integrated musical uses it to advance the plot, the concept musical utilizes song to illuminate aspects of the theme through self-reflective diegetic numbers, resulting in a commentary either on the action or on other characters.

The term “diegetic” is borrowed from film criticism and implies musical numbers that arise from the book out of necessity, as opposed to the out-of-the-blue songs in which characters are perceived to burst out in song, as is frequently the case in other musical theatre forms (McMillin 2006:103-104). In these diegetic songs, characters are aware of the audience and consciously perform for them in reaction to situations on stage, commenting from outside of the action (Young 2008:36). Sondheim reveals to Savran (1988:231) that the commentary songs in *Company*, among others, are carried out using a Brechtian approach in which actors disregard the fourth wall convention of naturalistic acting used in traditional book musicals, where audiences are treated as invisible spectators (Miller 2007:5).

Early concept musicals *Allegro*, *Love Life* and *Cabaret* all feature commentary songs. Young (2008:18) writes that *Allegro* features a type of Greek chorus as narrator, who also represents the community and the protagonist’s conscience. This choral device is also present in Prince and Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd*. As Taylor (2009:81) explains, the chorus in *Sweeney Todd* narrates directly to the audience, while also commenting on the action as outsiders, having a definite alienation effect. It has been previously mentioned that *Cabaret* and *Love Life* incorporate commentary songs sung by individuals or groups, as a reaction to dramatic events. These songs play out as entertainment acts of cabaret and vaudeville.

Vaudeville numbers become more than just entertainment acts in *Chicago*. While they establish the era of the 1920’s, they also become a metaphor for life (Miller 1999:2). Additionally, vaudeville music is used as a language, a means of communication. “The story of Chicago is told in the language of vaudeville, with almost every song in the style of a specific vaudeville performer or tradition” (Miller 1999:3-4).

In *Assassins*, each of the assassins gets a chance to deliver a song to state their case. The style of each character’s song is in accordance with his/her contemporaries, depending on the era they lived in (Miller 2000:191). Apart from being accurate in style, each song also captures the character’s being. In the words of Gordon (1992:329), “the essence of each character is exemplified in Sondheim’s musical language”.

Sondheim is often praised for his ability to create a unique theatrical language through his music:

Sondheim has evolved a particular category of musical language. The heightening emotional impact of tonality; the stimulation effect of rhythm; the soothing quality of harmony; the expansion and compression of time and feeling – these emotive powers of music are well established, and Sondheim naturally exploits all the connotative resonances of musical form (Gordon 1992:9).

While Aristotle viewed music merely as a decorative aspect of a production (Butcher 1898:29), the songs in concept musicals, especially those of Stephen Sondheim, serve a greater purpose than mere ornamentation. Sondheim views music as a language on its own (Gordon 1992:264) and believes in the ability of music to evoke a specific emotion in a listener (Horowitz 2010:72).

The value of music as an independent language can be demonstrated by the score in *Follies*. While the pastiche songs⁸⁸ serve to parody composers, lyricists and stage personas of the 1920's era, it also metaphorically comments on the characters' situations. The spectacular songs depicting the leading characters' days as Ziegfeld-girls contrasts immensely with their present-day lives in which their dreams certainly did not come true (Lundskaer-Nielsen 2008:134). Some musical numbers also serve as serious plot or character songs⁸⁹ for the four principal characters (Fisher 2000:72). More importantly, the melodies in these character songs betray that the leading characters are telling lies in the lyrics they are singing:

The principals of *Follies* are so dishonest with themselves that Sondheim was forced to tell the audience not to believe them through the music he gave them to sing. A song's melody, especially in the musical theatre, has always been able to confirm or deny what the character on stage is telling us (Citron 2001:182).

Information about characters can be revealed through both music and language. As Neale⁹⁰ (2009a:48) explains, spoken dialogue or lyrics seem like the primary means of revealing details about a character: who they are, where they are, as well as their psychological and mental state. However, as is the case in *Follies*, characters are not always honest on stage,

⁸⁸ In the *Collins Concise Dictionary: 21st century edition* (2001), "pastiche" songs are songs that imitate the musical style of another period.

⁸⁹ Apart from commentary songs, this study also acknowledges plot-advancing songs and character songs, depending on the purpose that the song fulfils in the musical. A plot-advancing or "action song" moves the plot forward, while a character song gives the character the opportunity to express their feelings, according to BBC Bitesize (http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/music_20th_century/music_theatre1.shtml).

⁹⁰ Derek Neale is a Lecturer in Creative Writing and has helped launch the Open University's new generation of writing courses. He is co-author of *Writing Fiction* (2008) and *Life Writing* (2008) and has written about literary approaches and techniques in several genres. He is the editor of *A Creative Writing Handbook* (2009) used here for insights on creative writing.

either through withholding information or lying. Horowitz (2010:viii) is of the opinion that, in many cases, Sondheim relies on the subconscious abilities of the audience's minds to fill in the blanks and make the necessary connections. They complete the puzzle through what is not being said, or through other evidence given - this might include character work, music or physical signs. For this reason, his musical numbers contain essential subtext and fulfil many dramatic purposes.

Sondheim's rhythms in language and melodies are also carefully constructed to serve specific functions and reveal information to the audience. Gordon (1992:15) emphasises Sondheim's belief that "rhyme suggests education". Therefore, the character must use a suitable language level that would depict his/her background and intellectual abilities. Neale (2009a:49) indicates that authors could differentiate characters by letting them speak with dialects or in idioms exclusive to the characters' demographical statuses. Mordden (2006:28) makes a good observation that *Company* has an "accurate score", because it sounds like the people in the show, even though the characters are not people who would normally sing, as Sondheim points out in Citron (2001:161). Kakutani (1984) uses the words "colloquial" and "conversational" to describe Sondheim's lyrics. He pronounces that "Mr Sondheim is extremely attuned to the nuances of language and essentially writes for the ear" (Kakutani 1984).

Pacific Overtures illustrates Sondheim's conviction about accuracy in language and music. Gordon (1992:189) notes the metaphoric language used in the musical, while Rockwell (1997:217) expands on the "foreignness in musical and dramatic idioms", due to the foreign quality of the content and Kabuki-style presentation. The pre-Westernised Japan features poetic qualities in the language and music inspired by Oriental styles. The Western influences, however, eventually intrude on the peaceful Japanese worlds, transforming even the music and language⁹¹.

[A]s the show progresses and the impact of the Western invasion is evident, the haiku-like lyrics of such tender Act 1 songs as "There is No Other Way" and "Poems" give way to more colloquial language, culminating in the final song, "Next" a jarring industrial show-like "tribute" to modern Japan (Fleischer 2001:108).

⁹¹ Act II opens with the musical number "Please Hello" and features colonialists from different European countries each performing their solos in a style indigenous to their countries. In "A Bowler Hat", words such as "umbrella", "pocket watch", "cigars", "monocle" and "bowler hat" are added to the haiku-style lyrics. The next song, "Pretty Lady", is performed in Cockney-dialect as three British sailors court a Japanese woman (TheSondheimFan 2013; Fleischer 2001:108). All the above-mentioned songs build up to the finale, "Next", in which a fully westernised Japan is showcased through lyrics and music.

Swain (1990:312) pronounces that in musicals with a frame story, in which the overall theme of the production carries the most weight, the songs need to be used in revolutionary ways. The musical numbers need to operate as small independent dramas exploring the theme and providing commentary (Young 2008:48).

Young (2008:37) and Gordon (1992:15) are in accord that diegetic songs in concept musicals often function as soliloquies or inner monologues. In these songs, characters acknowledge the audience and share their most profound thoughts and motivations with them, but not necessarily with other characters. Neale (2009a:62) views monologues as a key method used by writers to reveal personal details about characters. In this way, the character – and, subsequently, the performer – forms a more intimate bond with the audience⁹². The modernist vision about an intimate performer-spectator relationship seems to have been carried over to some extent to concept musicals, and a larger extent to cabaret and one-person dramatic show subgenres, which will be explored in later chapters.

The musical numbers in *Company* and *A Chorus Line* can be held as prime examples of songs used as inner monologues by the characters to connect on a deeper level with the audience. Each musical number in *Company* is considered an episode on its own (Citron 2001:162), and functions as an internal monologue (Young 2008:37). Sondheim is quoted in Lipton (2009:269) as saying “[e]ach of the songs was either a comment or the entire scene itself”. Swain (1990:312) observes similar characteristics of the songs in *A Chorus Line*, stating that they are “dramas in miniature...[that] had to have a dramatic role in the storytelling”.

Music and language can be used on different levels as means of communication. *A Chorus Line* adds dance as an independent language through which stories can be told and emotions portrayed. Philips (2006:2) argues that dance is a non-verbal language that could also progress the plot and aid character development. In *A Chorus Line* dance functions as the basic language of the production and even as non-verbal inner monologues through which deeper emotions are communicated to the audience. The musical numbers in *A Chorus Line* often replace dialogue and provide opportunities for the characters to dance in

⁹² The intimate performer-spectator relationship was a vision of Brecht for his Epic Theatre. Miller (2007:5) writes that actors bursting into song, and pretending not to notice the change of rhythm from speech to music, appalled Brecht. He rather believed in authenticity, which would demand the acknowledgement of the audience and awareness amongst the actors that they are performing, creating a more intellectual connection between performers and spectators. This draws audience members into the action, while at the same time alienating them emotionally so that they can make informed choices about the social issues at hand (Hirsch 1989:89).

order to express emotions that they cannot put into words, in the same way as verbal songs often serve as a means of channelling overwhelming emotions (Young 2008:40).

Language can take on a wide variety of forms, including dialogue, music, lyrics and dance. While all these mediums of communication serve as embellishments to a production, they also fulfil greater dramatic functions on a metaphorical and thematic level, especially in concept musicals. The music and language in concept musicals show some affiliation with Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* and presented the musical theatre with innovative ways in which to incorporate music and language towards the advancement of the overall theme, while adding harmonic decoration and auditory appeal to the production. The third and last external element is that of spectacle. In concept musicals, it adds visual appeal to the musical, but also contributes to the development of the theme.

2.2.4. Spectacle

Together with the embellishment of music, spectacle is the element that distinguishes a theatrical performance from merely reading a drama script or musical libretto (Kenny 2013:15). In the concept musical, the visual elements appear to be primarily informed by the overall theme of the production and show evidence of a modernist approach with a clear presentational mode in its execution.

Swain (1990:320) makes an interesting remark with the words "spectacle by itself is not drama". This is an opinion he shares with Aristotle, who believed that reading a script could have the required emotional impact without having to watch the performance thereof:

Scenery has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry. For the power of Tragedy, we may be sure, is felt even apart from representation and actors. Besides, the production of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet (Butcher 1898:30-31).

Hischak (2006:37) clarifies this statement of Aristotle by stating that "spectacle adds richness and variety to a play, but rarely is it the essential element that makes theatregoing special". In certain musical theatre productions, however, it seems as if spectacle is given a more prominent ranking amongst the elements. Hischak (2006:37) claims that most large-scale Broadway musicals rely on spectacle for its success, because audiences find spectacle an attractive feature in the whole theatrical experience.

Around the 1980's, elaborate and spectacular British musicals came into prominence on London's West End, also transferring to Broadway. These musicals can be described as technologically advanced mega-musicals, as Kenrick (2014b) calls them. These musicals include *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, *Miss Saigon*, and some that are considered concept musicals, such as *Evita*, *Starlight Express*⁹³ and *Cats* (Lundskaer-Nielsen 2008:47). Kenrick (2014b) criticises mega-musicals for placing spectacle above substance, claiming that these musicals seem to feature spectacular set designs, choreography and costumes to conceal the often weak dramatic material.

With concept musicals, particularly those associated with Sondheim, Prince, Michael Bennett and Bob Fosse, the dramatic material dictates the decisions made over the visual aspects, because the theme of the production lies at the centre of the creative process. According to Dietz (2014:xi), all the different facets of the concept musical, including the visual design, direction, choreography and performance, embody the underlying concept of the show. All creative departments unite in the development of the production, as Knapp (1995:774) elucidates:

[The concept musical is] a show in which the director and designers, instead of attempting to translate a pre-existing libretto and score into theatrical terms during rehearsals, collaborate with the composer, lyricist and librettist during the creation of the show, so that every element is conceived in terms of the production.

The fact that even the visual presentation of the musical was subject to the development of the central concept called for directors and designers to take on what Mordden (1983:188) labels as a more "artful approach". This seems to involve a shift in staging methods from representational, in which an illusion of reality was upheld by the décor, towards presentational theatre known to recognise the theatre as theatre, accentuating theatricality above an illusory reality (Stanton & Banham 1996:376; Mordden 2003:127). Exemplary of this approach is the visual methods used by Brecht, in which spectacle, along with music, is used to carry over a didactic message and engage the audience on a non-illusory, intellectual and metaphorical level (Catron 1990:223). In the words of Stanton and Banham (1996:377), "modern design sought an aesthetic and organic unity in which the stage picture functioned as a metaphor for the world of the play".

⁹³ Citron (2001:41) identifies Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express* as a concept musical due to its lack of a substantial, linear plot. Everett and Laird (2008:326) describe the musical as a visual extravaganza about trains, which featured actors in elaborate costume and roller skates. Hydraulic ramps built into the auditorium allowed actors to move around the entire theatre on their skates.

An extension of presentational theatre and Brecht's influential practices can be found in the modernist attitudes of conceptual staging, which features in most concept musicals. Conceptual staging involves the conceptualisation of the central thematic idea of the production into a single image, or variations of it, to form the basic setting of the musical. Here, the director's vision is of greater significance than the script (Stanton & Banham 1996:377). Using Prince's work in *Evita* as an example, Vagelis Siropoulos explains how the non-realistic, non-representational staging innovations in theatre forced directors to re-imagine the staging of productions as a creative, thematic visual process rather than a mere representation of reality.

Instead of simply staging the prose scenes and supervising the stage traffic, the director now assumes the role of the *auteur* [original italics] and reconceives the musical as a total visual composition, a three-dimensional ever-evolving painting, in which the various scenic discourses, set design, light, dance, movement, are combined in new innovative ways in order to create a unique visual effect that encompasses the performance in its totality (Siropoulos 2010:170).

Mordden (2003:131) holds that concept musicals could only flourish after the theatre-going public had grown accustomed to non-realistic set design appropriated by modern musicals.

Choreographer-director Bob Fosse is known for experimenting with conceptual staging, of which *Chicago* is one of the most notable instances (Miller 2000:191). According to Miller (1999:3), Fosse's experiments with high concept design and presentation began when he directed the stage musical, *Pippin* (1972), and the award-winning film version of *Cabaret* in 1973. In 1975 he directed *Chicago*, in which "form became content". Show business, and subsequently the show itself, became a metaphor for life.

From the descriptions given by Hischak (2009:78), as well as Everett and Laird (2008:65), Fosse's choreography of the satirical and commentary vaudeville numbers provided more spectacle than any other visual tool in the show, including the set design⁹⁴. It has been established that Michael Bennett's choreography was one of the most important methods through which the characters in *A Chorus Line* could present their life stories. The show is, of course, inspired by the lives of real dancers on Broadway. Kenrick (2003b:1) is of the opinion that the strong visual impact of Prince and Sondheim's *Company* and *Follies* can largely be accredited to Bennett's choreography as well.

⁹⁴ The very successful 1996-revival of *Chicago* featured no scenery and simple costumes, but won appraisal for its recreation of Fosse's distinctive choreography (Hischak 2009:79).

In *Company* and *Follies*, the décor envisioned by the creative teams is said to have “essentialize[d] the work, as with *Company*’s glass-and-chrome apartment boxes and *Follies*’ blasted temple of delight” (Mordden 2003:131). The set design for *Company* is regarded by Citron (2001:163) as a perfect visual representation of the dehumanised climate nurturing the whole show towards its theme. The Brechtian approach in the script and the theme of dehumanisation was advanced through the set design.

Designer Boris Aronson stylized [sic] this [dehumanisation] in a unit set: a steel-and-Plexiglas jungle gym of open cubes, connected by elevators and ladders, with a big playing area downstage and projections upstage (Mordden 2003:25).

Follies sported an expensive set of a theatre in ruins, with chunks taken out of the proscenium arch (Citron 2001:175). Just as the set in *Company* served as a visual metaphor for the thematic issues addressed by the show, *Follies*’ set illustrates the social commentary of a decadent, deteriorating theatrical and societal order (Fisher 2000:72). *Follies* adhered to the lavish nature of its background subject – the Ziegfeld *Follies* revues – with expensive costume and glamorous staging of musical numbers (Hischak 2009:148).

Two of Sondheim’s most artistic works are the Kabuki-styled *Pacific Overtures* and *Sunday in the Park with George*. The staging for these productions was equally as artistic. For *Pacific Overtures*, a set was chosen that would not overshadow the themes and characters, but rather form part of them (Mordden 1983:193). Citron (2001:214) states that the play is performed in Kabuki style, with elements of *bunraku* (puppet theatre) and *noh* (Japanese theatre combining music, dance and drama), because of its use of masks and a ramp, known as the *hanamichi*, used by the performers to enter from the auditorium, defying the fourth wall convention. According to Fleischer (2000:108), a movement piece presented at the end of Act 1 provides a visual representation of the commercialisation of Japan. This combination of the traditional Kabuki lion dance and the American cake walk, performed by Commodore Matthew Perry, foreshadows the inevitable invasion of Japan by Western civilisation.

As previously mentioned, *Sunday in the Park with George* was inspired by a painting by famous pointillist painter Georges Seurat. Hischak (2009:446) explains that “Seurat-like scenery” is used on stage, as the characters in the first act live in the world of Seurat’s painting. Kakutani (1984) writes the following about the production’s unusual subject matter of the process of creating art and the artists’ connection to his material:

[T]he show not only depicts Seurat's creation of that canvas - in the first act, an empty white set is gradually transformed into the dazzling tableau of the painting itself - but also demonstrates how that painting will influence later generations, how art, like love, endures through time.

Everett and Laird (2008:335) acknowledge the “moments of magical beauty”, such as the Act 1 finale, when the famous painting is recreated on stage. This materialises through George placing his characters, the ensemble, into their correct positions on stage to create a living tableau of the painting. Another beautiful moment takes place at the very end when Seurat's creations return to acknowledge him as their creator. The set further sports some pop-up cut-outs of George and other characters, often with hysterical effect.

The staging for *A Chorus Line* was far simpler than that of Sondheim, Prince, Fosse and their British counterparts. According to Lundskaer-Nielsen (2008:76) “the set consisted of a relatively bare stage on which the line of auditioning dancers periodically broke out into musical numbers only to meld smoothly back into the unforgiving line”. A row of turning mirrors at the back of the stage adds some variation to the image of the black box with only a white line across the stage (Mordden 2003:217). It is only in the finale, in what Mordden (2003:218) calls a “fantasy curtain call”, that some form of spectacle appears when all the dancers enter in golden outfits with a sunburst in the background (*Broadway: The American Musical* 2004).

In principle, most concept musicals need little scenery to be staged effectively. Because these shows are rarely set in specific locations, and sometimes even in surreal realities, Mordden (2003:137) indicates that simplified concert versions of concept musicals are generally very successful. Knapp (1995:774) uses the successful Off-Broadway and experimental productions as examples to prove that the musical theatre does not necessarily need spectacular scenery to thrive. Brook (1995:12) holds South African protest theatre productions, which often alternate its dialogue scenes with song and dance numbers, as confirmation that simplistic scenery, or even an empty stage, can be just as effective in conveying a dramatic message. This simplistic approach in protest theatre is also observed in the cabaret subgenre, known for its elements of *protest* and political commentary, which will be explored in the next chapter.

With regards to the element of spectacle, the concept musical typically presented novel ideas and more artistic approaches. Once again, the creative and presentational mode of modernist theatre is observed, supplemented by the general notion that the spectacle should

join the other elements in the advancement of the central theme that directs the entire show. While some concept musicals adhered to the minimalist movement of the day, many still opted for entire sets and extensive costuming. They did, however, still distinguish themselves from the elaborate and spectacular mega-musicals where substance took second place to spectacle. The makers of the exemplary concept musicals were, firstly, interested in stories with substance and techniques that could direct the musical forward.

2.3. CONCLUSION

Concept musicals provided the musical theatre with serious themes and subject matter which called for a re-envisioning of how the six elements could interrelate. Interesting new modernist and presentational staging methods were called for, which reminded specifically of the fragmented revue tradition and the Epic Theatre of Bertolt Brecht. The choice was made for an overall theme that commanded the way in which all the narrative and structural characteristics would be utilised – all in service of the development of this central concept.

In this chapter, a literature study was undertaken into the concept musical and its narrative and structural characteristics with the aim of employing relevant characteristics in the proposed framework later on in the study. A historical overview was presented, in which early concept musicals and the key concept musicals in history were identified. The concept musical's affiliation with the revue subgenre and the Epic Theatre of Bertolt Brecht was then documented. With the historical background as a foundation, the concept musical could be further investigated regarding the co-existence and interconnection of the six structural elements in the key productions. These findings will inform the Combined Framework to which the proposed South African one-person musicals will be applied in Section C.

For this study, the concept musical is an appropriate subgenre to explore since the researcher can draw parallels to the one-person musicals which will be evaluated later. Some similarities can also be observed with the cabaret subgenre and, to some extent, the one-person dramatic show. Characteristics such as intellectual material, a presentational mode of performance and non-linear plot development have surfaced, as well as Brechtian methods such as direct audience address, narration, commentary musical numbers, occasional multi-roling and *historisierung*. Musical theatre seemed to take a while to adapt to the new modernist movements in theatre which were around since the late nineteenth century, when the next subgenre, Cabaret, started to flourish.

CHAPTER 3:**CABARET AS GUIDELINE FOR THE NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION
OF SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS**

Cabaret has been affiliated with new directions in theatre since the end of the 1800's when it is said to have been conceived in Paris as part of a surge of experimental movements in art, as Appignanesi (2004:5) points out:

[Cabaret] emerged either as a laboratory, a testing ground for young artists who often deliberately advertised themselves as an avant-garde, or as the satirical stage of contemporaneity, a critically reflective mirror of topical events, morals, politics and culture. In the best instances, it was both.

The cabaret⁹⁵ provided a platform for artists to bring innovative ideas and approaches to the arts across a wide spectrum of artistic disciplines. According to Segel⁹⁶ (1987:xv-xvi), cabaret as an art form has since been used in many European countries as a medium for satire, *protest* and political commentary on the one end, but on the other end an endeavour to entertain audiences by providing a platform for performers to showcase their talents.

Some important modernist movements to come from the cabaret laboratory is *Dadaism* and the Epic Theatre of Bertolt Brecht. He frequented the cabarets of Munich and Berlin in Germany, not only as a spectator but also as a performer, and is said to have been influenced by various role players within the cabaret subgenre (Appignanesi 2004:180, Calandra 2003:190-191). Brecht is especially important for this study since techniques used in his Epic Theatre have been identified as prominent narrative and structural characteristics of the concept musical, discussed in the previous chapter. Brechtian techniques also seem to be present in the cabaret subgenre. These structural features, and others that might be identified during the course of this study will all inform the proposed Combined Framework to which South African one-person musicals can be applied in Section C of this study.

In Chapter One, an extensive definition of cabaret in its ideal form was given. Granted that the subgenre is a constantly changing phenomenon due to its affiliation with the present and

⁹⁵ When the researcher writes "the cabaret", it refers to a building, such as a café or tavern. When the word stands alone it refers to cabaret as an art form. The lyrics of the concept musical *Cabaret* is helpful in this distinction: "Life is a cabaret [an art form] old chum, come to the cabaret [the tavern]". Note that the word can also be used with another noun such as "subgenre" or "artist", which would need an article such as "the" to form phrases like "the cabaret subgenre", or "the cabaret artist". Here cabaret generally refers to the art form as well.

⁹⁶ Harold B. Segel's (1930-2016) book, *Turn-of-the-century Cabaret: Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Zurich* (1987) may have been written in 1987, but is still a valuable research source for cabaret history, also used in most of the contemporary research documents cited by the researcher in this study. Segel was an emeritus professor at Columbia University in the fields of Slavic literature and comparative literature.

the topical (Appignanesi 2004:6; Pretorius 1994b:63, Van Zyl 2004:113), this chapter will need to rely on the generalisations of scholars, as well as the researcher's own findings regarding cabaret's narrative and structural characteristics. This literary study of the cabaret subgenre will primarily follow the same structure as the previous chapter. Historical background of cabaret will be given. Firstly, the development of cabaret in Europe, specifically its origin in France and culmination in Germany⁹⁷, is of interest. In the second place, a historical overview of South African cabaret seems imperative in this chapter for reasons discussed in Chapter 1. Thirdly, commonalities between cabaret and the revue are identified due to their co-existence as theatrical entertainments in Germany, and, lastly, cabaret's connotation to Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre concludes the historical background.

In the next segment of the chapter, the narrative and structural characteristics of the cabaret subgenre is explored on the basis of the six structural elements laid down by Aristotle. This venture threatens to be a very difficult one due to the variable nature of cabaret. Cabaret cannot be limited by boundaries or fixed rules and structures and is, therefore, much like concept musicals, a difficult subgenre to analyse (Pretorius 1994b:70). To simplify the process, the generalisations made by critics will be aided by examples of the most important cabaret artists' work in the time frames appropriate to this chapter.

3.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cabaret has always been scattered across art forms. Van Zyl⁹⁸ (2004:113) highlights the fact that cabaret "borrows" from all types of theatre genres, mediums and styles, allowing it to be a flexible art form with as many possibilities as it has artists practising within the field⁹⁹.

⁹⁷ Two reasons can be held for the researcher's main interest in the history of cabaret in Germany. Firstly, it has been established that Bertolt Brecht, a key figure in this study, started his career in Germany and was associated with the German cabaret. Secondly, Hennie Aucamp, a very important figure in South African cabaret, makes no secret of his fascination with Weimar-Germany and the cabaret during this time, calling it his "Weimar-complex" (Aucamp 2013:145). The Weimar cabaret undoubtedly influenced his cabaret work. Aucamp's literary cabarets bear strong resemblances to those of Weimar-Germany and The Netherlands (Aucamp 1986:7).

⁹⁸ Prof Dorothea van Zyl is a literary critic that has lectured Afrikaans-Dutch at the University of Stellenbosch for many years. She founded the *Woordfees* (Word Festival) at the University, which promotes theatre and other arts in Afrikaans, but also other languages. After 15 years as festival director, she stepped down in 2015 and the dramaturg, Saartje Botha, took her place. She has shown special interest in Hennie Aucamp's work.

⁹⁹ The writer would like to believe that the reason for cabaret's flexibility it has to do with the fact that the performing cabaret artist plays such an important role in the success of the cabaret production. Every artist's individual voice is inevitably visible and influences the material used as well as the performance style – more than in structured, ensemble musicals. This notion is supported by Swart's (1993: 175) statement that newcomers on the cabaret scene undeniably bring fresh connotations to cabaret, creating alternative practices within the subgenre. Pretorius (1994b:68) adds that the talent and virtuosity of the performer determines the success of a cabaret performance and that each performer will structure the performance around his abilities.

It is also possible that artists incorporate certain elements of cabaret into another subgenre in which they choose to perform, for example, one-person musicals.

Frequent controversy accompanies the use of the word “cabaret” to describe contemporary South African musically-driven shows. Aucamp (2012), proclaimed by Van Zyl (2004:112) to be the father of the Afrikaans literary cabaret¹⁰⁰, criticises the “untidy” manner in which cabaret is dealt with in South Africa and asks the following questions: Is cabaret changing? Can contemporary productions, branded as “cabaret”, really pass as such if tested against the past? The researcher respects Aucamp’s authority as a pioneer in local cabaret, and acknowledges his concerns about shifts away from the purist cabaret-form, but understands art as a subjective phenomenon that is perpetually changing as new artists and new possibilities present themselves.

The researcher shares Nel’s (2011:46) opinion that South African artists like Nataniël and Amanda Strydom, regarded in this study as performing one-person musical artists, still incorporate elements of cabaret into their work, even if they have adopted other, more commercial, performance mediums. For Nel, the element that remains constant for these artists is a need for commentary and an intellectual approach to entertainment. The commentary is, however, not as forceful in *protest* as the purist cabaret that Aucamp longed for. The *protest*-element has been the defining element in cabaret since it first appeared in Europe.

In this literary study, it must be kept in mind that cabaret as an art form has typically been associated with protesting actions against the existing status quo. For this reason, Aucamp (2013:43) discusses cabaret as “oorgangsliteratuur” (transition literature), art created by writers and artists in times of transition in a certain milieu or during political instability in which they expose the defects of the new political system. Additionally, cabaret is predominantly linked to *Decadence*¹⁰¹ and what is taboo, as Herman Pretorius confirms in the foreword to

¹⁰⁰ The literary cabaret is more structured compared to its artistic counterpart. Budzinski (1985:119-122, cited in Pretorius 1994:70-72) points out that artistic cabaret often resembles variety shows, with some chance of intellectual material. Appignanesi (2004:12) writes that Rudolphe Salis’s *Le Chat Noir*, which will be discussed shortly, was the first artistic cabaret. In South Africa, the more structured literary cabaret was opted for by Aucamp, as stated by Van Zyl (2004:115) and Pretorius (2004:72), and these were at times also referred to as political literary cabarets (Pretorius 2004:72).

¹⁰¹ According to Terblance (2014), Hennie Aucamp always had to insist on the capital letter for the word *Decadence* to distinguish it as a cultural phenomenon rather than a term that indicates moral decay. *Decadence* is defined by *Dictionary.com* as being associated with “a group of French and English writers of the latter part of the 19th century whose works were characterized by aestheticism, great refinement or subtlety of style, and a marked tendency toward the artificial and abnormal in content”. The definition is supported by the *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate*

the published script of Hennie Aucamp's *Slegs vir almal* (Aucamp 1986:8). Cabaret also has a strong affiliation with the grotesque and the absurd (Aucamp 2013:11), as well as modern and postmodern movements, as Van Zyl (2004:113) postulates.

Critics emphasise the fact that cabaret is an intimate art form creating a special connection between performer and audience – one in which, ironically, a certain distancing effect is desired between the performer, the material and the audience (Aucamp 2013:12). The performer plays a vital part. The history of cabaret is frequently documented around the cabaret artists of certain periods or certain cabaret clubs, unlike concept musicals, for example, where the names of productions are used in chronologies of the art form.

The time periods most important for the historical background here, are the end of the nineteenth century in Paris, where cabaret is said to have originated as a meeting place for ambitious artists where they could test new, experimental work and share their ideas (Kenrick 2003a), and the period of Weimar Germany between the two World Wars, in which Berlin Cabaret flourished. Cabaret in South Africa during the Apartheid regime is an imperative part of the literature study, as well as the state of South African cabaret after 1994 when the political climate changed. The historical overview will commence with cabaret's early developmental years in Europe, at the end of the 1800's.

3.1.1. The development of cabaret in Europe: From Paris to Berlin

By the end of the nineteenth century, a tangible feeling of alienation from society was felt amongst artists and intellectuals in Europe. In this time, artists started wielding new theatrical approaches to establish more satisfying means of artistic expression, while also articulating their discontent with the social and cultural conventions of their day, especially with regards to the supremacy of the bourgeoisie (Segel 1987:xv). Cabaret seemed to grow out of their frustration and need for change.

It was in Montmartre, Paris, that cabaret had its humble beginnings. Rudolphe Salis (1851-1897), a painter, poet and publicist took on his next artistic scheme in 1881 by founding one of the first and most famous artistic cabarets¹⁰², *Le Chat Noir* (The Black Cat) (Appignanesi 2004:11; Segel 1987:xiii; Kenrick 2003a). In this café, Salis's artist-friends would gather to

Dictionary 11th ed. under the word, "decadent", used as a noun. Terblanche (2014) adds characteristics of *Decadent* artists' work as being bitter-sweet and showing an awareness of reality, morality and the transience of life.

¹⁰² See footnote no. 100.

share their thoughts and latest creations, whether it was songs or chansons¹⁰³, poems, prose readings or paintings (Appignanesi 2004:12). The cabaret provided a safe harbour for the artists, as Segel (1987:xiv) suggests:

[These] painters, poets, musicians and theater people [...] felt the need to come together, preferably away from the eye of public and critic alike, in order to enjoy the company of those of similar interests and attitudes, to share their creative efforts, to experiment in any way the spirit moved them, and, most important, to feel free to mock and deride the values of cultural monuments of a society they condemned as hopelessly bourgeois and philistine.

What began as an “elitist” endeavour reserved for Parisian artists and their circle of friends would soon draw more and more audience members from the public to *Le Chat Noir* to experience the unique atmosphere of cabaret (Segel 1987:xv). Appignanesi (2004:12) adds that Salis began serving drinks to artists and the public who were allowed to enter, which later even included the bourgeoisie, the subject of most of the satire and mockery in the artists’ material. In the words of De Villiers¹⁰⁴ (1994:130), “the rich and the famous soon flock to the venue to be satirised and insulted, and to enjoy every moment of it”. Salis took on the role of host in the *Le Chat Noir*, welcoming his guests with mock formality and providing the necessary insolent commentary during the evening’s entertainment. In doing so, he laid the foundation for the *conférencier* – a character that would become synonymous with the cabaret tradition¹⁰⁵ (Appignanesi 2004:17, 20). As is evident from Segel’s (1987:23) writing, *Le Chat Noir* remained popular even after it changed location in 1885 and would become the blueprint for more “*chatnoiresque*” cabarets, even after it closed in 1897 (Appignanesi 2004:22).

A very important pioneer, mentioned by the majority of historical sources that the researcher has consulted, is Aristide Bruant (1851-1925). Bruant seems to encompass some of the most important aspects of cabaret. Firstly, Bruant started his career as a *chansonnier*¹⁰⁶ in *Le Chat Noir* (Appignanesi 2004:25). Secondly, he became a *conférencier* and *chansonnier*

¹⁰³ The *chanson* is called the art song of the street and the café by Aucamp (2013:56). It is the French word for song and is closely associated with cabaret for its accessibility in terms of word and music, while still addressing issues about life and humanity. *Chansonnier* are performers of *chansons* and were very popular during cabaret’s inception.

¹⁰⁴ Coenie De Villiers is South African journalist, writer, composer, singer and pianist known for his body of work in the Afrikaans cabaret and the *musiek-en-liriek* movement in the 1970’s. He has interviewed major names in the South African theatre and music industry while presenting the Afrikaans television show, *Kwêla*, on *kykNET* and has contributed academic articles as well, one of which concerns the intertextuality between New Journalism and cabaret, featured in the *South African Theatre Journal*’s special cabaret edition in 1994, often cited here.

¹⁰⁵ See footnote no. 65.

¹⁰⁶ See footnote no. 103.

in his own cabaret *Le Mirliton*¹⁰⁷ (The Reed Pipe) in 1885¹⁰⁸ where he is said to have essentially run a “one-man show” offering only Bruant’s “towering, flamboyant presence” (Segel 1987:51). In the third place, De Villiers (1994:131) posits that, while he continued *Le Chat Noir*’s notion that cabaret should serve as a means of *protest*, Bruant extended the subgenre as a “motivational power for the masses”. Aucamp (2013:18, 300) writes that Bruant functions as the “public conscience”, and his “street poetry” and socio-critical songs, as Appignanesi (2004:22) categorises it, were mainly concerned with the every-day life of common people, the criminal and the prostitute¹⁰⁹.

The foundations placed for cabaret in Paris were built on further in other European countries like Spain, Austria, Russia and Switzerland, The Netherlands¹¹⁰ and Germany (Segel 1987:xiii-xiv; Appignanesi 2004:v-vi), the latter being of utmost importance to this study, with the focus on the development in München and Berlin. At this stage, it is important to note that German cabaret is now often classified under two distinct groups: “*Cabaret* [refers] to a strip show, while *Kabarett* is reserved for social criticism or political satire” (Jelavich 1993:1). The type of cabaret favoured in this discussion refers to the more serious *Kabarett*, but the Anglicised term will still be used.

Some attempts at the Parisian-style cabaret in Berlin is acknowledged by The Guide to Musical Theatre (2018) and Segel (1987:137) – primarily associated with director-producer Max Reinhardt’s (1873-1943) *Schall und Rauch* (Sound and Smoke) in 1901. With *Schall und Rauch*, Reinhardt could experiment and promote his preference for smaller theatrical forms in which the audience was no longer separated from the performer (Segel 1987:137). As noted by Appignanesi (2004:39) and Jelavich (1993:62), the signature attraction on the

¹⁰⁷ Appignanesi (2004:25) presents a description of the entertaininmet, insult, mockery and provocation that could be expected of Bruant as the audience entered *Le Mirliton*:

Stomping back and forth on the wooden floor, Bruant would suddenly sit down, pick up his guitar, and yell out: ‘Shut your row, blast you all, I’m going to sing.’ And pacing again, he would sing, or rather, cry out in a voice at once abrasive and persuasive.

¹⁰⁸ Bruant decided not to move with the other *Le Chat Noir* artists to the new venue in 1885. Instead, he established his own cabaret on the premises of the original *Le Chat Noir* (Segel 1987:49).

¹⁰⁹ The researcher would like to believe that cabaret’s reputation of decadence and dealing with taboo subjects is strongly linked to its affiliation with destituted groups and social outcasts, such as criminals, prostitutes and homosexuals, often marginalised in society, especially in the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁰ In an essay about Lisa Appignanesi’s extensive historical overview of cabaret in her book, *The Cabaret*, Aucamp (2013:52) criticises Appignanesi for not including the coincidentally well-documented history of cabaret in The Netherlands. Van Zyl (2004:112) acknowledges the centenary celebrations of cabaret in The Netherlands in 1995, where it was still said to be a dynamic and popular art form. It has been stated (see footnote no. 97) that early Afrikaans cabaret artists like Aucamp had been influenced by cabaret in The Netherlands. Its *Kleinkunst*, in particular, can be said to have had an important impact on the development of Afrikaans cabaret.

programme was its satirical parodies of contemporary literature, plays or theatrical styles. Appignanesi (2004:39) claims that the *Schall und Rauch* would later transform into Germany's first experimental theatre, the *Kleine Theater*.

The *Schall und Rauch* was the more intimate and intellectual counterpart of the commercially inclined *Überbrettl* (1901), launched by Ernst von Wolzogen (1855-1934) only days before the opening of the *Schall und Rauch* (Segel 1987:137). Appignanesi (2004:39) dismisses the *Überbrettl* as a cabaret only in spirit, stating that the intimacy so innate to the subgenre could not be achieved due to the size of the venue – the theatre seated 650 people. Also, the programmes lacked the satirical, experimental edge of acclaimed cabarets. This was partly due to the strict censorship enforced by the police in Wilhelmine Germany. In truth, as Jelavich (1993:38) points out, the *Überbrettl* was set to showcase “artistic variety shows”, attempting to elevate the variety show into a higher, more artistic sphere¹¹¹.

According to Hepple (2002a:122), The guide to musical theatre (2018) and Segel (1987:143), it was primarily in pre-war Munich that cabaret emerged as a vital and pungent art form, with a collective of artists known as *Die Elf Scharfrichter* (The Eleven Executioners). “Munich was in the grips of an artistic renaissance despite – or perhaps because of – the numerous, but well-defined, restrictions which Wilhelmine law imposed” (Appignanesi 2004:40). The artists associated with *Die Elf Scharfrichter* found a way to circumvent censorship and police surveillance by functioning as a “private club”, performing exclusively for “invited guests” (they made it quite easy, however, to acquire an invitation) (Appignanesi 2004:44). This “club” would establish Munich's first cabaret with the same title in 1901, which was, according to Segel (1987:xix), the most famous German cabaret before the First World War. Eleven men, ranging in occupation from visual artists, writers, journalists and musicians, to attorneys and architects, would form the core of the cabaret. Their main aim was to “battle against archaic morality and the conventions of the establishment” (Appignanesi 2004:43).

Jelavich (1985:166) commends *Die Elf Scharfrichter* as being a true cabaret on the Salis and Bruant model, featuring performers who wrote and composed their own work. Leading *Die Elf Scharfrichter* was Frenchman ¹¹², Marc Henry (1873-1943), who acted as

¹¹¹ It could be posited that the *Überbrettl* had less elements of *Kabarett* and more of the entertainment-orientated *Cabaret*. However, it still used an artistic and very “moral” approach and would, therefore, not be completely associated with the sleazy type of cabaret. Von Wolzogen was interested in the Parisian model of cabaret, but imagined new possibilities for it in Germany (Segel 1987:126).

¹¹² Appignanesi (2004:44) states that Marc Henry had, in fact, gained some experience at *Le Chat Noir* itself.

conferencier and composed his own songs reminiscent of French peasant and folk songs (Segel 1987:146). A few months after its conception *Die Elf Scharfrichter* welcomed the notorious Frank Wedekind¹¹³ (1864-1918) to their cabaret programme - a revolutionary and influential artist singled out by numerous critics as being a key influence on Bertolt Brecht's work in modernism (Aucamp 2013:22; Appignanesi 2004:49; Horn 2003:90; Jelavich 1985:306; Segel 1987:158)

Appignanesi (2004:51) writes that *Die Elf Scharfrichter* disbanded after only two years, in 1903, but its daring performances had a huge impact on the development of cabaret as a subgenre, as Segel (1987:xix) suggests:

[I]t paved the way for the dynamic cabaret culture of Weimar Germany whose fame rested, in large measure, on the extent to which it functioned as a microcosm of the sharpening social, economic, and political tensions of the 1920's and '30's.

Senelick (1992:24) and Jelavich (1985:185) quote Max Halbe¹¹⁴ (1865-1944) from his memoir, *Jahrhundertwende: Geschichte meines Lebens 1893–1914*, in which he acknowledges the influence that cabaret in Berlin and Munich, as shortlived as it was, had on the developments in modern theatre:

“[T]he examples in Berlin and Munich were so influential that within a few years the revolutionary transformation of the mental and artistic habits of the Germans was already complete. Audiences were fed up with seeing miniature editions of bourgeois or proletarian environs; they longed for color [sic], disorder, and the unleashing of the arts of the theater [sic]” (Halbe 1935:339-340, quoted in Jelavich 1985:185).

With the outbreak of World War I (1914-1918), any major advancement for cabaret as an art form in Germany was temporarily brought to a halt. Tightened censorship made satire and parody out-of-bounds, and the political tone of the country grew to be very nationalistic (Jelavich 1993:118). It was in Zürich, Switzerland, where the next innovative means of artistic expression, known as *Dadaism*, would develop and later spread to, among others, Berlin.

¹¹³ According to Horn (2003:90), Wedekind “performed satirical songs, with his own guitar accompaniment, in a confrontational manner calculated to shock his mainly middle-class audience”. Appignanesi (2004:48) describes his performance as having a harshly ironic, satanic tone, brittle and abrasive”, and mentions elsewhere that Wedekind shocked the bourgeoisie with his references to sex and other taboo subjects, as well as his critique that the moral codes of the day were hypocritical (Appignanesi 2004:47). Wedekind's style of writing and performing would set the norm for the German cabaret song, which would continue to play a vital role in the cabarets to follow during the peak of the German cabaret scene (The guide to musical theatre 2018).

¹¹⁴ Max Halbe was a German writer associated with Naturalism, although his work gradually moved away from the Naturalistic movement (Anon 2017).

In 1916, at the *Cabaret Voltaire*, an international group of radicals and pacifists, most of whom found refuge from the war in Zürich, launched *Dada*, an “irrational, nonsensical means of expression” (The Guide to Musical Theatre 2018). *Dada* pushed modernism and the avant-garde movement to its limits, with the *Dadaists* rejecting art itself. Their motto was “Kunst ist Scheisse” (art is shit) (Segel 1987:144; The guide to musical theatre 2018). Schechter (2003:177) sheds some light on the reasoning behind the *Dada* movement, a precursor to today’s performance art:

*Dadaist*¹¹⁵ cabaret artists in Zurich and Berlin rejected the logic, morality and stupidity that led Europe into World War I, and chose instead to revel in their own consciously chosen poetry of the irrational, and in unsettling, transgressive artistic performances which anticipated contemporary performance art.

One specific *Dada* performance infamously involved German Hugo Ball (1886-1927) reciting the first abstract, phonetic poems¹¹⁶, immobilised by the cubist costume he was wearing (Appignanesi 2004:112). *Dada* reached Berlin by the end of the First World War. Between 1918 and 1920¹¹⁷, Berlin *Dada*, associated with many cabaret artists, would be the chosen medium for shocking and provoking audiences in a desperate protest against the senseless carnage of war and the politics of the day, using their own “weapons of aggressive nonsense”¹¹⁸ (Appignanesi 2004:117).

Post-war cabaret in Germany would gain immense popularity, especially in Berlin. Under the Weimar rule, censorship was abolished in Germany (Kenrick 2003a). One would think that in the absence of censorship, an avant-garde enterprise such as cabaret would raise its level of experimenting. On the contrary, cabaret after the Great War would become more commercialised (Segel 1987:xxiv). Jelavich (1993:5) ascribes this phenomenon to the fact that the audience would now be the artists’ most important censor. In order to be successful

¹¹⁵ Own italics

¹¹⁶ Phonetic poems, also known as sound poems, are poems that lack semantic meaning due to the fact that it comprises of sounds forming unfamiliar, meaningless words. Two of his best-known sound poems are entitled “Karawane”, with the opening lines “jolifanto bambla o falli bambla”, and “Gadji beri bimba” (Siegel 1987:338-340; Appignanesi 2004:112).

¹¹⁷ The climax, and ultimately the demise, of the Berlin *Dada* was marked by the First International *Dada* Fair in 1920. Overlooking the proceedings, which was an exhibition, carnival and political meeting all together, was a pig’s head adorning a German officer’s uniform (Jelavich 1993:145).

¹¹⁸ *Dada* events were filled with what we now call “happenings”. Examples laid out by Appignanesi (2004:120) are a “Race Between a Sewing Machine and a Typewriter” staged by George Grosz and Walter Mehring; the “*Dada-Trott*”, which was a *Dada* mime dance; and a “living” photomontage presented by Erwin Piscator, who in turn influenced Bertolt Brecht’s Epic Theatre.

as an artist, one needs to consider what would entertain audiences and fill the seats in the theatre or cabaret.

A number of Berlin cabarets still presented avant-garde techniques and extreme themes, such as eroticism and politics, in their programmes, mixing these with satire, *protest*, creativity, humour and even a little bit of sentimentality in ways that would still be entertaining (Appignanesi 2004:167, 181). These are now considered literary cabarets, according to Smith (2013:131). Three post-war cabarets are of note: the second incarnation of *Schall und Rauch*¹¹⁹, which Max Reinhardt opened in 1919, Rosa Valetti's (1878-1937) *Cabaret Größenwahn* (Cabaret Megalomania) and Trude Hesterberg's (1892-1967) *Wilde Bühne* (The Wild Stage) of 1921 (Appignanesi 2004:171, 177-178; Smith 2013:131; Brendan 2010).

Some of the most popular and influential artists to come from the literary cabarets were Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935), a theatre critic and satirical writer, and Walter Mehring (1896-1981), one of the most prominent figures in Berlin *Dada*, who was also a chanson-writer, singer and performer associated with Expressionism. These men's politically ambiguous lyrics were the weapons of satire with which they could evaluate and criticise the state of society in Germany (Jelavich 1993:118, 131; Appignanesi 2004:128, 132).

One of the most prominent figures of 20th-century theatre, Bertolt Brecht, had his Berlin debut performance in Hesterberg's *Wilde Bühne* in 1922. Accompanying himself on a banjo, he sang "in a shrill, aggressive monotone" (Appignanesi's 2004:181). Jelavich (1993:150) gives an account of this memorable first and last performance in Berlin that was met with hostility from the audience:

For six days he sang "Jakob Apfelböck", about a boy who murdered his parents, and the "Ballad of the Dead Soldier" (Die Ballade vom toten Soldaten). This grotesque song described how the German army, short on manpower in the waning months of the war, dug up a soldier who had already been killed once in battle and sent him back to fight at the front. The bitter work, which also attacked military doctors, churchmen, and chauvinist citizens, caused a scandal at its first performance, and Hesterberg had to drop the curtain until the audience quieted down.

¹¹⁹ Appignanesi (2004:171) describes the second *Schall und Rauch* as follows: "Sharply political and satirical, left-wing in orientation, the cabaret set the tone for the witty critique of current affairs which was the mark of the period". It is interesting to note that Rosa Valetti and Trude Hesterberg, who later opened their own successful cabarets, initially performed at the *Schall und Rauch* (Appignanesi 2004:177; Brendan 2010).

Brecht seems to have been better received in the Munich cabarets, where he is known to have worked in close association with musical comedian Karl Valentin¹²⁰ (1882-1948). Brecht was deeply influenced by Valentin's mentality and performances. They conceived scenes together, and it is also documented that Brecht performed with Valentin at least once (Calandra 2003:190-191). Brecht and Valentin's most notable collaboration was the short-lived cabaret, *Die Rote Zibebe* (The Red Vine) in Munich in 1922. (Appignanesi 2004:170). A more detailed exploration of the significant influence that cabaret had on Brecht will be presented later in this chapter.

As a new decade dawned in Germany, economic depression and an unstable political climate seemed to slowly extinguish the flame that was the Weimar-cabaret. New cabaret acts lost most of its socio-political commentary, leaving it up to the interjections of the *conférencier* to preserve the typical satirical character of cabaret¹²¹ (The guide to musical theatre 2018, Appignanesi 2004:195). Jelavich (1993:214) mentions the politically driven Communist cabarets of "agitprop" troupes that travelled around the country. Known for its "agitation" and "propaganda", these shows aimed at luring audiences away from bourgeois, commercial entertainment and mass culture.

From 1933, when the Nazi Era and the Third Reich came into being, the Berlin cabaret died a slow death. Cabarets were depoliticised and converted to nothing more than variety shows or mindless, even sleazy, entertainment (Appignanesi 2004:202). Prominent Jewish entertainers fled Germany or were killed. In the words of Jelavich (1993:202), "an entire era of Berlin cabaret had come to a tragic end by 1945 [...] because the Nazi's murdered so many of the human beings who sustained it".

Cabaret lives on in many different art forms, where its elements - such as song, sketch, dance and satire - have been separated and reunited in all kinds of ways. For Appignanesi (2004:239), stand-up comedy is probably the most durable of cabaret's successors. She mentions other art forms, such as one-person shows, where the role of the *conférencier* is magnified into the main focus (Appignanesi 2004:218), and certain music genres, for

¹²⁰ Karl Valentin's work included monologues, farcical songs, skits and one-act plays that bordered on absurdism. His character is typically toppled by ordinary things such as language or technology due to misunderstandings or incorrect reasoning (Appignanesi 2004:192).

¹²¹ Had it not been for the *conférenciers*, the *Kabarett der Komiker* (Kade Ko), the longest-running cabaret in Berlin, would have only been classified as a nightclub sporting some satirical or literary items (Appignanesi 2004:200).

example, rock and rap, which often feature socio-political themes and lyrics (Appignanesi 2004:251).

Aucamp (2012) makes a bold statement, as he admits, that cabaret has never quite reached the same heights as it did in pre-war Berlin. Segel (1987:xiv) proclaimed in 1987 that contemporary cabaret does not capture the original meaning and purpose of the art form as it emerged in Europe. Ironically, around the time he wrote those words, a pungent cabaret and alternative music culture had manifested in South Africa, where artists once again confided in their weapons of satire and socio-political commentary to expose the evils of the apartheid-regime (Byerly 1998:1; Van der Merwe 2010:48).

3.1.2. The emergence of cabaret in South Africa

Socio-political and satirical cabaret in South Africa emerged in the 1980's when the country experienced its most turbulent era, bombarded with protests against the apartheid regime. "[Cabaret] became a vigorous form of political protest, especially in the Afrikaans theatre, for audiences traditionally considered to be conservative, Calvinistic and right-wing" (Pretorius 1994a:1). Like its European counterpart, South African cabaret seemed to find some of its most active advocates in writers, performers, singers and musicians who delivered socio-political commentary through cutting-edge satirical lyrics or satiric and comic performance material (Pretorius 1994b:72; Van der Merwe 2010:52).

Academics single out Hennie Aucamp as perhaps the most influential writer for and promoter of South African cabaret. Van Zyl (2004:112) views Aucamp as the "Father of South African cabaret", noting that he was a practitioner as well as a theoretician/academic in the field since the 1970's. Pretorius (1994b:77) places Aucamp at the centre of South African cabaret's formation into what he believes to be a unique, indigenously South African version of cabaret. He is also credited with creating South Africa's first literary cabaret production, *Met permissie gesê*, in 1980 (Swart¹²² 1993:100; Aucamp 1986:3).

Aucamp has influenced, collaborated with and written academic essays about many other practitioners within the fields of cabaret performance, musical theatre, socio-political music, satiric writing and performing, and other art forms that aimed at socio-political commentary

¹²² Amanda Swart is currently employed at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, doing research in adult education, clinical psychology and legal psychology. Two of her research documents are important to this study: her doctoral thesis entitled *Die poëtika van die lirieke in die Afrikaanse literêre kabaret* and her article in the 1994 special edition of the *South African Theatre Journal*, focusing on the metaphorical use of soldiers in two Aucamp cabarets.

(Van Zyl 2004:113). Other key artists appropriate for this chapter are musicians and/or performers such as Johannes Kerkorrel¹²³ (1960-2002), Koos Kombuis¹²⁴ (1954-), Coenie De Villiers (1956-) and David Kramer (1951-), as well as the satiric comedians¹²⁵, Pieter-Dirk Uys (1945-) and Casper de Vries (1964-). Nataniël, Amanda Strydom and Elzabé Zietsman, whose work is appropriate to the case studies later in this study, are closely affiliated with the cabaret subgenre in South Africa and will be discussed in more detail under Section C. It will become evident throughout this historical overview that the majority of these artists have also been working in collaboration with each other on different occasions.

Within the South African music industry, Byerly (1998:12) identifies two insurgent “waves of ‘unofficial’ South African musical countercultures”. The first ranged from 1912 to 1960, in which African musicians served as voices for the black communities excluded by segregation laws imposed by the white government¹²⁶ (Byerly 1998:10). The resistance movement matured into the second, more hands-on wave of protest stretching from 1960 to 1990. “[P]rotest consisted of expressions of determination to be pro-active mobilizers [sic] of social change” (Byerly 1998:9). These protestations were subtly woven into the music performances so as to elude stringent censorship, but, at the same time, the performances maintained an undercurrent of disillusionment, anger and determination¹²⁷ (Byerly 1998:10).

It is in this second wave of cultural activity that South African cabaret arose as a prominent, albeit subtle and veiled form of protest theatre. Pretorius (1994b:60) uses Ibo’s term, “beskaafde protes” (civilised *protest*), to describe South African cabaret, as opposed to a militant black political protest theatre that also emerged around that time. Byerly (1998:15) writes that the *protest* genres gradually entered the mainstream of the music industry

¹²³ Born Ralph Rabie, the absurd pseudonym, Johannes Kerkorrel, was as much of an attempt at protest against and commentary on the “absurdity of the social agendas around [him]” as his music and political work was (Byerly 1998:15). According to Hopkins (2006:124), Rabie was a cabaret performer at heart. He understood the powerful impact that cabaret, with its honest approach, can have on society. Unfortunately, Rabie found cabaret, as well as the *musiek-en-liriek* movement, problematic as a vehicle for the “broader youthful” audience he wanted to target. He found it “elitist, snobbish, too literary and bourgeois” (Hopkins 2006:125). Rabie discovered a suitable medium for what he wanted to achieve in alternative rock music.

¹²⁴ Koos Kombuis was born André Le Roux Du Toit. He was known as André Letoit for the first part of his career, where he was already commended for his promising potential as a poet and musician, at times associated with cabaret (Aucamp 2013:194).

¹²⁵ It will become evident upon further discussion that Casper de Vries and Pieter-Dirk Uys are not merely comedians, but deliver pungent satirical socio-political commentary on South African issues, which places them well within the realm of cabaret. De Vries was part of some of the earliest Afrikaans cabarets.

¹²⁶ This “wave of resistance”, as Byerly calls it, utilised blatant expressions of “refusal to accept or conform to a situation”, in this case the initial years of segregation prompted by the Native Land Act of 1912 (Byerly 1998:12).

¹²⁷ It is also important to note that the second movement involved not only black musicians, but members from all communities and cultural backgrounds (Byerly 1998:10).

through Afrikaans artists who sought new means of expression. Firstly, the *musiek-en-liriek* movement¹²⁸ would place emphasis on lyrics with deeper meanings than the existing Afrikaans songs, as Byerly (1998:15) explains:

The *musiek en liriek* movement, targeted at the more conservative audiences, reviewed the importance of meaningful lyrics by substituting the inane *lekkerliedjie*¹²⁹ with the more thoughtful *luisterliedjie* ("listen song," a meaningful ballad where the essence of the song was in the poetry of the lyrics, requiring careful listening, and loaded meanings replaced bland "nice" lyrics).

Secondly, the aggressive rock music associated with the East Rand Rock movement challenged the authorities and the personal identity and image of the Afrikaner, playing a vital role in what Byerly (1998:15) calls the "Afrikaans Renaissance". In an ode to Amanda Strydom, Hennie Aucamp states that the alternative movements introduced new idioms, new terms and new demands for the Afrikaans language in particular (Strydom 2011:77). Byerly (1998:15) continues to explain that the Afrikaans music industry would challenge audiences even more directly in the 1980's: rock music would be utilised for strong socio-political commentary in the controversial *alternatiewe musiek* movement, and the *luisterliedjie* manifested in intimate, often unsettling theatrical cabaret performances, starting with Aucamp's *Met Permissie gesê* in 1980.

Van Zyl (2004:112) writes that Hennie Aucamp claimed to have written four cabarets, and one semi-cabaret: *Met permissie gesê*, *Slegs vir almal* (1985), *Blomtyd is Bloeityd* (1987) and *Oudisie!* (1991), and a cross between legitimate theatre and cabaret, *Lied onder lede* (1986). Van Zyl is of the opinion that Aucamp's morality play "*Van Hoogmoed tot Traagheid*" (1996), also known as *Die Sewe Doodsondes*, related to cabaret because of its satirical tone and its combination of music and spoken word (Van Zyl 2004:113). A brief description of the four cabarets will now follow.

The Drama Department of the University of Stellenbosch, with Herman Pretorius as Head of Department, became the laboratory for Aucamp's cabaret activities (Aucamp 2013:10). Drama students were cast for the first performance of the groundbreaking cabaret, *Met permissie gesê*, in Stellenbosch in 1980 (Terblanche 2014; Anon 2016b). In 1981, a

¹²⁸ Three of the most important songwriters who steered the *musiek-en-liriek* movement forward were Koos du Plessis, Jannie du Toit and Coenie de Villiers. De Villiers is known for his involvement in cabaret, and one of Strydom's dear friends and colleagues (Glorie 2013a; Roggeband 2010:51).

¹²⁹ Own italics

professional production, directed by Janice Honeyman, was staged at the Market Theatre for the opening of the new restaurant, and at the Oude Libertas Theatre¹³⁰ (Anon 2016b).

Aucamp (2013:145) regarded *Slegs vir Almal* as his only full-fledged political cabaret. The initial student production¹³¹ was not met with great critique, but a professional production 10 years later in Bloemfontein, directed by Gerben Kamper, was praised for its actuality¹³². *Blomtyd is Bloeityd* (1987) won the *Fleur du Cap Theatre Award* for Best New Indigenous script. It was directed by Marthinus Basson and Coenie De Villiers composed music for Aucamp's lyrics (Anon 2016e). It is interesting to note that the, then upcoming, young Nataniël was part of both of the aforementioned productions¹³³. He was also the composer for Aucamp's last cabaret, *Oudisie!* (Anon 2016c), which marked Aucamp's retirement from the cabaret subgenre (Aucamp 1994:75; Van der Merwe 2010:54).

A very aggressive and controversial political cabaret, *Piekniek by Dingaan*¹³⁴ (1988), would see an amalgamation of cabaret and the *alternatiewe musiek* movement. Controversial musicians, Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkorrel, collaborated with artists affiliated with cabaret, including Nataniël, who arranged the music, and Marthinus Basson, who acted with Kerkorrel, to create what Hopkins (2008:159) calls a "rock 'n roll cabaret". *Piekniek by Dingaan* won the *Amstel pick of the Fringe award* at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in 1988 (Anon 2016d; Hagen 1999:29). Due to censure, a planned performance at the Nico Malan theatre (now Artscape) was cancelled (Hagen 1999:29).

Kerkorrel and Kombuis would face censorship and bans¹³⁵ the next year, in 1989, with their revolutionary *Voëlvry* campus tour, which was an extension of the compilation album of the same name, released just months after *Piekniek by Dingaan* (Hagen 1999:31). The controversial *Voëlvry* tour was the culmination of the *alternatiewe musiek* movement, as Van

¹³⁰ It is worth mentioning that Amanda Strydom was one of the featured artists in this production, alongside other now celebrated artists such as Laurika Rauch, Sam Marais and Gerben Kamper (Anon 2016b).

¹³¹ It is worthy of note than Casper De Vries, who will be discussed a bit later in this chapter, was part of the cast of *Slegs vir Almal* (Pretorius 1994b:61; ESAT 2016e).

¹³² In 2015, a revival of *Slegs vir almal* was done in Cape Town by students from Northlink College, accompanied by the band Mr. Cat & The Jackal. It was also performed at the US Woordfees in 2016. In their reviews, both Malan (2015) and Saayman (2016) praise the relevancy of Aucamp's cabaret, even after 30 years.

¹³³ An online video of *Blomtyd is Bloeityd*, posted by Sarah J Smith (2013), shows a young Nataniël behind the piano. A list of his productions on his official website also shows *Slegs vir Almal*, *Oudisie!* and *Piekniek by Dingaan* as productions he has been associated with (www.nataniël.co.za).

¹³⁴ In 2017, *Piekniek by Mpande, née Dingaan*, a re-imagining of *Piekniek by Dingaan*, was performed at most of the major Afrikaans arts festivals (Du Toit 2017) and received a *Fiësta Awards*-nomination for Best Musically-driven theatrical production according to Stage and Screen (<http://www.stageandscreen.co.za/fiestas-2018>).

¹³⁵ Hopkins (2006:182) provides evidence of at least three cancelled shows of the *Voëlvry* tour – in Pretoria, Potchefstroom and Stellenbosch – where the performers' moral values were held as reasons for the ban.

der Merwe (2017:164) points out¹³⁶. This tour would attract thousands of students from all over the country despite condemnation from cultural leaders, churches warning against it, and many attempts from towns and campuses to ban it (Hopkins 2006:8). Van der Merwe (2010:59) confirms that most of the songs which were to be performed on the *Voëlvry* tour were already banned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) due to its political content and utterances against the establishment. Kerkorrel and Kombuis briefly performed together in *Die Gereformeerde Blues Band*, but Kombuis soon left the group to start a solo career. The band was made up of Kerkorrel on vocals and keyboard, Hanepoot (Jannie) van Tonder on drums, Piet Pers (real name Gary Herselman) on bass guitar and Braai Nylon (Willem Möller) on guitar and was managed by Dagga-Dirk Uys (pseudonym for Brian Epstein)¹³⁷ (Anon 2018j). They released their first album, *Eet Kreef!*, in 1989. The album's popularity could be ascribed to the promotion the band received during the *Voëlvry* tour (Hagen 1999:32).

Van der Merwe (2017:122) posits that the *musiek-en-liriek* movement was considered too mild and still too commercial for the radical artists associated with the *Voëlvry* movement. He does, however, single out the work of David Kramer in the 1980's as having a more political, critical and counter-hegemonic approach, especially considering his album *Baboondogs* (1986) and his work in the musical theatre aimed at overthrowing racial hierarchies¹³⁸ (Van der Merwe 2017:118, 122). Aucamp (2013:182) sees Kramer as a humanist, cultural philosopher and poet and notes that his lighthearted persona often conceals the serious political subtext in his work. Elsewhere, Aucamp (2008) acknowledges Kramer's unique contribution to cabaret, levelled with such powerful contributions as that of Pieter-Dirk Uys and Casper de Vries.

Aucamp (2013:52) strongly disapproved of the omittance of South African cabaret artists such as Pieter-Dirk Uys in Lisa Appignanesi's comprehensive history of the cabaret

¹³⁶ Artist who performed the *Voëlvry* shows were Koos Kombuis, Bernoldus Niemand (real name James Phillips) and his band *Die Swart Gevaar*, and Kerkorrel with his band *Die Gereformeerde Blues Band* (Anon 2018i).

¹³⁷ Kerkorrel explains to Byerly (1998:20) that these Afrikaner-pseudonyms reflected "the absurdty of the society [they] belonged to, and redicule[d] the cultural identity [they] were part of".

¹³⁸ One of David Kramer's most renowned musicals, in collaboration with the late Taliep Peterson (1950-2006), was *District Six* (1987) that enjoyed a sold-out 7-month run at the Baxter Theatre. It was revived in 2002 and is now available on DVD. Another Kramer-Peterson collaboration, *Kat and the Kings* (1997), was the first Cape Town production to be staged on New York's Broadway and London's West End, according to David Kramer's website (www.davidkramer.co.za), boasting several award nominations and wins, including the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Musical. "Set in District Six during the 1950s, it tells the story of a teenage vocal harmony group following their dreams of fame and fortune despite the obstacles of an apartheid South Africa" (www.davidkramer.co.za).

subgenre¹³⁹. He is of the opinion that an international artist such as Uys, who started his career by opposing the wrongdoings of the apartheid-regime and is still exposing the offences of current governmental systems, deserves mention in a history of cabaret.¹⁴⁰ Uys does not want to limit his craft by categorising it, and therefore refrains from calling himself a cabaret artist: “[The] basis of my work is 49% anger vs [sic] 51% entertainment” (2014, pers. comm., 31 October). Academics like Aucamp (2018) and Van der Merwe (2010:58), however, still insist that the strong topical satire and political undertones in his work, presented in a theatrical and entertaining way, qualifies as cabaret. In South Africa’s most turbulent times, the 70’s and the 80’s, Uys managed to keep his art alive despite censorship and authorities trying to silence him. The publisher, Stephen Gray, tells Julian Shaw (2011) in an interview that Uys treads on taboos but does so in such a humouristic way that he has kept audiences on his side for decades. One of his creations, his alter-ego, Evita¹⁴¹ Bezuidenhout, has survived for the last 35 years and has become a household name, considered by many to be “the most famous white woman in Africa”¹⁴² (Morgan 2015). Uys first introduced Evita in 1981 in *Adapt or Dye*. Using Evita as a mask, he could unleash some of his most effective weapons of satire.

Evita Bezuidenhout is his clown, a means of completely altering and disguising his persona, a means to be outrageous in appearance and outlook and a means [...] to challenge social and political categories (McMurty 1994:82).

Van der Merwe (2010:68) places Uys’ work more or less in the same category as that of Casper de Vries, in terms of character work used to highlight socio-political themes. It could be said that De Vries is one of a few who captures the true spirit of cabaret, with his satirical socio-political commentary through song, stand-up comedy, stereotypical characters and parodies of famous television-programmes (Van der Merwe 2010:68, Van Zyl 2008:43,94). De Vries explains to Van Zyl (2008:92) that his debut production, *Hello, Suid-Afrika!* (1986), was written as a cabaret show. He directed and starred in the show together with artists such as Elzabe Zietsman and June von Merch. Since 1992, he created and performed numerous

¹³⁹ Ironically, in Aucamp’s own creatively structured overview of the last century of cabaret, published in *Koffer in Berlyn: essays oor kabaret* the year before he died, he fails to include a South African history, only briefly touching on early Afrikaans lullabies for dramatic effect at the end of his overview (Aucamp 2013:14-39).

¹⁴⁰ The researcher believes that Aucamp’s own literary cabarets, strongly influenced by the cabaret shows of The Netherlands and Weimar-Germany (Aucamp 1986:7), also deserves international mention.

¹⁴¹ Interestingly, Evita’s first name is a deliberate reference to the musical *Evita*, based on the life of Eva Peron, directed by Hal Prince, one of the forces behind the concept musical (McMurty 1994:83). Uys also regularly performs at his own theatre, Evita se Perron (Van der Merwe 2010:58).

¹⁴² Evita Bezuidenhout was even granted an interview with Nelson Mandela in 1994 (EvitaSePerron 2013).

solo productions. While Aucamp (2008) describes him as a stand-up comedian, De Vries now categorises his productions as “one man shows” (Van Zyl 2008:92).

It appears that the artists from the two different movements of more civilised *protest*, cabaret and alternative rock music, were working closely together in speaking out against the apartheid regime and the political turbulence that South Africa experienced because of it. In personal communication with Byerly (1998:11), Christopher Ballantine¹⁴³ is quoted as saying that these protest movements reached its zenith by the end of the 1980's. When the political climate in the country changed after the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, the force which drove artists to make bold political statements through their performances seemed to decline, as Byerly (1998:11) explains:

The second, more concerted surge (of protest) rode out its crest, resolved itself and dissipated. It voluntarily handed over its mission in 1990 to the political forces that had been liberated for the purpose of a negotiated transition

In a postface for a collection of Aucamp's lyrics, *Lyflied*, Daniel Hugo points out that a politically driven enterprise such as cabaret thrives in an oppressive or totalitarian government. Once censorship or prohibition is lifted to create a freer society, cabaret often loses its appeal, as was the case in post-war times in Germany (Aucamp 1999:69).

Whereas cabaret in South Africa emerged as a form of protest theatre or “proteskuns” (protest art), as Van der Merwe (2010:61) calls it, many of the original cabaret artists found other mediums in which to showcase their talents, while at times still attempting some social commentary. These mediums tend to be entertainment-based to attract bigger audiences, ensuring better financial possibilities for the artist, but often jeopardising the small, vibrant and empathetic atmosphere that cabaret creates for socio-political commentary (Aucamp 2012). Appropriately, Amanda Strydom, Nataniël and Elzabé Zietsman seem to have found an effective medium in musical theatre, more specifically the one-person musical, for which these artists' work will be evaluated later in this study.

According to Van der Merwe (2010:88), a new “movement” seems to have emerged among the younger generation in the last two decades. Reminiscent of the Afrikaans *alternatiewe musiek* movement of the 1980's, a community of young musicians are once again singing

¹⁴³ Christopher Ballantine is a Music Professor at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and has written numerous books and articles in the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, popular music studies and sociology in music. His writings mostly concern the meanings of music in society, and how these meanings are formed, according to his profile on the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal's website (<http://music.ukzn.ac.za/staff-profile/honorary-academic-staff/Christopher-Ballantine>).

about the socio-political issues in South Africa. Alternative Afrikaans bands such as *Fokofpolisiekar*, *Foto na Dans* and *Die Heuwelsfantasties* provide sharp commentary through aggressive rock music and attacking lyrics. An example of such commentary songs is Fokofpolisiekar's *Brand Suid-Afrika* (2006). The Voëlvry artists' legacy is also said to live on in the Oppikoffi rock festival (Van der Merwe 2017:125), and rock singer Karen Zoid (Anon 2018f).

A different genre appears to have taken over the "duties" of cabaret in terms of satirical commentary: stand-up comedy. As previously mentioned in cabaret's European history, the stand-up comedian could be regarded as the most enduring of cabaret's offspring. This genre has only recently taken South Africa by storm.

Late-night talk shows and comedy clubs are increasing in popularity in South Africa. They involve a montage of humorous skits, jokes and amusing anecdotes often underpinned by incisive, satirical commentary. This comedic revolution is dominated by a growing number of young, black comedians. Like their peers worldwide, they are pushing the boundaries on controversial issues (Snodgrass 2016:2).

From this description of stand-up comedy, it seems as if this genre comes closest to the original structure and aim of cabaret – satirical commentary on a small, intimate stage in a club. According to Van der Merwe (2010:35), the stand-up comedian can be said to take on the role of *conférencier*, who is constantly in informal, improvisational conversation with the audience, even encouraging audience interaction. "[D]it moet soos 'n kuier voel", De Vries tells Van Zyl (2008:96).

Perhaps the best South African export in stand-up comedy is Trevor Noah¹⁴⁴ (1984-). From his first shows, such as *The Daywalker* and *Crazy Normal*, Noah's subject matter ranges from humorous anecdotes about him growing up as a child of mixed race to ethnic experiences he has encountered (Snodgrass 2016). He also includes satirical commentary about the current political situation in South Africa, racial differences and comic impersonations of political figures, such as former president Jacob Zuma, Helen Zille and Julius Malema.

Cabaret is often described as a changing phenomenon which can take on many forms. This is evident in the short history of cabaret in South Africa. Van Zyl (2004:113) ascribes this to cabaret's affiliation with the topical, being an art form of and for its time, and its links to

¹⁴⁴ Trevor Noah is currently the host of *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central and published his first autobiographical comedy book, *Born a crime: stories from a South African childhood*, in 2016.

modernism and postmodernism, like the concept musical. Traditional cabaret seems to have found a new home in alternative music and stand-up comedy, while the cabaret artists of the 1980's now create bigger theatrical productions. Casper De Vries tells Van Zyl (2008:92) that some academics often classify these “commercial cabarets” as revues. The researcher agrees with De Vries's condemnation of this classification but does admit that cabaret and the revue are two art forms that have always been closely related.

3.1.3. Comparisons between cabaret and the revue

When considering the development of cabaret, one must also consider developments in other theatrical subgenres, such as the revue¹⁴⁵. Cabaret is described in Pretorius (1994b:65) as an art form that is not genuine drama, and not pure revue, although it does share some recognisable characteristics with revues.

In the first place, both cabaret and the revue can be described as fragmented in structure, and feature a mixture of loosely structured scenes, sketches and musical numbers. In the words of Jelavich (1993:3), “[t]he revue was related to cabaret inasmuch as it comprised a smattering of songs and dialogues of a satirical or parodistic nature”. The revue seems to show some more structure, with a thematic link between the different episodes (Appignanesi 2004:187). These themes are generally topical, relating to contemporary matters at the time that the performances are presented. The revue is, however, considered to be aimed at a passive audience that seeks entertainment and soothing songs (Aucamp 2013:104), as was the case in Florenz Ziegfeld's spectacular *Follies*-revues, described in the first chapter. De Villiers (1994:130) explains that the subject matter in cabaret is typically closely linked to the social and political happenings in a specific community, with the cabaret performer providing cutting-edge commentary on contemporary matters. The revue, as Appignanesi (2004:187) rightly points out, offers a lighter form of topical commentary, softening the sharpness and political edge, while at times preserving the satirical tone of cabaret. This makes the revue slightly more accessible to larger audiences since revues are more commercial and entertainment-driven than cabarets, which seeks intimacy and rests on modernist principles.

It is also the factor of intimacy that determines the way in which characterisation is perceived in cabaret, as opposed to revue. It has been established in the previous chapter that the revue would feature different performers or characters in almost every episode, while the

¹⁴⁵ A description of the revue was given in Chapter 1 (see 1.9.2.).

concept musical demonstrates full characterisation and progression in character. In cabaret, with intimacy as its primary aim, the performer often addresses the audience without hiding behind a character. Harrington (2000: 15-16) explains that cabaret artists open up on a personal level, creating a unique level of trust between audience and performer. Even when performers occasionally take on a different character, usually in the form of caricatures¹⁴⁶ (Pretorius 1994:62), the audience still connects to the performer underneath the mask.

After the first World War, cabaret found its most suitable home in Berlin, Germany, under the rule of the Weimar Republic (Kenrick 2003a). The interrelationship between cabaret and revue can be felt here, as these two subgenres influenced each other through co-existence (Jelavich 1993:3). Under the rule of the Weimar Republic, revues were the most popular forms of theatrical entertainment¹⁴⁷, although there were still attempts at literary cabaret, as discussed previously. Whereas revue and cabaret seemed to be two different streams of entertainment that existed alongside each other, the 1920's also saw a series of cabaret-revues in which these two were combined, finding the middle ground between the two subgenres. Jelavich (1993:190) writes the following:

Although the great commercial revues remained the most popular form of live entertainment in Berlin until the Great Depression, after 1926 a counterbalance appeared in the form of the cabaret-revue.

In order for cabaret artists to make a living in Germany between the two World Wars, it seemed as though they had to acknowledge their audiences' needs. Around 1920, audiences in Germany preferred cabarets that were more entertaining over politically-driven avant-garde cabarets (Segel 1987:xv). The result was cabaret-like satirical revues. The improvisational nature of cabaret was substituted for a more organised sequence of events, and the political critique toned down. Music and dance in these cabaret-revues carried more weight than verbal wit (Appignanesi 2004:187).

In 1924, Erwin Piscator, associated with Berlin Dada, created a series of cabaret-revues for political agitation, referred to as the *Red Revues*. Piscator was approached by the KPD (The German Communist Party) to use the entertainment devices of cabaret, the revue and

¹⁴⁶ "In art or literature, [caricature represents the] portrayal of an individual or thing that exaggerates and distorts prominent characteristics so as to make them appear ridiculous. **Caricature** is commonly a medium for satire" (www.dictionary.com).

¹⁴⁷ The end of censorship resulted in a surge of entertainment programmes offering nude dancing. The court eventually managed to set up specific boundaries regarding the depiction of the female body on stage. Females on stage became the main attraction of revues, together with a new import, American music and jazz, influencing the musical programmes (Jelavich 1993:154).

variety show to promote their political ideals. Jelavich (1993:211) states that Piscator regarded these productions as “revolutionary [and] political-proletarian revues”.

Intent on making [the revue] into a political and proletarian form which would both analyse the contemporary situation and advocate a socialist future, Piscator urged that all possible theatrical elements be exploited: music, song, acrobatics, sport, film, statistics, harangue, even on-stage drawing (Appignanesi 2004:187).

It could be posited that these ‘new’ revues incorporated the entertainment orientated elements of revues to achieve cabaret-like goals seated in political commentary and even propaganda. In another revue, Piscator presented a documentary montage of the First World War, covering the history between 1914 and 1919, with a clear propagandistic agenda (Appignanesi 2004:188).

In South Africa, Hennie Aucamp first incorporated cabaret-like devices in a book that he described as a revue (for readers). The title, fittingly, was *Wolwedans: ‘n soort revue*. The book was published in 1973, seven years before his first cabaret, *Met permissie gesê* (Van Zyl 2004:112). According to theatre critic Kerneels Breytenbach, *Met permissie gesê* has also been referred to as a “revuette” (Aucamp 1980: Back Cover) and it was advertised as a revue in The Star of 30 March 1981.

Due to their topical content, Pieter-Dirk Uys’s shows are sometimes referred to as revues, although he does not use music in his productions.

Uys regards the revue format, with its structural and stylistic flexibility [...] and the manner in which, like cabaret, it allows for the incorporation of music, songs and commentary, as the ideal vehicle for satire. Topical revue arises from and reflects a current situation. “My revues mustn’t last,” Uys believes, “They must go, here-today and gone-tomorrow, as events and attitudes change (McMurty 1994:81).

Nataniël (2014, pers. comm., 29 October) calls his contemporary shows “concerts”. While his music and monologues (binding script) tend towards satirical or social commentary, the extravagance¹⁴⁸ of his productions seems to relate to the revue, which seeks a larger commercial audience, as is evident from several live performances that are available on DVD, for example *COMBAT* (2011), *CATHEDRAL* (2010) and *FACTORY* (2013).

Elzabé Zietsman has engaged in a variety of revues, some of which are often classified as cabarets, including *Die Sleutelgat revue* with, among others, Casper de Vries, and *Strydom*

¹⁴⁸ In personal communication with Nataniël, he revealed that his extravagant annual concerts feature roughly 80 different costumes, twenty technicians, dancers, backing vocalists, musicians and a décor set for each musical number (2014, pers. comm., 29 October).

en Ziets – in alfabetiese volgorde. More revues by Zietsman include *Elzabé Zietsman in Cliché*, *Two Faces of Elzabé Zietsman* and *SABS Approved* (Anon 2001a; Anon 2010). In 2001, Zietsman collaborated with Coenie de Villiers for *Songs – Ziets sing Coenie* in which she sang a selection of his songs (Anon 2001b; Roggeband 2009:90).

Musical programmes built around a specific composer's work are referred to as *surveys* or *retrospectives*, as mentioned in Chapter 1, and are classified as a type of musical revue. According to De Luca (2013:71), musical revues, which are theatrical programmes showcasing theme-related songs¹⁴⁹, are classified as contemporary cabarets in The United States of America. This further demonstrates the general confusion between the two terms and how they are often used synonymously, especially with regards to contemporary musical productions.

The researcher acknowledges that cabaret and the revue seem to have influenced each other interchangeably across the years, leaving many blurred lines when it comes to the classification of the two subgenres. Perhaps Piscator managed to merge the extremities of both subgenres in just the right ratio with his *Red Revues*. Appignanesi (2004:188) speaks out about the major contribution Piscator made to theatre. She makes special mention of the significant influence he had on the work of Bertolt Brecht, who also admired the revue and, appropriately, the cabaret.

3.1.4. Bertolt Brecht and cabaret

While the concept musical is thought to have been influenced by Bertolt Brecht after his death, it is important to note that Brecht himself was active as an artist during the golden years of cabaret. It was established as historical background that Brecht performed on cabaret stages in Munich as well as Berlin. Appignanesi (2004:168) finds it “interesting to note just how much the cabaret influenced the most famous playwright of the period [...] and through him the twentieth-century theatre”. Brecht has been credited with influencing many other theatre practices, including the concept musical discussed in the previous chapter, and even South African cabaret. Hennie Aucamp makes no secret of the lasting Brechtian influence in his cabaret work (Aucamp 2013:60; Aucamp 2012; Botha 2008).

¹⁴⁹ According to De Luca (2013:71), the songs in a musical revue can be linked by the following themes:

1. A certain composer or lyricist, or composer-lyricist collaboration
2. A certain musical style or genre
3. A certain musical era

Double and Wilson¹⁵⁰ (2006:40-61) devote an entire chapter to Bertolt Brecht and his association with cabaret. It is evident that many of the Brechtian methods present in concept musicals, as explored in the previous chapter, can also be observed in cabaret. These include Brecht's montage structure, *Verfremdungseffekt*, the disposal of the fourth wall convention, the use of commentary music or song, and political motives hidden behind comic or entertaining performance material. Both the concept musical and cabaret involve humour and set out to entertain, but compared to the concept musical, cabaret seems more vigorous in adding political or didactical undercurrents to its humorous material (Aucamp 1986:8). This was exactly the kind of theatre that Brecht was interested in.

According to Double and Wilson (2006:59), cabaret provided Brecht with the necessary means and methods to promote the political agenda he envisioned for his ideal theatre. Morris¹⁵¹ (1994:112) explains that "[c]abaret is political theatre, of a particular kind. Its performance methods do not include mass action or public address, [but] rather mockery, satire and seduction". It is a means of casting reality in a sharper, objective and perhaps more intellectual light, urging audiences to re-evaluate the status quo and perhaps inspire change (Double and Wilson 2006:43). As a form of civilised *protest*, cabaret uses comic techniques to mask its socio-political commentary. Aucamp perhaps best describes cabaret's function as being "a moralist wearing a clown's hat" (Botha 2008:3). It was Karl Valentin's work, and through working in close contact with the comedian in cabarets, that Brecht identified exactly this characteristic of teaching through entertainment (and fun) as a crucial element for his own Epic theatre. As Calandra (2003:191) explains: "Valentin's is a theatre for learning and for the highest of pleasures, with its basis in gesture and its implicit message a need for perpetual change".

The non-linear structure of cabaret provided a suitable model around which Brecht could arrange his scenes and songs.

The short, sketch-like scenes of the cabaret performance, which were non-consecutive but loosely linked through satirical and political intent, left their mark on his use of an episodic form (Appignanesi 2004:170).

¹⁵⁰ Dr Oliver Double is a former stand-up comedian who is currently working at the University of Kent's School of Arts as lecturer and Research Centre Director of Comedy and Popular Performance. Michael (Mike) Wilson is a Professor of Drama and Field Leader for Performing Arts and Film and the University of Glamorgan. He is known for various publications on the aspects of storytelling practice and has worked extensively in the area of community theatre.

¹⁵¹ Dr Gay Morris was the Head of the Drama Department at the University of Cape Town until 2003, also serving as Postgraduates Programmes Convenor for Drama. She still works as Emeritus Associate Professor at the university, as well as a postgraduate supervisor and researcher in the field of Applied Drama and Theatre.

Brecht believed that each scene should function on its own, and needs not be a result of the previous scene. This was a way to achieve his vision of a radical separation of the elements. He would still connect different scenes and songs through thematic or stylistic devices (Double & Wilson 2006:47). This loose structure can be observed in almost every play created by Brecht.

One of the most effective methods of maintaining an objective stance in the theatre is Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* when it comes to characterisation. Appignanesi (2004:168) and Double and Wilson (2006:50) recognise the unique performer-audience relationship of cabaret as a direct influence on this Brechtian technique. By dispensing of the imaginary fourth wall, which normally creates a barrier between the audience and the performers in traditional theatre, performers draw the audience into the performance, giving them an active part in it. They deliberately distance themselves from the dramatic material so as to create a special awareness amongst audience members that they too have a role to fulfil in the performance (Aucamp 1986:7). Performers welcome audience participation and improvise around it, making for theatre that is much more interested in the present moment (Double & Wilson 2006:56-57). Cabaret performers constantly remind audiences that they are merely portraying roles (Jones 2012: 962; Pretorius 1994:62). In this regard, Brecht can be compared more with cabaret than with the concept musical. By not presenting the audiences with psychologically accurate and empathetic characters, and rather choosing to present caricatures or address the audience as themselves or a persona, audiences could remain emotionally detached and could evaluate the situations depicted on stage on a more objective level (Aucamp 1986:15-17).

A good example of this is the *conférencier* so inherent to cabaret, whose comments and audience address would serve as a link between disparate scenes. Appignanesi (2004:170) posits that Brecht's use of a narrator in *The Threepenny Opera*, stepping out of the action to comment on it, much like in the concept musical, is reminiscent of the *conférencier's* dramatic function. Double and Wilson (2006:47) write that Brecht also created a counterpart for the *conférencier* through his use of songs and banners. The songs provide strong commentary on the scenes depicted on stage, while the banners announce the title of the next scene and explain the action that is about to take place.

The influence of the popular cabaret song on Brecht's writings is already evident in his earliest songs, such as *Jakob Apfelböck* and *Ballad of the Dead Soldier*, and especially his plays *The Threepenny Opera* and *Mahoganny*. His ballads depicted everyday life and told

the stories of ordinary men. It seemed to avoid the lyricism of “serious music”, rather providing light verses which were full of character. Most of all, the cabaret song allows for the possibility of *gestus*, where physical expressions can reveal deeper social truths and attitudes (Appignanesi 2004:170; Double & Wilson 2006:49;56). It has been established in the previous chapter that the use of song interchanged with dramatic scenes automatically creates the distancing effect that Brecht sought.

The influence of cabaret is clearly visible in Brecht’s productions¹⁵² and academic writings on the theatre. He saw a suitable new vehicle for theatre-making in cabaret, with regards to its possibilities as a political, didactical and social platform whilst still providing pleasurable aesthetics, its audience-performer relationship, its structure, and its utilisation of the different elements.

3.2. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SIX ELEMENTS OF DRAMA IN CABARET

It is clear from the literature review that the success of cabaret as an art form can be attributed to the unconventional way in which it approached the structural elements of drama, discussed in Chapter One. When cabaret first emerged during the nineteenth century and blossomed in the early twentieth century, it was considered a new type of theatre. Measured against the traditional theatre that the public was used to, terms associated with cabaret often include *Decadence* and the *grotesque*. Both of these terms involve the abnormal or distorted, in contrast with the ordinary. Swart (1994:46) places the *grotesque* in service of the *Decadence*, claiming that *Decadence* chooses to highlight the *grotesque* rather than the natural.

The presence of the *grotesque* in cabaret would have to signify some distorted interpretation of the elements and how they are to be utilised in productions. Morris (1994:113) confirms this by equating Kayser’s (1966:79) description of grotesque with the nature of cabaret:

The distortion of all ingredients, the fusion of different realms, the coexistence of beautiful, bizarre, ghastly, and repulsive elements, the merger of the parts into a turbulent whole, the withdrawal into the phantasmagoric and nocturnal world [...] all these features have entered into the concept of the grotesque.

¹⁵² Although Brecht started out as a strolling balladeer, he did not remain a performer on the cabaret stage for very long. He did, however, never break his ties with cabaret. It is interesting to note that Brecht preferred to cast cabaret artists in his plays (Double & Wilson 2006:45). Appignanesi (2004:170) adds that he would invite many cabaret stars to perform in his short-lived cabaret *Die Rote Zibebe*.

When applied to cabaret, one can identify the similarities. The “fusion of different realms” relates to cabaret’s combination of different entertainment forms from different subgenres in theatre, music and literature (Pretorius 1994:73). Cabaret thrives on paradox, satire and blatant artificiality. It presents the beautiful and the ugly simultaneously, often with the goal of unmasking truths and causing disillusionment in audiences. “Performances are not usually pretty, stable and comforting; rather they tend to be unsettling, even bizarre, and visually fantastical” (Morris 1994:110). The nocturnal world that Kayser speaks of could be linked to cabaret’s affiliation with the decadent, the erotic and taboo subjects it addresses, and the lower class characters, such as prostitutes, that it often involves, as discussed previously.

Morris (1994:112) continues by stating that cabaret charms the audience and draws them into the action, only to shock and horrify them in the end. The seduction of the audience is achieved mostly through humour (often in the form of satire, parody or travesty), eroticism and the cliché, which Snyman¹⁵³ (1994:27) promotes as one of cabaret’s strongest tactics. He elaborates on this statement by explaining that the cliché seems to make audiences comfortable due to its familiar territory, which heightens the shock effect when the truth is revealed (Snyman 1994:35). The different tactics mentioned above – the paradox, the *grotesque*, *Decadence*, the cliché, humour and eroticism – all seemed to be visible in the eventual utilisation of the six structural elements of Aristotle within the cabaret subgenre, which is the primary focus of this division.

When asked which element of drama he would regard most important in cabaret, Aucamp undoubtedly chose the “word”, which can be paralleled to “language” in this study. The performer, here it would be categorised under “character”, is also authoritative, followed by the music (as previously mentioned, the songs or *chansons* were the key attractions in earlier European cabarets). The ideal situation for Aucamp would be if these three elements could be equally strong in a performance (Van der Merwe 2010:41). Cabaret is considered “woordkuns” (word art) by Aucamp (1986:7), with the other elements being in service of the word. If the word loses its authority over the other elements, cabaret can easily regress to mere spectacle and meaningless entertainment (Aucamp 1986:8). Morris (1994:110) adds that cabaret further avoids digressing towards shallow entertainment by imposing sensitive,

¹⁵³ Prof Henning Snyman (1938-2017) was an academic in Afrikaans literature with special interest in poetry. Aucamp (2013:60) writes that Snyman was one of the first academics to write about the “liedteks” (song script) in cabarets (see footnote no. 164). Snyman’s article *Kabaret: ‘n literêre grensgeval* is especially useful for this study.

often serious, intellectual and even taboo themes as the foundation on which the stories and characters are built.

The researcher extrapolates the following from the information above: that language can be seen as the vehicle through which a plot can unfold, a theme can be brought across, and characters can convey their thoughts. In the same sense, music can here be considered a component of language, a medium through which language can be conveyed or a language in itself. The last element, namely Spectacle, becomes secondary to Language, Character, Music, Plot and Theme.

For the sake of consistency, the elements will be discussed in the same order as in the previous chapter, starting with Plot and Theme. In true Brechtian fashion, the arrangement of events in cabaret tends to be episodic and often diverse but often linked by a common thematic thread. The next division investigates Character, acknowledging the importance of the performer more than certain characters, with special attention given to the audience-performer relationship. Language has been established as an imperative component of cabaret. While Music also has a very important part to play, it is dealt with here as a constituent of language. Finally, Spectacle – or the simplicity thereof - is scrutinised for its effective role in cabaret.

The historical background already shows that cabaret has taken on many different forms over the years. This section will be based on generalisations made by academics, with some examples linked to certain writers, performers or cabaret stages. This differs from the concept musical's investigation, where specific musicals served as exemplary material. To avoid unnecessary repetition, keeping in mind that a lot of the details have already been discussed in the history division of cabaret, the following headings will be approached in a more summative fashion and with direct application on cabaret in mind.

3.2.1. Plot and theme

When cabaret first emerged during the high tide of modernism and avant-garde, it embraced the unconventional ways of these art movements. In terms of structure, the linear way of presenting dramatic events was abandoned for a more distorted, episodic montage-structure, which can also be associated with collage, in which fragmentation, discontinuity and heterogeneity are promoted (Jelavich 2003:19-20). The grotesque and paradoxical nature of cabaret becomes visible in the non-linear arrangement of the events (the plot), with the different episodes being juxtaposed and seemingly incoherent and the employment of a

diverse spectrum of performance media borrowed from theatre, music and literature (Pretorius 1994:73). It is, therefore, understandable that Appignanesi (2004:5) writes that cabaret walks the “tightrope between the stage proper and the variety show”. Herman Pretorius argues that, as the subgenre matured and more structured literary cabarets developed, the plots remained disjointed and episodic, but there appears to have been an overarching theme connecting the different events (Aucamp 1986:7), much in the same way as concept musicals.

The exemplary cabaret, *Le Chat Noir*, demonstrated the fragmented nature of cabaret. Essentially unstructured, the performances thrived on spontaneity, improvisation and surprise. Artists would take turns on performing their work, ranging from poetic recitals to piano improvisations, from choir music to chansons by a macabre balladeer, Maurice Mac-Nab or Aristide Bruant (Appignanesi 2004:14). From the historical overview, it is evident subsequent cabarets would incorporate a similar approach to structure.

In Aucamp’s work, one finds the elements of traditional African theatre, such as song, dance, story-telling, dramatisation, mime and improvisation, not in random order, but formally structured together in a European fashion. This results in a very unique, inclusive South African theatre form (Pretorius 1994:76). Aucamp’s (2008) own definition of cabaret seems to summarise his approach to plot and theme in most of his cabarets. He states that cabaret is a theatrical performance that employs different methods of entertainment, always on an intellectual basis and preferably with an overarching theme linked to the seven deadly sins in society.

It is evident from the scripts of *Met permissie gesê*, *Slegs vir almal*, *Blomtyd is Bloeityd* and *Oudisie!* that they all present a similar fragmented structure made up of monologues, dialogue scenes, commentary songs, comic sketches, rhyme, mime and dance (Aucamp 1980:3-53; Aucamp 1986:33-103; Aucamp 1994:13-61). The challenging material has strong socio-political undercurrents linked to *civilised protest* and attesting to the intellectual approach of Aucamp’s work, aimed at an educated audience (Aucamp 1986:7).

Different overarching themes are presented, some more political than other. Van der Merwe (2010:53) observes elements of the seven deadly sins in the political cabaret, *Slegs vir almal*, especially pride and lust, manifesting in greed or selfishness. In the programme notes of *Blomtyd is Bloeityd*, Aucamp (1994:11) writes that the central subject is the woman and her entrapment in her biology and in the role that society ascribes to her. She is the

personification of a flower bleeding¹⁵⁴. He elaborates further in an interview that the woman also represents all of humanity and its suffering (Sarah J Smith 2013). In *Oudisie!*, Aucamp (1994:39) explores the Theatre of Politics and the Politics of Theatre. On the one hand, a strong theme of war - which is also a popular subject in European cabaret – and its effect on society is depicted through a monologue entitled *Die Laaste Soldaat*, followed by a commentary song, *Die afwaartse spiraal* (Van der Merwe 2010:55, Swart 1994:40). The other aspect of *Oudisie!* is dedicated to people working in theatre. Cultural confusion is a reoccurring theme. Aucamp identifies and criticises the vanity of artists as “poverty” (“spervuur van armoede”) in theatre at the time (Aucamp 1994:39; Van der Merwe 2010:54).

Cabaret is often concerned with controversial themes, associated with all that is decadent and taboo. Subjects that people are least comfortable with are often presented on stage, guaranteeing a heightened level of shock in the audience. These themes can be political, topical or universal, but need to address problems that humans are faced with (Aucamp 1986:7).

Cabaret’s preoccupation with topical themes generates a certain journalistic quality (De Villiers 1994:145, Aucamp 1986:6). De Villiers (1994:130) qualifies this statement when he declares that documented cabarets can often serve some sort of historical function, due to the fact that it is a reflection of what happens in a country or community at a given time or social milieu. Cabaret tends to be very outspoken over themes of war, political and social tendencies, and even contemporary fashion of a specific period (Jelavich 2003:6). *Piekniek by Dingaan*, for example, touched on racial, sexual and erotic themes, which were unacceptable in the controversial social milieu of the time, and ridiculed the censorship under which South African media functioned (dpelser 2015). As mentioned, Pieter-Dirk Uys is especially committed to providing topical information. He concentrates on contemporary headlines, the latest Zapiro cartoon¹⁵⁵ and letters to the editor and presents these as issues of the day (2014, pers. comm., 31 October).

On the other side of the spectrum, cabaret takes on more universal themes relating to the human race and human experience. Examples can be found in the work of Aristide Bruant and Hennie Aucamp, who focused on the stories of the common man, instead of the aristocracy. Aucamp particularly favours the seven deadly sins – anger, avarice, envy,

¹⁵⁴ “Bloei” in Afrikaans has two meanings: one is to bloom, but the other is to bleed.

¹⁵⁵ Jonathan Shapiro (1958-), known as Zapiro, is a South African cartoonist. He is known internationally for his (often controversial) topical cartoons, which appear daily in the *Mail & Guardian* and weekly in the *Sunday Times*.

gluttony, lust, pride and sloth – as a thematic basis on which to build his cabarets (Aucamp 1994:5). Morris (1994:114) explains that cabaret “frequently addresses topics fraught with personal tensions, ambiguities, uneven power relations, and salacious thrills for the audience”. Snyman (1994:35) elaborates by claiming that cabaret highlights humankind in its primitive form: erotic and violent. Sex, or eroticism, is regarded by Jelavich (2003:4) to be the most prominent human issue addressed in cabarets, especially during its formative years. This was certainly a taboo subject at the turn of the century.

Despite the more liberal society we find ourselves in today, eroticism has remained one of the primary aspects of cabaret, even if it is merely used as a method of seducing the audience before unnerving them by exposing daunting truths. The anarchic dancer, Valeska Gert’s ¹⁵⁶ (1892-1978), representation of a prostitute through expressive dance moves stands out as a prime example, as documented by Double and Wilson (2006:56):

After a series of hip wiggles, jerks and spasms, she physically showed the excitement ebbing away to be replaced by disgust and disdain, as if to say, ‘What’s been happening to me? I’ve been exploited. My body’s been abused because I need money’.

Aucamp (2013:298-343) makes special mention of homosexuality that has been part of the cabaret culture since the Weimar-era. He adds HIV/AIDS as a prominent theme in cabaret in the last few decades. More themes concerned with sex and sexuality are prostitution, transsexuality and transgenderism (Aucamp 2013:16).

Violence and exploitation stand out as a prominent human theme. At its pinnacle is the theme of war. As stated by Swart (1994:39-40), war has been a recurring theme since the beginning of the European cabaret. Cabaret aims to expose war as a phenomenon of senseless destructiveness, hopelessness and grief. The Dada movement seems to have epitomised the theme of war during World War I, answering its absurdity with their own senseless art. During the turbulent times in South Africa, relating to apartheid and the Border War against Angola, local cabarets also resorted to war themes, notably Aucamp’s *Ouidisie!* and *Met Permissie gesê*, in which a performer at some point represents a soldier, who becomes a metaphor for war in general (Swart 1994:39).

¹⁵⁶ Valeska Gert was a German Jewish performer who had roots in dance and theatre. According to Goodman (2018), Gert “tends to be identified as a ‘dance performance artist’ because she used her body to tell socially critical stories in what seemed like bizarre or grotesque ways, and was perhaps the first modern dancer to do so”. Her work was absorbed into German Expressionism and 1980’s punk.

A preoccupation with the grotesque and the avant-garde seems to account for cabaret's non-linear, distorted plotline, which is more often than not united by taboo themes which expose the human condition in a vulgar fashion. Another structural element can function as a binding mechanism between unrelated scenes or a means of personifying certain themes: character.

3.2.2. Character

In its approach to characterisation, cabaret differs from traditional theatre and, in some instances, from the concept musical. Whereas these theatrical forms encourage three-dimensional characterisation from actors for audience sympathy, cabaret leaves no room for characterisation (Pretorius 1994:62). Instead, cabaret performers take the stage as themselves, or a certain persona they have created, and occasionally break into a stylised, artificial character with a certain theatrical function (Aucamp 1986:18; Double & Wilson 2006:50). It is the performer's own energy, charisma, honesty and ability to draw the audience in that facilitate the special performer-audience relationship that cabaret thrives upon (Double & Wilson 2006:50). These observations are similar to Harrington's (2000:15):

In theatre, a performer must make an audience believe in a character. In cabaret, the audience must buy the performer—even when that performer has adopted a persona very different from his or her own offstage personality. There is an exchange of trust in cabaret between audience and performer that exists in no other medium. A good cabaret performer opens up, thereby allowing the audience to open up as well.

Morris (1994:111) captures the essence of this performer-audience relationship when she writes that the audience is “close enough to the performers to see their painted faces – that heavy disguise only emphasising the breathing everyday reality of the artist beneath the contrived persona”.

Without the need for an empathetic or emotional connection with the audience through some fleshed-out character, performers are free to embrace the grotesque nature of cabaret with extreme impersonations of human stereotypes. Donning masks of eccentric characters and caricatures, often comical and satirical in nature, enables the performer to lure the audience into his theatrical world, only to unmask the truth with unnerving bitterness (Aucamp 1986:14). Here, the stereotype is functionally equivalent to the cliché, where generalisations of human personalities seem to facilitate a form of familiarity in the audience, which the performer then shatters, disillusioning them.

Performers break the fourth wall, speaking directly to the audience. Perhaps the most enduring character that was created by cabaret is that of the *conferencier*. The Master of Ceremonies stands central in several of Aucamp's cabarets, including *Met permissie gesê* and *Slegs vir almal*, binding the entire production together and revealing the moral themes and existential questions fundamental to cabaret (Pretorius 1994:74).

The performer slips in and out of different personas. Apart from stereotypes and parodies of well-known people, it is very common for cabaret performers to switch gender roles (Aucamp 2013:24; Morris 199:111). While Casper de Vries creates fictional characters that often re-appear in his shows, Uys's characters, often based on public figures, mostly come and go, as they arise from contemporary events. Past characters include fleshed-out impersonations and lampoons of political figures such P.W. Botha, F.W. De Klerk, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and, in recent years, former Minister of Health, Manto Tshabalala Msimang (McMurty 1994:81-82; Julian Shaw 2011). Pieter-Dirk Uys is, of course, synonymous with *Evita Bezuidenhout*, the alternate persona (or mask) he created for himself. A large number of the South African artists mentioned in the historical overview are publicly known for their personas. These include David Kramer, Nataniël and Johannes Kerkorrel (Aucamp 2013:179, 218), as well as Koos Kombuis, whose persona has almost reached cult status, according to Aucamp (2013:194).

The technique of cross-dressing is ultimately a form of travesty, also a component of satire. It is also a means of distancing the audience member emotionally. Seeing a man dressed as a woman, and vice versa, turns the familiar into something strange. While it is funny, it also forces the audience to reconsider preconceived ideas with which they entered the cabaret (Aucamp 1986:12-13). Transvestites, divas and prostitutes are essentially playing dress-up and portraying a certain role, according to Aucamp (2013:307). Smith (2013:131) classifies the prostitute with other "colourful urban characters", such as criminals, beggars, vagabonds, vendors and pimps, as one of the reasons for the commercial success of the literary cabarets in Germany, successfully portrayed by leading cabaret artists.

The cabaret performer needs to be skilled in many facets of artistry (Aucamp 1986:17). He needs to be flexible in spirit to fluctuate between many different characters, he needs to be able to move as an actor, mime and dancer when required and he needs to possess a certain charming or eccentric personality that can grab an audience's attention and win their support. Some of the most important instruments the *cabaretier* uses to achieve this include his voice, effective language and functional songs. According to Van der Merwe (2010:43),

the different theatrical methods applied by cabaret may differ, but the essence of cabaret's power lies in the special relationship between the performer and the audience, and what the performer has to say.

3.2.3. Language and Music

The two mediums largely used by cabaret artists to convey their messages are the "spoken word", or language, and music (Van der Merwe 2010:40). It is indicated that in cabaret the spoken word can be presented in the form of monologue or dialogue, and is typically alternated by music to interpret the word even further. In the words of Ruttkowski (2001:45), the Cabaret song lives on in movies, on recordings or in one person shows. Being more than just a song, the term "cabaret song" implies a certain performance style in alliance with expressive lyrics set to complementing music. The special style of performance was adopted by cabaret performers as a result of the intimate spaces in which they performed, and is characterised by fine nuances and the art of understatement (Ruttkowski 2001:51).

As mentioned, cabaret is in essence 'word art' maintaining a fine balance between literary methods for intellectual interpretation and theatrical methods for amusement (Van der Merwe 2010:42-43). In the cabaret tradition, language is often stripped of its dignity in order to achieve a certain level of social commentary. Most infamously, the Dadaists took extreme measures by creating phonetic poems in which the spoken language was entirely distorted and devoid of all meaning, which would fit into the grotesque tendencies of the cabaret tradition. In a less extreme way, cabaret employs the clichés of language and poetry for satirical agendas. To roughly translate Snyman's words, "Cabaret re-activates the cliché to create a parody on the conventions of poetry" (Snyman 1994:30).

Parodic methods are meant to overthrow preconceived ideas and expectations in the audience, and ultimately unmask hypocrisy or surprise audiences with a sudden plot-twist¹⁵⁷ (Aucamp 1986:15; Jelavich 2003:4). Examples include parodies of existing literary material¹⁵⁸ in which certain aspects are mocked and parodies of existing songs in which words could be changed, but the melodies remain a familiar territory for the audience.

¹⁵⁷ Travesty is also found in music. For example, a cabaret artist can sing a love song in a way that the audience is familiar with, giving them what they expect, and then suddenly presents a perversion of the norm in the end. The song, *If you could see her through my eyes*, by the Emcee in *Cabaret* is a prime example. The soothing love song ends in the unexpected "if you could see her through my eyes, she wouldn't look Jewish at all" (Aucamp 1986:13).

¹⁵⁸ Aucamp (2013:184) stresses the fact that a parody of existing literary material can also serve as a tribute rather than commentary. An example can be found in Aucamp's own pastiche of Afrikaans writer Boerneef's work in *Teen latenstyd*. Daniel Hugo writes that Aucamp was open about his admiration for Boerneef (Aucamp 1999:70).

Hearing different words, often satirical and politically charged, to well-known music creates an oddity which throws the audience off balance, forcing them to listen to the new lyrics and challenge their own perceptions. Another example can be found in the use of language itself. Audiences expect certain words and dialogues to accompany certain situations. Cabaret often juxtaposes irreconcilable ideas, causing confusion and discomfort in audiences which they conceal with laughter (Aucamp 1986:13).

Johannes Kerkorrel often parodied existing Afrikaner songs by manipulating its well-known lyrics into politically charged messages, pasted onto its well-known melodies. He is quoted by Hopkins (2006:124) saying: “It is wonderful giving FAK-songs, “Die Stem” and psalms a rock beat”. One of his best known parodic songs is *Wat ‘n vriend het ons in P.W.*, a new take on the religious song *Wat ‘n vriend het ons in Jesus* (Hopkins 2006:123), which featured in *Piekniek by Dingaan*. In Koos Kombuis’s *Swart September*, lyrically based on the prominent Afrikaans poet, C. Louis Leipoldt’s, poem *Oktober is die mooiste maand*, the national anthem of the time, “Die Stem”, was given alternative, highly controversial lyrics¹⁵⁹ (Byerly 1998:32; Swart 1993:138; Aucamp 2013:197). In Aucamp’s *Oudisie!* popular Afrikaans singers such as Anneli van Rooyen and Bles Bridges are subjects of ridicule (Van der Merwe 2010:54).

It could be posited that music is not of utmost necessity in cabaret, as is demonstrated in the purely theatrical work of Pieter-Dirk Uys. It should, however, be kept in mind that, at its inception, the cabaret’s *chansonniers* are said to have been its main attraction (Segel 1987:35). According to Ruttkowski (2001:54-56), there are four different types of songs utilised in cabaret. Firstly, the cabaret ballad sets out to tell a story, often in narrative form (it could also be a conversation with an unseen second party). The second type of cabaret song introduces a character to the audience, typified by the “prostitute song”, which encompasses all of the stylistic aspects of the cabaret song. Ruttkowski (2001:56) provides further information about the prostitute song, claiming that it is a self-introductory “role song” in which the singer-actress distances herself from the character and describes herself, directly or indirectly. This is reminiscent of character songs in concept musicals.

In the third instance, a cabaret song can be used for reflective purposes, often with a tinge of satire. It can range from personal topics to social ones, and may even go as far as treading political grounds. Here, distinctions can be made between a “decision song”, in which actors or characters describe their situation and plan on making a decision about it, and “satirical

¹⁵⁹ The lyrics to *Swart September* is documented in Hopkins (2006:133) and Swart (1993:136-138).

couplets”, a “mouthpiece for the author” often detached from the plot (Ruttkowski 2001:55), which the researcher connects with commentary songs in concept musicals.

The last type of cabaret song sets out to describe certain moods and feelings. These are often lyrical poems which were set to music at a later stage (Ruttkowski 2001:56). The researcher places the *chanson* in this category based on different utterances made by Aucamp in different sources. Similar to Ruttkowski’s first description, Aucamp proclaims in a programme note for *Met Permissie gesê*¹⁶⁰ that cabaret is intellectually inclined, while the *chanson* thrives on emotional connotations. The emotive flow in *chansons* counters the aggressive tone often found in the spoken passages of cabaret (Aucamp 2013:44). Ruttkowski’s second statement can be compared to Aucamp’s (2013:97) opinion that the *chanson* can exist outside of the context of its music, often as a poem. In the Afrikaans music tradition, the *musiek-en-liriek* movement with its *luisterliedjie*’s more substantial lyrics and subject matter could be placed under this category (Aucamp 2013:56).

In cabaret, the music and rhythm are regularly tailored around the lyrics, emotions and the performer’s personal style of expression. Cabaret songs, and especially *chansons*, focus on the meaning of the words more than on the vocal or musical execution thereof¹⁶¹ (Ruttkowski 2001:61). The well-known *disease*¹⁶², Yvette Guilbert¹⁶³ (1865-1944), is a fine example of how the performer owns rhythmical freedom by often disregarding the metre of the music and slowing down or speeding up phrases for emotional effect, also known as *rubato*. Guilbert, as a performer, adds colour and nuance to her vocal performances to bring the meaning of the dramatic content and substantial lyrics across (Ruttkowski 2001:46). Her performance approach to the cabaret song, involving singing, speaking and prophesying, is still imitated by cabaret performers today (Appignanesi 2004:28). Ruttkowski (2001:46) writes that Guilbert claimed to approach her songs as miniature dramas reduced into several

¹⁶⁰ The programme of the first professional production of *Met permissie gesê* can be found on Laurika Rauch’s website (www.laurikarauch.com/met-permissie-gese/). She was one of the performers then and is now a very successful Afrikaans singer.

¹⁶¹ Koos Kombuis’s musical abilities and singing abilities are not of star quality, but because of the messages found in his lyrics and performances, he is a huge success amongst audiences. Likewise, Aristide Bruant showcased a rather coarse singing voice, but his presence and interpretation were the reasons behind his success. Vocal shortcomings are often overlooked when the performer’s presentation and the meaning behind the music can persuade an audience (Ruttkowski 2001:48, 61).

¹⁶² This French word refers to “an actress who presents dramatic recitals, usually sung accompanied by music”, according to *Dictionary.com*.

¹⁶³ Guilbert is known to have sung “cabaretistically”, although she did not perform on cabaret stages (Appignanesi 2004:28). She was a French singer, reciter, and stage and film actress who gained popularity as a singer of songs drawn from Parisian lower-class life. What made her famous was her ingenuous delivery of the songs, which were charged with risqué meaning and subtext.

lines, much in the same way as the concept musical. Likewise, Aucamp (2013:74) describes some important cabaret songs of The Netherlands as three-act minidramas.

Aucamp's (2013:56) description of the *chanson* as the "art song of the street and café" leads the researcher back to *chansonnier* Aristide Bruant. The researcher regards Bruant as Stephen Sondheim's cabaret counterpart with regards to his sensitivity to the dialects, speech rhythms and vernacular of the lower-class Parisians that he wrote and sang about (Aucamp 2013:301; Appignanesi 2004:15). Bruant is described by Ruttkowski (2001:61) as a "folksinger". Appignanesi (2004:22) declares that "Bruant brought street poetry and the socio-critical song, fundamental to the cabaret repertoire, to their contemporary zenith". His best songs would recreate life on the streets, representing the people who lived there – prostitutes, beggars, the homeless – and the special argot that they used (Appignanesi 2004:25). According to Appignanesi (2004:24), "[t]he street argot was colourful, lively, brutal, cynical, and rich in picturesque metaphor, daring neologisms and imitative harmony". Aucamp is also known to have followed Bruant's lead of writing for the average man.

Coenie de Villiers applauds Aucamp's sense for metre and rhythm when writing lyrics¹⁶⁴. De Villiers composed music for many of Aucamp's lyrics. He admits to being fond of writing for cabaret because the rules of commercial music do not necessarily apply – for example, refrains do not need to be repeated for popular appeal – which gives composers more artistic freedom (Sarah J Smith 2013). Ruttkowski (2001:52) does, however, acknowledge that it is particularly in the cabaret song's refrain that its emotional appeal lies.

The role of music also must not be underestimated. The accompaniment can accentuate the meaning of a cabaret song, but it can also cover it up and ruin the performance. It provides, especially in the refrain, what appeals to the listener emotionally: its bewitching, humoristically playful, or agitational character

The song often delivers commentary on a scene that precedes it, still in an entertaining fashion. It could be used as an extension of the spoken scenes, or even to politically charge an audience (Ruttkowski 2001:55).

It can be gathered from the information above that language and music serve important and active functions in cabaret. These two elements are the mediums through which cabaret's writers and performers can provide their pungent and controversial commentary. With the

¹⁶⁴ The Afrikaans word used for lyrics in cabaret or musicals is "liedteks" (song script), which effectively distinguishes the cabaret lyric from commercial lyric in that it adds a more theatrical connotation to it. Aucamp (2013:55) also indicates the connection of the "liedteks" with poetry.

emphasis on cabaret's language, music and performers, as well as the message conveyed through them, the element of spectacle seems to be deliberately downplayed in cabaret.

3.2.4. Spectacle

In terms of visual elements in cabaret, the understatement is of utmost importance. Cabaret typically utilises a small stage in a tiny hall with audiences sitting around tables and enjoying drinks "in an ambience of talk and smoke" (Appignanesi 2004:6). The intimate atmosphere of the cabaret influences the way in which spectacle should be approached. Large gestures, exaggeration and extravagant visual aspects can ruin the intricate and intimate bond the performer forms with the audience (Ruttowski 2001:51).

Van der Merwe (2010:35) and Aucamp (1986:18) both make reference to Ibo's (1974:7) observation on cabaret's simplistic and minimalistic approach to spectacle, as exhibited through the work of Bruant. He states that cabaret penetrates to the core of things, without being overshadowed by glamorous costume, spectacular décor and lighting design, copious amounts of props or ornate orchestrations. Instead, everything is scaled down to its simplest form. What remains is the performer, his personality and his message. Pretorius (1994:76) provides a good summative description of spectacle in cabaret which translates as follows: "Cabaret is dressed in stripped theatricality that relies more on the imagination and performance skill than on finances".

When visual elements are employed, it is likely to have thematic or metaphoric significance. An example can be found in Aucamp's *Met permissie gesê*. After the song *Guns are free in Angola*, three dishes are carried on stage by Voortrekker-girls: one exhibit is that of a cast head of a Voortrekker, while the other two are a model of the dodo and the head of a Cape Lion, both of which are extinct (Aucamp 1981:29). Swart (1994:50) explains that the significant message behind these props is that all three dishes carry animals, which would already be a strong insult on the Afrikaner. Additionally, two of these animals are extinct. The question could thus be asked: Is the Voortrekker (also read Afrikaner) an endangered species?

It has been mentioned that the structural elements of mime and dance can feature in some cabaret performances, especially those written by Aucamp. Where entertaining dances still seemed to play a big part in concept musicals, dance in cabaret fulfils a more thematic function and is also a form of eroticism as Swart (1994:55) suggests. A prime example can be found in Valeska Gert's performances, in which she is also said to have parodied popular

dances such as the Charleston, the Foxtrot and the Tango (Smith 2013:132), but also used dance as a means of providing critique on society. Appignanesi (2004:190) credits Gert with inventing a new dance form, called the *outré*, which is the “socio-critical dance pantomime”. Gert, who was apparently in a state of trance during each performance, presented radical expressionistic dance routines, foreshadowing contemporary experimental dance. Using highly stylised, almost grotesque, gestures, each bodily movement in Gert’s dance routines signified a certain state of being. One satirical dance mime featured Gert as a prostitute, illustrating with bodily motions how her body was being abused. Double and Wilson (2006:56) identify clear connections between Gert’s dancing and Brecht’s notion of *gestus*.

It is evident that cabaret and the concept musical do not follow the same approach with regards to the element of spectacle. Whereas concept musicals still tend to invest in some form of visual appeal for its bigger audiences, cabaret’s fixation on pristine art with an overpowering message (and messenger) calls for more simplistic tactics.

3.3. CONCLUSION

As expected, an attempt to provide a compact, but comprehensive overview of the cabaret subgenre is not an easy task. Cabaret is an extremely fluid form of theatre that not only borrows from other theatrical subgenres but also spreads to different forms of literature and music. The subgenre not only emerged as an extension of the avant-garde movement; its practitioners were also actively involved in the shaping of modernism, often resorting to drastic means as an attempt to establish change. True to its roots in modernist considerations, cabaret was concerned with fragmentation and disintegration within society. This fragmented perception of life is also reflected in the narrative and structural characteristics of cabaret. Bertolt Brecht is of particular significance to this study because of the modernist techniques in his *Epic Theatre*, which were aimed at achieving a fragmented presentation of the elements of drama.

The objective of the literature study in this chapter was to identify narrative and structural characteristics that seem appropriate for the Combined Framework against which three South African one-person musicals will be evaluated in Section C of this study. Similar to the previous chapter, the literature study commenced with an overview of key historical developments within the cabaret subgenre: first in Europe, with the focus on Paris, München and Berlin, and, secondly, in South Africa. The similarities between cabaret and the revue were then highlighted, followed by a discussion of Bertolt Brecht’s affiliation with cabaret

and how he was influenced by the subgenre. The second division of this chapter was devoted to the exploration of the six elements of drama in cabaret and how they behave and interrelate towards the final product.

Narrative and structural characteristics identified in concept musicals have resurfaced in the investigation of cabaret, some of which are also expected to emerge in the next chapter, the literature study of one-person dramatic shows. Characteristics such as a presentational mode of performance and fragmented structure are, once again, observed. It is important to note that, while both the concept musical and cabaret aim at intellectual entertainment, cabaret proves to be more politically driven and has a strong *protest* facet to it which is not really indicated in concept musicals. Once again, features such as narration, direct audience address and commentary musical numbers are indicated. There is, however, minimal attempt at characterisation in cabaret, unlike the concept musical, and a persona or caricature is often opted for. Cabaret is also significantly less concerned with the visual aspects of theatre when compared to the concept musical. This simplistic approach to performance is a characteristic that appears to be present in the next subgenre of note, the one-person dramatic show, in which a single performer is responsible for a whole evening's entertainment.

CHAPTER 4:**THE ONE-PERSON DRAMATIC SHOW AS GUIDELINE FOR THE NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURAL COMPOSITION OF SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS**

The solo performer has been part of human oral traditions since prehistoric times. Actress Julie Harris¹⁶⁵ (1925-2013) writes in an introduction to Young's¹⁶⁶ (1989:5) book that "[a]cting solo is really the art of storytelling". Stories, myths and legends have been carried down from one generation to the other in tribes and communities all over the world. Catron¹⁶⁷ (2009:5) sketches the image of a primitive tribe seated around a fire, watching a *shaman*¹⁶⁸ alternate between different characters in an educational re-enactment of a hunting scene. This scene is almost identical to the pre-colonial African tradition of fireside-stories. As Pretorius (1994:64) observes, the storyteller can be described as a single actor taking on all the roles in the story, using his voice, gestures and song for dramatic effect.

In the Western theatre tradition, academics such as Catron (2009:5), Gentile (1989:3) and Dolan¹⁶⁹ (2005:67) are in agreement that the travelling storytellers and oral poets from ancient Greece, called *rhapsodists*, seem to be predecessors of modern solo actors. Together with their Roman counterparts, *histriones*, these ancient "solo artists-historians-entertainers [were] chroniclers of their times, impersonating significant leaders and events of the past to captivate audiences in the present" (Catron 2009:5). Meyer-Dinkgräfe (2002a:697) mentions the *scops* from Anglo-Saxon England as another early example, while

¹⁶⁵ Julie Harris was an award-winning American actress on stage and screen. She originated the role of *Sally Bowles* in the stage play *I Am a Camera*, based on the Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin*. Isherwood's book and the stage play later served as the bases on which the concept musical *Cabaret* was created, followed by the Academy Award-winning film version of the musical. To this day, *Sally Bowles* is one of the women who epitomises the image of Berlin cabaret, together with Lola Lola (see footnote no. 260) from the film *The Blue Angel*, even though they are fictitious characters.

¹⁶⁶ Jordan R. Young (1950) is a freelance writer-photographer, entertainment historian and playwright who has written 12 books and hundreds of articles that have been published in a wide array of magazines. Young's book *Acting Solo: The Art of One-Man Shows* (1989), has been used as teaching material for universities and serves as a key source of historical information on the one-person dramatic show in this literature study.

¹⁶⁷ Louis E. Catron (1932-2010) was a retired Professor of Theatre from the University of William and Mary. He taught playwrighting, directing and acting and published several books on the subjects.

¹⁶⁸ According to *Dictionary.com*, a *shaman* is "a person who acts as intermediary between the natural and supernatural worlds", especially associated with certain tribes.

¹⁶⁹ Jill Dolan (1957-) is an American educator, author, blogger and feminist. She writes on theatre, sexuality studies and feminist theory, both online and in books, with special mention given to her blog, *The Feminist Spectator*, for which she won the *George Jean Nathan Award* for Dramatic Criticism in 2011. Dolan has been the Dean of the College at Princeton University since 2015, and is also a professor of English and Theatre. Prior to Princeton, Dolan was the Department Head of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas.

Young (1989:115) describes the traditional Irish storyteller, or *seanchaí*, presenting fireside anecdotes, legends and folktales as an evening pastime for ancient Celtic tribes.

It has been stated in Chapter One that solo forms such as poetry readings and book readings are not regarded as one-person dramatic shows in this study. However, these types of performances, as well as the ancient art of storytelling, should be considered for their pivotal role in establishing a solo tradition which ultimately led to one-person dramatic shows of different natures which could be accepted and appreciated as legitimate theatrical productions (Paterson 2015:6; Catron 2009:7).

Written literature seems to be closely linked to the one-person dramatic show. Pavis¹⁷⁰ (1998b:218) writes that “[i]n intimate theatre, monologue becomes a kind of writing that approaches lyrical poetry”. Wallace¹⁷¹ (2006:9-10) observes similarities between the poetic genre of *dramatic monologue*¹⁷² of the Victorian age and the one-person dramatic show. Preston (2011:101) attributes these similarities to the direct influence of *dramatic monologue* on the traditions of recitation and elocution, which in turn had a direct impact on the development of one-person dramatic shows. Two more literary devices surface as precursors to monologue dramas, namely *interior monologue* and *stream of consciousness*¹⁷³ in prose (Pavis 1998b:219; Wallace 2006:11). All of these literary devices emerged out of the writers’ need to explore the human psyche and portray the individual as being a variable and fragmented product of the social and historical milieu that he/she is placed in (Wallace 2006:11). These objectives are mirrored in Catron’s (2009:98) observation that the one-person dramatic show is a “study of humanity”:

[It] excels in daring to examine fundamental questions about what it means to be a thinking, feeling, conscious human facing questions about morality,

¹⁷⁰ Patrice Pavis (1947-) retired as a Professor for Theatre Studies at the University of Kent in 2016. He has written extensively about performance, focusing his study and research mainly in semiology and inter-culturalism in theatre. His book *Dictionary of the theatre: terms, concepts, and analysis* (1998) is of value to this study.

¹⁷¹ Clare Wallace, an Associate Professor associated with the University of New York in Prague and the Charles University, teaches in the fields of Irish studies, American drama, British drama, theories of performance, literary and cultural studies, and higher-level composition/academic writing courses. She is the editor of *Monologues: theatre, performance, subjectivity* (2006) one of the key sources for the literature study on one-person dramatic shows here.

¹⁷² Dramatic monologue, which can be called a persona poem, is “a poem written in the form of a speech of an individual character; it compresses into a single vivid scene a narrative sense of the speaker’s history and psychological insight into his character” (www.brittanica.com).

¹⁷³ *Interior monologue* and *stream of consciousness* are often used interchangeably. These are literary methods in which a character’s feelings and thoughts are expressed as it appears in the character’s mind.

ethical conduct, relationships with others, personal responsibilities and goals, social obligations [and] mortality.

Wallace (2006:10) and Preston (2011:101) identify the modernist aesthetics in the literary techniques mentioned, which moved away from traditional theatre practice. The development of one-person dramatic shows can be closely linked to the rise of modernism since they “rarely maintain the conventions of a naturalistic stage space” (Wallace 2006:5). In the investigation into the narrative and structural characteristics of the one-person dramatic show to follow, modernist artists¹⁷⁴ such as Bertolt Brecht and his Epic Theatre, as well as Samuel Beckett and his work in *Absurdism* and *Existentialism*, are of key concern. These artists’ work seems to correlate with one-person dramatic shows in various aspects of structure and its approach to the dramatic material that emerges in the work of key solo performers to be discussed here. Appropriately, narrative and structural characteristics identified in the concept musical and cabaret seems to be present in one-person dramatic shows as well.

This chapter commences with a discussion of the different types of one-person dramatic shows, followed by a historical background of the subgenre, which Teachout (2012) classifies as one of the youngest theatrical forms. The researcher is especially concerned with its early beginnings as means of circumventing theatrical laws in the United Kingdom and its emergence on lecture and elocutionary circuits in the United States of America, where it was subsequently established as a legitimate form of theatre. The reason for the researcher’s preference for a history mainly in the United States of America has a lot to do with the availability of sources, but also with the fact that the key shows to be discussed were primarily showcased on commercial and popular Broadway stages, which seems to have become a measure of an artist’s and art form’s success. The revue subgenre is compared to the one-person dramatic show for consistency, and due to the fact that the two subgenres seem to share a fragmented structure and a preference for topical themes. Next, the one-person dramatic show is measured against the work of Brecht and Beckett for its roots in modernism.

The second division of the literature review concerns the narrative and structural characteristics of the one-person dramatic show. Aristotle’s six elements of drama inform

¹⁷⁴ The researcher also acknowledges the modernist movement of *Dadaism*, which has been discussed in the previous chapter as having its origin in cabaret, for its influence on the development of performance art, one of the branches of the one-person dramatic show.

the investigation that aims to identify suitable structural characteristics for the proposed Combined Framework in the next chapter. It is expected that a number of these characteristics may have been identified in the previous two subgenres as well. The framework will aid the researcher in gaining more insight into the narrative and structural characteristics of the South African one-person musicals in question.

A key characteristic that one-person dramatic shows share with one-person musicals is the presence of a single performer. This feature is especially valuable due to the fact that it distinguishes the one-person dramatic show from concept musicals and cabarets, which often feature more than one performer, as it has become evident in the previous chapters. As a mode of presentational performance, the power of the one-person dramatic show lies in its directness and how it thrives on the artificiality of theatre conventions (Pavis 1998b:218-219). In the postmodern idiom that it exists today, the one-person dramatic show has given artists the opportunity to imagine new possibilities for the theatre by experimenting with their craft and the flexibility of the subgenre, which is evident in the many different types of one-person dramatic shows.

4.1. TYPES OF ONE-PERSON DRAMATIC SHOWS

In the introductory chapter of this investigation, a brief summary was given of the variety of forms a one-person dramatic show may take (see 1.9.4.). Critics seem to have the same difficulty classifying and categorising this subgenre, as they do the subgenres of the concept musical and cabaret (Gentile 1989:64). Experimentation with the form is an ongoing venture for solo artists. Productions may vary in form and style, as well as intent (Young 1989:28). Catron (2009:40) adds structural differences, length¹⁷⁵ and different subject matter as more intricate ways of distinguishing between shows.

It has been established at the beginning of this study that one-person shows predominantly take on the form of either monologue drama or monopolylogue (see 1.9.4.). The reasons and intent behind creating one-person dramatic shows range from financial gain and vehicles for stardom, to personal challenges for the individual performer and a true need to

¹⁷⁵ Short monologues are often performed for online videos, auditions or open microphone comedy or poetry evenings and typically last between 1 and 20 minutes, according to guidelines by Bruno and Dixon (2015:16). Similarly, monologues and soliloquies are popular tools for giving voice to a character's internal conflict in ensemble theatrical productions (Catron 2000:28). Early solo performances can also be traced to individual specialty acts and short skits of Vaudeville evenings, or short monologues performed to entertain audiences while scenery was being changed between the acts or scenes of theatrical plays (Catron 2009:7; Alterman 2005:9; Sommer 2014). These are, however, excluded for the purpose of this study. Included are solo performances which last for more than half an hour.

provide commentary on or express a concern in society, politics or humanity. Some writers simply wish to tell a story to an audience about someone or something significant to them (Alterman 2005:29, Catron 2009: 2-4, 9-12; Young 1989:22-23; Teachout 2012; Bruno & Dixon 2015:14-15). In terms of subject matter, Kearns (2005:viii) identifies two relatively simple categories: fiction and non-fiction. In the same sense, Bruno and Dixon (2015:9) attempt to simplify the process of categorization structurally, under the headings narrative or non-narrative¹⁷⁶, while Paterson¹⁷⁷ (2015:7) finds that a line can be drawn between acting and not-acting with regards to style. These parameters will inform the overview of the types of one-person dramatic shows to follow.

Biographical one-person shows are possibly the best example of monologue dramas with non-fictional subject matter. These productions bring historical figures to life. The performer can embody any public, momentous figure, whether they were political figures, authors, poets, actors, or other solo performers¹⁷⁸ (Catron 2009:34-36). This form can be classified as a narrative work and requires the performer to act. The narrative is essentially driven by the characterisation of the performer and typically well-scripted with a fully developed plot (Catron 2009:40; Gentile 1989:144). Young (1989:23) writes that these “[l]iterary and historical portrayals are by far the most popular types of one-man [dramatic] show”.

However, another variation on non-fictional one-person dramatic shows became prevalent in the 1990’s, exemplified in the work of Anna Deavere Smith¹⁷⁹. Alterman (2005:5) calls them “reality-based docu-monologues” and explains them as follows:

These pieces are created from real-life events. The monologist uses the exact words of the people involved...Ms. Smith portrayed all of the characters. She obtained

¹⁷⁶ “It may be that your solo work is not narrative based, that is to say it does not feature a character or protagonist telling a story. Your piece may be an act of curation, a collection of scenes around a subject, a concert, a recitation or the portrayal of an abstract concept” (Bruno & Dixon 2015:9).

¹⁷⁷ Eddie Paterson is a senior lecturer at the University of Melbourne. He teaches scriptwriting for theatre, contemporary performance, and new media. He is especially interested in the intersections between performance, politics and everyday life and focuses on monologue and live art. His insights in *The Contemporary American Monologue: Performance and Politics* (2015) form an important part of this study, especially with regards to the one-person dramatic show.

¹⁷⁸ Gentile (1989:130) postulates that Emlyn Williams and Hal Holbrook, who performed as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain respectively, were pioneers for the rich tradition of biographical one-person shows to follow suit. An extensive list of biographical one-person shows before 1989 is provided by Gentile (1989:133-134).

¹⁷⁹ Smith’s work is scrutinised as early examples within the greater, almost journalistic genre of “documentary theatre” by Forsyth (2009:140) and will be further investigated for its historical relevance in the next subdivision of this chapter.

information by tape-recording¹⁸⁰ the actual people and taking notes on their speech tics and vocal inflections.

Smith's chosen form is a character-driven monopolylogue. She personifies recorded testimonies of different characters in a non-linear, non-narrative series of monologues, connected by a central social theme that affects her personally (Forsyth 2009:141-142). The fact that Smith takes on other characters places her in Paterson's category of acting, although Smith's work is closer to mimicry¹⁸¹, according to Dolan (2005:86). Catron (2009:98, 105) confirms that solo performers are often driven to create productions about subject matter that they can identify with and feel passionate about.

Possibly the most personal type of a non-fiction monological one-person dramatic show is the autobiographical one-person show, "a form of autobiography that theatrically stages the self" (McLean-Hopkins 2006:185). Heddon (2006:161) explains that "in solo autobiographical performance, the performing subject and the subject of performance are typically one and the same". The performer's personal life and personal anecdotes serve as subject matter¹⁸². Alterman (2005:4) identifies a narrative storytelling style and non-acting approach, where characterisation is kept to a minimum, because the performer, or public persona created by the performer, addresses the audience as him- or herself. The performer's purpose, however, should not be to simply tell stories about themselves. They rather use the details of personal experiences and transform it into public presentations shedding light on universal themes (Heddon 2006:170, Dolan 2005:67). Autobiographical performers include Spalding Gray, Quentin Crisp (1908-1999), Karen Finley¹⁸³ (1956-),

¹⁸⁰ This process of collecting dramatic material from tape recordings reminds of the recordings of director-choreographer Michael Bennett's interviews with real dancers to create the pivotal concept musical, *A Chorus Line*, as discussed in Chapter Two.

¹⁸¹ Dolan (2005:86) explains that Smith uses the word *mimicry* to describe her character work, rather than the Aristotelian *mimesis*, which would suggest that Smith would become someone or something else entirely. Instead, Smith opts for creating a distance between her and the character, presenting them simply as an attempt to walk in another person's shoes.

¹⁸² Young (1989:26) provides semi-autobiographical fiction as a type of one-person dramatic show which seems to bridge the gap between non-fiction and fiction. Here, artists build fictional stories around their own life experience, or they may draw parallels between their lives and existing works of fiction, such as Christ Cinque's *Growing up Queer in America*.

¹⁸³ Karen Finley's work in performance art is known for her use of nudity and blasphemy. Her performances, recordings, and books are used as forms of activism. She is also a musician and poet. In the words of King (1991:187), "Finley [goes against] convention and blows the audience away, alternately offending them and reducing them to laughter as she brings to light what the culture represses".

Holly Hughes¹⁸⁴ (1955-) and Laurie Anderson¹⁸⁵ (1947). Gentile (1989:168) does point out the similitude between Gray's shows and stand up comedy¹⁸⁶, but exalts the former as being more complex, more cathartic and viewed as legitimate theatre. Critics also seem to blur lines between autobiographical one-person shows and performance art, notably in the work of Finley and Hughes (Carlson 2004:126-127).

Auslander (2004:114) postulates that the avant-garde and postmodern phenomenon of performance art often fuse with the characteristics of autobiographical monologue in order to seem more accessible for audiences, which leads to a wider acceptance of the form and its performers in the cultural mainstream. Performance art, according to Meyer-Dinkgräfe (2002b:590), is a convergence of theatre with the visual arts, in which linear narrative, reality, language, character and "the self" as we know it may be distorted and redefined in modernist and postmodernist terms. Hubbard (2001:287) mentions performance art's *futurist*, *dadaist* and *surrealist* predecessors, among others:

The texts for "performance art", unusually, draw mostly on autobiographical sources [...w]ith its roots in futurism, dadaism, surrealism, and conceptual art. [...]he frequent tendency to perform the "body as text" [...], combined with the increasingly common practice of transforming autobiographical stories into dramatic texts [...] locate performance art as a noteworthy form of theatrical life writing.

According to Paterson (2015:8), performers associated with performance art and autobiographical monologue are known for their strong critique on politics and culture, raising questions about aspects like race, gender, sexuality, class and discrimination. They directly address these issues as themselves, willing to be vulnerable in front of audiences.

Some one-person dramatic shows are purely fictitious. Alterman's (2005:5) term "character-driven, fictional monologues" perhaps best describes the shows of major solo performers

¹⁸⁴ Holly Hughes is best known for her work as a feminist and lesbian performance artist. She is a co-editor of *O Solo Homo: The New Queer Performance* (1998), an anthology of queer solo performance, which included her own *Clit Notes*, for which she is probably most famous. Hughes' controversial shows include *World Without End* (1984), *Clit Notes* (1994) and *Preaching to the Perverted* (2000).

¹⁸⁵ Laurie Anderson is an American avant-garde artist, composer, musician and film director known for her work in different fields, including performance art, pop music, and multimedia projects. She has invented a number of new devices in the field of electronic music, which she uses in her performance art shows and her recordings.

¹⁸⁶ The topical monologue, termed by Alterman (2005:6), is also closely related to stand-up comedy, whilst being seated in autobiography as well. Alterman writes that "they are part autobiographical, part observation, and part opinion". Topical events are subjectively reviewed by the monologist, reminiscent of topical revues.

such as Lily Tomlin, Danny Hoch¹⁸⁷ (1970-), Ruth Draper¹⁸⁸ (1884-1956) and Whoopi Goldberg¹⁸⁹ (1955-), although the latter does seem to tread the tightrope between autobiography and fiction. What makes these artists' performances memorable, is their portrayal of a variety of characters in a monopolylogue form. "[T]he actor/writer creates multiple characters to express a theme, display a lifestyle, or tell a (sometimes) imaginary story" (Alterman 2005:5). Acting comes into play in these monopolylogues, as the performer primarily takes on characters instead of speaking as themselves. There seems to be a narrative, plot-driven variation as well as a non-narrative, fragmented and theme-driven variation within this type of show.

The first variation might remind of a normal play, where dialogue between different characters drives the narrative forward. The difference is that one actor portrays all these characters, switching between a range of personalities by means of voice changes, different postures or positions, or even the use of props (Catron 2009:31; Jordan 2006:126). Wallace's (2006:4) term "ensemble monologue" appears to be very fitting here.

In the second instance, performers portray an array of characters in separate scenes, rarely having characters interact with one another, and rarely revisiting the same character. The loosely constructed narrative might resemble a non-linear, collage or montage-like structure reminiscent of the concept musical and cabaret. Characters seem to be linked in some way, either by common experience or common theme, and might present stories or opinions that either contradict or verify each other (Dolan 2005:2; Alterman 2005:5; Jordan 2006:126-127). The different scenes resemble character sketches, in which fundamental information about the various characters, applicable and essential to the subject matter at hand, is shown (Catron 2009:41).

A final type of one-person dramatic show that writers or performers have opted for is the non-narrative anthology or literary adaptation, which is essentially a collage or collection of excerpts from existing literature by either one author, or multiple authors (Young 1989:24). Catron (2009:36) identifies popular source literature such as the Bible in *St Mark's Gospel*

¹⁸⁷ Danny Hoch is known for his one-person shows, but is has also featured in several movies, both art house and mainstream. He is credited as an actor, writer, performance artist and a director.

¹⁸⁸ Ruth Draper was an American actress, dramatist and *diseuse*. She is remembered especially for her character-driven monologues and in her evening entertainments, which could be viewed as one-person dramatic shows.

¹⁸⁹ Born Caryn Elaine Johnson, Whoopi Goldberg, as she is known professionally, is a famous American actress, comedian, television host and author. She is one of only a few to have won an *Academy Award*, *Grammy Award*, *Tony Award* and *Emmy Award*.

(1977) by Alec McCowen¹⁹⁰ (1925-2017) and Shakespeare, as is the case in *Readings from Shakespeare* (1949) by Fanny Kemble¹⁹¹ (1809-1893), as well as *Ian McKellen Acting Shakespeare* (1976) by Ian McKellen¹⁹² (1939-) and *Ages of Man* (1957) by John Gielgud¹⁹³ (1904-2000). It is true that the monologue form has long been associated with literature such as prose and poetry, and seems to provide ample opportunity for intertextuality (Paterson 2015:14). Referring to monologue theatre's preoccupation with literary genres such as poetry and fiction, Wallace (2006:9) states that "elements from these non-theatrical genres later appear woven into the fabric of theatres of monologue".

The one-person dramatic show is a flexible subgenre that has taken on many different forms since its acceptance into the legitimate theatre circuits. It has, however, not always been performed on the popular stages, and had its humble beginnings on smaller platforms, as will be discussed in the following historical overview of the one-person dramatic show.

4.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A history of the one-person dramatic show, as is the case with the concept musical and cabaret, cannot be written without considering the context of its social, political and cultural climate, as well as movements in literature and theatre during key moments of change (Jordan 2006:130). As Pavis (1998b:218) points out, the monologue tends to be especially utilised in anti-naturalistic periods of theatre and literature which do not favour realistic dialogue, such as the modernist and Romantic movements. Leading names in modernism, Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett, are promoted in a myriad of academic articles as key figures in the development of the one-person dramatic show¹⁹⁴. Similarly, movements that place emphasis on social issues such as race and racism, gender (e.g. feminism) and sexuality (LGBTQIA) have seemed to find in the solo form a useful vehicle to address these matters, especially during the last few decades of the 1900's (Paterson 2015:8; Elam 2002:98, cited in Dolan 2002:499).

¹⁹⁰ Alec McCowen was an English character actor known for his work on stage and screen.

¹⁹¹ Frances Ann (Fanny) Kemble was the daughter of the famous Shakespeare actor, Charles Kemble (1775-1854).

¹⁹² The award-winning Sir Ian McKellan is a famous English actor of stage and screen, perhaps best known as *Gandalf* in the film versions of J.R.R. Tolkien's books, *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. McKellan will be performing the lead role in Shakespeare's *King Lear* on London's West End from 11 July to 3 November 2018.

¹⁹³ Sir Arthur John Gielgud was one of the most prominent actors on the British stage in the 20th century. His career as an actor and theatre director spanned eight decades.

¹⁹⁴ To be discussed in 4.2.4.

In the historical overview to follow, key moments in history are placed alongside key developments in the one-person dramatic show, especially in the United States of America, associated with the work of certain pioneering artists and performers within the subgenre. Artists in the field of solo theatre seem to often become synonymous with the productions that they perform in since some of these shows are very personal. For this reason, revivals of one-person dramatic shows seem to be a rarity¹⁹⁵. Artists and productions are chosen based on the significant amount of existing literature about their success in the field, and their relevance towards the final aim of the investigation, which is the construction of a framework in the next chapter to inform case studies on some significant South African one-person musicals.

4.2.1. Early developments of the one-person dramatic show in the United Kingdom

Solo performers seem to have been theatrical artists' saving grace over the centuries. According to Catron (2009:6), when the advent of Christianity brought formal theatre to a near standstill in Medieval Europe, it was the travelling solo performers that kept show business alive in taverns and courtyards. When strict censorship was endorsed on theatrical productions in eighteenth-century England under the Licensing Act, several entertainers resorted to the solo form to circumvent these laws. They would often refer to their productions as "lectures" (Young 1989:14; Catron 2009:6).

During the eighteenth century two British performers, Samuel Foote (1720-1777) and George Alexander Stevens (1710-1780) cleverly circumvented strict licencing laws by presenting what was respectively labelled "solo mimicry" and "lectures". Foote, although sometimes supported by other actors on stage, was the main attraction in satiric shows such as *The Rehearsal* and *The Diversions of the morning* (1747) in which he mimicked and often ridiculed well-known actors and public figures for over 30 years (Young 1989:13; Gentile 1989:3). Foote's pioneering success inspired many similar – at times identical - shows from his contemporaries.

It was George Alexander Stevens who, inspired by Foote, would make popular the monologue form (Young 1989:14). For Alterman (2005:8) Stevens is "The Father of the

¹⁹⁵ Revivals as especially rare for work by performance artists such as Finley, with its autobiographical source material (Wallace 2006:5). One known revival of Jane Wagner and Lily Tomlin's *The Search for Intelligent Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* appears to have not been well received by critics, such as Goldman (2015).

Monologue". His *A Lecture on Heads*¹⁹⁶ (1764) would pass as a one-person dramatic show today, according to Catron (2009:6), and features an intellectually driven performance in which the sole artist calls upon *papier-maché* heads and wigs. He utilises clever wordplay, literary references and puns to poke fun at famous historical figures and stereotypes within society (Young 1989:15). Gentile (1989:3) writes that *A Lecture on Heads* was to be performed by numerous actors in the decades to come, also spreading to The United States of America and paving the way for a rich tradition of professional one-person dramatic shows there. More British solo performers would grace America's theatre scene during the nineteenth century. Drawing inspiration from Foote, Charles Mathews (1776-1835) created shows that earned him the caption of "a whole play in the person of one man" (Young 1989:17). A comedian by vocation, Mathews had impeccable skills in mimicry¹⁹⁷.

Around the same time as these early one-person dramatic shows in the United Kingdom, solo performers in The United States of America also found the lecture circuit a valuable platform to showcase their talents. From there, the one-person dramatic show would develop into a recognised theatrical subgenre.

4.2.2. The development of one-person dramatic shows in the United States of America

A tradition of lectures and platform readings would develop during the 1700's and 1800's in The United States of America. While these were essentially one-person shows, they managed to avoid the prejudice held against formal theatre by Puritans who deemed it a corruptor of morals (Gentile 1989:4-5; Catron 2009:6). Even famous authors such as Charles Dickens¹⁹⁸ (1812-1870) and Mark Twain¹⁹⁹ (1835-1910) travelled America to read their

¹⁹⁶ Alternatively known as *Lecture upon Heads* (Young 1989:14; Alterman 2005:8).

¹⁹⁷ Mathews' first solo act, *The Mail Coach Adventure* (1808) was applauded by audiences from his home country. He went on to create a whole series of solo programmes typically involving the monologue form, monopolylogues, impersonations and, occasionally, song. When he toured America in 1822, his shows were greeted with equal enthusiasm from the public and critics (Alterman 2005:9; Young 1989:18-19). It seems, however, as if his success rested more on his good impersonations than on his abilities as a scriptwriter (Gentile 1989:12).

¹⁹⁸ According to Gentile (1989:13), a young Charles Dickens, now one of the most prolific writers of the Victorian era, was an avid devotee to Charles Mathews' work. It was Mathews' sensitivity to the details of characterisation that Dickens was most inspired by. Between the years 1858 and 1870, Dickens would present reading tours in Britain and America in which he read from selections of his own work to audiences and physically took on the characters as they appear (Gentile 1989:13; Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2002a:697; Hubbard 2001:286; Catron 2009:7). Elocution had already been a popular art form when Dickens started his tours. Although he seemed to have lacked the graceful poise and vocal dynamics of a proper elocutionist, he was praised for his meticulous physical portrayals of characters. In fact, Gentile (1989:16) affirms that a platform performance such as Dickens', which included movement of the legs, would have rather shocked conservative audiences of the Victorian era.

¹⁹⁹ Mark Twain built the narrative for his "lectures" around his travels. In a simple stage setting, Twain would present his somewhat satiric readings in formal clothing, in the guise of a single persona, unlike Dickens' many characters. Despite some derisive, pungent remarks, Twain's persona was still well liked by his audiences. "Twain's character

novels on these platforms (Teachout 2012). Platform readings experienced its golden era in the Chautauqua and Lyceum circuits in America between the late 1800's and the mid 1920's, while short solo acts as part of the variety programmes of Vaudeville and Music Hall²⁰⁰ also grew in popularity at the turn of the century (Gentile 1985:42; Gentile 1989:49).

In the twentieth century, characterised by the rise of the avant-garde movement and modernism, the one-person dramatic show evolved into a very versatile theatrical subgenre which is widely experimented in and serves artists in fulfilling many different purposes (Paterson 2015:15). According to Bradby (2006:63), the monologue is promoted from a mere literary device in written media, to the basis on which entire theatrical productions can be built. In the same sense, the "critical perspective shifted away from viewing one-person shows as a form of entertainment distinct from theatre to one integral to theatre" (Gentile 1989:1). Artists often praised for their contribution to this shift in perception towards solo productions are Ruth Draper, Cornelia Otis Skinner²⁰¹ (1899-1979), Emlyn Williams²⁰² (1905-1987) and Hal Holbrook²⁰³ (1925-). Paterson (2015:6) places solo performances such as platform readings, these early one-person dramatic shows and even vaudeville acts as early indicators towards the trajectory of performance – as opposed to the naturalistic representational theatre – observed during the last few decades of the twentieth century.

The first few decades of the twentieth century saw the solo performances become structurally more defined and more substantial, as is observed in the monologue dramas of Ruth Draper and Cornelia Otis Skinner. Both of these ladies built entire shows around their talents as character actresses, presenting a variety of characters on stage during one evening's entertainment. According to Catron (2009:223), Draper performed successfully around the world between 1920 and 1956. Young (1989:43) writes that Skinner, whose career started in 1928, was an avid admirer of Draper. Her shows were not unlike those of Draper at first, but they soon developed into more elaborately staged costume dramas²⁰⁴.

was bemused by the foibles of the human race. His style was carefully designed for comic value with a deliberate deadpan expression accompanied by a look of wonder when the audience laughed" (Catron 2009:220-221).

²⁰⁰ Music Hall is, in effect, the British version of Vaudeville, a variety show.

²⁰¹ Cornelia Otis Skinner was known as an actress, playwright, biographer and humourist on Broadway.

²⁰² Emlyn Williams was a Welsh actor, dramatist and writer most famous for famous works such as *Night Must Fall* and *The Corn Is Green*. He started touring with his one-person show, *Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens* in 1950 and it was very popular with audiences, even internationally.

²⁰³ Hal Holbrook, actor for stage and film, received critical acclaim for his one-person show, *An Evening with Mark Twain* (1954), receiving a Tony Award in 1966 (Young 1989:53), and an Emmy Award nomination in 1967.

²⁰⁴ Solo actress, Pat Carroll, who features a bit later in this historical overview, points out another difference between the two performers: "Miss Skinner had a terrific personality, a theatrical personality, but Miss Draper was the real actress" (Young 1989:43).

During these transition years from platform performance to solo shows, audiences were gradually becoming more accepting of theatre and solo appearances as legitimate theatrical entertainment.

The biographical dramas of Welshman Emlyn Williams and American Hal Holbrook seemed to help the one-person dramatic show to gain that last bit of grounds towards being accepted into the mainstream theatre circles. *Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens*, in which Williams recreated Charles Dickens' platform performances, premiered in Britain before opening on Broadway, New York, in 1952²⁰⁵ (Gentile 1989:120; Young 1989:196). Similarly, Hal Holbrook, in the persona of writer Mark Twain, performed *Mark Twain Tonight* as a touring production from 1954, opening in New York in 1956 and returning to Broadway in 1966 and 1977 (Catron 2009:228). The success of Williams and Holbrook sparked many more biographical one-person dramatic shows.

Female performers who took on the roles of well-known historical figures, and are further discussed in this Chapter is Julie Harris and Pat Carroll²⁰⁶ (1927-). Julie Harris performed in two biographical one-person shows written by William Luce. The first, *The Belle of Amherst* (1976), featured her as poet Emily Dickinson and provided Harris with her fifth Tony Award in 1977. The second, premiering in 1983, was *Brontë*, in which she played the author Charlotte Brontë (Catron 2009:229; Young 1989:134&138). Pat Carroll also received critical acclaim when she portrayed the controversial Gertrude Stein, a writer, poet and art collector. According to Gentile (1989:135), *Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein* (1979) earned Carroll a Drama Desk Award as well as an Outer Critics' Circle Award in 1980.

Between the 1950's and 1980's, anthologies of well-known literature, mentioned in the previous division, were well received as solo productions. Performers like John Gielgud, Alec McCowen and Ian McKellen²⁰⁷ would grace the stage with simplistic sets, without moving into deep characterisation, and would recite or read from literature establishing an intimate, often informal relationship with the audience. These productions fall well within the new directions of theatre at the time which seemed to move away from the naturalistic and

²⁰⁵ According to Young (1989:52), Emlyn Williams even performed his production in South Africa. In the archives of the *Encyclopaedia of South African Theatre, Film, Media and Performance* (ESAT), it is stated that Williams performed *Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens* at the Wits University Great Hall in 1954, and returned in 1956 with another show, titled *Dylan Thomas: A Boy Growing Up* (http://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php?title=Emlyn_Williams).

²⁰⁶ Patricia Ann "Pat" Carroll is an American actress, voice actress, and comedian, best known for voicing Ursula *Walt Disney's* animated film, *The Little Mermaid* (1989). She has enjoyed a long acting career in film and television.

²⁰⁷ The three performers mentioned here are all Englishmen who developed their shows in the United Kingdom. All of the shows did, however, transfer to the United States of America and are, therefore, still relevant under this section.

realistic representational style of theatre, to one in which the performer is clearly aware that he is in a theatre, performing²⁰⁸ a show to an audience. Gentile (1989:163) confirms of Alec McCowen's *St. Mark's Gospel* that "[t]he mode of the performance was strictly presentational". Of *Ian McKellen Acting Shakespeare*, Gentile (1989:159-160) writes that the show emphasises the theatrical, and would often involve McKellen sitting at the edge of the stage's apron, occasionally inviting audience members to join in on some impromptu ensemble acting on stage.

The inclination in theatre towards the performative and presentational, and what Bradby (2006:63) calls "theatre of the self", started to surface around the 1970's and onwards. It is worthy of note that extreme political and social movements such as the Gay Liberation, the Women's Movement and the Black Power Movement had by then started taking shape, coinciding with the rise of postmodernism, influencing the subject matter for solo performances to come (Saddik 2007:xiii-xv). Monopolylogues in which the performers are well aware of the audience and their capacity as performer/activist in a theatrical production includes Jane Wagner's (1935-) *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* (1985), performed by Lily Tomlin, and Whoopi Goldberg's *Whoopi Goldberg* (1984) (Gentile 1989:170-172). Starting in the 1970's, autobiographically driven solo shows began to appear, with Quentin Crisp's²⁰⁹ *An Evening With Quentin Crisp* (1975) in which he talks about his unconventional style and advises audiences to find their own style as well (Catron 2009:230). The performer who seems to be the pioneer in autobiographical solo performance is Spalding Gray. Catron (2009:230) attributes his strength to "a total revelation of self, both strengths and weaknesses", showcased in iconic shows such as *Swimming to Cambodia* (1984), *Terrors of Pleasure* (1986) and later *Gray's Anatomy* (1996), all of which were developed into films. The solo theatre seemed to be embraced by audiences at this stage.

Gentile (1989:62-63) observes that the preoccupation with the solo theatre form seems to indicate a point of convergence between the monologue in performance and the monologue in literature, which started during the Victorian times.

Once we accept the literary monologue and the performance monologue (i.e., the one person show) as manifestations of the same impulse, we may then finally argue

²⁰⁸ "The emergence of performance signals a divergence from the traditions of Western dramatic theatre present since the Renaissance" (Paterson 2015:6).

²⁰⁹ Quentin Crisp was born in England as Denis Charles Pratt, but moved to the United States of America at the start of his career. He claims to have been better accepted in America than in England.

that the concurrent popularity of the two genre [sic] in the Victorian age was a result of the Romantic movement and its interest in the exploration of the individual²¹⁰. The desire of an audience to see a celebrity on the platform or view a solo performance focused on an individual character (historical or fictional) appears itself to have been the product of the Romantic sensibility. The movement in solo performance toward an investigation of an individual psyche reaches its summit in the late twentieth-century biographical and autobiographical one-person shows.

Gentile could, however, not foresee the direction that solo performance would take after 1990 since the interest in the Self as spectacle, the Individual in society and the Individual in performance would manifest even further in experimentation with the solo form in performance. The 1990's gave rise to the documentary theatre of Anna Deavere Smith, the emotively driven performances by Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Peggy Shaw²¹¹ (1944-) and Danny Hoch with its strong social themes, and, ultimately, the postmodern, post-dramatic movements driving Performance Art (Paterson 2015:8).

Anna Deavere Smith created theatrical character "portraits" in *Fires in the Mirror* (1992) and *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (1994) based on interviews she had with individuals affected by significant racial incidents (Catron 2009:72; demarcations 2011). Danny Hoch found inspiration for his characters in real people on the streets as well but did not approach the material as strictly documentary or factual, rather developing fictitious stories around them in shows like *Some People* (1994) and *Jails, Hospitals, and Hip-Hop* (1998) (Dolan 2005:75). Early performance artists such as Finley, Hughes and Shaw, turned to their personal experiences and struggles to craft dramatic texts, often utilising "the body as text" and taking extreme, provocative artistic measures to bring attention to issues that the individual (especially the female, in this instance) experiences in society (Hubbard 2001:287; Dolan 2005:46).

The one-person dramatic show continues to be experimented in, especially in the present postmodern, post-dramatic theatrical movements. This brief historical overview showcases the development of the one-person dramatic show from an art form posing as a performative

²¹⁰ Literary devices such as dramatic monologue and interior monologue emerged in novels and poetry as writers sought new ways in which the individual could be investigated in terms of emotions and his personal experiences (see footnote no. 172 and no. 173).

²¹¹ "As a solo performer, Shaw tours and performs three different shows – *You're Just Like Your Father* (1994), *Menopausal Gentleman* (1997), and *To My Chagrin* (2001) – all of which address her life as a middleaged [sic] butch lesbian" (Dolan 2005:51-52). Shaw is one of the founders of *Split Britches*, a lesbian and feminist performing troupe producing work internationally since its inception in New York City in 1980. Lois Weaver, and Deborah Margolin were her co-founders.

extension of literature in the nineteenth century to one which is accepted and critiqued as theatrical productions in mainstream, legitimate theatre circles.

4.2.3. The revue and the one-person dramatic show

Before the one-person dramatic show was accepted as a legitimate form of theatre, solo performances were mainly found in platform performances or as part of variety entertainments. The revue was another art form in which solo performers could share their talents with audiences through short comedy sketches or the delivery of monologues as part of the evening's episodic entertainment programme (Hepple 2002b:645).

As will become evident in this subdivision, the revue appears to have had some influence on the one-person dramatic show since its humble beginnings, but the two subgenres are now functioning and evolving as two distinct art forms. In the contemporary South African context, revues would generally be associated with school concerts in which a selection of songs is danced on by different year groups. However, the rich history of the revue worldwide makes it a more complex subgenre to consider for this investigation, especially topical and satiric revues, as well as the more intimate variation of the subgenre.

Two characteristics seem to overlap in the one-person dramatic show and the revue: the fragmented structure and the thematic content. Occasionally, a solo performer's work is identified as a revue by an academic or critic - most likely for these two common characteristics²¹². Early solo performer, Samuel Foote, mounted a show called *The Diversions of the Morning* (1747), which Young (1989:13) classifies as a satirical revue. It featured topical material in the form of parodies of famous figures of the time and consisted of loosely organized scenes or skits²¹³. In more recent times, the work of Anna Deavere Smith resonates with the revue in terms of structure and subject matter. Smith is the only performer on stage but presents a series of characters in a series of monologues. The play, therefore, resembles the fragmented, non-linear arrangement as found in montage, a technique utilised in revues and by Bertolt Brecht, discussed in the next subdivision.

²¹² Dolan (2005:55) writes that Peggy Shaw's performances have been categorised as "one-person revues", but mostly because the work was very unconventional and novel at the time and seemed to defy classification.

²¹³ In 1939, Joyce Grenfell, a newspaper columnist was asked to perform two comedy sketches in *The Little Revue*. She went on to construct her own evening entertainment, *Joyce Grenfell Requests the Pleasure*, in the same vein as the revue, featuring songs and a trio of dancers along with her monologues. She went on to become a well-known solo performer.

It is in the socio-political and topical material that an important correlation is recognised by Catron (2009:77-78). Smith showcases characters that are based on real people with whom she had conducted interviews after two significant racially driven contemporary events in marginalised communities. The outcome is a documentary drama bearing a strong semblance to the topical revues or surveys²¹⁴ and *Living Newspaper* of the early twentieth century. The *Living Newspaper*, according to Barker (2002:587), is “the news performed in a variety of theatrical styles and forms”. These shows were, however, a lot more elaborate²¹⁵ than the minimalistic approach of Smith’s work. They focus more on the impact that social injustices have on a certain group, while Smith focuses on certain individuals and their personal stories regarding prejudice and racism (Catron 2009:77).

The *Living Newspaper* and topical revue share with Smith a need for socio-political commentary (Catron 2009:77). As discussed in Chapter 3, the revue and cabaret were attractive forms of theatre to achieve the politically inclined theatre that modernist Bertolt Brecht wanted to explore. After identifying structural and thematic correlations in revues and one-person dramatic shows, an investigation should also be launched into the Brechtian, modernist impulses that solo theatre seems to share with the revue as well.

4.2.4. Modernism and one-person dramatic shows: Bertolt Brecht’s Epic Theatre and Samuel Beckett’s Theatre of the Absurd.

Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett are two central figures of modernism and the avant-garde movement, albeit in two different strands of modernist theatre. Brecht is known for his *Epic Theatre*, already discussed in the three preceding chapters, while Beckett is primarily associated with *Theatre of the Absurd*²¹⁶. Although Lyons²¹⁷ (1968:297) and Brater²¹⁸ (1975:195) confirm the stark discrepancy between the two artists’ work, they also recognise

²¹⁴ See 1.9.2. in the Introductory Chapter of this study.

²¹⁵ According to Catron (2009:78) the *Living Newspaper* and topical satirical revues, such as those staged by Erwin Piscator, were elaborate revues which featured multimedia projections and large casts.

²¹⁶ The *Theatre for the Absurd*, or *Absurdism*, was largely based on the philosophy of *Existentialism*. Absurdist playwrights, such as Samuel Beckett, would portray the theme of “life is meaningless” on stage in a non-linear structure of events, with characters often using disruptive or non-sensical language (Price 2016).

²¹⁷ Charles R. Lyons (1933-1999) was Chairman of the Drama Department at Stanford University for eighteen years at the time of his death. He taught drama and comparative literature, and was one of the original advisory editors for the academic journal *Comparative Drama*. Lyons wrote a number of books, taking special interest in Brecht, Beckett, William Shakespeare and Henrik Ibsen.

²¹⁸ Enoch Brater (1944-) is the Kenneth T. Rowe Collegiate Professor of Dramatic Literature, as well as Professor of English and Theatre at the University of Michigan. He has written extensively on the work of Samuel Beckett and Arthur Miller. Brater and his book *Beyond Minimalism: Beckett’s Late Style in The Theatre* (1987) are also cited extensively by Eddie Paterson in his book, *The Contemporary American Monologue: Performance and Politics* (2015).

some areas in which they do correspond. The one-person dramatic show appears to showcase elements of both the Epic and the Absurd throughout its history, as is observed by academics such as Paterson (2015:10) and Gentile (1989:193).

Embracing modernism's enmity towards naturalism and realism in theatre, Brecht and Beckett each produced intellectually driven productions which defied the conventions of traditional theatre, an attribute frequently used in definitions of the one-person dramatic show, as mentioned. Brecht's non-Aristotelian approach to time and structure, with its non-linear, fragmented construction of scenes, unified by theme rather than chronology, is once again illuminated by Lyons (1967:298). More Brechtian devices already identified in previous chapters, such as *historisierung*, didactic goals, non-traditional characterisation and the *Verfremdungseffekt*, all seem to be of relevance to this subdivision as well.

According to Wallace (2006:3), Beckett's experimentation within the solo form since the 1950's is pivotal. In Beckett's work, time and structure are considered futile. There is rather being referred to a "consciousness" or "single psychic moment", but one that is not fixed to time or chronology, producing a static, almost other-dimensional, atmosphere. While Beckett's plays are concerned with storytelling, the nature of the narrative is constructed (or de-constructed) in such a sense that the act of narration is foregrounded for its ambivalent and ambiguous nature, operating more like an "extended poetic image" (Lyons 1967:297-298). Language is found inadequate to convey true meaning and emotion since characters seem to speak words which could or could not be their own. This brings about that the audience might question the character's honesty. "In Beckett's theatre, characters become shadowy fragments whose parts have been reduced to bits and pieces," writes Voigts-Virchow and Schreiber (2006:291). The Brechtian concept of *Verfremdung* is taken a step further by Beckett, according to Brater (1975:203), with the estrangement not only taking place between audience and performer but within the stage persona and performance itself, intensified by an alienation in language. "[S]ince one meets the limits of the linguistic world, Beckett shows the failure of his characters to merge with themselves" (De Vos 2006:115). Rooted in existentialism, the entire notion of "the self" and communication is questioned and deconstructed in the majority of Beckett's plays (Voigts-Virchow & Schreiber 2006:284).

In the words of Pavis (1998b:218), "monologue reveals the artificiality of theatre and acting conventions". The same can be observed in the theatre of Brecht and Beckett.

[N]either the epic nor the absurd dramas assume the conventional pretense [sic] that their action is real. The artifice of the performance is clarified, for example, by both

Brecht and Beckett as they remind the spectators that the play itself is an imaginative construct (Lyons 1998:298).

This is achieved in Brecht through the disposal of the fourth wall, narration directly to the audience, and verbalisation of stage directions²¹⁹. Likewise, in Beckett's short play *A Piece of Monologue* (1979), one actor, *Speaker*, frequently interrupts his own speech, almost as if replaced by a different character, and narrates the stage directions written for the actor (De Vos 2006:114, Chris Agg. 2014).

One of the most significant one-person dramatic shows for Catron (2009:152) is Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), which features only one male actor, listening to tape recordings of himself, occasionally responding to it verbally, reading from a book and recording new thoughts²²⁰. The biographical one-person shows of Emlin Williams and Hal Holbrook premiered only a few years prior to *Krapp's Last Tape*. What is noticeable in both types of performances, is that a single character drives the entire narrative²²¹. Teachout (2012) points out that monologists prior to this decade, using Ruth Draper as a prime example, still relied on multiple characters in different sketches to hold the audience's attention. It was unheard of that characters like Beckett's *Krapp*, Williams' *Dickens*, and Holbrook's *Twain* could carry a full-length one-person dramatic show. Apart from *Krapp* being fictional and *Dickens* and *Twain* real historical figures, Beckett does deviate from the other two writer-performers in another sense: *Krapp*, unlike the other two characters, does not break the fourth wall convention to address the audience directly, a feature well associated with Brecht's epic theatre and most solo performances.

Speaking about one-person dramatic shows in general, most critics unanimously state direct audience address as one of its main performance strategies (Wallace 2006:5-6, Pavis 1998:238, Heddon 2006:171). The intimate performer-audience relationship which modernists strived for, is intensified in the solo performance. By presenting themselves or their characters directly to the audience in often vulnerable states, together with fragmentary

²¹⁹ Brechtian devices were discussed in Chapter One under the Clarification of Concepts section (see 1.9.5.).

²²⁰ Two other productions also worthy of consideration are *Happy Days* and *Not I*. Although there are more than one figure on stage, the narrative in both these plays are mainly driven by the female characters. In *Happy Days*, a stationary Winnie talks to her mostly silent husband, Willie. He occasionally utters something or reads from a newspaper (Oyunnomin Mod 2014; Lyons 1967:300). *Not I* features only a female Mouth, illuminated by a single beam of light, and a shadowy figure, the Auditor, in a corner – listening and watching with minimal movement (De Vos 2006:111, Marinchr 2010).

²²¹ Catron (2009:154) is of the opinion that the presence of the tape recordings in *Krapp's Last Tape* does evoke the sense of multiple characters, since the recordings represent previous versions of Krapp. It is still, however, essentially one character with which the audience identifies.

narration and story-telling techniques, the performer prolongs an emotional passiveness in audience members and rather engages the audience intellectually and personally. In doing so, audiences actively question the themes at hand and might be inspired to act upon the issues in society (Paterson 2015:8, Dolan 2005:72). This is the aim of Brecht's technique of *Verfremdung*. Key solo artists portraying such qualities are Lily Tomlin, Anna Deavere Smith, Spalding Gray. Each of these performers, even though their shows belong to different sides of the spectrum of solo performance, seem to engage Brechtian and/or Beckettian characteristics.

The most important Brechtian influence observed in *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, as discussed by Dolan (2005:69-70), is that of *gestus*²²²:

Tomlin performs the *gestus*, marking each character with a gesture that defines her, while her words and her relations to the carefully self-contained social world Wagner creates unsettles bourgeois presumptions. Transformations between and among these social spheres happen in splitsecond adjustments of posture, gesture, and voice, which materialize on Tomlin's face and body through her hard performative (and performed) labor [sic].

According to Calder (2002:78), Beckett was also known for his meticulousness when it came to gestures, voice control, pronunciation and bodily movement, which were so musically timed that one could say they were choreographed rather than directed. By constantly fluctuating between characters, Tomlin's audiences are prevented from being immobilised by emotions brought about by connecting to the characters. They are, in other words, alienated. This alienation is taken even further when one of the characters really does make contact with aliens. Dolan (2005:69) extrapolates that "the audience sees life on earth from an estranged, Brechtian position that leaves nothing safely ensconced in common sense".

Anna Deavere Smith also utilises multiple characters in her shows. Her approach to the one-person dramatic show is, however, different. Dolan (2005:41) states that Smith's work is undoubtedly driven by a didactical, political impetus to encourage audiences to think differently about issues such as race and class. Lyons (1967:303) is of the opinion that Brechtian and Beckettian theatre, too, are concerned with political subjects. Brecht, in particular, is often cited for his ambitions to make political theatre (Carlson 2002:225). Paterson (2015:37) reveals the monologue as an effective choice of genre for this goal.

²²² *Gestus* has been explained under the Clarification of Concepts section (see 1.9.5.).

In *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight: Los Angeles*, Smith creates documentary theatre in which she bases her characterisations on real people that she interviewed. According to Rizk (2002:703) and Paget (2002:214), Brecht is an important influential figure for documentary theatre. History has always been an important part of Brecht's theatre. As is pointed out by The Drama Teacher (www.thedramateacher.com), his shows *Life of Galileo* (1943) and *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*²²³ (1959) were chronicles of historical figures' lives, much like the biographical one-person show. Smith personified the testimonies of real people who were involved in actual racial conflicts in the United States, at times juxtaposing their viewpoints. This reminds of Brecht's concept of *historisierung* in which historical events are depicted and narrated but viewed in the context of the contemporary. What is different in Smith's plays, however, is that the historic event would have been quite recent for audiences, giving it an almost journalistic immediacy. While direct audience address and the monopolylogue format may have distanced the audience members to some extent, they could still associate with the subject matter due to its current, factual basis and be moved to the extent of taking action or changing their perspectives (Dolan 2005:41, Paget 2002:214).

Beckett and Brecht, and the modernist movement in its entirety, challenge the idea of identity and character in theatre. Artists within the monopolylogue form, such as Smith and Danny Hoch, likewise, explore "what constitutes 'character' and [expose] the hegemonic structures surrounding identity" (Saddik 2007:15). Paterson (2015:160) brings to light the Brechtian techniques behind the creation of a performing persona in the place of traditional theatrical character, a growing aspect of the one-person dramatic show subgenre. Voigts-Virchow and Schreiber (2006:279) elaborate by stating that the term persona represents the conjectural "mask" temporarily assumed by the artist, used to great effect by Smith. Wallace (2006:13) writes that the use of persona is a popular feature of solo performance since the 1980's. It is mainly aimed at "social critique, the undermining of gender stereotypes through role-play, blurring the outlines of the autobiographical, 'authentic' subject".

The Brechtian persona is present in the autobiographical work of Spalding Gray. Even though the productions are deemed autobiographical, and in some ways display confessional qualities, Gray creates a different version of himself to tell his stories on stage (Paterson 2015:60). Paterson (2015:59-60) calls Gray's type of performance "epic

²²³ After the success of his musical, *The Threepenny Opera*, in collaboration with Kurt Weill, Bertolt Brecht created *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* between 1929 and 1931. The play did not receive its first theatrical production until the 1959, at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, after Brecht's death. This information was found online at: http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles/Saint_Joan_of_the_Stockyards.

autobiography” in that he directly communicates with the audience, but he adds the element of parody and explores parts of narration where the truthfulness and reliability of his words might be questioned.

As mentioned earlier, Beckettian characters have the tendency to seem unreliable at times. Saddik (2007:34) highlights Beckett’s preoccupation with language and memory and how they cannot always be trusted in constructing an individual’s reality. Autobiographical solo performance is unquestionably driven by the memory of the writer/performer, around which he then builds a narrative to convey a certain message. The remembering subject is placed in relation to his memory. His story may or may not be trusted by audience members.

Voigts-Virchow and Schreider (2006:282) explore Will Eno²²⁴ (1965-) as a writer who connects the strands of Beckettian theatre, storytelling through monologue and stand-up comedy, which has become a popular contemporary solo form in the last 20 years. Even though the subject matter draws on Eno’s personal experiences and his memory, his plays are different in the sense that he is merely the writer, not the performer. King (2016) presents phrases like “existential stand-up” and “Samuel Beckett for the Jon Stewart generation” to describe his work. In *Thom Pain (based on nothing)*²²⁵ (2004) the writer sends the performer on a quest to investigate the human condition. In Eno, we seem to find a midpoint between Beckettian and Brechtian influences. Through fragmentation, contradictory ramblings, impersonation, direct audience address to the extent of interrogation, and audience participation, Eno’s objective is to force audience members to confront their lives and re-evaluate their position as individuals in their own lives (King 2016:2-3; Voigts-Virchow & Schreiber 2006:294-295).

Eno’s methods seem to stem from the performance art²²⁶ movement of the last 20 to 30 years. Gray and Smith can be considered precursors to the new wave of solo performance artists who would rise to prominence in America from the 1980’s onwards. Performance art has been discussed in a previous section of this chapter. What is of note at this stage, is how the postmodern qualities of performance art seem to specifically relate to Beckettian drama.

²²⁴ Will Eno is an American playwright whose plays have been produced in New York, on Off-Broadway circuits and by regional and European theatres. Comparisons between Eno and Samuel Beckett are often made with regards to their approach to the individual, which is briefly discussed here.

²²⁵ The play was a finalist for the *Pulitzer Prize* for Drama in 2005.

²²⁶ Also known as “live art” in England.

[I]n the postmodern world truth and illusion are often indistinguishable, identity is not fixed, and differences co-exist in the same sphere. [...] Characteristics of postmodern literature and drama include a focus on the instability of meaning and the inadequacy of language to completely and accurately represent Truth, along with an irony and playfulness in the treatment of linguistic constructs; [...] and an eschewing of the notion of an origin or essential 'core' in terms of identity, as identity becomes a series of layers or 'masks' with no distinction between the artificial and the real (Saddik 2007:6).

A renewal in communication with the audience was a primal aim of performance art. Instead of being the traditional and fictional medium, it opted for a "here and now"-moment, where audience members could become involved since they share a reality with the performer (Borowski & Sugiera 2006:39). In addition, performance art adopts the Brechtian ideal of theatre as a tool for political commentary and revolution (Saddik 2007:15), as well as a visual aspect and use of the body with Beckettian precision (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2002b:590).

Conclusively, one-person dramatic shows, ranging from the biographical one-person shows to the documentary theatre of Smith and the performance art of the last few decades, show definite correlations to and manifestations of the modernist movements of Brecht and Beckett. This could be in terms of structure, characterisation, performance or subject matter. The modernist movement is said to have abolished the unities laid out by Aristotle, which is subsequently also the case in the solo theatre form. Despite the divergence from Aristotle and his writings, his paragraphs on the six elements of theatre is still a useful outline from which the structural characteristics of this subgenre can be drafted.

4.3. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SIX ELEMENTS IN ONE-PERSON DRAMATIC SHOWS

Rooted in the anti-realistic approach of modernism and, subsequently, postmodernism, the one-person dramatic show seeks to find new ways in which Aristotle's six elements of drama can be incorporated into a theatrical production. In the previous two chapters, the concept musical and cabaret have also been explored accordingly.

Where the concept musical seems to favour theme and character, and cabaret leans toward foregrounding the elements of language and character, many academics identify language as the primary element in the one-person dramatic show too. Special mention is also often given to the role of the performer and his persona, which would be categorised under character in this investigation. A special intimacy is established between the performer and the audience, which creates a platform for the performer to convey a certain message

through a heightened sense of language and its power to persuade. As the one-person show established itself as legitimate theatre, it became evident that these types of shows were effective vehicles for political and social commentary. Serious themes could be touched on by performers who saw themselves as advocates for certain causes, including feminism and racism, as will be discussed in the first subsection.

The subsections to follow will be dealt with in the same way as the previous two chapters, with reference to key figures and shows mentioned as historical background to substantiate findings. For Gentile (1989:142-143), one-person dramatic shows place less emphasis on the embellishments of spectacle and music, and more on the elements of language, character and theme. Plot also seems to be of less importance to Gentile. The researcher would, however, like to stress that non-linearity in terms of plot structure does not necessarily make the plot unimportant. For the researcher, the arrangement of the different episodes carry significance, and a fragmented structure of events can be effective and necessary, especially when it is considered that audiences' perception of theatre is also changing with the times.

4.3.1. Plot and theme

King²²⁷ (1991:6) writes that, since the arrival of television, film and computers, it has become evident that audiences have shorter attention spans and a continuous need for change in imagery, new information and sometimes even shock tactics to stay invested in a performer or theatrical show. While this does challenge writers and performers, especially when there is just one performer, the ever-changing media also brought about that audiences have the capacity to comprehend fragmented narrative structures or jumps in time and location.

As discussed earlier, there is an extensive array of forms that a one-person dramatic show may take on, making it difficult to declare a definite tendency in terms of the structuring of events, since the narrative may be fragmentary or similar to story-telling. The process appears to be simplified by concentrating on the two main categories of the subgenre with regards to form: monologue drama and monopolylogue (see 1.9.4. and 4.1.).

Two movements within the monologue drama stand out. The biographical one-person shows of the 1950's and 1960's in which a historical figure is embodied by a performer, and

²²⁷ Bruce King is the series editor for *Literature, Culture and Identity* (Continuum) and *Modern Dramatists* (Palgrave Macmillan), among others. Now a freelance writer and international literary critic, King was a professor of English at universities in countries like the United States of America, England, France, Nigeria, Canada, Israel and New Zealand.

the autobiographical one-person show, starting in the 1980's. The pioneering biographical shows, *Emlyn Williams as Charles Dickens* and *Mark Twain Tonight!*, showcased both performers in the visage of a single, well-known historical figure in English literature. These performances essentially depicted the two famous writers in their positions as platform readers. The structure of the narrative was quite straightforward: in character, both Williams and Holbrook would proceed to read or recite a selection of excerpts from the literature of Dickens and Twain, respectively, in the same way that the writers would have done decades earlier (Gentile 1985:43). Hence, a through-narrative for the entire show seems unlikely. Instead, a collection of scenes is achieved in an episodic, montage-like fashion reminiscent of the Brechtian influence also observed in revue, concept musicals and cabaret²²⁸. What unifies the seemingly disconnected "scenes" is, of course, the writer by whom they were created.

More one-person shows based on the lives of other literary figures followed. These did, however, differ in format from the previously mentioned shows. The performers still embodied a historical figure, and often these also were names in English literature, such as Emily Dickinson, as portrayed by Julie Harris in *Belle of Amherst*, and Patt Carroll's Gertrude Stein in *Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein*. In both of the abovementioned examples, the narrative was not built around the literary work that these writers created, but around their personal lives. *Dickinson* is seen in her house in Amherst for the duration of the performance, in which she invites the audience in to share anecdotes of her life (Gentile 1989:138). Gertrude Stein (performed by Carroll) also shares her personal life, art collections, relationships and writing with the audience in a seemingly informal conversation (Gentile 1989:138; Young 1989:109-110). The narrative here is more straightforward and linear. Even though there is an actor portraying the historical figure, the narrative unfolds in an almost confessional, autobiographical way which seems to foreshadow the work of autobiographical performers such as Spalding Gray in the 1980's.

Spalding Gray's autobiographical shows of *Swimming to Cambodia*, *Terrors of Pleasure*, and *Gray's Anatomy* is classified by Gray as "poetic journalism". Gray's impetus to produce these shows stems from his need to tell stories. The narrative consists of him basically reporting true personal events, but with a poetic inclination and an occasional embellishment of the truth (Gentile 1989:150; Young 1989:177). In an interview with Charlie Rose in 1997

²²⁸ The anthologies of Shakespeare scenes as found in Ian McKellan's *Acting Shakespeare* and John Gielgud's *Ages of Man* take on the same episodic structure of tying together disparate scenes from a unifying figure or theme.

(Manufacturing Intellect 2016), Gray explains that he is a “collage artist” and that he structures his shows around rough diaries he keeps of his life.

A decade before Spalding Gray, Quentin Crisp, now regarded a queer icon, also used the solo form as an autobiographical platform, especially to speak out about identity, his homosexuality and femininity. Initially, his performances of *The Naked Civil Servant* were not scripted. When he achieved fame with the show, the follow-up performances in the 1980's consisted of two parts.

The first is an autobiographical monologue, which is more like a series of anecdotes than like the continuous personal narratives of Spalding Gray. The second part is devoted to a question and answer format (Gentile 1989:152).

In *An Evening With Quentin Crisp*, which opened in 1978, Crisp continued to delve into identity and the individual's place within the world and society, touching on the Beckettian theme of existentialism (Sam Tichinoff 2016). “[Crisp was] advising audiences how to rethink the world on one's own terms – as he had – and develop a personal style” (Young 1989:173).

Performance artists such as Peggy Shaw, Holly Hughes and Deborah Margolin were driven by personal themes such as feminism and sexuality. Their chosen narrative structure, although still affiliated with autobiographical storytelling, ties in with postmodernism's fragmented plots and less fixed locations and timelines. They experimented with these methods to determine whether they could deal with gender themes more extensively and progressively (Dolan 2005:64).

[E]ach of the three performances [...] refuse the kind of narrative closure and coherence that marks more conventional theater [sic]. Instead, they share insights, emotions, and political critique through vignettes, anecdotal evidence, and exquisite images that gather force through their momentum (Dolan 2005:52).

A theme that inevitably surfaces in most shows where the individual is alone on stage is that of vulnerability in humans, as pointed out by Will Eno in an interview with Elyse Sommer (2014).

By the very nature of the one-person play, in which we're only looking at one person, the body itself and the breathing and the elegance and the frailty of a human being all potentially become themes or sub-themes. There's also a kind of loneliness to the form, potentially, and a subtext of *The Individual vs. The Crowd*.

Themes of the individual experience and psyche, as well as more socio-political issues affecting individuals, are mostly the stimuli behind key performances in the monopolylogue

form as well. Some are more politically inclined than others. Whoopi Goldberg emerged as a solo artist at roughly the same time as Lily Tomlin. Gentile (1989:172) indicates both artists' interest in social commentary. Auslander (1997:111) expands on this by recognising the feminist motives behind their work, while Goldberg is said to especially take a stance on behalf of marginalised communities in her performance – in particular, African-American women (Young 1989:28). In terms of plot, Goldberg's loosely structured narrative consisted of a series of character sketches, reminiscent of Tomlin's earlier work (Gentile 1989:173).

In *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, Tomlin again performed a series of episodes, taking on different characters in each episode. This time, however, the different scenes are connected by a unifying theme, taking a firmer feminist stand²²⁹. Additionally, the different strands are held together by the narration of the character *Trudy* (Gentile 1989:170, Young 1989:48).

In the work of Anna Deavere Smith, a specific factual incident unites each of the individuals portrayed on stage. In separate scenes, Smith reproduces eyewitness accounts and opinions of certain figures in the community directly or indirectly affected by the riots in Brooklyn's Crown Heights in August 1991²³⁰ (*Fires in the Mirror*) and Los Angeles riots following the release of Caucasian police officers accused of beating the motorcyclist, Rodney King in *Twilight Los Angeles, 1992* (Catron 2009:73, Dolan 2005:83). According to Catron (2009:73) "Smith's monodrama reflects America's troubled path of discrimination, polarization [sic], misunderstanding, religious and racial tensions, and police and governmental policies".

Whether the plot of the one-person dramatic show seems to unfold in the more linear narrative sense of storytelling, or through a fragmented, non-linear, episodic arrangement of scenes, there seems to be an inherent need for topical social or personal commentary in most contemporary shows within the subgenre. Performers like Ruth Draper and Cornelia Otis Skinner started the monopolylogue form with its episodic montage of character sketches in the 1930's, but there seemed to be less interest in conveying revolutionary messages than there was in the characters they portrayed and to which extent they could showcase their talents as impersonators.

²²⁹ Act 2 of the performance consisted of a compressed history of the feminist movement (Gentile 1989:170).

²³⁰ Violence between African American and Hasidic communities in Brooklyn followed the death of an African American child who was run over by a Jewish rabbi (Wallace 2006:6; Dolan 2005:84).

4.3.2. Character

When Draper and Skinner performed their pioneering one-person dramatic shows during the second quarter of the twentieth century, there was still a larger focus on characterisation. Draper would perform a number of original “character dramas” in which she embodies fictitious characters one at a time while evoking other characters on- or off-stage. Skinner’s performances followed the same structure, but she chose to portray an array of historical figures²³¹ in short monologues or character sketches. Once again, additional characters were addressed but not embodied on stage (Gentile 1989:106, 112; Young 1989:41). Hence, Draper and Skinner were still adhering to the fourth wall convention, which inhibited them from directly addressing the audience in front of them.

The element of character is dealt with here for its turn away from the traditional three-dimensional, representational characterisation to that of presentational characters or personas that seldom adhere to the fourth wall convention of realistic and naturalistic theatre. The appeal of the one-person dramatic shows that appeared on the theatrical scene since the 1950’s as an extension of the modernist movement lay in the revolutionary ways in which the performer-audience relationship could be explored. Most solo performers speak directly to the audience, whether they are talking as themselves, a stage persona, or in character.

Starting with the biographical shows of Emlyn Williams and Hal Holbrook, Pat Carroll’s *Gertrude Stein* and Julie Harris as *Emily Dickinson*²³², these characters all broke out of the imaginary wall between them and their audiences and proceeded to acknowledge the audience as an audience, or sometimes a more personal confidant (Gentile 1989:138). Young (1989:113) and Gentile (1989:136) point out that this motion of entrusting personal information to the audience directly places the audience member in a higher position than in realistic theatre. In effect, the audience becomes a second character, a silent listener²³³ in one sense, but they also become activated partakers in the narrative, especially with regards to autobiographical performances (Heddon 2006:174).

²³¹ In *Paris ’90*, Skinner would also include fictitious female characters, but she seemed to aim at historically correct representations of Parisian women of the 1890’s (Gentile 1989:113).

²³² According to Young (1989:143), Julie Harris in *The Belle of Amherst* does still at times address an unseen character on stage in accordance the Draper tradition, but is mostly seen narrating to the audience.

²³³ The audience is not necessarily always silent listeners who only look on as the narrative progresses. In Will Eno’s *Tom Payne* the audience is at times pulled into the narrative as active characters that could possibly influence the outcome (King 2016).

The phenomenon of meta-theatre²³⁴ comes into play at this point. Often, solo performers acknowledge not only their audiences as addressees, but acknowledge the fact that they are performers entertaining these audiences on a stage, at times in the form of a character. One-person dramatic shows can, therefore, at times be self-referential, self-conscious entertainment pieces²³⁵. Performers often receive more merit for their presence and charisma on stage than they do for authenticity in character, story or set (Dolan 2005:52). As an anti-realistic theatrical form, the one-person show is perhaps one of the prime examples in which the artificiality of the theatre in terms of characterisation is not only recognized, but embraced, as Saddik (2007:2) explains.

[Anti-realistic theatre] aims at presenting characters who, rather than representing a psychologically consistent identity, play with the boundaries between actor/character/real person, the blurred line between 'acting' and 'being'.

Spalding Gray dedicated his work in the solo theatre to establishing a stage persona for himself (Young 1989:175). The same can be observed of other solo artists who perform in the performance art category, for example, Peggy Shaw, Holly Hughes and Karen Finley. In a presentational theatre form like the one-person dramatic show, audiences accept the fact that a performer might speak to them as themselves or a different, parallel version of themselves. In the words of Paterson (2015:7), these artists "deliberately confuse their real-life 'selves' with their performance personae challenging the limits of 'enactment' and 'fictionality' and influencing new approaches to monologue". They might present stories about their own lives which could have happened in that way or could possibly have been adapted slightly for the purpose of the performance. Quentin Crisp dedicated his life to reinvent himself by developing the now iconic flamboyant, androgynous persona which he embodied on- and off-stage. In an interview with David Letterman, posted online by Declan John (2013), Crisp proclaims: "I don't think I could have made a go of being a real person".

An interesting early performance artist, Andy Kaufman (1949-1984), recently resurfaced with the release of Netflix's documentary entitled *Jim and Andy: The Great Beyond* (2017) in which behind the scenes footage is shown of Jim Carrey²³⁶ (1962-) embodying Kaufman

²³⁴ "Self-reflexive drama or performance that reveals its artistic status to the audience" (www.oxfordreference.com). The performer is aware of his/her role as performer, and even draws attention to the fact that he/she is in a performance.

²³⁵ Similarities between the concept musical, *Assassins*, and the solo form can be detected here. The characters in *Assassins* are aware of their position as performers being observed and they take control of the plot, rather than being controlled by it (see 2.2.2.).

²³⁶ Jim Carrey is a famous actor, comedian, impressionist, screenwriter and producer. At the start of his career he performed as a solo-artist in stand-up comedy.

and Kaufman's alter ego, *Tony Clifton*, on set during the making of *Man on the Moon* (1999). Just as Andy in the persona of *Tony Clifton* had insisted to be addressed as *Tony* for the duration of his appearance, Carrey would insist on being addressed as *Andy* or *Tony* – depending on the persona he adapted for the moment – even when film cameras were not rolling (*Jim & Andy: The Great Beyond* 2017). Andy's solo performances in the 1970's were considered unique and strange for the way in which he played the audience, at times confronting them for their behaviour and sometimes even resorting to Dadaist techniques of incomprehensible language or gibberish, still managing to invoke laughter (rejectedburrito 2009a).

Taken up with the modernist and postmodernist developments in art and literature, audiences of the second half of the twentieth century seemed to have shifted their interest from the public, aristocratic and middle-class characters portrayed on the stage, to the psychological exploration of more private, ordinary individuals (Gentile 1989:150). The unvoiced opinions of the normal person on the streets seemed to be given a platform through the one-person dramatic show, in the same way as the cabaret artists insisted on portraying the average citizen of their time.

By presenting multiple characters to an audience in one evening's entertainment, monopolyloguists such as Lily Tomlin and Danny Hoch manage to bring a variety of individual realities and their personalities together.

Both Tomlin and Hoch are translators; as a reviewer wrote about Tomlin, they express "the poetry of human behaviour [sic]". They use their ability to speak multiple languages, to embody multiple cultural identities, to bring more people into a discussion about difference and human commonality (Dolan 2005:82).

It is interesting to note the meta-theatricality in *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* as well, as pointed out by Dolan (2005:69). Tomlin is referred to, by herself, as the dark-haired actress who is performing on Broadway. She also presents herself at the beginning of the show before she continues to the different character scenes, including male characters. Gentile (1989:170) indicates that the character of *Trudy*, the bag lady, serves as a narrator that threads together all the other scenes, each functioning almost like a chapter in a book, reminiscent of the various narrators in concept musicals and the conferencier in cabarets.

Anna Deavere Smith becomes the vehicle through which the voices of real members of often marginalised communities can be heard. Smith's characters are neither fictional nor

historical or deceased figures. Her characters were theatrical recreations of real, living people who were roaming the streets of Crown Heights and Los Angeles at the time of the performances. Even though the audience is constantly aware of Smith as interlocutor, as a single bodily vehicle through which these diverse personalities can come to life on stage, Smith does not break character to present herself as an actress to the audience in a meta-theatrical sense. Although Smith does address the audience directly, it always happens as the character she is mimicking. As the actress and performer, Smith is kept at a distance from the characters and the audience, taking a more pedagogical stance (Dolan 2005:86). Paterson (2015:113) acknowledges the objectivity to the material and the outcome thereof that such a distance could constitute. As the journalist who conducted the interviews, Smith simply presents the facts through scrupulous mimicry based on the source material.

The element of character seems to stand out in the one-person dramatic show subgenre, whether it takes on the form of mimicry or personae. The performer plays an important part. He/she is, however, accompanied by the element of language. Mark W. Travis, director of several one-person shows, proclaims his excitement about the solo form to Young (1989:187-188) with the words, “We’re also going back to – and this is what I find exciting – the power of the actor, to create just with words, and with his ability as an actor”. In the same sense, Wagner, writer of *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, is quoted by Young (1989:49) as saying: “[W]hen there is one person up there performing, what else do you have to go on but words?”

4.3.3. Language and Music

Due to the fact that one-person dramatic shows were defined in the first chapter as solo performances without music, as opposed to one-person musicals which are the ultimate destination of this dissertation, music in the form of songs is not an imperative element in the shows to be discussed. To tie in more with the important element of language, the poetic or lyrical quality of the language is foreground as a musical characteristic.

Numerous researchers concede that the element of language forms a pivotal, if not the most important, part of the one-person dramatic show. Paterson (2015:8), Carlson (2004:128), Wallace (2006:6) and Gentile (1989:125) writes about the reanimation of language in the solo performance in which the word and its meaning, as well as the dynamics of language, is foregrounded and placed at the centre of the production. Catron (2009:31-32) shares this conviction and links it to literary forms such as poetry:

Monodramas [one-person shows] often are considered *plays of language* [original italics]. [...] Perhaps that emphasis is a residue of the modern monodramatist's poetic ancestors, such as the early Greek *rhapsodists* or the [...] solo platform performers, many of whom were poets. Certainly, too, language becomes more important in a play that is stripped of other theatrical qualities, such as numerous characters, stage scenery and machinery, and properties. We therefore often think of the solo play as theatre's equivalent to poetic forms.

With the one-person dramatic show's roots in the literature, it is fitting that early pioneers such as Emlyn Williams and Hal Holbrook would present famous writers and their literature on stage. Similarly, the anthologies of Shakespearean literature by John Gielgud and Ian McKellen, or biblical readings in Alec McCowen's *St. Mark's Gospel* reveal the solo form's affiliation with literature and the written word. More biographical one-person shows would put literary figures on stage²³⁷, but would not necessarily use their exact words. Pat Carroll as *Gertrude Stein* used original, paraphrased words, but the rhythm in the language is still that of the writer being portrayed (Young 1989:105).

It is interesting how Samuel Beckett would deliberately discard of coherent language in *Krapp's Last Tape* or *Not I* (1972), deeming language insufficient as a means of expressing the truth and occasionally causing a sense of distrust towards the character uttering the words. "Language in Beckett behaves as a parasite using the character onstage as a vehicle rather than the other way around" (De Vos 2006:113). Although the element of language is used for a different purpose in the Theatre of the Absurd, it is still vital to the social commentary that the writer and performer want to achieve²³⁸.

Performance art, as previously mentioned, is also known for its distortion of language to achieve certain political or social standpoints, together with imagery and the use of the body. In the words of King (1991:190) "words, ideas, commentary are more important than, or as important as, the image". Another aspect of performance art that would place solo performer Spalding Gray within this field too is that of the autobiographical subject matter. He shares

²³⁷ Examples include Emily Dickinson, William Blake, Charlotte Brontë and Bernard Shaw (Genitle 1989:133).

²³⁸ Andy Kaufman comes to mind again, with his performance on HBO Young Comedians Special (rejectedburrito 2009b) in which one entire scene features him speaking gibberish, while his bodily movements and audience interaction still managed to carry some meaning and garner in the laughs from the audience. With the different gags and skills that Kaufman exhibits in one night's performance, one could compare him to the New Vaudeville artists that emerged around the 1970's. Modern clowns, who draw inspiration from experimental theatre, variety shows and circuses, perform all sorts of tricks to expose their loneliness and the "consoling sadness of American life" (Shteir 2002:540-541). Shteir (2002:541) also mentions Spalding Gray's mode of storytelling as part of her investigation of New Vaudeville. Of monologists like Gray, she writes, "[T]hese melancholy garrulous performers talk to bring late twentieth-century life's absurdities into sharp focus and to stave off its horror".

this feature with other performance artists such as Laurie Anderson, Karen Finley and Holly Hughes, amongst others. Aided by the word, and with the image in service of the text, performance artists become our generation's poets, storytellers and preachers (Carlson 2004:128).

It seems as though contemporary monologists are drawn to the multifunctionality of language. Anna Deavere Smith places the word at the centre of acting and characterisation and considers it to be "magical" due to its meaning and its "artful manipulation" (Catron 2009:77). Smith is so meticulous in her mimicry, that she reproduces the language – the exact vocal inflections, pauses and exact words – used by the individuals that she interviewed to gain material for her one-person dramatic shows (Catron 2009:76). Dolan (2005:83) postulates that Smith investigates the speech patterns of these individuals because she believes their realities and emotional truths can be uncovered through it.

In a solo show where there is only the performer's body and the words uttered, these words need to be chosen carefully for its meaning and its rhythmic qualities. Jane Wagner, on writing the one-person show for Lily Tomlin, confirms that "[w]hen you deal with an expository form like this you have nothing to shield you. There's just Lily and the material. Every word becomes a delicate choice because every word is so obvious" (Young 1989:49).

Jordan (2006:147) attests that nuances in language and "verbal codifications" are some of the few tools one-person dramatic shows use to move and capture their audiences. The performer's voice becomes the vehicle through which humanity can be explored linguistically, and wherein possibly pungent commentary can be conveyed (Paterson 2015:5). It is also the variations in the voice of the actor – timing, pitch, volume and timbre – that constitutes most of the elements of music in one-person dramatic shows, due to the absence of song (Catron 2009:15&149), which is different from the previous two subgenres discussed. Elsewhere, however, Catron (2009:43) does mention that experimentation with music in the solo form at the start of the twenty-first century may have pointed towards new horizons for the one-person show. Appropriately, these new directions seem to indicate one-person musicals as one of the possible new directions or the one-person dramatic show.

The construction of the language in one-person dramatic shows is an aspect that requires thought and careful choices, due to the subgenre's simplicity in terms of other elements, especially that of spectacle. Spectacle, although generally minimalistic and simple, still needs deliberation for its effectiveness within the one-person dramatic show subgenre and

how it can be utilised to support the more authoritative elements of language, character and theme, as well as the anti-realistic narrative structure.

4.3.4. Spectacle

Some theatrical forms can conceal weaker scripts and performances by overwhelming audiences with spectacular visual effects and tricks. This is certainly not the case in the one-person dramatic show (Gentile 1989:125). Since inception, the solo form seems to have favoured minimalistic visuals above elaborate staging. This is, of course, one of the main reasons for its popularity amongst theatre practitioners and producers – its simplicity makes it one of the least expensive types of productions to put on stage and tour with (Catron 2009:10; Young 1989:32; Bruno & Dixon 2015:15, Teachout 2012).

Due to the one-person dramatic show's association with modernism and the presentational theatre mode, it roams on its theatricality and artificiality. Sommer (2014) writes that the solo form is elemental, pure and vital theatre. Theatre is essentially stripped of its embellishments and returns to its roots of storytelling (Wallace 2006:6): one performer, one voice, one story, the audience and, very often, an empty space very much in line with what Peter Brook advocated²³⁹. Similar to cabaret, the one-person dramatic show mostly involves little to no scenery, as is confirmed by Catron (2009:25) and Young (1989:21).

In the early formative days of the one-person dramatic show, when platform readings were preparing audiences for a new legitimate form of theatre, solo artists or elocutionists needed no more than their literary material to read from, the stage, some lighting and perhaps a reading desk, as was the case for Charles Dickens and Mark Twain during their readings (Catron 2009:218; Gentile 1989:58). Their platform performances were recreated decades later by Emlyn Williams and Hal Holbrook with more or less the same stage setting (Gentile 1989:137). The latter two performers would, however, attempt to physically resemble their subjects, which would involve some costuming.

Some performers, like Ruth Draper, distinguish between different characters through small changes in costuming, such as hats, coats, an umbrella and scarfs on a stage dressed with minimal furniture (Gentile 1989:110; Young 1989:37). Draper's contemporary, Cornelia Otis Skinner, took costuming and spectacle in one-person shows to another level, eventually

²³⁹ Peter Brook, an American director well known in contemporary theatre circles for his important work towards minimalism in theatre, summing in his book, *The Empty Space* (1968). According to Williams (2002:113), his book was a very important read for someone interested in the future of theatre.

staging *Paris '90* (1952), an elaborate costume drama with a large set, lighting and make-up (Gentile 1989:113, Young 1989:43). It does, however, seem that Skinner is one of the few exceptions to what is customary in solo productions.

According to Voigts-Virchow and Schreiber (2006:292), the performer in a solo theatre production, be it performance art, stand-up comedy or monologue dramas and monopolylogues, is often defined only by one costume for the duration of the performance. Where Williams, Holbrook and Harris would dress up in the guise of literary figures and remain in that guise for the performance, Lily Tomlin and Spalding Gray are prime examples of contemporary monologuists dressed in one set of modern clothing throughout the show. Tomlin performed *The Search for Signs of Human Intelligence in the Universe* in black pants and a blouse, transforming into other characters simply through a change of voice or gestures (also read Brecht's *gestus*) and posture, miming whichever props the characters would use (Gentile 1989:170; Candice Nelms 2015). Gray also appeared in a contemporary outfit, sitting at a table with a glass of water and some books or props, choosing minimalism or "poor theatre"²⁴⁰ to enhance the technicality of the script and psychology, rather than the staging (Gentile 1989:149).

The tendency towards visual minimalism is not without reason. Apart from emphasising the talents of a lone performer as opposed to overshadowing him (Young 1989:32), the bareness of a set can also serve a poetic quality to metaphorically tie in with the subject matter or theme. Whoopi Goldberg's set for her first one-person show, *Whoopi Goldberg*, is described by Gentile (1989:172) as "minimalistic street rough". "[It's] coarse appearance [...] helped maintain at least a semblance of the underground or nonestablishment [sic] roots of the performer and her material".

The technological aspects of the theatre are often carefully worked out to support the solo performer. Jack Garfein²⁴¹ describes to Nemy (1984:2) that the lighting and sound aspects of the solo show become the other characters and therefore are crucial to the production. Lighting changes from dark to light, at times an illuminated auditorium in which the audience sees the performer interact with other audience members, exposes the theatricality of Eno's *Thom Pain* and aids the special audience-performer-relationship he wants to achieve

²⁴⁰ The notion of a poor theatre is closely associated with the work of the Polish theatre director and theorist, Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999), known for his innovative work in modern theatre. His techniques are easily grasped by school students. Poor Theatre can be performed in any bare space with few resources.

²⁴¹ Jack Garfein is a theatre director, writer, teacher and producer associated with the Actor's Studio, an organisation that offers membership possibilities for professional actors, theatre directors and playwrights.

(Voigts-Virchow & Schreiber 2006: 292; King 2016:2). Lesbian feminist performing artist, Peggy Shaw, is seen in bits and pieces as parts of her body are isolated through lighting. At a certain point during her performance, the androgynously dressed performer moves around with mini-flashlights strapped to her wrists and ankles, illuminating only those parts.

The light makes her skin translucent, shining on the lines of her skin and her veins. Dancing in the dark like an apparition with no body, only limbs, Shaw isolates her parts but evokes the absence of the whole, somehow embodying the condition of all performance as both presence and absence. In her choreographed physicality, she demonstrates the labor [sic] of gender, even if she insists she's 'so queer [she] doesn't have to talk about it' (Dolan 2005:53).

Technological advances have introduced projection and slideshows into the theatrical world. Contemporary solo performers often use these technological media to visually enhance their performances, as well as other visual aids such as art pieces (Alterman 2005:70). Paterson (2015:5) identifies “mediatization” as one of the characteristics that distinguish the work in contemporary monologue from the years prior to the 1980’s²⁴². He writes: “These works engage with popular commodity culture and the technologies or electronic and digital reproduction and are frequently consumed as already mediatized [sic] works”.

In the one-person dramatic show, the emphasis should be on the single performer and the message that the dramatic work wants to convey to audiences. Like cabaret, the one-person dramatic show primarily returns to the primitive simplicity of the theatre, especially with regards to its visual aspects, presenting performances that indulge in the artificiality of theatre to present some of the most honest, often confronting, works of art. The honesty and vulnerability of the one-person dramatic show draw the audience in.

4.4. CONCLUSION

The one-person show shares its modernist, and consequential postmodernist approaches with the concept musical and cabaret. The subgenre can be confronting to the performer and the audience member due to its directness and its preoccupation with themes often concerning the dark spaces of the human psyche. The audience is challenged on an intellectual level by the performer in that he/dhe relies on the audience’s imagination to connect the different threads in the fragmented narrative structure, and in presenting material that can be confronting.

²⁴² This is a generalisation, the decade is not exclusive and exceptions are observed.

The literature study about one-person dramatic shows was executed with the primary goal of finding valuable insight into the narrative and structural characteristics of the subgenre, which will now be combined into a framework with that of the previous subgenres discussed. After discussing some of the different types of one-person dramatic shows, the researcher presented a historical background which concentrated on the development of the art form in the United States of America, with prior mention of the early developments in the United Kingdom. The revue and the one-person dramatic show were discussed for their similarities in terms of structure and, occasionally, theme. The one-person dramatic show's association with Modernism was explored, taking particular interest in the theatrical work of Brecht and Beckett. The final part of the literature study was devoted to a discussion of the interrelationship between Aristotle's six elements of drama in one-person dramatic shows.

The one-person dramatic show displays similarities with the concept musical and cabaret in terms of its narrative and structural characteristics. Once again, a presentational mode of performance is opted for, with the material aimed at intellectually challenging audiences while entertaining them. Solo performers speak directly to their audience about pressing issues, and their honesty and willingness to be vulnerable seem to be responsible for the intimate relationship that is established between the audience and the performer. What distinguishes the one-person dramatic show from the other two subgenres, is the precondition of a single performer who carries the narrative, and the fact that music is not a prerequisite. When music is a driving force behind the narrative of a solo production, it will be regarded as a one-person musical, which is the ultimate concern of this study. The researcher intends to use the anticipated framework, to be constructed in the next chapter, in three case studies of South African one-person musicals. The information gathered on the narrative and structural characteristics of the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show will inform the final chapter of Section B, the Combined Framework.

CHAPTER 5:

COMBINED FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVALUATION OF NARRATIVE AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS IN SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS

This chapter is devoted to the construction of a Combined Framework based on the literature study described in the previous three chapters. This will inform the case studies of three South African one-person musicals in the forthcoming Section C. With specific consideration of the interrelationship between Aristotle's six elements of drama in the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show, a detailed framework of possible tendencies observed in each of the three scrutinised subgenres is developed in table format.

While there are certain narrative and structural characteristics in the three subgenres that strongly coincide, there are notable differences which could not and should not be overlooked in the construction of the Combined Framework. The ultimate aim of this study is to identify tendencies in South African one-person musicals which could be linked to a combination of the three subgenres informing the framework. Some characteristics may be observed to a much stronger degree in concept musicals than in cabaret or one-person dramatic shows, and vice versa. If these characteristics are then indicated in the case studies, a more accurate conclusion could be drawn as to how strongly each of the three subgenres are present in the one-person musical.

In the Combined Framework to be constructed, the first column represents the narrative and structural characteristics or tendencies deemed important for the evaluation of the selected one-person musicals. The next three columns are dedicated to a summative indication of the presence of the specific characteristics in each of the three subgenres researched. The strong presence of a characteristic, where it can become a generalised tendency in the subgenre, is indicated in a green block and marked *Strong*. Where a characteristic is observed to a smaller extent, and therefore a possibility, it is indicated as *Occasional* in a yellow block. Characteristics showing insignificant presence, where it could have been present in exceptional and rare cases, or totally absent, is left blank under the appropriate subgenre. The last two columns will be utilised during the case studies to indicate the presence of a characteristic in the one-person musical in question. Its manifestation within the single production will then be identified and explained in terms of its significance.

The first main heading in the Combined Framework, Purpose of the production, provides two possibilities. The first is Intellectual entertainment, which seems to be a driving force

behind all three of the subgenres, largely a Brechtian influence. And *Protest*, observed strongly in cabaret, especially its purest form, and occasionally in one-person dramatic shows, specifically when considering the pungent performance art productions. *Protest* is very rarely the purpose behind concept musicals, and its presence is, therefore, insignificant for the Combined Framework.

The next heading is Mode (of performance). The presentational mode, or performative mode, seems to be indicated strongly in concept musicals, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows from the research done. This does not exclude the possibility of a representational mode in the one-person musicals to be considered. Therefore, an option for Representational mode is provided for consideration in the framework.

Lastly, the structural elements are listed and broken down extensively into possible ways in which they could manifest and be utilised in productions. While some inclusions are rather straightforward, others might need some clarification:

1. Where dialogue and monologue are identified under Plot, the dialogue indicated as occasionally present in one-person dramatic shows, even when there is only one performer, refers to the monopolylogue form in which characters can possibly converse with each other. Cabaret can either sport larger casts, or solo acts, which facilitates its occasional indication of dialogue. Similarly, where monologue is indicated for occasional presence in concept musicals, where an ensemble cast is the norm, consideration is given to scenes where actors speak or sing alone for a long time, either towards the audience or other characters, revealing inner truths. These are touched on again under the element of Character and Music.
2. While Theme is considered an important element in all of the subgenres, the concept musical seems to be referenced as overtly “theme-driven” in a much larger sense.
3. Under Character, where characterisation is strongly indicated, the production would feature an actor concentrating on developing a character to a deeper extent as impersonation or mimicry, and identifying as that character. Characterisation is further divided into either fictional characters or non-fictional characters. While characterisation is indicated stronger in concept musicals, it is not limited to the subgenre, and can be observed in some one-person dramatic shows as well.
4. Where characterisation is less prominent, the options for the performer include creating a stage persona or forming two-dimensional characters while primarily remaining identifiable as the performer. Persona is a prominent feature in cabaret and

one-person dramatic shows. Caricature and grotesque characters are mainly observed in cabaret, while mimicry and impersonation seem to be indicated stronger in one-person dramatic shows.

5. Multiple characters can be observed to varying degrees in all of the subgenres. With ensemble casts found in concept musicals and some cabarets, multiple characters could be deemed inevitable. Each of these characters could then be assigned to a single actor within an ensemble cast, but could also involve a specific actor having to portray multiple characters in one performance. This is why a subdivision for “multi-roling”, once again a characteristic of Brecht’s Epic Theatre, is included. Some one-person dramatic shows opt for multiple characters, which would inevitably call for a single performer to engage in multi-roling to achieve this.
6. Under Language, the words to the production and spoken text are of the essence. However, in concept musicals and many cabarets, the libretto needs to be added to the equation, since it involves not only spoken text but the words/lyrics to the songs.
7. Music-driven refers to productions for which music or song is an essential element. The inclusion of the word “musical” in the term concept musical, constitutes this, as would the inclusion of it in “one-person musical”.
8. Songs can either be written for the production, or existing songs may be utilised in different ways. Any song may serve a variety of purposes within a production. These are identified in the framework as commentary, plot-advancing or character songs. Songs often function as separate scenes or monologues, as mentioned under no. 1.
9. Spectacle, which refers to the visual elements of the production, primarily includes two options – a more elaborate inclination or a minimalistic approach – to its subheadings of set design, costuming, lighting, props and dance/movement, as these tend to be divergent in the three subgenres.

The narrative and structural characteristics in the Combined Framework are not exclusive, but subject to some generalisations to facilitate easier categorisation. Still, the framework has been constructed in a broad sense to allow for a wide spectrum of possibilities, since each of the three informing subgenres has been identified as changing phenomena that can take on a variety of forms, and the same is expected of the one-person musical subgenre.

5.1. THE COMBINED FRAMEWORK

Table 1: The Combined Framework

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: [NAME OF ONE-PERSON MUSICAL]	Manifestation and significance
Purpose of the production					
Intellectual entertainment	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Protest		STRONG	OCCASIONAL		
Mode					
Presentational	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Representational					
Structural element					
Plot					
Fragmented / episodic / montage	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Narration	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Unconventional time structure	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Dialogue	STRONG	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Monologue	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Absence of subplot	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: [NAME OF ONE-PERSON MUSICAL]	Manifestation and significance
Theme					
Theme-driven	STRONG				
Overarching Theme	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Topical themes	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Individual and social themes	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Political themes	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	OCCASIONAL		
Autobiographical subject matter			OCCASIONAL		
Biographical subject matter	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL	STRONG		
Character					
Single performer		OCCASIONAL	STRONG		
Character-driven	STRONG		OCCASIONAL		
Performer-driven		STRONG	STRONG		
Characterisation	STRONG		OCCASIONAL		
Fictional characters	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Non-fictional characters	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Narrator	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: [NAME OF ONE-PERSON MUSICAL]	Manifestation and significance
Persona		STRONG	OCCASIONAL		
Caricature & Grotesque		STRONG			
Mimicry / Impersonation		OCCASIONAL	STRONG		
Multiple characters	STRONG	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Multi-roling	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Audience-performer relationship	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Direct address	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Language					
Conversational / Prose	STRONG	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Poetic language / Verse	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Substantial Lyrics	STRONG	STRONG			
Satirical		STRONG			
Character's vernacular	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Disruptive, nonsensical language		OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Music					
Music-driven	STRONG	OCCASIONAL			

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: [NAME OF ONE-PERSON MUSICAL]	Manifestation and significance
Atmospheric music	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
Actors voice	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG		
Original songs	STRONG	OCCASIONAL			
Existing songs		STRONG			
Parody of existing song		STRONG			
Commentary song	STRONG	STRONG			
Plot-advancing song	OCCASIONAL				
Character songs	STRONG	STRONG			
Songs as monologue/soliloquies	STRONG	STRONG			
Songs as separate scenes/dramas	STRONG	STRONG			
Spectacle					
Set design supports theme	STRONG	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		
More elaborate staging	STRONG				
Minimalistic & intimate	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		
Costume change	STRONG				
Single costume or minor changes	OCCASIONAL	STRONG	STRONG		

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: [NAME OF ONE-PERSON MUSICAL]	Manifestation and significance
Significant lighting changes	STRONG		OCCASIONAL		
Basic lighting		STRONG	OCCASIONAL		
Extensive use of props	STRONG				
Minimalistic props / mime		STRONG	STRONG		
Dance / Bodily movement	STRONG	OCCASIONAL			
Gestus		STRONG	STRONG		
Media & Technology	STRONG	OCCASIONAL	OCCASIONAL		

5.2. CONCLUSION

The literature studies of three theatrical subgenres, namely the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show, were conducted towards ultimately informing the Combined Framework that has been constructed in this final chapter of Section B. For the creation of the Combined Framework, the researcher was mainly interested in the narrative and structural characteristics of the three subgenres, since these features, now summarised in the framework, will direct the case studies in Section C. The objective of the case studies to follow is to evaluate three South African one-person musicals for their narrative and structural characteristics using the Combined Framework.

A comprehensive literature study into the narrative and structural characteristics of the three informing subgenres would entail a historical overview of key moments in the development of the subgenre, as well as an assessment of the interrelationship between the different elements of the productions. This was executed for all three subgenres. For the concept musical, the development of the subgenre in mainstream musical theatre circuits, such as Broadway, Off-Broadway and West End was of concern. Key pioneers that featured included Stephen Sondheim, Hal Prince, Michael Bennett and the songwriting team, Kander and Ebb. Cabaret was explored for its roots in Europe, with special interest in its original developments in France and its golden years in Germany. A history of cabaret in South Africa was included for its important role as a vehicle for *protest* during turbulent times, and for its suitability to the development of the South African one-person musical, since the three artists to be discussed in the next section all have been associated with the South African cabaret circuit. The one-person dramatic show primarily became prominent as a legitimate art form in the United States of America and was explored accordingly, with some early developments in the United Kingdom also held appropriate for the historical background to the study.

The historical background also featured comparisons to the revue subgenre and explored the connection of the subgenres to modernism, with special interest in the theatrical developments of Bertolt Brecht. The revue was deemed an appropriate subgenre to consider for its influence on and comparison to the concept musical in terms of narrative and structural characteristics. Befittingly, the revue could also be utilised for successful comparisons with cabaret and the one-person dramatic show in the subsequent chapters, due to its shared features of fragmented structures and, in some instances, topical themes. Even more parallels could be drawn between the three subgenres when they are

considered for as extensions of the modernist movements of the twentieth century, especially Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre. Brechtian techniques such as a presentational mode of performance, fragmentation, narration, direct audience address and multi-roling surfaced in all three subgenres, as well as intellectual material and social-political themes. In concept musicals and cabaret, song is often used as commentary on the dramatic material, in Brechtian fashion. Cabaret also engages in the strong political commentary that Brecht sought, and resorts to it to achieve its goals. For an individual undertaking like the one-person dramatic show, Samuel Beckett's work in *Existentialism* and *Absurdism* surfaced as an aspect that needed to be addressed due to Beckett's special interest in the individual psyche.

The informing subgenres were explored for their narrative and structural characteristics, with Aristotle's six elements of drama forming the basis of the investigations. Plot and Theme were continuously discussed under the same heading, followed by Character and then the elements of Music and Language combined. The last structural element was Spectacle. As mentioned above, certain characteristics had already proven to be similar in the three subgenres, but definite differences were also observed. The differences are evident in the Combined Framework of Chapter 5, which concludes Section B.

In Section C, the researcher expects to see the narrative and structural characteristics of the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show manifest in the South African one-person musicals in question. These manifestations are expected to vary in the different case studies. It is also expected that some of the characteristics showing distinction between the three informing subgenres could inform the nature of the one-person musical even more. When these isolated features are present in the one-person musicals to varying degrees, it would mean that the one-person musical in question does not perfectly resemble only one of the subgenres, but borrows characteristics from all of them. This could confirm the researcher's supposition that one-person musicals are an amalgamation of the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show.

SECTION C

CASE STUDIES:

THREE SOUTH AFRICAN ONE-PERSON MUSICALS APPLIED TO THE COMBINED FRAMEWORK

AN INTRODUCTION TO SECTION C

The Combined Framework established in Chapter 5 will be applied to three South African one-person musicals by three diverse South African performers. Even though these performers are more widely associated with the Afrikaans community, their work has been widely accepted across language borders. The first performance to be discussed is that of the multilingual *State of the Heart* by Amanda Strydom. Secondly and thirdly, *Combat* by Nataniël and Elzabé Zietsman's performance in *Agter Glas* feature the artists singing and speaking in both English and Afrikaans.

The layout of this Section will be as follows:

An overview of the artist and one-person musical in question will precede each evaluation, serving as background information. The production will then be evaluated in table format by completing the empty columns in the Combined Framework. The columns established for the three informing subgenres are presented only in green or yellow shading so as to add more space for the evaluation. The relevant sections present in the specific one-person musical will be indicated, once again, as *Strong* (in green) when its presence is strongly indicated, and *Occasional* (in yellow) when present to a lesser degree. A block will be left blank if insignificant evidence of a section is identified. In the far-right column, the sections will be explained for its manifestation in the performance. Each evaluation will end with a brief summary and discussion of key elements identified in the table.

Findings will be based primarily on subjective interpretations of the chosen productions upon viewing the performance on DVD, or in person, and/or reading the script, where it was generously made available by the artist. Additionally, reference may be made to e-mail correspondence between the researcher and the artist, where it was granted, or online reviews, promotional material, interviews and research done on the performer or the selected one-person musicals, where available.

The objective of this chapter is to identify in the chosen South African one-person musicals narrative and structural characteristics found in all three of the subgenres discussed in the literature study. The presence of elements from concept musicals, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows, might reveal the one-person musical as a hybrid form of solo theatre which involves influences from all of these subgenres.

CHAPTER 6:**STATE OF THE HEART BY AMANDA STRYDOM****6.1. CASE STUDY 1: AMANDA STRYDOM**

Amanda Strydom (1956-) is a multi-talented performer, with singing, acting, piano, composing and writing skills, according to her mentor Hennie Aucamp (Strydom 2011:77-78). While most resources classify Strydom's original work²⁴³ as cabaret, she calls her original productions "one-woman musicals" (Glorie & Strydom 2012), and claims to have only ever starred in two cabarets, both of which were written by Aucamp. The first, *Met permissie gesê*, has been discussed earlier as the first Afrikaans cabaret. The second, *'n Vuur gevang in glas* (1997) was a solo cabaret (Roggeband 2009:11). Originally written for her by Aucamp in 1985, *'n Vuur gevang in glas* would premiere 12 years later, in 1997, after some adjustments made by her and Aucamp. Since then, Strydom has performed it all over South Africa, including a live radio broadcast of the entire cabaret as part of RSG's (Radio Sonder Grense) first "Radio-kunstefees" on 28 November 2013, the first cabaret-broadcast of its kind in South Africa (Meyer & Strydom 2014). Strydom toured The Netherlands with the cabaret show in 2011, renaming it to *Vuur in glas* to suit the Dutch audience (Glorie & Strydom 2012). It enjoyed renewed popularity after Aucamp's death in 2014, serving as a tribute to him, whom she calls "Meester" (Jacobs 2014).

The researcher saw a live performance of *'n Vuur gevang in glas* during the 2014 *Vryfees* (now *Free State Arts Festival*) in Bloemfontein. After the performance, the researcher approached Strydom about a possible e-mail interview, but due to a busy schedule, she declined. Fortunately, the DVD of *State of the Heart* (*State of the Heart* 2008) was available, and there are numerous sources and interviews, written or recorded, with the legendary Strydom, as well as writings on her and her work by "Meester" Hennie Aucamp.

It was Aucamp who encouraged Strydom to write her own shows and songs after reading the words of her first song, *Ek loop die pad*, in 1979 (Glorie & Strydom 2012). Strydom explains to Glorie (2017) and Roggeband (2009:11) that *Ek loop die pad* was written as one of the new creations of the *musiek-en-liriek* movement in the 1970's.

²⁴³ The one-person musicals written by Amanda Strydom will be investigated in the fifth chapter. They are not discussed here, because they will not be treated as full-fledged cabarets.

Van der Merwe²⁴⁴ (2017:118) lists Strydom, together with David Kramer and Anton Goosen (1946-), as one of the more politically outspoken artists within the *musiek-en-liriek* movement, but notes that these artists were never quite as radical as the musicians of the *Voëlvry*-movement. The *musiek-en-liriek* movement was, after all, still aimed at the (still conservative) masses in Afrikaner-culture. Strydom did, however, take a controversial, political stand in 1986, when she sang her acapella song “Die Pas”, a song against the enforced passbook system for non-white South Africans, and ended the performance with her fist in the air, shouting “Amandla!”²⁴⁵. This caused so much upheaval and rejection from the media and fellow artists that she suffered a mental breakdown (Roggeband 2009:9-10). Strydom explains that Johannes Kerkorrel and Hennie Aucamp were two of the artists who convinced her to return to the stage two years later (Glorie & Strydom 2012).

Since her return, Strydom has been providing the South African theatre with a wide range of one-person musicals and music productions at art festivals or as independent runs at theatres across the country. She also has an international following in Namibia, Belgium and The Netherlands. Of the roughly 15 music productions Strydom has created, *State of the Heart* was her first one-person musical and, together with *’n Vuur gevang in glas*, arguably her most popular and best-known production²⁴⁶ (Britz 2016; Anon 2013b).

6.2. STATE OF THE HEART

Created in 1993, *State of the Heart* won DALRO and Showtime awards in 1994. Strydom is still performing this one-person musical due to public demand, with recent runs in 2013/14 in various South African theatres (Anon 2013a; Anon 2013b). CD recordings of Strydom’s work are easier to obtain than video recordings. A live performance of *State of the Heart* was recorded on 28 October 2008 in the Johannesburg Pro Musica Theatre,

²⁴⁴ Schalk van der Merwe has lectured in History at The Universtiy of Stellenbosch for the past 12 years.

²⁴⁵ The Amandla! chant (meaning “power”), usually paired with a fist in the air, is a salute for black empowerment. A white person executing this salute in the conservative Afrikaans white community during the 1980’s would surely be rebuked by the government and media (Roggeband 2009:10). Strydom would also be chastised by some with the nickname “Amandla Strydom” after the incident (Van der Merwe 2010:73).

²⁴⁶ Other solo productions, six of which are classified as one-person musicals, followed *State of the Heart*. Roggeband (2009:10) lists *The Adventures of Tinkerbelle van Tonder*, *Diva*, *In full flight*, *Die taal van my hart*, *Meisie sing die blues* and *Kerse teen die donker*, while the online festival programme for the *Free State Arts Festival* (<http://www.vrystaatkunstefees.co.za/events.aspx?EventID=1212>) and Britz (2016) provides information on two more recent productions: *Amanda Strydom: Die hele boksemdaais* (2016) and *’n Rusgsak vol Robyne* (2017).

Roodepoort. This performance, now available on DVD, was used in the evaluation of this piece.

Promotional material for a 2013 performance of *State of the Heart*, reveals the following regarding the content of the production (Anon 2013a):

Hierdie tydlose liefdesverhaal steek op 'n teer wyse die draak met ou Afrikaner tradisies en kyk na die geskiedenis van Suid Afrika van die twintiger tot sewentigerjare. Vooroordele tussen mense word tegelykertyd subtiel, skreeusnaaks en hartverskeurend bekyk. Die wreedheid van oorlog, die passie van 'n hart wat bly glo, ten spyte van teenslae, dat die liefde sál seëvier, word ook [...] blootgelê.

In *State of the Heart*, the narrative is constructed around the story of strong-willed *Maxie de Meyer*, a young Afrikaans woman and singer, who falls in love with an English fighter-pilot, *Raymond D. Bartlett* – a forbidden love strongly rebuked by her father, who is still caught in the strong conservatism and Afrikaner nationalism around the 1930's, where the story commences²⁴⁷. Strydom speaks in Afrikaans and English and sings in 6 different languages: Afrikaans, English, Xhosa²⁴⁸, French, German and Dutch. She is also seen in quick impersonations of about 14 characters throughout the performance.

The story is retold to the audience by Strydom, taking on the persona of *Maxie's* sister's granddaughter, as Strydom explained to Maroela Media (2013) in an online interview²⁴⁹. Her name is not given, but it is indicated that her Aunt *Maxie* called her by the nickname "Gogga". The narrative starts with the song *When the meadow was blooming*, resting on the lyrics "do you remember" to induce the narrator's "I remember Auntie *Maxie* leaving for England" as the first spoken lines of the performance. This episode introduces *Maxie* in a later stage of her life, which is the last scene of the storyline when viewed chronologically. After a swift overview of life in the 1930's and introducing the

²⁴⁷ Strydom describes the narrative of *State of the Heart* in two separate interviews which are available on YouTube. The first is an interview with Maroela Media for the *Aardklop Arts Festival* (Maroela Media 2013) in the other, artist Willem Botha interviews her at the 2014 *Klein Karoo National Arts Festival* (AbsaKKNK TV 2014).

²⁴⁸ In an interview with Maroela Media (2013), Strydom indicates that she sings in Zulu. However, the Dingaka lullaby sung during the performance was indicated as being a Xhosa version, when this writer approached Xhosa opera singer, N. Nkwinti (2017, pers. comm., 27 December) with the material. The two languages of Zulu and Xhosa are very closely related, but if one considers the geographic location of *Maxie* and the African people she was acquainted with, they most likely lived in Xhosa regions close to the Garden Route, between the Eastern Cape and Western Cape. *Maxie* and *Raymond* attend the wedding of Frik Ferreira and *Stoffelina* in the Langekloof. The band who entertains guests at the wedding comes from the Baviaanskloof. These are some of the few indications as to where the action is set, and if it is presumed that *Maxie* and *Raymond* were invited because they knew the couple, they most probably lived in the same district and would not travel very far from their home towns. Strydom herself grew up in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, not far from these regions.

²⁴⁹ The video is titled *Amanda Strydom oor State of the Heart* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi7IzQmSETs>).

gramophone as a recurring motif in the production, the narrator shares a personal anecdote of her mother catching her singing to Dolly Parton's *Jolene*, treating the audience to a quick impersonation of Parton singing (*State of the Heart* 2008).

The narrator quickly takes the narrative back to when *Maxie* was young, starting with her life-story at the age of 16 when she performed as a singer all over her district. As *Maxie*, she performs *The Man I Love*. From there, the narrative unfolds mostly in a chronological fashion, occasionally interrupted by song. Main events in *Maxie*'s life are retold. The narrator tells the audience of how *Maxie* met *Raymond* at the age of 18 at *Rooibaard De Beer's* Harvest Festival. Their first date at the wedding of tobacco farmer *Frik Ferreira* and (slightly pregnant) *Stoffelina Nel*, was strongly objected to by *Maxie*'s father, *Oupa Dik Daniël* (the narrator's great-grandfather). *Maxie* went there, despite an argument with her father. A very comic impersonation of *Stoffelina* singing a Boer medley follows. The audience is given a glimpse into secret romantic evenings between *Maxie* and *Raymond* and how he wrote letters to her, with little *Sipho* as the messenger. *Sipho*'s parents worked for *Raymond*. Intertwined with the narrative is *With my lover beside me* sung as *Maxie*, and the *Dingaka Lullaby*, in the character of a farm worker (*State of the Heart* 2008).

A turn of events occurs with the delivery of a letter *Raymond* wrote *Maxie*, which would also become the only established prop throughout the rest of the performance. In a voiceover, *Raymond* announces his return to England to explain their situation to his family, who also disapproves of their relationship. He ends his letter with the words: "No matter what, I will come for you", words which *Maxie* holds on to for the rest of her life. Opening an imaginary music box, the chiming sounds instigate a French medley sung by an emotional *Maxie*. It also became clear in *Raymond's* letter that the war (World War II) had started. *Maxie*'s career as a singer at homecoming events for soldiers is depicted in the *War-medley*. This musical number, together with a short piece of monologue, exposes the cruelty of war (*State of the Heart* 2008).

The next event involves *Oupa Dik Daniël* scheming to marry *Maxie* off to *Klein Piet Pretorius*. On the wedding day, *Maxie* flees and vows never to marry. Only one episode, which could be perceived more as an after-thought inserted by the narrator, seems to defy the chronological line. The narrator recalls a later stage in her own life when Aunt *Maxie* said to her: "Gogga, if you can learn to be by yourself and like it, you'll never need anyone, and you'll never get hurt". This introduces the well-known Afrikaans song *Skielik*

is jy vry, arguably one of the only songs sung by Strydom as the narrator in the performance (*State of the Heart* 2008).

Back in chronology, *Maxie* is seen supporting the narrator as a little girl in her first Eisteddfod. Strydom's impersonation of a retired actress announcing the winner garners in laughs and applause from the audience. The progression in *Maxie's* life is observed further when it is announced that she got too old for singing. The death of her father, *Oupa Dik Daniël*, creates a touching scene where *Maxie* visits his grave and sings the Dutch *Papa* about how, regardless of their differences, she sees so much of him in herself. To everyone's surprise, *Maxie* inherits the farm. With the help of *Sipho* and his wife, they keep the farm going. Strydom's iconic song, *Ek loop die pad*, is presented by *Maxie* in the confines of her room, rereading the letter as an old spinster, still holding on to *Raymond's* promise (*State of the Heart* 2008).

In the final episode, the narrator shares the great news that *Raymond* had hired a lawyer in London to find *Maxie* since his letters never seemed to reach her in all these years. A letter from the lawyer was delivered to *Maxie*, revealing the telephone number and address where *Maxie* can reach *Raymond* since he is desperately looking for her. It is not known whether *Maxie's* father had hidden the letters from her, or if *Raymond's* family intercepted them. As the song *At last* builds, the narrator redirects the audience to the beginning of the performance, where *Maxie* leaves South Africa to spend the last years of her life with *Raymond* (*State of the Heart* 2008).

With a historical overview and synopsis of the production in place, the 2008 recorded performance of *State of the Heart* will now be evaluated for its narrative and structural characteristics by applying it to the Combined Framework.

6.3. STATE OF THE HEART APPLIED TO THE COMBINED FRAMEWORK

Table 2: *State of the Heart* applied to the Combined Framework

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Purpose of the production					
Intellectual entertainment				STRONG	Strydom's main focus is to provide an entertaining performance to the audience with a beautiful story of love and hope. This is not merely escapist entertainment, however, and audiences are engaged intellectually in more than one way. Strydom sings in 6 different languages, which would seem to appeal to a more educated audience with an appreciation for different cultures and international music. Commentary song, spoken words that carry a much deeper meaning, as well as changes in voice, tone and facial expression are all methods that encourage audiences to look at some of the illuminated issues from a more critical perspective. Her social commentary does not reach such a level that it could be regarded as <i>protest</i> . These methods become clearer as they are evaluated in the sections to follow.
Protest					No significant evidence found.
Mode					
Presentational				STRONG	Strydom is present as a performer from the moment she steps onto the stage. Under applause, she acknowledges the audience and thanks them with a bow before taking her seated position for the first musical number. The audience is immediately invited into the shared experience of a performance where the performer is aware that she is performing for an auditorium of spectators. Strydom performs with a handheld microphone for the duration of the performance and does not engage in costume change to attempt an exact representation of characters. The four-piece décor in no way attempts to reproduce a real room or setting.
Representational					No significant evidence found.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Structural element					
Plot					
Fragmented / episodic / montage				STRONG	While most of the story unravels chronologically, the inclusion of songs disrupts the linearity of the plot, dividing the theatrical experience into sections, or episodes. The episodes occur years apart. Significant events in <i>Maxie's</i> (and occasionally the narrator's) life are highlighted and pasted together in what could be seen as a collage or montage.
Narration				STRONG	Strydom presents the story of <i>Maxie</i> in the persona of an unnamed narrator. The narrator is responsible for conveying the story to the audience, with the occasional break into a character or impersonation.
Unconventional time structure				STRONG	<p>The narrative unfolds as a story which happened in the past. The fictional time covers <i>Maxie's</i> life from the time she was 16 around the 1930's, until the time she leaves South Africa in the 1970's. There are significant jumps in time. The biggest jump happens right at the start, when the story begins where it ends. A second jump in the narrative occurs when the narrator thinks back to a time when <i>Maxie</i> gave her relationship and life advice, most likely at a time where she could comprehend the words, which would mean she was already a teenager. After the song, <i>Skielik is jy vry</i>, the narrative jumps back to when the narrator was a little girl at her first Eisteddfod.</p> <p><i>State of the Heart</i> was written in 1993, and the DVD performance used in the evaluation occurred in 2008, but the time-frame in which the narrator lives does not seem to have altered. The narrator is, thus, not bound to time and her narration seems to occur from a more omnipresent, undefined dimension or time-frame.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Unconventional time structure (cont.)					The musical numbers inevitably created another dimension of time, parallel to the narration. Their time-structures and rhythms are different from the spoken segments, due to their confinement within the bound of musical beats, as well as their different languages. The musical numbers also differ from each other, since all of the songs sprung from different writers and artists at different times in history.
Dialogue				OCCASIONAL	In one scene, a confrontation between <i>Oupa Dik Daniël</i> , <i>Maxie's</i> father, and herself is portrayed by Strydom. She takes on both characters, therefore fluctuating between the two for a number of lines. During the Eisteddfod scene, <i>Maxie</i> does imply that the narrator, then a little girl, is standing in front of her and speaks to her by bending down to her level.
Monologue				STRONG	Every episode that is narrated to the audience predominantly takes the form of a monologue, except for the rare occasion when a quick dialogue is opted for. There is only one performer, and when she is speaking, she is mostly in the persona of the narrator.
Absence of subplot				STRONG	There is no divergence from the primary love story and the life of <i>Maxie</i> , nor any parallel stories that run alongside it. By concentrating on the main story, Strydom can lead the audience through the narrative without distraction. They get the most out of the story by being able to simply focus on <i>Maxie</i> , her love for <i>Raymond</i> , how she never stopped believing that he would come for her, and how he finally finds her.
Theme					
Theme-driven					No significant evidence found.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Overarching Theme				STRONG	<p>A major theme that drives the conflict to a large extent is that of prejudice. The relationship between <i>Maxie</i> and <i>Raymond</i> is condemned by both of their families. <i>Maxie's</i> father rejects <i>Raymond</i> because he is English, and he cannot see past the suffering of Afrikaners during the Anglo Boer war. <i>Maxie's</i> father refers to him as a "Rooinek" during a confrontation. <i>Raymond's</i> family find an "Afrikaner meisie" too simple for their <i>Raymond</i>, who is presumably in a higher social class.</p> <p><i>Maxie</i> tries to be free from the Afrikaner nationalism and prejudice. She tells her father during an argument: "Ons kan nie onself van die res van die wêreld apart hou nie", foreshadowing Apartheid, which the audience knows would happen in the future. She builds strong relationships with the African people in her life, an ethnic group of people that have been known to be subjected to prejudice, especially from the Afrikaner.</p> <p>The Afrikaner and their ways form another important theme that is thoroughly explored, and at times parodied, throughout the performance. Stereotypical names such as <i>Oupa Dik Daniël</i>, <i>Klein Piet</i>, <i>Rooibaard De Beer</i>, <i>Duimpie Nel</i>, <i>Lang Hans</i> and <i>Stoffelina</i> indicate the strong Afrikaner presence in the production.</p> <p>The young Afrikaner men who are <i>Maxie's</i> age are described as coarse and loud, compared to <i>Raymond</i> who is soft and gentle. <i>Maxie</i> confronts her father with the words: "Pa kan nie altyd alles wil regdôner nie", referring to the angry and often violent way in which men react to unpleasant situations. Even <i>Stoffelina</i>, the bride who sings the <i>Boere-medley</i> at her wedding, is presented as unpolished, rough and almost masculine. The mention that <i>Stoffelina</i> is "slightly pregnant" at the time of their wedding, would already suggest to the audience the amount of scandal and prejudice that the couple had to face prior to the wedding.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Topical themes					It does not seem as if the themes of <i>State of the Heart</i> are significantly topical; they are more universal.
Individual and social themes				STRONG	<p>The main theme of prejudice, which involves racism, classism, and nationalism has been discussed in the previous section. We see <i>Maxie</i> placed in the middle of this prejudice. <i>State of the Heart</i> explores the individual's struggle within a prejudiced environment and how it affects her. The narrator briefly touches on the issue of sexism when she says that <i>Maxie</i> was loved by everyone, "except those who believe that women should know their place, if you know what I mean". <i>Maxie</i> is made stronger, slightly more stubborn and all the more hopeful by the condemnation of her free spirit and her relationship with <i>Raymond</i>. This hope, enkindled by true love, is essentially a secondary theme in the production.</p> <p>Another secondary theme is that of the individual in war. Strydom observes the unfortunate effect of war on a young man's body and psyche. This theme is intertwined with <i>Maxie's</i> life after <i>Raymond</i> left at the start of the war, when we see her performing for soldiers, and each soldier has <i>Raymond's</i> face, each song is sung for him and the hope that he'll return.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Political themes				OCCASIONAL	Without going into the details of important political and cultural happenings in the world and South Africa, to avoid side-tracking the primary theme and story, the narrator uses these events to illustrate the passage of time in <i>Maxie's</i> life. "Sy het gewag – dwarsdeur die oorlog, die eerste man op die maan, Vewoerd en sy nuwe apartheid, Woodstock en hotpants, Sharpeville, Sophiatown," and adding for comic relief, "ek en my heel eerste Cross-Your-Heart van Playtex". The mere mention of Verwoerd, Apartheid and Sharpeville, however, and the emphatic, somewhat disapproving look on her face when she utters those words, evokes an emotional response from the audience and invites them to consider these events from a critical standpoint.
Autobiographical subject matter					No significant evidence found.
Biographical subject matter					No significant evidence found.
Character					
Single performer				STRONG	Amanda Strydom is the only dramatic performer in this one-person musical. The live pianist, Janine Neethling, is not seen in the recording.
Character-driven					No significant evidence found.
Performer-driven				STRONG	Audiences buy tickets to a show like <i>State of the Heart</i> to see Amanda Strydom in action. As a performer, Strydom uses her charisma on stage to charm audiences, presenting them with a narrating persona not unlike herself, and proceeds to utilise her talents as a singer and impersonator, at times combining the two by presenting a musical number in the guise of one of her characters. While people are moved by the story, it is Strydom's presence and performance that makes the show successful. It is also hard to imagine the piece being performed by any other performer.
Characterisation					No significant evidence found.

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Fictional characters					The characters signified or mimicked on stage are all fictional, but could be inspired by real people in Strydom's life, which is often the case with most writers when they create characters. The quick impersonation of Dolly Parton is based on the real singer.
Non-fictional characters					No significant evidence found.
Narrator				STRONG	Strydom addresses the audience as the narrator, who is the granddaughter of <i>Maxie's</i> sister. <i>Maxie</i> calls her "Gogga", but her actual name is not revealed.
Persona				STRONG	Due to the anonymity of the narrator, suggesting that Strydom did not attempt to create a three-dimensional character very different from herself, the narrator could be seen as a persona of Strydom. The narrator comes across as a parallel version of Strydom, sharing the same life experiences, the same image, voice and personality. Strydom does not attempt to change her appearance into a completely new character. It could be argued that the audience, most likely being avid followers of Strydom as a performer, would perceive the narrative to be carried by Strydom herself, and overlook the role of narrator due to their semblance, taking the story as being told from a fictionalised or "quantum"-autobiographical ²⁵⁰ perspective – a reality that could have been true for Strydom in a parallel life or reality.

²⁵⁰ This phenomenon of a "quantum"-autobiographical approach, referring to the possibility of multiple realities suggested by quantum physics, is not an existing, coined term. However, when the term emerged through correspondence with study leader, D.C. Cloete (2017, pers. comm. 3 December), this writer finds it to be useful in exploring narratives such as those presented by Spalding Gray, and Nataniël, who's work will be explored in the next section. In a stage persona, these artists seem to tell stories from an autobiographical origin. Yet, due to the narrative's blurred sense of reality or truth, exaggeration and possible surreal components, the audience might question the truth behind some of the stories told. This distrust is directly proportioned to the unstable and distorted nature of memory, which is explored in the work of Gray and Samuel Beckett. It does not exclude the possibility that, in some parallel reality or frame of mind, the events may have occurred for the artist or his persona.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Persona (cont.)					<p>More parallels can be drawn between Strydom and the narrator:</p> <p>Strydom, being an artist and being part of cultural activities as a child, could possibly have taken part in Eisteddfod in the same way the narrator did.</p> <p>Strydom and the narrator seem to share the same age. It could be argued that the narrator is younger than Strydom, but whether this is due to some historical inaccuracy in the narrative or whether it was intentional, is open for discussion. In the last episode of <i>Maxie's</i> story, she leaves for England. The narrator indicates that she was in her matric year. She gives an indication of the year with referral to John Vorster who was Prime Minister (which could be anything between 1966 and 1978), Cornelia singing <i>Picking up Pebbles</i> (the song was released in 1968), and Fanus Rautenbach's radio programme called <i>Flink uit die vere</i> (which aired between 1961 and 1974). Strydom herself matriculated in 1974.</p> <p>A problematic date occurs when the narrator shares the anecdote of her always singing along with the gramophone when she was 13 years old. She talks about a time her mother caught her singing <i>Jolene</i> in a bra she stuffed, presenting a short, entertaining impersonation of Dolly Parton singing. However, the song was only released in 1973. If a stuffed bra was necessary, she probably was still 13 years old, which would mean the year of her matriculation would have to shift to 1978. This does, however, throw some of the other historical time frames out of balance. This writer is of the opinion that historical inaccuracy of the release date of <i>Jolene</i> is the cause of the confusion. Dolly Parton was a good choice for impersonation due to her unique and recognisable voice, and for this reason, Strydom opted for performance choices above historical accuracy.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: STATE OF THE HEART	Manifestation and significance
Persona (cont.)					<p>Technicalities aside, the fact that Strydom enters on stage as a performer, with an acknowledging bow to the audience, and presents the performance in a personality not unlike her own, never pretending to be something else, indicates to this writer that the narrator is simply another “self”, or persona, created by Strydom.</p> <p>For a brief moment after the <i>Boere-medley</i>, the words spoken to the audience seem to come from Strydom herself. In a quasi-didactic capacity, she says, “Those songs are going to be Africana one day, my friends, and no-one can take them away from us”. She then continues to narrate the story in a slightly different tone of voice, more associated with the narrator-persona. Similarly, the phrase “Except those who believe that women should know their place”, which can be heard after the narrator says that everybody loved <i>Maxie</i>, seems to come from a different voice - as if the interlocutor, possibly Strydom, could be interrupting the narrator for social commentary. The same voice is present by the end of the narrator’s comments on war.</p> <p>The musical numbers performed by <i>Maxie</i> when she is performing as a singer – <i>The man I love</i> and the <i>War-medley</i> – sees <i>Maxie</i> taking on a stage persona too, adding yet another layer and dimension to the performance.</p> <p>It could be an interesting perspective to consider that even <i>Maxie</i> could be another “self” of Strydom. The painting of <i>Maxie</i> on stage has definite resemblances to Strydom. <i>Maxie</i> is also a singer, like Strydom. The musical numbers that seem to be presented in the persona of <i>Maxie</i>, and those presented as the narrator, are not easily distinguishable. In truth, they seem to simultaneously represent Strydom, the narrator and <i>Maxie</i>’s talents in a reality outside of the limits of time.</p>

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Caricature & Grotesque					No significant evidence found, although the portrayal of <i>Stoffelina</i> could be regarded as having qualities linked to caricature.
Mimicry / Impersonation				STRONG	<p>Strydom presents most of the spoken dialogue and some musical numbers as the narrator, while the majority of the musical numbers seem to be sung as <i>Maxie</i>. Occasionally, the narrator (and ultimately Strydom) resorts to mimicry to present some of the characters to the audience. This involves a change of voice, accent, stance and facial expression.</p> <p>A classic example of impersonation is found in the scene where the narrator briefly sings the key phrase of the chorus of Dolly Parton's <i>Jolene</i>, in Parton's distinct voice.</p> <p><i>Raymond's</i> English family is also fleetingly suggested in a short impersonation. Without taking on a distinguished character, the narrator impersonates the stereotypical middle-class British woman with a strong British accent. Speaking of the disapproval of <i>Raymond's</i> relationship with the Afrikaner woman, she utters the words, "They were not amused. No, not at all", to the delight of the audience.</p>
Multiple characters				STRONG	<p>Characters that are presented in a more developed form through mimicry, and who present spoken lines or songs, to the audience, are as follows:</p> <p><u><i>Oupa Dik Daniël</i> - <i>Maxie's</i> father, and the narrator's great-grandfather</u></p> <p>In one scene he is seen in conflict with <i>Maxie</i>. In another scene he speaks to the father of the groom he wishes to marry <i>Maxie</i> off to, showing his scheming ways.</p> <p><u><i>Maxie</i></u></p> <p>In several scenes, the narrator becomes <i>Maxie</i>, most notably in the musical numbers. She is briefly shown during the part where she and <i>Raymond</i> met. Then there is the confrontation with her father. When she heard she would be married off to another man, a defeated <i>Maxie</i> simply utters the words, "What will be, will be". As a runaway bride, she</p>

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Multiple characters (cont.)					<p>vocalises the title of the show to her brother after he pleads with her to go back to the ceremony, “Los my uit, boetie. It’s the state of my heart”.</p> <p><i>Maxie</i> is also shown in conversation with the narrator. Firstly, giving her advice on love and independence, and in a different scene motivating her to go on stage for her first Eisteddfod. She also shouts the final spoken words of the performance to the narrator on the airport, “Gogga, hold on to your heart”, as she waves goodbye.</p> <p><u>The narrator’s mother</u> On two occasions, she speaks to the narrator about <i>Maxie</i>, describing her as mad or unstable.</p> <p><u>Sipho</u> He becomes the messenger throughout the narrative, at first delivering love letters from <i>Raymond</i> as a little boy, then handing <i>Maxie</i> the dreaded letter about <i>Raymond</i>’s move back to England. He also tells <i>Maxie</i> about her father’s scheming to marry her off. As they grow older, they remain friends and partners, working together on the farm after <i>Dik Daniël</i>’s death. It is also <i>Sipho</i> who arrives with the letter from <i>Raymond</i> decades later when he finally found her again through an English lawyer. When speaking as <i>Sipho</i>, Strydom changes her accent to an African English accent.</p> <p><u>Emilina, Sipho’s sister and worker on Oupa Dik Daniël’s farm</u> She is the middleman between <i>Sipho</i> and <i>Maxie</i>’s correspondence. Calling <i>Maxie</i> away in Xhosa, with the phrase “izapha”. She was the one who overheard the scheming between <i>Maxie</i>’s father and the other farmer whose son she almost married. She then told <i>Sipho</i>, who ran to <i>Maxie</i> to tell her about it.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Multiple characters (cont.)					<p><u><i>Stoffelina</i></u> At her wedding, a seemingly unattractive, loud <i>Stoffelina</i> sings old Afrikaans folk songs with a guttural “r” (known as “bry” in Afrikaans) and protruding bottom lip. She also curtsies under applause in a boorish, unladylike manner.</p> <p><u>Neighbour to <i>Oupa Dik Daniël</i></u> In one scene, she tells <i>Dik Daniël</i> that she’s seen <i>Maxie</i> and <i>Raymond</i> meeting in secret somewhere, resulting in corporal punishment for <i>Maxie</i>.</p> <p><u>African woman</u> While speaking about African people, the narrator stops talking as if she hears something in the distance. With a “Shhh, listen” she moves stage right, sits on the chair, and sings the <i>Dingaka lullaby</i> as the African woman, holding a child in her arms.</p> <p><u><i>Willy</i> – <i>Maxie</i>’s brother</u> At the planned wedding between <i>Maxie</i> and <i>Klein Piet Pretorius</i>, he was the bride’s chauffeur but ends up chasing after her when she flees. When she stubbornly insists on walking home, he comically follows her in the car, driving slowly next to her, begging her to get into the car.</p> <p><u>Retired actress</u> The scene where the narrator competes in her first Eisteddfod, feature a retired actress who announces the winner. She speaks in a pompous, over-articulated theatre dialect associated with the older generation of Afrikaans actors. Her age is also made clear in the shaking of her hands, difficulty getting out of her chair, bad eyesight and a shivering, higher voice.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: STATE OF THE HEART	Manifestation and significance
Multiple characters (cont.)					<p>There are also characters who are briefly demonstrated physically, such as the band members accompanying <i>Stoffelina</i> in the <i>Boere-medley</i> at her wedding.</p> <p><u>Skewe Petrus Du Plooy</u>: guitarist, physically portrayed as having a skew right eye</p> <p><u>Duimpie Nel</u>: <i>Stoffelina's</i> cousin on double bass is very short, illustrated by Strydom bending her knees and back, and looking up, miming tugging at stings.</p> <p><u>Wit Willem Nel</u>: <i>Stoffelina's</i> brother on concertina, visually implicated by Strydom by combing the hair back above her right ear.</p> <p><u>Lang Hans Liebenberg</u>: He is not really visually portrayed, but is mentioned for his role of harmonising and playing the saw for the sad numbers and waltzes.</p>
Multi-roling				STRONG	As the sole performer, Strydom portrays all these characters and personas, showcasing her talents in storytelling, mimicry and impersonation, both in song and drama.
Audience-performer relationship				STRONG	<p>Even though the performance takes place in a theatre with a large auditorium, the fact that Strydom acknowledges her audience, and the conversational approach she follows when presenting the narrative, brings about an intimate audience-performer relationship. It is clear that the audience enjoys the performance, with applause after every musical number and heartfelt laughs during comic scenes. There are about two instances in which Strydom has a laugh with the audience. At times the silence is tangible as the audience engages in the sadder, more emotional scenes. All of this makes for a pleasant, meaningful theatrical experience for performer and audience.</p>
Direct address				STRONG	Strydom speaks to the audience directly and performs the musical numbers to them as well. At one point, she even encourages audience participation when she says, "Our mothers have always fended for us, hey girls?", pointing the microphone towards the audience to encourage their response. A large number of voices from the audience are heard supporting her statement by uttering a "yes".

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Language					
Conversational / Prose				STRONG	<p>The narration seems to flow like it would in a novel. Sentences are constructed in a conversational, unembellished way leaning more towards prose than verse. Fluctuating between English and Afrikaans, the narrator often mixes the two languages, often to comic effect. An example can be found in the scene where <i>Dik Daniël</i> sits down with <i>Rooi Piet Pretorius</i> to talk about the arranged marriage with his son, <i>Klein Piet</i>. Narrating in English, some Afrikaans terms, quite synonymous with Afrikaner culture, are added to the sentence, “<i>Rooi Piet Pretorius</i>, who was on ‘huisbesoek’ for the was the ‘ouderling’ for that district.” In another scene, the narrator talks about romantic winter evenings when <i>Maxie</i> slipped away to <i>Raymond’s</i> house. “<i>Raymond</i> would light a fire in the huge ‘klip’-fireplace in his ‘voorhuis’. There were lion and zebra skins on the ‘geelhout’ floors”.</p> <p>The informal nature of the narrator’s approach to the audience just creates a more conversational tone, but this does not mean that the words were not chosen carefully and at times have a poetic quality. <i>Maxie</i> confronts her father’s patriotism and the fact that he and other Afrikaners want to keep themselves separate from other cultures, especially the English. “Ons kan nie onself van die res van die wêreld APART hou nie”. Her choice of the word “apart” is carefully chosen for the immediate association with the Apartheid regime which would be established in the future.</p>
Poetic language / Verse				OCCASIONAL	<p>In one of the more serious scenes, such as the description of their romantic evenings by the fireplace, the narrator speaks over the introductory music of the next musical number, <i>With my lover beside me</i>. The metre of the music seems to establish a lyrical rhythm in the spoken words, bringing about a poetic quality. After <i>Raymond</i> leaves, this poetic quality and melodic way of speaking seem to be utilised by the narrator whenever <i>Maxie</i> is close to the last letter he wrote to her.</p>

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Substantial Lyrics				STRONG	<p>The chosen songs predominantly fit into the <i>musiek-en-liriek</i> movement's domain, aiming at more substantial content in song. The songs and lyrics fit the dramatic context in which they are placed. In essence, the lyrics continue the story from where the spoken language ends to introduce the musical number.</p> <p>A number of songs are in languages other than English and Afrikaans. Still, when translated, the lyrics enhance the narrative. <i>Raymond's</i> heart-breaking letter and music box introduce the <i>French-medley</i>. The extract from the French love song <i>L'amour ist bleu</i> pronounces that love is sweet and that her heart runs after love, like water. A few sentences in English to the melody of the <i>Plaisir d'amour</i> speaks of enduring love, and the first two lines of the song in its original French is delivered thereafter, which directly translates to "the pleasure of love doesn't last but a moment, the pain of love lasts for a lifetime".</p> <p>Other musical numbers worth mentioning for their meaningful lyrics, is <i>Skielik is jy vry</i>, written by Koos du Plessis, an important figure in the <i>musiek-en-liriek</i> movement, and <i>Papa</i>, the Dutch song by Stef Bos. The lyrics in Strydom's own creation, <i>Ek loop die pad</i>, written 14 years prior to <i>State of the Heart's</i> conception, becomes incredibly relevant in this production. <i>Maxie</i> performs it at a later stage in her life when she has walked alone for very long, still wondering, "My lam, waar is jy nou?".</p>
Satirical					No significant evidence found.

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Character's vernacular				STRONG	Strydom attempt to remain as accurate as possible in her presentation of certain characters by speaking in a way that they would speak. African dialects are heard in the characters of the <i>Sipho</i> , and <i>Emilina's</i> only line is a Xhosa word, since that is her home language. <i>Dik Daniël</i> speaks in a typical Afrikaner dialect and uses words that would have been used in the 1930's. An example is the choice of the word "drag slae", which seems more archaic than the contemporary better-known term "pak slae" when he threatens to punish <i>Maxie</i> if she goes to the wedding with <i>Raymond</i> . The elderly, retired actress at the Eisteddfod can also be mentioned for her choice of words, appropriate for her profession and age: "Die eerste plek gaan aan nommer 18 vir die varsheid, oorspronklikheid, en innige meelewing in haar vertolking. Hier het ons 'n ware klein kunstenaar".
Disruptive, nonsensical language					No significant evidence found.
Music					
Music-driven				STRONG	While the amount of performance time dedicated to songs is essentially equal to that of the spoken text, the music does seem to carry more weight in this production. As is the case with concept musicals, the presence of the word "musical" in <i>State of the Heart's</i> classification implies that music is of primary importance. Each episode in the life of <i>Maxie</i> seems to end in song or contain a musical number.
Atmospheric music or sound effects				OCCASIONAL	Occasionally, the piano starts introducing the themes and chords of the musical number while the narrator continues with the final part of the story. The rhythm creates an atmosphere, which also carries over to the narration, with the narrator often slowing down her speech rhythm and adapting her speaking voice to a more lyrical one. The letter that <i>Raymond</i> sends is read out loud in <i>Raymond's</i> voice through a pre-recorded track playing through the sound system. This is one of the few sound effects in the

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Atmospheric music or sound effects (cont.)					production. During the <i>Dingaka lullaby</i> , sung acapella, Strydom fills some silences with humming sounds and a rolling “r”, supporting the rhythm of the song.
Actors voice				STRONG	<p>Being a good storyteller, Strydom understands that a change in tone of voice, as well as the rhythm of speech, is a very important technique to hold an audience’s attention. This is especially true when there is only one performer on stage. She does this very effectively by mimicking and impersonating other characters, creating a different sound and rhythm for each of these.</p> <p>The narrator changes her voice, pace and volume depending on the emotion she wants to evoke in the audience. A louder, livelier sound accompanies lighter and more exciting scenes, while a slower, softer and deeper sound suggests a more serious tone for emotionally driven scenes.</p> <p>The quasi-didactic version of Strydom, who occasionally seems to make her appearance in quick lines of socio-political commentary can be identified by her deeper, almost accusing tone of voice. This voice seems to be of a quicker pace than the narrator’s lower and slower voice, which also engages in some critique at times. Single words, such as Sharpeville, Sophiatown, Verwoerd and Apartheid are emotively charged through the narrator’s tone of voice and rhythm (reinforced by an expression of disapproval and critique on her face). The mention of the “servants’ quarters”, where the African <i>Sipho</i> had to go to get some water to drink, has the same effect.</p>
Original songs					No significant evidence found.

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Existing songs				STRONG	All of the songs chosen for this production are existing musical numbers. All of them, except Strydom's own <i>Ek loop die pad</i> , were originally written and performed by other artists. The musical numbers are, in this writer's opinion, very well chosen and placed within the narrative. The fact that the audience would be familiar with most of the songs seems to bring about a more intimate relationship between Strydom and them. They show their appreciation when they recognise certain songs through applause.
Parody of existing song					No significant evidence found.
Commentary song				STRONG	<p>Most episodes featured in this production builds towards a musical number which often provides commentary on the spoken parts preceding it.</p> <p>The <i>War-medley</i> is simultaneously entertaining in its presentation and intellectual in its underlying message to expose the absurdity of war. The spoken lines which introduce the musical number describe the young men who left the country whole, as now being broken, confused and hopeless. Then Strydom utters a menacing, unnerving laugh. In a coarse, vulgar voice, much like what was the custom in cabaret, Strydom (as <i>Maxie</i>) performs <i>I may never go home</i> with a menacing, haunting grimace. The melody is catchy and lively, but the words speak of doom and hopelessness. The rest of the medley features songs from the days of WWII. Songs performed by <i>Maxie</i> to the soldiers include <i>Another spring</i>, <i>another love</i>, <i>La vie en rose</i> and the German <i>Lili Marlene</i>. Behind every performance, the subtext of <i>Maxie</i>'s own life and longing for <i>Raymond</i> is clear. Single lines from <i>The White Cliffs of Dover</i> and <i>A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square</i>, containing the words in the title, are added at the end of the medley. Deviating from the sweet-sounding originals, Strydom delivers these lines in an ominous, sardonic voice. The song ends in a blackout, the only major lighting change during the performance.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Commentary song (cont.)					<p>The inclusion of the Xhosa lullaby is particularly appropriate for mentioning here since Strydom's predominantly white Afrikaner audience grew up during the apartheid regime, where racism was the norm. Her observation that "[Maxie] said the most beautiful thing in the world was a big white smile on a shining black face", could have struck a nerve with some audience members. This beautiful rendition of a well-known African lullaby might open the audience members' minds to appreciate the beauty through the diversity, instead of judging the diversity.</p> <p>Juxtaposed to the traditional African song, the <i>Boere-medley</i> features the <i>lekkerliedjie</i>, which is also in contrast to the more serious tone of the music overall. While this is a very entertaining scene, there seems to be a hint of criticism beneath, exposing the <i>lekkerliedjie</i>, so synonymous with old Afrikaner nationalism, as being somewhat shallow in meaning. This intellectual, social critique could extend to Afrikaners today who still cling to Nationalist conservatism. Fittingly, this conservative patriotism also causes the conflict around which the entire production is built.</p> <p>The <i>French-medley</i> which follows <i>Raymond's</i> letter seems to appear from out of the music box. In a foreign language to <i>Maxie's</i> own, two French songs about love is delivered as commentary. These songs are, however, not all positive. The second song, <i>Plaisir d'amour</i>, pronounces how the pain of love lasts a lifetime. Between the two songs, English lyrics set to the tune of <i>Plaisir d'amour</i> speak of hope and enduring love and appears to be delivered by an idealistic <i>Maxie</i>. Seemingly entering <i>Maxie's</i> world from an outside perspective looking in, the true, gloomier lyrics to the French song interrupts, exposes and comments on <i>Maxie's</i> situation and heartache.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: STATE OF THE HEART	Manifestation and significance
Plot-advancing song				OCCASIONAL	<p>While providing social commentary and comic relief, the <i>Boere-medley</i> is also inserted as a scene which is part of the narrative and unfolding of the story. The musical number does not seem to stop time in the way that a monologic character song or some commentary songs would. It takes place in real time and illustrates what happened during <i>Maxie</i> and <i>Raymond's</i> first date.</p> <p>Similarly, the <i>War-Medley</i> and <i>The Man I Love</i>, performed by <i>Maxie</i> in the capacity of a singer, happens as a real-time performance and forms part of the chronological narrative.</p>
Character songs				STRONG	<p>Character songs offer the audience a glimpse into the psyche of the character performing it. The inclusion of the English section in the <i>French-medley</i> gives an indication of <i>Maxie's</i> thoughts. Pacing the stage with the letter in her hand, <i>Maxie</i> sings to a familiar French tune, "A love like ours can never ever grow old. A love like ours will endure 'til the stars grow cold". It is clear that <i>Maxie</i> is still holding on to the hope that <i>Raymond</i> will be back, believing in the strength of their love.</p> <p><i>Maxie's</i> state of mind when she visits her father's grave is revealed in the song <i>Papa</i>. As if speaking to him, she sings that, despite all their differences, she is starting to look like him and possibly do some things in the same way as he would. He remains a part of her, and would certainly have influenced her in more than one way.</p> <p>In the confines of her room, <i>Maxie</i> sings <i>Ek loop die pad</i> when she is around the age of 50 or 60. Still clinging to the promise in the letter, <i>Maxie</i> reveals in the song that she never stopped thinking about <i>Raymond</i>, wondering where he was and hoping for his return. In an introspective conversation with herself, she sings about how she has been walking alone for a very long time. With the words "Kyk hoe lyk ek nou", the passage of time is felt, as well as the faintest sign of uncertainty, melancholy and defeat about her choice to wait for him.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Songs as monologue/soliloquies				STRONG	Both <i>Papa</i> and <i>Ek loop die pad</i> are sung by <i>Maxie</i> when she is alone. <i>Papa</i> occurs at <i>Dik Daniël's</i> grave, and the substantial lyrics reveal her inner thoughts about him. In the same way, <i>Ek loop die pad</i> is presented in the private confines of her room, with the audience being invited into this confessional space, where she shares what she is feeling.
Songs as separate scenes/dramas				OCCASIONAL	The musical numbers that function as plot-advancing songs seem to become episodes in their own right. The <i>Boere-medley</i> features the character <i>Stoffelina</i> singing folk songs with the band at her wedding as an entire scene in the narrative. <i>Maxie's</i> performances as a singer, when she performs <i>The Man I Love</i> and the <i>War-medley</i> , functions as episodes in her life. During the <i>War-medley</i> her inner conflict and difficulty dealing with <i>Raymond's</i> departure is evident and provides important subtext for the narrative to expand.
Spectacle					
Set design supports theme					No significant evidence found.
More elaborate staging					No significant evidence found.
Minimalistic & intimate				STRONG	The set design consists of four pieces of furniture. Stage right is a chair with a red cushion beside a small table with a glass of water on it. Centre stage, a structure resembling a large window is suspended from the fly bars. And on the left side of the stage, a framed painting rests on an easel. Initially covered with a purple cloth, the painting is soon revealed as a portrait of <i>Maxie</i> . Strydom delivers some lines and songs seated, and others standing. She often walks back to the portrait or refers to it, looking at <i>Maxie</i> admiringly. The table next to the chair is where Strydom always places the letter, a very important prop.
Costume change					No significant evidence found.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Single costume or minor changes				STRONG	Strydom is dressed in a black dress, black stockings and black shoes for the duration of the performance. The audience's attention can be channeled to this one image of the narrator, and her simplistic approach to costuming would not divert the attention away from the main story. It is also commendable that Strydom is able to command an audience primarily with a good story, an effective method of narration and an engaging interpretation of the musical numbers.
Significant lighting changes					No significant evidence found.
Basic lighting				STRONG	General lighting is used to illuminate the stage, with occasional fluctuation between the colours of certain lights shining from the side during the musical numbers. The <i>War-medley</i> ends in a blackout, accompanied by eerie sounds from the piano and Strydom holding her right hand over her right ear, contracting her upper body with her head down. By limiting drastic changes of lighting to this particular scene, the dark reality of war is exposed even further, promoting the murky nature of the <i>War-medley</i> and the socio-political commentary that lies beneath. The definite end to the <i>War-medley</i> also signifies the moment when it is announced that <i>Dik Daniël</i> secretly started scheming to marry <i>Maxie</i> off to another man. The blackout seems to foreshadow the impending gloom that is to come.
Extensive use of props					No significant evidence found.
Minimalistic props / mime				STRONG	Except for the handheld microphone that Strydom uses, the only prop she handles is the letter <i>Raymond</i> sends right before leaving for England at the start of World War II (1939-1945). Holding the letter, Strydom, as <i>Maxie</i> , performs the <i>French-medley</i> . The prop resurfaces on several occasions. It becomes the paper from which the retired actress reads the results for the Eisteddfod competition.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Minimalistic props / mime (cont.)					<p>The letter seems to become a symbol of hope. <i>Maxie</i> regularly revisits the letter, still clinging to <i>Raymond</i>'s words, "No matter what, I will come for you". An elderly <i>Maxie</i> has the letter in her hand when she sings <i>Ek loop die pad</i>, declaring that she still wonders where <i>Raymond</i> is. The symbolism of hope behind the letter reaches its climax when it also becomes the letter with which <i>Raymond</i> finally reaches <i>Maxie</i> again.</p> <p>The parcel that <i>Raymond</i> sends along with the letter is not physically present on stage. Strydom mimes the opening of the brown paper package, and mimes opening the music box to cue the chiming sound on the piano, leading into the <i>French-medley</i>.</p> <p>As <i>Willy</i>, <i>Maxie</i>'s brother, Strydom is seen miming the turning of the car's steering wheel and the opening of the gate on the day of <i>Maxie</i>'s arranged wedding. Similarly, the African woman mimes holding a baby.</p>
Dance / Bodily movement				OCCASIONAL	<p>Some instances of choreographed or directed movement are evident. Strydom moves towards the painting of <i>Maxie</i> covered by a purple cloth on the easel stage left and pulls the cloth down to reveal <i>Maxie</i>'s portrait. When speaking about the dances between <i>Maxie</i> and <i>Raymond</i>, Strydom demonstrates a few dance moves and twirls.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>STATE OF THE HEART</i>	Manifestation and significance
Gestus				OCCASIONAL	While the gestures observed in <i>State of the Heart</i> are not necessarily used and repeated for symbolic effect, some gestures carry an emotive connotation or represent a certain image or stereotype. When speaking about the typical dress code of the 1930's, especially that associated with the Afrikaner, Strydom cups her hand around imaginary suspenders and cups her hand as if holding a pipe. The African farm worker, <i>Sipho</i> , who delivers <i>Raymond's</i> letters to <i>Maxie</i> , is always presented while doing some chore, at one point an exaggerated gesture of wiping sweat from his forehead seems to indicate some commentary on the fact that many African workers were, and still are in some instances, simply seen as pawns for physical labour and often need to do the less pleasant chores. Another gesture that seems to carry extra meaning is seen in the <i>War-Medley</i> on the final line of the musical number. Cupping her right ear as if in pain, trying to cut off some deafening sound, Strydom paradoxically sings the words "and a nightingale sang in Berkeley Square". This seems to be indicative of the horrific sounds of bombs and screams that are associated with war.
Media & Technology					No significant evidence found.

6.4. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF EVALUATION: *STATE OF THE HEART*

From the evaluation, it is apparent that the one-person musical, *State of the Heart*, does possess narrative and structural characteristics identified in all three of the subgenres – concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show. The three subgenres do show similar behaviour with regards to many of the qualities listed in the Combined Framework, but there are also characteristics that differ. In these similarities and differences, and the extent to which these divergent qualities are present in *State of the Heart*, the discussion lies. The first two sections in the Combined Framework deals with the purpose and mode of the performance. Thereafter, this discussion will follow a summary of the sections to follow, divided into the six elements of Aristotle.

State of the Heart seeks intellectual entertainment in the same way as the other three subgenres but does not make an attempt at political commentary to such a degree that it would be regarded as *protest*, as is the case with the cabaret subgenre. Like the three informing subgenres, *State of the Heart* is also presented in presentational mode, with the performer being well aware of her role as a performer during the show.

In terms of plot, the structure of the events is fragmented and episodic and seems to resemble montage or collage. This structure is associated with concept musicals, cabarets and one-person dramatic shows due to their affiliation with Brecht's Epic theatre and the revue. *State of the Heart* also shares the unconventional time structure and absence of plot that is strongly indicated in the three subgenres. In features such as monologue, narration and dialogue, *State of the Heart*, leans more towards the one-person dramatic show and cabaret, with a strong indication for monologue and narration, and an occasional suggestion of dialogue. Overall, this one-person musical, therefore, seems to resemble cabaret and the one-person dramatic show more than concept musicals with regards to plot.

State of the Heart is also not theme-driven to the extent that concept musicals are but does strongly indicate an overarching theme, as does all of the subgenres. The types of themes in *State of the Heart* seem to correlate with concept musicals more since it indicates topical and political themes less strongly than cabaret and one-person dramatic shows. However, all three subgenres still share the strong indication for individual and social themes with *State of the Heart*. An insignificant indication for autobiographical material in *State of the Heart* tends more towards the characteristics of concept musicals

as well. It could, thus, be concluded that *State of the Heart* shares more thematic tendencies with concept musicals than with the other two subgenres.

Character is the next section to be explicated, and there seems to be little correlation here between the element's manifestation in the concept musical and in *State of the Heart*. The only significant resemblance can be found in direct address, which is a Brechtian feature also indicated in the other subgenres, and multiple characters occasionally indicated in the others. The one-person dramatic show and *State of the Heart* share a strong indication for a single performer on stage. This brings about that the Brechtian device of multi-roling comes into play strongly for Strydom as a performer, a feature also strongly indicated in cabaret and one-person dramatic shows. More resemblances lie in the fact that *State of the Heart* is performer-driven, features a narrator and a special audience-performer relationship. Little characterisation and the strong presence of persona in *State of the Heart* resembles cabaret, while a stronger tendency towards mimicry or impersonation than towards caricature, links more to the characteristics of one-person dramatic shows. Summatively, *State of the Heart* shows similar manifestations in terms of character to both the one-person dramatic show and cabaret.

The entries in the Combined Framework for Language in *State of the Heart* are identical to that of concept musicals: a strong indication for conversational language, substantial lyrics and character's vernacular, occasional poetic language, and insignificant evidence for satirical language or nonsensical and disruptive language. Cabaret is also indicated for substantial lyrics and character's vernacular but seems to feature poetic qualities more than conversational qualities, as is the case with one-person dramatic shows.

Once again, the concept musical and *State of the Heart* show an almost identical pattern with regards to how music manifests in the productions, with a few exceptions. Firstly, music is cardinal to a production that is by nomenclature classified as a "musical", such as concept musicals and a one-person musical such as *State of the Heart*. Furthermore, in both of these examples there are strong indications for character songs, commentary songs and songs as monologues/soliloquies and a smaller, but significant, indication for plot-advancing songs. Cabaret comes through strongly as well, indicating all of the above except plot-advancing songs, and adding the existing song as a feature instead of the original song. In *State of the Heart*, all of the songs are pre-existing. Due to the lack of songs in one-person dramatic shows, the only manifestations bearing a resemblance to

State of the Heart are atmospheric music or sound effects, and the significant use of the actor's voice, which both of the other subgenres indicate as well.

The one-person dramatic show does bear strong resemblances to *State of the Heart* when it comes to the element of spectacle. This can also be said of cabaret. The concept musical, however, shows the least similarities in this section. Minimalism in terms of props, costuming, décor and lighting prevails in *State of the Heart* as much as it does in cabaret and one-person dramatic shows. The utilisation of dance and movement resembles cabaret, and *gestus* is indicated in Strydom's work, but to a lesser extent than in cabaret and one-person dramatic shows. *State of the Heart* seems to show the most similarities to cabaret under the section of spectacle.

In conclusion, the narrative and structural characteristics of the three informative subgenres and, subsequently, Amanda Strydom's *State of the Heart*, seem to include similar modernist techniques, many of them linked to Brecht's Epic Theatre. From this discussion, it is evident that the one-person musical for this particular evaluation shows characteristics found in all of the subgenres discussed in the literature study of Section B, and is, therefore, an amalgamation of the three subgenres in question.

CHAPTER 7:

COMBAT BY NATANIËL

7.1. CASE STUDY 2: NATANIËL

A very outspoken, openly gay artist with a flamboyant, unique style, Nataniël's work was met with a lot of criticism at the start of his career, especially from the conservative Afrikaans community. Harrison (2005:26) lists Nataniël as an important figure in Queer Performance²⁵¹ in South Africa. He persevered and is now arguably one of the most successful artists in Afrikaans theatre. "It is beyond logic that I have been able to be this politically incorrect and unashamedly Eurocentric in presentation, content, sound and inspiration, and still managed to go unpunished," he tells De Beer (2017). Nataniël's inimitable performance style will be expounded in the evaluation to follow.

Like Amanda Strydom, Nataniël (born Nataniël le Roux in 1962) started his career in ensemble cabarets. Since 1986, Nataniël was involved as a performer and/or composer in productions by Hennie Aucamp, including *Slegs vir almal*, *Blomtyd is Bloeityd* and *Oudisie!*, and the controversial *Piekniek by Dingaen*, created with members of the alternative *Voëlvry*-movement, such as Koos Kombuis and Johannes Kerkorrel (Anon 2018g).

Nataniël managed to launch an incredible solo career²⁵² in which he has worked in the capacity of singer-songwriter, performer, composer, playwright, writer, public speaker, director and producer in the South African theatre, music, radio and television industries for more than 30 years (Anon 2018h; Van der Merwe 2010:72). He has also performed in the Royal Albert Hall in London with *Nataniël and Friends* in 2005 (Anon 2005; *COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012). Nataniël claims to have attempted acting in only two instances during his career: with his solo production *Dancing with John* (1991) and a 2014 short film, *Almon* (2014, pers. comm., 29 October). He has also written productions for other artists, including the binding script for Elzabé Zietsman's *In Glass*²⁵³

²⁵¹ Nataniël's public persona is somewhat reminiscent of English queer icon Quentin Crisp, mentioned in Chapter 4 of this investigation. His androgynous image is paired with a unique style, and his approach to life is at once flamboyantly strange, but pure and liberating.

²⁵² Nataniël's first single, *Maybe Time*, launched his solo career in 1987. A full list of Nataniël's work is available on his website (www.nataniel.co.za).

²⁵³ Not to confused with Zietsman's *Agter Glas*, which will be evaluated in the next section of this chapter.

(1995) and the script of *BOOM!* (1996) for actress Lizz Meiring. De Beer (2017) gives a summary of Nataniël's extensive résumé.

Nataniël has written, staged and appeared in more than 80 original stage productions. He has released 17 albums and five DVDs, filmed three TV series, [...] and published 17 books. Together with 28 concert tours, numerous collaborations, food shows and lifestyle talks, he has given more than 6 000 performances.

His first solo productions in the late 1980's and early 1990's²⁵⁴ were categorised as cabarets, although he now prefers not to regard his work as such (2014, pers. comm., 29 October). In e-mail correspondence with Nataniël, he revealed that he would call his shows concerts or anything but cabaret. In an answer so telling of his frankness, Nataniël writes:

Ek dink die term kabaret is absolute bog, dit bestaan nie meer nie, dit was 'n tipe protesvermaak tydens oorlogsjare, maar deesdae word enige ding wat moeilik is om te identifiseer as kabaret beskryf. Wat ek doen is konserte, verhoogproduksies, vermaak, noem dit wat jy wil, maar nie kabaret nie. Ek het wel in die beginjare self my pogings as kabaret beskryf, maar bloot omdat ek nie van beter geweet het nie. Deesdae beteken kabaret iets baie aaklig wat op 'n passasierskip aangebied word (2014, pers. comm., 29 October).

Aucamp (2008) describes Nataniël as “a fantast with commendable musical intelligence”, while Van der Merwe (2010:72) concentrates on the socio-political contents of his work, qualifying him as a fine satirist. He holds up a mirror to his audience, exposing the wrongs of society, but does so in such a humorous way that they laugh at the truth, and ultimately at themselves. Guitarist, Juan-Pierre (Floors) Oosthuizen, attributes his success to his ability to make the audience relate to him, and for that, they love his work and keep returning to his shows (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012).

Since 2000, Nataniël creates one new show per year for a run in the Theatre of Marcellus at Emperor's Palace exclusively. These are his most elaborate performances in terms of costume and set, according to Miles (2012). Nataniël attests to this, stating that these large-scale productions are very expensive to put on, and are the biggest and most lavish productions he had ever staged (2014, pers. comm., 29 October; *COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012). For Nataniël, costume plays a crucial, if not the most important, part in his productions. In 2012 Nataniël said the following, “My costumes are writing my

²⁵⁴ His first adult solo cabaret was *Weird People* (1988) followed by *One Life* (1989), *Work of art* (1990) and *Summertime* (1990) (Van der Merwe 2010:69).

autobiography. They are part of my life, and that's how I document the state of everything at that point of my life" (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012). Incidentally, his book entitled *Closet: The remarkable wardrobe of Nataniël* was released in 2017, documenting his costumes (and essentially his life) since he started performing, writes De Beer²⁵⁵ (2017). It is not surprising that *COMBAT* (2011), his 11th show at Emperor's Palace, is driven by the theme of uniform, or costume, in man's existence.

7.2. *COMBAT*

On the back of the DVD of *COMBAT* (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012), recorded live at Emperor's Palace in March 2011 and released in 2012, it reads,

Inspired by the Mark Twain phrase, "Clothes make the man", *COMBAT* both investigates and celebrates the uniform. For years people have been feared or admired for their uniforms. From emperors to soldiers, from church leaders to the police, doctors, nurses, servants, butlers, chauffeurs, firemen and sailors.

COMBAT is the last show in the C-trilogy, preceded by *CORONATION* (2009) and *CATHEDRAL*²⁵⁶ (2010). It made South African cinema history when it became the first South African live theatre performance to be shown on the big screens by Nu-Metro and Ster-Kinekor. *COMBAT* opened on 3 February 2012 at selected cinemas around the country, for a limited run of 7 days (Miles 2012).

The format for *COMBAT* follows the same structure as most of Nataniël's shows, with a musical number following each separate story told in Nataniël's distinctively monotonous voice. Standing centre stage behind a microphone on a stand, Nataniël remains stationary during the spoken scenes. He addresses the audience in his now well-established stage persona. The stories unfold as separate episodes, linked by the overall theme of uniform. Each musical number serves as commentary on the scene preceding it. These songs are elaborately staged, with four men providing backing vocals, two of them being dancers, and the four-piece band occasionally being utilised in the staging²⁵⁷.

²⁵⁵ Diane De Beer wrote the foreword for the newly published *Closet: The remarkable wardrobe of Nataniël*. She is a former editor of the Pretoria News art and a close friend of Nataniël's, according to De Beer (2017) and Berry (2017)

²⁵⁶ *CATHEDRAL* was the first ever Nataniël show to be recorded live and produced on DVD in 2010.

²⁵⁷ The all-male cast for *COMBAT* is made up out of Nicolaas Swart, Dihan Slabbert, Ignatius van Heerden and Martin van Heerden, the latter two being brothers and the dancers for some songs. The band consists of Charl du Plessis (piano), Werner Spies (bass), Juan-Pierre Oosthuizen (guitar) and Hugo Radyn (drums).

All the musical numbers are in English, while the spoken scenes can either be in English or Afrikaans (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012).

Different subthemes surface in the spoken episodes, or “epics”, as Nataniël likes to call his stories (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012), which are expanded on in the songs. Socio-political issues such as war, power-abuse and corruption are addressed in several musical numbers and episodes. The individual’s struggle as a theme is more prominent, with references made to homosexuality, transgenderism, tradition, religion, obesity, love and discontent. Ultimately, in the final scene and song, Nataniël brings a positive message of hope, encouraging audiences to have a vision and will to survive whatever troubles they are facing. As if singing from inside a pop-up book, the entire company proclaims, “Maybe it’s time for miracles, because I ain’t giving up on love” (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012).

In e-mail correspondence, Nataniël indicated that the musical numbers are what he works on first, after choosing a theme. He is first and foremost a musician, but a non-commercial musician. Unfortunately, the public buys tickets to hear his stories, and that is why he adds the comical anecdotes as binding script between songs. The essence of every story, and the subthemes it suggests, is completed in the succeeding musical number. He speaks out about not having produced a single hit song, stating that it is “sad”, but that it gives him the freedom of never having to repeat a song. The songs are part of the narrative for that specific show, and while they would probably work out of context, they will primarily be associated with that show, much like a concept musical (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012).

In a backstage documentary on his *COMBAT* DVD, Nataniël describes the final product of his work to be “almost like a musical, although I can’t stand a musical” (*COMBAT: Live at Emperors Palace* 2012). His work certainly does not resemble the traditional book musicals, but aspects of the concept musical do seem to be present. The evaluation to take place will set out to determine to which extent elements of concept musicals, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows have manifested in the narrative and structural characteristics of Nataniël’s *COMBAT*.

7.3. TABLE 3: *COMBAT* APPLIED TO THE COMBINED FRAMEWORK

Table 3: *COMBAT* applied to the Combined Framework

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Purpose of the production					
Intellectual entertainment				STRONG	Nataniël's shows are incredibly accessible for audience members of all age groups and cultural backgrounds. They are visually entertaining and spectacular, and the anecdotes are thoroughly enjoyable for their frank, comic approach and a lesson to be learned in each of his storied. Still, a lot more goes on underneath the comedy and sparkle on the surface. Nataniël's strong remarks are perceived as funny but have a strong satirical bite to them that provides commentary on political, societal and universal issues facing humanity. After having laughed at pungent remarks, at times ridiculing the cultural stigmas of the audience members themselves, the audience exits the theatre enriched and possibly mobilised to question the wrongs in society rather than just accepting them.
Protest					The researcher acknowledges that Nataniël is known for his often subversive utterances, especially in earlier productions, which could be viewed as a form of protest. <i>COMBAT</i> , however, when viewed on its own, appears to show no significant evidence for protest.
Mode					
Presentational				STRONG	Nataniël does not attempt to recreate real life on stage. On the contrary, most of the scenic elements and costumes tend to be fantastical, often pieces of art in itself. He often remarks in interviews that he wants his shows to be magical. There is also an element of fantasy and absurdities in his anecdotes, which could be said to resonate with the aesthetics of magic realism. Nataniël presents himself to the audience in a performance persona, speaking or singing into a visible microphone. He is fully aware of his capacity as a performer and occasionally announces a next musical number to the audience. The four-piece band is visible for the entire performance.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Representational					No significant evidence found.
Structural element					
Plot					
Fragmented / episodic / montage				STRONG	The narrative unfolds in an episodic structure as a series of loosely related anecdotes and commentary songs. Not a single musical number is staged in the same manner or with the same costumes, which means that each song forms a unique, individual entity. Each episode will be able to stand on its own. The same is true for the musical numbers, but they do typically tie in with the story that precedes them. The order of the episodes could essentially be changed to the same effect. Halfway through the performance, there is a section where three musical numbers follow one another, each with a different visual appeal and atmosphere, functioning as separate episodes.
Narration				STRONG	Nataniël is a master of storytelling. In his performance persona, Nataniël narrates a series of seemingly personal anecdotes to the audience. He remains in this persona for the duration of the performance, not even attempting impersonations of his characters when delivering direct quotes by them.
Unconventional time structure				STRONG	Episodes follow no chronological line of time or space. Stories include jumps in time and location. The narration seems to happen from an indefinite, out-worldly frame of time, a dimension not restricted by time or location. There is a clear separation between the spoken scenes and musical numbers – not only visually, but also in terms of metre and aural perception. The songs comment on the stories from a different dimension – a musical dimension. Nataniël's voice changes from a higher

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Unconventional time structure (cont.)					speaking tone into a majestic, semi-operatic voice. Songs are set in Ancient Japan (<i>The colour of my veins</i>), The French Era of Enlightenment with scenes reminiscent of Marie Antoinette (<i>Hotstuff Executioner</i>), in a pop-up book (<i>Time for miracles</i>), a futuristic setting for <i>Stuck</i> and even close to the sun (<i>Close to the sun</i>).
Dialogue					No significant evidence found.
Monologue				STRONG	As the only performer speaking on stage, Nataniël presents a series of narrative anecdotes in the form of monologues to the audience. The monologues are often set in his hometown, and he is often involved as an onlooker or partaker in the stories.
Absence of subplot				STRONG	While there is an array of different anecdotes, each story contains its own storyline, and each essentially plays out as a miniature drama in its own right. The limited length of the monologue and an aim to focus all elements cohesively on one idea or character leaves little space for subplots to divert the audience's attention away from the primary narrative.
Theme					
Theme-driven				STRONG	<i>COMBAT</i> is the perfect example of a show in which the theme dictates every other aspect of the performance: the plot is constructed out of episodes all linked by the theme inspired by a Mark Twain phrase, "The clothes make the man". The musical numbers feature lyrics that advance this theme, and the musical style often matches the specific atmosphere in a specific song, inspired by a specific costume or idea. In the same way, all the costumes and set designs, and other visual elements work towards supporting this theme.
Overarching Theme				STRONG	As mentioned above, the overarching theme of "uniform", and the different variations of it, is what ties all the stories and musical numbers together, creating a cohesive product.
Topical themes				OCCASIONAL	Various subthemes are present in <i>COMBAT</i> . Occasionally, mention is made to contemporary topical issues of the day, such as corruption in South Africa and the terrorist attacks that have been threatening society in the last few years. These topical themes can, however, also be placed under political themes and will be more thoroughly explored under that section.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Individual and social themes				STRONG	<p>A large part of the subthemes in Nataniël's work is devoted to issues that individuals face in daily life. These issues are worsened by tumultuous political environments, which will be dealt with in the following section, but they are largely regarded as universal individual or psychological struggles within a community. Occasionally, politically inclined situations are used as the starting point and metaphor to reveal more personal and individual problems. For example, starting one of his anecdotes, Nataniël speaks of the Islam suicide bombers who, for their religion, strap bombs to their chests and blow themselves up, claiming more lives with them. He pulls the metaphor through to everyday life by stating that we all walk with something inside of us waiting to explode, making a prisoner of us, whether it is a secret or something that we long for. As commentary, the musical number, <i>Stuck</i>, points out how we are prisoners to many things in our lives.</p> <p>Stuck in this mask I put on, stuck in the clothes I wear, stuck with the cruelest diet, stuck in a loveless love affair, [...] stuck with my credit card, stuck with my medication, stuck with a racing heart.</p> <p>Homosexuality, transgenderism, breaking out of the mould that society puts us in and finding yourself as an individual in a world of conformity, are other important subthemes that could occur more than once throughout the narrative. The opening musical number is performed in military uniform by the all-male cast, singing "Happy to see you but sad to be back. I'm glad it's over, but I really miss <i>Jack</i>". The words "I have returned, but I'm not like before", is accompanied by a suggestive forward movement of the pelvis, which suggests that the phrase has a sexual connotation, likely linked to the soldier's homosexuality.</p> <p>The first spoken scene also makes reference to homosexuality. In essence, it tells the story of <i>Nicky</i>, an accountant who lives with his mother after separating from his wife. After</p>

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Individual and social themes (cont.)					<p>seeing a raunchy homo-sexual theatrical piece at what appears to be a gay club, called the Sweating Stallion, <i>Nicky</i> notices how everyone at the club seemed happy because they could be themselves. He decides to throw away his glasses, cut off the sleeves of his suit and be who he really is. After being confronted by his mother about perhaps being “affected”, <i>Nicky</i> denies it, but later walks in front of a bus, injuring both legs. His mother blames the fact that he can’t see without his glasses.</p> <p>In Afrikaans, Nataniël tells the story of <i>Mrs Fish</i> becoming <i>Mr Fish</i>. Talking about his school’s “Kadette”, much like a marching band, a practice known for its strictness in conformity and uniformity. The audience laughs hysterically when he shows his disgust about the colour of the uniforms being khaki. During a town march, the khaki uniforms blend in with the walls of the church across from <i>Mrs Fish</i>’s house, and for a moment the entire group disappears. A shocked <i>Mrs Fish</i>, who always stood in her doorway, runs after them, calling them back. Her jewels and hair fall off in the process, and she is revealed to be <i>Mr Fish</i>. Nataniël’s mother tells him at the end of the day that something very special had happened that day. <i>Mr Fish</i> had “stirred the blood” by breaking the norm and becoming exactly what he was supposed to be: <i>Mrs Fish</i>. In Japanese robes, Nataniël and two backing vocalists, resembling his image with bald heads, sing <i>The colour of my veins</i>, about breaking free from the bonds of tradition and inheritance.</p> <p>Obesity is a subtheme in the second episode, which involves <i>Lou Heydenrych</i>, who had to be broken out of his house to get medical attention because he was too obese. As the commentary on <i>Lou</i>’s story, the song <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> is about leading an unhealthy lifestyle, but enjoying life to the fullest in the process. In that way, he could be remembered after death. On the final note, a noose falls from the fly bars.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Individual and social themes (cont.)					<p>In the final scene, Nataniël states that many people lack vision because they do not believe that they will survive their illness, their debt, hostile marriage or problems they face every day. In a very sincere, honest, intimate moment shared with the audience, Nataniël says the following:</p> <p>I do dress like this, but I cannot change the world. I cannot end the wars of the world. I cannot soften the blows of the battles of everyday life. I can hardly solve a problem. But what I can do is invite you for a few moments into one of my pop-up books.</p> <p>In a fantastical pop-up book scene, the cast presents the final musical number, <i>Time for miracles</i>, proclaiming that they are not giving up on love. This leaves the audience with a message of hope and urges them to still believe in love and the beauty of life and to envision a better life for themselves.</p>
Political themes				OCCASIONAL	<p>Nataniël does not pollute his shows with negative political commentary and <i>protest</i>, but in a subtle, satirical manner, he does speak out on some political issues, such as war, corruption and the abuse of the sense of power that comes with wearing a uniform.</p> <p>The opening number, <i>Sad to be back</i>, exposes war for the negative impact it has on soldiers who return. "Some have lost an arm, some have lost a leg," and they have trouble adapting to civilian life again due to the indoctrination and psychological scars they now need to face.</p> <p>In two more episodes, Nataniël exposes the absurdities and sorrow of war. Using the true events of the 1982 Falklands War between Argentina and Britain as backstory for his story entitled <i>Waiting</i>, Nataniël remarks on how surviving soldiers return home, but a long period</p>

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Political themes (cont.)					<p>of healing and waiting lies ahead: the family has to wait for him to become part of the family again, the soldier has to wait for the images of death and nightmares to subside. “That is the legacy of war or confrontation. For a few moments of stupidity, cruelty or power, there comes a lifetime of waiting”. Likewise, in the final anecdote, World War II military organisations are exposed for “brainwashing young boys on how glamorous war is, how wonderful it is to die when you’re well dressed, or kill somebody and get a broach”. These comments are all made in Nataniël’s nonchalant, monotonous tone of speaking as if he is just casually making conversation.</p> <p>A phrase that Nataniël repeats constantly when speaking of the details of these true events, is “the name escapes me”. He talks about a warship, a controversial war general and an elite war organisation brainwashing young soldiers, but claims to not remember their names. In effect, this provides some insight into his opinion of these famous historical names. By not showing any particular interest in finding out the real names, Nataniël indirectly shows that he finds them unimportant and not worth mentioning, because of the negative effects their legacies have had on mankind.</p> <p>South African politics briefly came under scrutiny in the final episode, with the words “we do not think we will survive the crime, the corruption, the general stupidity of our country”. Greed and the abuse of power are extensively explored in the musical number <i>Close to the sun</i>. As if speaking to some higher power, which seems to be associated more with a human authority than a divine entity (although the religious reference is strong), Nataniël confronts this authority. Firstly, for forgetting about the peasants down under now that he has reached his height, and, secondly, for being a “kind that needs to conquer, a kind that wants it all”. He warns the higher power to not get too close to the sun and burn because of the arrogance of assuming to know everything. In the bridge, a menacing, devilish voice calls</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: COMBAT	Manifestation and significance
Political themes (cont.)					out: “Look at me, I’m down here. I am harmless and a little, little bit dumb. I’m just dressed up like the god that you are trying to become”.
Autobiographical subject matter				STRONG	Nataniël speaks to the audience as himself, or rather his established stage persona, and tells many of the stories as if he was a bystander witnessing the events or taking part in them. The quality of magic realism in the stories, however, could either mean that the stories are exaggerated truths or completely fictionalised. A disclaimer at the end of the DVD recording states that characters and events were fictional. It could be argued that the characters have crossed Nataniël path at some point in his life, or that there is, like with Strydom, an element of what this writer likes to call quantum-autobiography, through which the events are not discredited as being false or lies, but simply possible realities in the performer’s life. Nataniël does seem to speak from an autobiographical standpoint in the epilogue, entitled <i>Vision</i> , when he speaks about buying a popup book for his first godchild, but keeping all of them – she is now 21. In an interview with Apartment Therapy journalist, Liezel Strauss, Nataniël reveals that he has eleven godchildren (Strauss 2009).
Biographical subject matter				OCCASIONAL	In three instances, historical events inform either the narrative and thematic approach in specific episodes or in the musical numbers. Two of these are linked to wars (Falklands war and World War II) and have been mentioned under the Political Themes section. The third worth mentioning here is the death of Marie Antoinette, the last Queen of France, who was executed in 1793 after being found guilty of high treason. Her death sentence is paralleled to that of <i>Lou Heydenrych’s</i> story for the musical number, <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> . Nataniël wears a headpiece reminiscent of the high wigs associated with Marie Antoinette and is carried to his execution by the four vocalists, on counts of living an unlawful and unhealthy life. This image ties in with the one of <i>Lou Heydenrych</i> being transported to the hospital by large vehicles because of his obesity; having, in essence, eaten himself into an early grave.

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Character					
Single performer				STRONG	There are blurred lines to this section of the evaluation, since <i>COMBAT</i> , as all of his other shows, are credited and widely accepted as a Nataniël show. The fact that he is alone in the spotlight during all of the monologues, and a lot of the musical numbers, and the fact that the material is conceived and written by him, qualifies this as being essentially a one-person show. However, Nataniël shares the stage with other artists during the musical numbers. The band is visible during all the musical numbers, and at times joins Nataniël and the four vocalists in song and movement, or moving the sets. There are a few instances, mostly when Nataniël has a major costume change, when these cast members fill the silences with song, instrumental music or dance. When all of them are on stage together, there is largely an attempt to create cohesion between them all, either in synchronised movement or identical costumes. In this way, the extra bodies on stage essentially become an extension of Nataniël himself. In <i>Colour of my veins</i> , Nataniël is dressed in Japanese robes, joined by Martin van Heerden and Nicolaas Swart, who both shaved their heads for the show in order to resemble Nataniël.
Character-driven					No significant evidence found.
Performer-driven				STRONG	These magical shows all spring from Nataniël's mind. He is the primary performer, producer and the vision behind the entire production. Every production is executed in Natanël's trademark style, and audiences buy tickets to witness and experience him on stage as the incredible performer he has proven himself to be. <i>COMBAT</i> is driven by the artistic genius and talents of Nataniël in storytelling, writing, composing, singing and conceptualising, all in a unique style that is both fantastical and accessible. The show could not have been done by anyone else. Nataniël's honest performance and the way that he exposes truths and tribulations tastefully and artfully, while still sending out a positive message of hope is what makes this production so successful.

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Characterisation					No significant evidence found.
Fictional characters				STRONG	The characters Nataniël creates in his stories are fictional, even though he seems to tell the story from an autobiographical perspective.
Non-fictional characters					No significant evidence found.
Narrator				STRONG	The narrative is driven by Natanël narrating a collection of anecdotes to the audience. According to the disclaimer at the end of the DVD, the characters are all fictional, although Nataniël does place himself in some omnipotent position of witnessing most of the stories told, or participating in them. He was one of the spectators when <i>Lou Heydenrych</i> had to be broken out of his house with construction vehicles due to his size, and Nataniël as a schoolboy was a Cadette when <i>Mrs Fish</i> became <i>Mr Fish</i> . In the story about <i>Mercia</i> , the lesbian police officer, Nataniël is one of her fellow classmates who attend their school reunion. He also witnesses <i>Nicky</i> cutting off the sleeves of his suit to the dismay of his family, and hilariously comments as an aside, "I thought he looked fantastic".
Persona				STRONG	<p>Except for two instances where he attempted acting, <i>Dancing with John</i> and <i>Almon</i>, as previously mentioned, Nataniël has always presented his theatrical productions in his stage persona. This is the public version of Nataniël that the country has come to know in theatre, music, television and magazines. This persona is bald, flamboyant, always neatly dressed, often in black, with some effeminate mannerisms. In a monotonous voice, and forthright way of commenting on the world as he sees it, Nataniël presents his spoken episodes in "quantum"-autobiographical fashion.</p> <p>For this writer, the reference to the scientific phenomenon of quantum physics is especially interesting in an artist like Nataniël. In quantum theory, it has been determined that particles behave differently when they are observed, affecting the true results of experimental findings. The stage persona or public persona seems to be a performance</p>

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Persona (cont.)					<p>reality that relates to this phenomenon. The Nataniël that the public has come to love and adore is a version of himself that he dons whenever he knows he is being observed, and in this way, protects an artist from revealing everything about themselves. This does not in any way attempt to question the truthfulness, sincerity and soul that Nataniël puts into his work and creations. On the contrary, this writer is a huge admirer of his work and believes that he is often not appreciated for his musical genius and insightfulness into the world. In 1991 already, the magazine <i>Insig</i> wrote about the bravado behind Nataniël's choice to reveal himself to audiences. "Hy lê homself bloot soos geen ander kunstenaar in hierdie land dit nog durf waag het nie" (In Nataniël 1992: Back Cover).</p> <p>In personal communication with Nataniël and by viewing backstage interviews, a more private Nataniël seems to reveal himself from time to time. In e-mail correspondence, Nataniël writes that his music is extremely dear to him. He can emerge himself in the magical world of music and his costumes. However, he knows that audiences buy tickets to listen to his stories. Audiences laugh at his anecdotes and remarks, but one can only hope that they can appreciate the insight that he shows in each comment. Nataniël reveals in the backstage documentary that he never intended for his shows to be filmed, since the audiences are then brought too close and see things they should not, including his face. He speaks a lot about wanting to feel safe on stage, whether it is the best representation of his vocal abilities, a darker lighting state, or a fantastic costume. A sincere, seemingly emotional Nataniël says,</p> <p>I always thought when I die I want to be like those great artists you've only heard of and seen on pictures, but you don't know what they did, you just know that they were there. I would like dying actually one day and leaving behind a few really flattering black and white pictures, and that's all. But now, unfortunately, I'm on this thing [a DVD recording].</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Persona (cont.)					<p>The phenomenon of persona and “different selves” are taken a step further when one witnesses Nataniël in the musical numbers. The singing Nataniël seems to belong to a different reality and time, opposite of the speaking Nataniël narrating the stories in conversation with the audience. With a majestic singing voice and magical costumes, the musical numbers seem to reveal the inner mind of Nataniël. He perfectly describes this version of himself in a backstage interview on the <i>COMBAT</i> DVD, when he states that he is “in my heart and in my mind and in my imagination and in my life a Victorian. I live in a different time”. The musical numbers each offer a parallel reality, each with its own rhythm, metre and atmosphere, appearing from an elastic timeframe or space as a commentary on or expansion of the theme, story and characters in Nataniël’s narrative.</p> <p>Nataniël does build his narratives around characters, but never attempts to impersonate, mimic or become a character. All direct quotes from all characters are still delivered in the characteristic voice of Nataniël’s stage persona. Extending the idea of multiple realities, the musical numbers to follow seem to simultaneously present other versions of Nataniël, and fantastic versions of the protagonists in their corresponding stories.</p>
Caricature & Grotesque				OCCASIONAL	Some images of characters created in the musical numbers become almost non-realistic, slightly grotesque figures. The golden, almost god-like figure in <i>Close to the sun</i> and the Marie Antoinette-inspired character in <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> comes to mind.
Mimicry / Impersonation					No significant evidence found.
Multiple characters					No significant evidence found.
Multi-roling					No significant evidence found.
Audience-performer relationship				STRONG	Audiences love Nataniël and support his work to a large extent. Even though the productions happen on such a large scale, leaving no opportunity for an intimate environment, Nataniël manages to create a sense of conversation between him and the audience. This is largely attributed to his charisma on stage and the fact that he can present

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: COMBAT	Manifestation and significance
Audience-performer relationship (cont.)					diverse stories in a very relatable way, presenting pungent commentary without startling the audience or pushing them away. He seems to prefer the big stages and auditoriums, and the distance that there still is, since it makes him feel safer, and allows him to stage the elaborate musical numbers that he conceptualises.
Direct address				STRONG	Nataniël speaks directly to the audience and presents the musical numbers to them as well. At times he announces a song before the music starts. For example, for the final song, he invites the audience into one of his pop-up books. A special, intimate moment occurs when Nataniël starts repeating his much-used phrase “the name escapes me” for the last time in the final scene. Without finishing the sentence, he just smiles at the audience, and they laugh in mutual understanding.
Language					
Conversational / Prose				STRONG	The spoken episodes could be described as a vocal delivery of short stories – Nataniël’s stories work very well in written format, and a very large collection of his stories has been published in books. The narrative unfolds like prose, with no particular attempt at embellished language. Nataniël presents the anecdotes in a conversational way to the audience in either English or Afrikaans.
Poetic language / Verse					No significant evidence found.
Substantial Lyrics				STRONG	It has already been established under the themes section of this evaluation that the lyrics to the musical numbers carry substantial meaning and provide commentary on individual, psychological, social and political matters facing humanity every day. Nataniël’s songs are all presented in English. The lyrics to every song ties in with the story preceding it, and can also be linked to the staging and costume utilised during that musical number.

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Satirical				OCCASIONAL	Nataniël is known for his satirical approach to serious topics, but he does not let negativity command his remarks. With a tongue-in-the-cheek, comical approach, and an often nonchalant frankness, Nataniël gives his opinion on many individual or socio-political problems. Audience members laugh at these issues, and often at themselves and the absurdities of mankind, but possibly, and hopefully, go home with a different outlook, re-evaluating their own lives and the problems that they are faced with.
Character's vernacular					No significant evidence found.
Disruptive, nonsensical language					No significant evidence found.
Music					
Music-driven				STRONG	For Nataniël, music is the essential part of his performances. Spectacle comes in close second. In e-mail correspondence with Nataniël, he writes that the songs are the first material he writes around the chosen theme, and he plans the staging accordingly. Then, he writes the stories about two weeks before opening night. While the stories are what attracts audiences, they serve more as binding text for Nataniël between his musical numbers. All of the socio-political commentary, individual themes and the essence of the stories are stowed within the musical numbers. The artistic genius of <i>COMBAT</i> , as with all Nataniël shows, reaches its zenith in the musical numbers.
Atmospheric music				OCCASIONAL	The band occasionally performs some musical interludes or extended introductions to allow for costume changes. In <i>Ain't no sunshine</i> , the interlude serves as a way to introduce the band as they take the lead in intervals to showcase their talents.

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Actors voice				STRONG	<p>Nataniël's monotonous speaking voice has become one of his trademarks. Seemingly discarding all the rules of elocution or drama, in which speakers are encouraged to change pitch, rhythm, volume and timbre, Nataniël uses monotony to his advantage and still manages to capture the audience. He occasionally speaks through full stops and commas, at times to the delight of the audience.</p> <p>One example can be found in his direct quote of the loquacious <i>Bennetjie Loots</i> in the story entitled <i>Kadet</i>, in which he combines an array of sentences starting with "My ma sê", without any pauses. In another instance Nataniël lists a seemingly endless amount of health-related terms that his character <i>Mercia</i> treats in the equally named story, <i>Mercia</i>: "Daar's nou nie 'n vrot asem, vleiswond, los vel, plastieklaken, oumensdoek, koorspen, urinesak, swelsel, vars ledemaat, groeisel, kiem-epidemie of plaag wat haar kan keer nie".</p> <p>His singing voice, in strong contrast with his monotonous speaking voice, is nuanced, warm, dynamic, controlled and powerful. The audible differences between these two voices might be where the magic lies.</p>
Original songs				STRONG	<p>Except for two songs, Nataniël wrote all the music and lyrics for <i>COMBAT</i>. The tracklist of his own creations is as follows:</p> <p><i>Sad to be back</i> <i>Something Alive</i> <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> <i>Colour of my veins</i> <i>Close to the Sun</i> <i>Stuck</i> <i>Time for miracles</i></p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Original songs (cont.)					All of these songs expand on the overall theme of the production in different ways, whether through lyrics or through costume and staging. They involve different musical styles, including jazz, techno-electronic, slow numbers and some have a Pop sound. The staging of these numbers in terms of costume and set design tie in with the musical atmosphere and style. <i>Something Alive</i> , and to some extent <i>Colour of my veins</i> , seems to feature lyrics which could come from a more personal, autobiographical space for Nataniël.
Existing songs				OCCASIONAL	<p>Nataniël presents the audience with two existing musical numbers, both of which he announces beforehand. The first, <i>Ain't no sunshine</i>, he dedicates to all of the people in the world who are waiting for something, whether it is a soldier waiting to heal, or a person waiting for other things, of which he gives a few examples:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We wait to win the lotto, we wait to lose the weight, we wait for family to die so we can inherit, we wait for those we fancy to fall in love with us, we wait for those who left us to return to us, we wait for the dictators of this word to die so we can live with dignity again.</p> <p>The second song he dedicates to people in the police force, like his character <i>Eloise van Bron</i>, who are protecting us every day. It is a song written by Joe Niemand, entitled <i>Into the wind</i>, proclaiming “whenever you need me call into the wind. You just need to call my name, and I’ll be right by your side”. The visual presentation of the song features the entire cast, except the guitarist, with rectangular shields, creating different structures with them, forming a little house in the end, with smoke coming out of its chimney. In the background, fighter planes hang from the fly bars.</p>
Parody of existing song					No significant evidence found.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Commentary song				STRONG	<p>The majority of the songs that Nataniël wrote or chose for <i>COMBAT</i>, either provides commentary on or expands on the scene preceding it. They all advance the overall theme, dealing with different types of uniform. The story of <i>Nicky</i>, for example, who decides to cut the sleeves off his work suit and be happy with who he really, is followed by <i>Something Alive</i>, in a jazzy musical style. The lyrics criticize the corporate world of grey, lifeless suits, stating that a suit is elegant restraint, and that there is no oxygen dressed in a tie. Taking off the military jacket he wears in the opening number to reveal a sparkling black shirt underneath, Nataniël sings about his love for sparkle and shoes with heels because it makes him look like something that is alive, as opposed to looking “dead from 9 to 5”.</p> <p><i>Colour of my veins</i> is the musical number that follows the story entitled <i>Kadet</i>. It expands on Nataniël's mother's remarks about <i>Mrs Fish</i>, who was <i>Mr Fish</i> all along, in which she utters the following words:</p> <p>Dis 'n baie spesiale dag; dit gebeur net as jy die bloed roer. Alles gaan oor bloed. Dit wat jy geërf het is in jou bloed, en dit wat jy regtig moet wees is ook in jou bloed. Om van die een te ontsnap of die ander een wakker te maak, moet jy die bloed roer. [...] Meneer Fish het wel, en hy betaal 'n baie duur prys, maar hy is wat hy moet wees.</p> <p>In Japanese robes, Nataniël sings about inheritance and tradition, but not feeling affiliated with them. An excerpt from the lyrics read as follows:</p> <p>CHORUS Why don't I feel anything at all? Why do I ignore the one who rules? I don't care about my history My inheritance, the colour of my veins</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Commentary song (cont.)					<p>BRIDGE</p> <p>It's all too graceful and familiar It's a disease that paralyses There's been no change for such a long time It's the weight I carry but cannot see</p> <p>The other musical numbers have been discussed for their commentary contents, so a brief summary will follow here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sad to be back</i> provides commentary on warfare and the psychological problems of a returning soldier. It also touches on homosexuality. • <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> comments on unlawful, unhealthy lifestyles that lead to one's own downfall, but how splendid life was and how people who live such notorious lives are remembered, making it worth their while. • <i>Ain't no sunshine</i> is dedicated to soldiers who are waiting to heal, and any person who waits for something to happen so that they can move on and live better lives. • <i>Close to the Sun</i> deals with authority, greed and abuse of power, exposing the danger of getting burnt when you are too high up and too close to the sun. • <i>Stuck</i> comments on how our personal issues hold us prisoner. • <i>Into the wind</i> pays tribute to police officers or military forces who protect the civilians of their countries or town. • <i>Time for miracles</i> is an extension of the magical pop-up book worlds that Nataniël speaks of, in which life is perfect and free of the cares of the world which have been extensively exposed during the production. It aims to provide a positive message of hope, believing in miracles and not giving up on life.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Plot-advancing song					No significant evidence found.
Character songs					No significant evidence found.
Songs as monologue/soliloquies					No significant evidence found.
Songs as separate scenes/dramas				STRONG	<p>Most of the musical numbers can function as scenes on their own, since they encompass the theme just as the spoken scenes do and essentially expand on the narrative, at times more extensively than in the stories themselves.</p> <p>There is even progression to be found in the narrative of the lyrics to some of the songs. For example, <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> sees the protagonist in the song being carried closer to his death, and after declaring that he hopes to have an executioner with a flamboyant style so that he can be remembered, he says goodbye. The song ends with a noose falling from the flybars.</p> <p>Similarly, in <i>Colour of my veins</i>, the protagonist begins to realise why he does not feel anything at all for his history and inheritance. Declaring that he is paralysed by the familiarity and unchanging, stagnant quality in tradition, the lyrics changes to “that’s why I don’t feel a thing at all, that’s why I ignore the one who rules. [...] I need to change the colour of my veins”.</p>
Spectacle					
Set design supports theme				STRONG	In <i>COMBAT</i> , the overarching theme of the uniform is the one element towards which all of the other elements are directed. The set design and the costumes are all extensions of the theme or work toward advancing the thematic thread or subthemes in the production.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Set design supports theme (cont.)					<p>In <i>Close to the Sun</i>, which deals with greed and power abuse, an enormous circular structure descends from the flybars, smoke and magnificent lighting bring a burning quality to the stage.</p> <p>The musical number <i>Into the wind</i>, directed at military and police officers, features large cardboard aeroplanes flying downwards as the flybars are lowered. Apart from that, the shields the men are holding could be regarded as props turning into set pieces, since these rectangular shields are placed next to each other in different formations to form bigger structures. For example, they build a little house at the end of the song. At some point in the musical number, shields are also placed in such a way that they form a large pulpit from which Nataniël fleetingly resembles a church minister by standing behind it in a toga-like costume.</p> <p>The set design for <i>Stuck</i>, which features the words “stuck in the mask I put on” in the first phrase of its refrain, comprises of jail bars behind which two dancers perform. In front of the large jail bars, Nataniël and the other two vocalists are placed behind microphone stands to which giant heads are attached, and they seem to be stuck behind and masked by these massive structures.</p> <p>The final scene, which presents the song <i>Time for miracles</i> in a pop-up book world, establishes a little pop-up book town from which the entire cast emerge in costumes representing the vocations of everyday people in every town – the butcher, the minister, the policeman or businessman.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
More elaborate staging				STRONG	<p>The extent of spectacle in the staging of the musical numbers for <i>COMBAT</i> has been extensively covered throughout this evaluation. It is important to acknowledge the fact that all of the scene changes happen manually by the cast or the stagehands. Including the pop-up book town, which is made out of cardboard.</p> <p>Three musical numbers for which the staging has not been deliberated on, are <i>Something Alive</i>, <i>Colour of my veins</i> and <i>Ain't no sunshine</i>. In <i>Something Alive</i>, Nataniël sings about loving a little spark. A large half-dome like structure is revealed behind from out of the dark once the lights are on it. It enhances the sparkle of Nataniël's shirt and creates more sparkle in the visual presentation in its entirety.</p> <p>In <i>Colour of my veins</i>, the visuals are inspired by ancient Japanese tradition. This is evident in the costuming of Nataniël and the two bald vocalists accompanying him on stage, becoming more versions of him. To establish some more symmetry and cohesion, the three bald performers are placed in front of red curtains covering the entire width and height of the stage and proscenium. There are three openings in which they stand. The band is still revealed in these gaps. The ending lyrics "I need to change the colour of my veins" is accompanied by Nataniël moving away from the two vocalists, who are holding the back of his costume. This reveals a thin piece of fabric extending a few metres as he walks further, symbolising his blood/veins from which he seems to walk away.</p> <p>The historical events which serve as the basis for the story leading into <i>Ain't no sunshine</i> involve soldiers on a cargo ship who were bombed during the Falklands Attacks. The maritime and aquatic image is carried through in a robe covered entirely in scale-like patterns of fabric, resembling a fish. Illuminated jellyfish-like structures hang from the flybars.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: COMBAT	Manifestation and significance
More elaborate staging (cont.)					In strong contrast to the elaborate visual staging of the musical numbers, the spoken episodes opt for a refreshing simplicity, except for the occasional colourful and elaborate costume still worn by Natanël. Standing alone in a spotlight, occasionally with just his head illuminated, Nataniël proceeds to share his anecdotes with the audience.
Minimalistic & intimate					Only the spoken scenes are done in a very isolated minimalistic fashion, but the production overall would not qualify as minimalistic and intimate since the musical numbers are visually spectacular and more than a thousand people are seated in the auditorium.
Costume change				STRONG	<p>Nataniël is seen wearing 10 different costumes, designed by Floris Louw. Some of the more elaborate and themed costumes are only utilised in the musical numbers. A costume that stands out is the very majestic golden costume and headpiece in <i>Close to the sun</i>. The gold is a visual representation of the theme of greed and power. Small mirrors attached to the headpiece reflect thin beams of light, creating the illusion that the light is emitted directly from the authoritative figure on stage. This ties in with the issue of ruling figures in society and politics believing that they themselves are some kind of god.</p> <p>The costuming in <i>Hotstuff Executioner</i> is inspired by a Marie Antoinette or Venetian festival image. Tall headpieces, skirts with lights inside of them for the vocalists, and an embellished carriage which seems to create the image of a skirt for Nataniël as well, all make for an elaborate visual fare.</p> <p>He wears the more simplistic costumes during the spoken narratives. One exception to this rule is identified in the costuming for the story entitled waiting, in which Nataniël still sports his Japanese robe, embellished with a huge and colourful necklace.</p> <p>The other performers, including the band, also have several costume changes.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Single costume or minor changes					No significant evidence found.
Significant lighting changes				STRONG	<p>Each musical number consists of significant lighting changes, depending on what Nataniël wants to see revealed to the audience at specific times. At times, a visual masterpiece is revealed from the dark. The effect of the lighting on the fantastical costumes creates some more magic. The band is always illuminated, albeit in darker, low-light conditions.</p> <p>There is a movement piece performed by the two brothers in the cast, Ignatius and Martin van Heerden. The lighting for this piece involves gobos and special lights which creates interesting shadows for a watery, flowing effect over the white, semi-naked bodies of the dancers. Another very effective, and incredibly spectacular visual creation happens in <i>Close to the Sun</i>, when hundreds of small mirrors on Nataniël's headpiece reflect the light, creating a magical crown of light beams around his head.</p> <p>Nataniël speaks out about the general darker state of the lighting, indicating that it, firstly, creates more magic on stage for him than extremely bright lighting states would, and that he, in the second place, feels safer in the darker environment of the stage.</p> <p>The spoken episodes primarily take place on a dark stage, with a beam of light illuminating Nataniël.</p>
Basic lighting					Basic, minimal lighting is observed in the spoken scenes when Nataniël is isolated in one spot of light as he tells his stories.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: COMBAT	Manifestation and significance
Extensive use of props				STRONG	<p>Only during the musical numbers, once again, extensive use of props is indicated. These props do tie in with the theme or subtheme being explored at the time. The opening number involves microphone stands with circular embellishments resembling horse-racing ribbons or military ribbons or medals. The cast carries these microphones like guns while marching into different positions.</p> <p>The shields carried by the entire cast in <i>Into the wind</i> are utilised to build different set pieces by arranging them in different orders and patterns. The vocalists are also seen with drums over their shoulders as if in a marching band in the musical number, <i>Ain't no sunshine</i>. Here the military or marine force theme is once again introduced, following the story about the Falklands war.</p>
Minimalistic props / mime					The visuals are in general all quite elaborate, including the use of props.
Dance / Bodily movement				STRONG	<p><i>Sad to be back</i>, the opening number of the production features the entire cast choreographed in unison. The choreography mostly involves strong, definite arm movements, complementing the soldier-theme. The occasional suggestive move with sexual connotation connects to the lyrics about the soldier returning but missing Jack, with whom he seems to have had a homosexual relationship or connection during the war.</p> <p>The Oriental theme in <i>Colour of my veins</i> is extended into hand signs which seems to be connected to eastern cultures or could be associated with Buddhist or spiritual practices. The rest of the choreography involves staccato arm movements of both arms, mostly symmetrical, with both arms forming the same gesture.</p> <p>Nataniel makes use of the two professional dancers in his cast. A contemporary dance piece with watery effects and flowing choreography seems to be an extension of the aquatic</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: COMBAT	Manifestation and significance
Dance / Bodily movement (cont.)					<p>images created in the musical number prior to it, which involved the jellyfish-like structures and scaled costume. This piece of choreography also serves a means of creating time for Nataniël to get dressed in his elaborate Golden Costume.</p> <p><i>Stuck</i> also sees the two brothers with striking choreography behind bars, in a futuristic scenic setup. A musical interlude with electro and techno sounds are filled with choreography by Nataniël and the two vocalists in front of the prison bars behind grotesque futuristic masks.</p>
Gestus				OCCASIONAL	<p>Although the instances are few, there are occasional indications of gestus connected to the mention of a certain character. One example is found in the story, <i>Kadet</i>. The slightly obnoxious <i>Bennetjie Loots</i>, who asks too many questions, is signified by a single gesture of the right hand, palm facing to the back and index finger in the air, almost like a student does in class.</p> <p>In the musical number <i>Colour of my veins</i>, which takes an Ancient Japanese or Eastern themed approach, the hand gestures used at times seem to mean more than just being choreography. Most of the movement in this song is subtle changes in arm and hand placement. Nataniël does sing “I sleep with no disturbance in a soft and ancient bed”, which could indicate the significance of some hand gestures as they were used in Ancient times. Images of Ancient Egypt, Buddhism and Hinduism, also connected with yoga, seem to be recreated on stage. One particular hand gesture that can be identified is the Prana Mudra, in which two fingers are held up, without separating them as you would for the “peace” sign. The Prana Mudra is said to be the “gesture of life” as it activates dormant energy and</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>COMBAT</i>	Manifestation and significance
Gestus (cont.)					<p>synchronises your energy with the energy around you²⁵⁸. The open palm also features, and could either be connected to the Abhaya Mudra, which dispels fear; or in Christianity, the open hands a priest in the church would hold up as a means of blessing the people in front of him. These are all appropriate since Nataniël does sing about religion and not feeling connected to the rituals or traditions you were taught as a child.</p> <p>In the opening number, <i>Sad to be Back</i>, the gestures often clarify the meaning behind the lyrics. One example lies in the verse line “I have returned, but I’m not like before”. Following two army salutes, Nataniël and the ensemble make different hand gestures over their crotch areas, the most prominent one is a thrusting movement with their hands on their crotches, singing “I’m not like before”. The moves and the lyrics together create the bigger picture, that the soldier is returning, but has had sexual relations or chemistry with other men, mentioning that he misses <i>Jack</i>.</p> <p>It is worth mentioning the linguistic gestus found in the repetition of the phrase “name escapes me”, as explained under the Political Themes section of this evaluation.</p>
Media & Technology				OCCASIONAL	<p>While many of the scenery that descends from the fly bars are most probably mechanically driven, Nataniël does take a lot of pride in the fact that the rest of the scenery on stage, including the big pop-up book in the end, is brought or pushed on stage by hand – either with the help of stagehands, or the rest of the ensemble.</p>

²⁵⁸ Information about different mudras was published on Everything Soulful’s blog entitled *Increase your energy flow with hand yoga (mudras)*, available online at: <<https://everything soulful.com/increase-energy-flow-hand-yoga-mudras/>>.

7.4. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF EVALUATION: *COMBAT*

From the above evaluation, it can be presumed that, like *State of the Heart*, Nataniël's *COMBAT* seems to show narrative and structural characteristics that encompass features from all of the informing subgenres. This summary and discussion are devoted to a summative interpretation of the evaluation in the table above. In some sections, the one-person musical, *COMBAT*, inclines towards the characteristics of the concept musical; for others, it shows more evidence of cabaret, and, in some instances, the features resemble those of one-person dramatic shows. There are also certain sections in which all the subgenres share the same characteristics with *COMBAT*.

For example, the purpose and mode of *COMBAT* resemble the three subgenres equally. They all strongly indicate a need for intellectual entertainment. Nataniël aims at intellectually challenging audiences whilst entertaining them. *COMBAT* does this through entertaining visuals and stories which include socio-political commentary, but not to the extent that the show turns into a means of *protest*. *COMBAT* is presented in presentational mode, with the audience always being aware and being made aware that they are watching a theatrical production.

The way in which plot manifests in *COMBAT* is mostly identical to that of cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. Strong indications are shown for a fragmented and episodic structure, unconventional time structure, narration, monologue and absence of subplot. While some of these features are also indicated in concept musicals to varying degrees, *COMBAT* does not share with concept musicals its prominent presence of dialogue, a feature also only occasionally displayed in the other two subgenres.

In terms of theme, however, *COMBAT*'s entries in the Combined Framework evaluation are almost identical to the concept musical's. Most importantly, *COMBAT* is theme-driven in the same way that concept musicals are. Topical and political themes may be present, but not strongly indicated as it would be in cabaret or some one-person dramatic shows. An occasional presence of biographical material in *COMBAT* correlates with concept musicals and cabaret since it is indicated to a larger extent in one-person dramatic shows. What *COMBAT* does share with one-person dramatic shows and cabaret is Nataniël's strong autobiographical approach. Features in *COMBAT* prominent in all three subgenres are individual and social themes and an overarching theme or concept – in this case, “the uniform”.

With Nataniel's roots in cabaret, it is not surprising that the approach to character in *COMBAT* appears quite similar to how it manifests in cabaret. There is no significant evidence of an attempt at characterisation, but rather some indication for a grotesque and non-realistic element in terms of character. There is a strong indication for a performance persona and no particular indication for a character-driven approach. Rather, like cabaret and the one-person dramatic show, *COMBAT* opts for a performer-driven performance and the presence of a narrating individual. The special audience-performer relationship is observed in *COMBAT* to the same extent as in these two subgenres, with the concept musical only occasionally indicating the presence of this relationship. No attempt at multiple characters, multi-roling or mimicry/impersonation is observed. There is a single main performer, a prerequisite for any one-person show – one-person musicals and one-person dramatic shows alike. At times, performers join Nataniël on stage for visual and aural appeal during the musical numbers, but the performance is primarily driven by Nataniël as a single performer. Direct audience address in *COMBAT* correlates with all of the subgenres.

The concept musical and cabaret seem to manifest in *COMBAT* equally where language is concerned. Firstly, *COMBAT* is presented in a more conversational tone, like concept musicals. There is no indication of disruptive or nonsensical language, and the lyrics carry substance. Substantial lyrics is also a feature in cabaret, aided by a strong indication for satirical language, which *COMBAT* does seem to indicate, only to a smaller extent.

One of the most important and deciding features of *COMBAT* is that it is music-driven, which is very strongly displayed in concept musicals, but not a prerequisite for cabaret, although cabarets mostly feature some form of music. The commentary song and song presented as separate scenes are also prominently featured in *COMBAT* as well as the concept musical and cabaret. While original songs are mostly used, as is the case in concept musicals, two songs in *COMBAT* are pre-existing, which is a feature indicated in cabaret. The three subgenres share with *COMBAT* its occasional use of atmospheric music and its effective use of the actor's voice. Although Nataniël does not adhere to the rules of elocution, his voice is effective for what he aims to achieve.

An interesting observation which is particularly applicable to the spectacle section is that the Nataniël show seems to act differently in musical numbers than it does in the spoken scenes. *COMBAT* acts like a concept musical during the musical numbers – with multiple

performers and a more elaborate approach to staging, props lighting and movement. In strong contrast, the spoken scenes present a single, isolated performer with a very simplistic, minimalistic approach to visual elements very much in line with the one-person dramatic show and cabaret. Nataniël does engage in *gestus* to a small degree, which is most prominent in cabaret and one-person dramatic shows.

COMBAT, like *State of the Heart*, presents a wide variety of evidence suggesting that its narrative and structural characteristics show influences from all three informing subgenres. Modernist and Brechtian methods observed in the subgenres are to a large extent also displayed in *COMBAT*, with some Beckettian features such as the isolated individual where memory also comes under scrutiny and seems to be approached as a malleable phenomenon. It is worth noting here that *COMBAT* resembles the revue when considering its fragmented structure and elaborate staging for musical numbers which aim to entertain audiences. However, the songs do not fit into the mould of commercial music, and the need for social commentary resembles more the three main informing subgenres. As a matter of fact, *COMBAT* as a one-person musical seems to become a midpoint where these diverse subgenres converge.

CHAPTER 8:

AGTER GLAS WITH ELZABÉ ZIETSMAN

8.1. CASE STUDY 3: ELZABÉ ZIETSMAN

On her personal website, Elzabé Zietsman markets herself as an “actress, songstress and chefstress – and a woman talented in all three” (Anon 2018b). Zietsman always wanted to be an actress and studied Drama at the University of Pretoria. Singing was soon added to her list of talents and Zietsman has enjoyed a successful career in the South African entertainment industry for 35 years now. In 2003 she opened a restaurant, Zietsies, where she could also showcase her cooking abilities. She expanded to a guest house and theatre restaurant in 2006 (Roggeband 2009:87, 90-91).

Since 1982, Zietsman has been on South African television screens and stages, as well as international stages. Her television debut was in *Die rooi komplot* (1982), directed by Regardt van den Bergh. He also directed *Meisie van Suidwes* (1984), in which Zietsman starred alongside Arnold Vosloo. She has portrayed roles in television soaps like *Egoli* (1995-1998 & 2002-2003) and, more recently, *7de Laan* (2016), Afrikaans movies such as *Dis Koue Kos, skat*²⁵⁹ (2016) and provided the voice for *Nora* in the Afrikaans version of the animated movie, *Khumba* (2013) (Anon 2018c; Anon 2018d; Roggeband 2009:87). In theatre, Zietsman has shared the stage with an incredible array of South African artists, including Amanda Strydom in *Strydom en Zietsman in alfabetiese volgorde* (2000), Coenie de Villiers in *Songs - Ziets sing Coenie* (2001) and Nataniël in *The After Dark Horror Show* (1990) (Roggeband 2009:89-90).

Zietsman reached out to Nataniël in 1995 to write *In Glass* for her. It was themed around one of the most famous figures of Weimar cabaret, Marlene Dietrich²⁶⁰. In the production, parallels are drawn between Dietrich and a South African woman at war with life due to her obsession with eternal youth (Anon 2018b; Anon 2010; Anon 2006). Performances of *In Glass* in Namibia landed Zietsman roles in three German revivals of popular musicals, all of which are mostly regarded concept musicals. In 1996 Zietsman was the leading lady in Lloyd-Webber’s *Evita* at the Summer Festival in Ettlingen, Germany - all in German.

²⁵⁹ Zietsman performed *Dis Koue Kos, Skat* as a one-person show for many years before it was turned into a movie (PasellaTV 2017).

²⁶⁰ Marlene Dietrich is known for her role as the leading lady, *Lola Lola*, in the film *The Blue Angel*.

She returned in 1997 and 2000, in the roles of *Velma* in *Chicago* and the *Emcee* in *Cabaret* respectively (Roggeband 2009:89).

South African singer and entertainer, André Schwartz, promotes Zietsman as possibly being South Africa's only true cabaret artist (Roggeband 2009:91). Zietsman prides herself on her cabaret work of the 1980's and 1990's, and still occasionally opts for a strong cabaret tone in her work. She does, however, admit that the demand for cabaret has decreased and that the form has changed a lot from where it started as a form of *protest* with strong socio-political aspirations (2015, pers. comm., 19 January; *Agter Glas* 2008).

Before attempting her first solo-cabaret, she was part of ensemble cabarets and revues, including *Ekskuus vir die Wals* (1984-85), *Van Berlyn tot Bapsfontein* (1989), and three shows with Casper de Vries as the decade of the 1990's dawned: *Sleutelgat revue* (1989), *The drivel and the song* (1989) and *Ziets en De Vries* (1990). (Van der Merwe 2010:68; Anon 2018b). Zietsman claims to have gained most of her knowledge about cabaret from De Vries (Anon 2018b).

Two of Zietsman's earliest solo-cabarets were *Two Faces of Elzabé Zietsman* (1988) and *Cabaret Schmabaret* (1990), a parody on the preconceived ideas of cabaret by society (Anon 2001a; PasellaTV 2017; *Agter Glas* 2008). In effect, Zietsman juxtaposed the two types of cabarets, Cabaret and Kabarett that emerged in Berlin before World War II.

People tended to think that cabaret consisted of a woman in nipple caps and g-string singing Broadway hits. In the first half of the show we gave the audience just that but the second half was real cabaret with political and social commentary (Anon 2018a).

Some other productions in Zietsman's career are worth mentioning here. *Twee van die bestes* (1995) features songs from Hennie Aucamp, the father of Afrikaans cabaret, and David Kramer, who wrote powerful Afrikaans music, often with a *protest* quality. In 2002 she toured with *Kaalgestroop*, searching for and discussing the truth of "self". Next, Zietsman performed in *Small Change* (2004), where history, science and art are discussed for the fundamental role they play in our lives (Van der Merwe 2010:68).

Although Zietsman does not write her own cabarets, she is always part of the writing process from the start. She is often praised for making the material her own, even when they were not her own words, as is the case with Emma Bekker in an interview on the

DVD of *Agter Glas* (*Agter Glas* 2008) and various artists in correspondence with Roggeband (2009:88-91). Her performances typically use intellectual humour, satire and commentary song as a means of educating an audience on socio-political issues (Van der Merwe 2010:68; *Agter Glas* 2008; 2015, pers. comm., 19 January). She reveals to Pasella that she always strives to be honest and present honest work (PasellaTV 2017). At times, this honesty is taken even further when Elzabé's personal life becomes the very substance around which the narrative is built. *Agter Glas* combines all of the above.

8.2. AGTER GLAS

Agter Glas is a noteworthy production on many different levels. Firstly, in 2008, after 26 years in the South African theatre industry and numerous nominations, Zietsman won her first award with *Agter Glas*, namely the *Kanna Award* for the Best Musical Theatre Production at the *Klein Karoo National Arts Festival* where it premiered (*Agter Glas* 2008). It was also the first production of Zietsman to be filmed live and made available on DVD (LitNet 2014). The show enjoyed more runs years later, with a number of performances in 2014.

Zietsman explains in an interview on the DVD of *Agter Glas* that the idea behind the title originally came from her seeing the world through the lenses of her spectacles, as well as the little glass apartment she has on her property where she spends a lot of her time. The idea was expanded to living behind glass, and how seemingly ordinary things or people are exhibited behind glass – in museums, in glass cabinets at home, in framed photographs behind glass (*Agter Glas* 2008; Anon 2008). Ordinary people come under the scrutiny of Zietsman's magnifying glass, and their social or psychological backstories ultimately reveal them as somewhat less ordinary (Anon 2014b; Anon 2008; Anon 2014a).

The title essentially becomes the overarching theme framing the seemingly disparate scenes and subthemes. Each of the characters evoked in the episodes has a story to tell, all of which subsequently provide strong socio-political messages, strengthened by the commentary songs that follow each episode. These characters' struggles and issues all accumulate into the final episode in which Zietsman herself is laid bare in front of the audience when she speaks about her own problem with alcoholism with which she lived for 20 years. Here the reference to "glass" gets an even deeper meaning, when Zietsman admits to living both "behind glass" and "in glass" (Anon 2014; *Agter Glas* 2008).

Zietsman has always felt the need for socio-political commentary in her work and cherishes this production for being close to the cabaret shows she became known for in the 1980's. In an article for Fine Music Radio (Anon 2014b), Roggeband classifies *Agter Glas* as musical theatre. There is less political commentary in *Agter Glas* than a true cabaret would, but social commentary is abundant in binding script and episodes between musical numbers, and the lyrics to the songs (*Agter Glas* 2008). The writer, Emma Bekker, produced a well-reasoned libretto with subtext, which turns the apparent mediocrity of the stories into intellectual, daring, and often political pieces. At times, the scenes border on the absurd, and other times it can also be naughty (Anon 2014b).

Subthemes that come into play in *Agter Glas* include sexual abuse, domestic abuse, obesity and obsession, alcoholism, loneliness and heartbreak, and occasional cabaret themes such as eroticism and politics. For Zietsman, any form of commentary or a social message should be presented in a language that the audience can relate to and understand (*Agter Glas* 2008). She presents the stories and songs mostly in Afrikaans, with an occasional English musical number. With the message behind the production carrying a lot of weight, Zietsman opts for a simplistic stage setup to focus the audience's attention on the issues at hand.

For this evaluation, the DVD of the live recording of *Agter Glas*, which was made in Johannesburg on 27 August 2008, as well as the script, will be applied to the Combined Framework. Zietsman generously provided the DVD as well as the script for evaluation. The outcome of this third and final evaluation, together with the previous evaluations, might reveal possible tendencies in the narrative and structural characteristics of South African one-person musicals.

8.3. TABLE 3: *AGTER GLAS* APPLIED TO THE COMBINED FRAMEWORK

Table 4: *Agter Glas* applied to the Combined Framework

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Purpose of the production					
Intellectual entertainment				STRONG	Zietsman strives for some form of socio-political commentary in almost every scene or song of <i>Agter Glas</i> . Audiences certainly have times when they can laugh at some of the stories and Zietsman is very entertaining to watch, but the performance and the material are quite serious at its core. Zietsman does not present the average love song or escapist, mawkish story; there is substance behind every episode and musical number. Average lives are put on display, but they soon reveal deeper truths about humanity that can shock audiences or change their perspectives on certain issues and how they view others. The audience, however, needs to be able to read between the lines, understand the subtext behind what is being said, grasp subtle references and extricate satirical nuances. Additionally, most of the music and lyrics are newly written texts. The audience needs to be engaged in the scenes and attentive to every word that is being uttered in order to get the most out of their theatre experience.
Protest					Although Zietsman's work shows the strongest attempt at political commentary of the three case studies, it still does not go over to <i>protest</i> .
Mode					
Presentational				STRONG	Zietsman walks onstage with the pianist, Janine Neethling, and announces to the audience that the two of them are two completely average and normal ("doodgewone") girls, behind average and normal glasses. Neethling then takes her place behind the piano, where she is visible for the duration of the performance, at times included in the scenic composition – in

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Presentational (cont.)					a presentational fashion, the source of the music is not hidden, and the audience is aware of her presence throughout. Zietsman goes on to talk about herself as a performer, stating to the audience that she always wanted to act and perform. This metatheatrical, self-referential aspect of <i>Agter Glas</i> reoccurs several times during the performance. Zietsman and Neethling are aware of their roles as performers, and they do not aim to authentically represent reality on stage. Zietsman carries a handheld microphone into which she speaks and sings, and the décor is very minimalistic. The show is presented as a performance, and the audience is acknowledged throughout.
Representational					No significant evidence found.
Structural element					
Plot					
Fragmented / episodic / montage				STRONG	<i>Agter Glas</i> essentially takes on a scene-song-scene-song structure. There are a few exceptions in which two spoken scenes follow each other directly, or one musical number leads into the other. These consecutive scenes connect into each other thematically. In essence, the spoken scenes serve as binding script between the musical numbers, all of which carry a significant message. In the introductory monologue, Zietsman explains that artists meet many interesting characters on their travels. These people entrust their stories to them, and the artists store them somewhere in the back of their minds, displayed in a figurative glass cupboard with drawers waiting to be opened for the world to hear. Each story and song in <i>Agter Glas</i> seems to arise from Zietsman's display cabinet, and is presented as a montage or collage of disparate stories or episodes, linked by the theme of being "behind glass". Typically, a musical number follows a spoken scene where it either comments on it or develops the idea further. Characters established in the scene are often the protagonist in the song to follow, at times becoming the speaker in the musical number.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Narration				STRONG	Zietsman presents the spoken episodes by narrating them to the audience and establishes the characters and their stories in the third person. The musical numbers to follow are often presented as the character. Some of the musical numbers also take the form of narration. The first monologue is told from Zietsman's own perspective with an autobiographical tone. Similarly, Zietsman herself becomes the subject under scrutiny for the final three musical numbers and final two spoken scenes in the narrative.
Unconventional time structure				STRONG	The spoken scenes introduce the lives of different characters in no fixed time frame. They are told from an omnipresent position of Zietsman, and the musical numbers tend to comment on the binding script from a different dimension of time, within the confines of a different musical metre and rhythm. Jumps in time and place are identified between the different stories since none of the characters' lives are directly connected and their stories might happen years, months, days or hours apart and all over South Africa.
Dialogue				OCCASIONAL	In the episode entitled <i>James: Die Bloemis</i> , Zietsman momentarily mimics an older lady bending down to address little <i>Kosie</i> , merely suggesting that he is there, briefly establishing a type of dialogue on stage.
Monologue				STRONG	The majority of spoken scenes, as well as some musical numbers, take the form of monologues. They are presented by a single speaker, Zietsman, mostly with her stage persona driving the narrative. At times, Zietsman takes on a character for an entire scene or song, presenting the narrative to the audience as a monologue by that character.
Absence of subplot				STRONG	The scenes between songs are very short and essentially binding script. Hence, these scenes need to be short and to the point – driven more on the theme or social commentary that Zietsman aims for than a strong storyline or plot. Subplots are not an option, and the audience is presented with thematic rather than plot-driven narratives.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Theme					
Theme-driven				STRONG	<p>All of the elements in <i>Agter Glas</i> work towards the achievement of a cohesive, holistic product, determined by the theme, or motif, of “glass”. In promotional material for a performance in 2014, <i>Agter Glas</i> was advertised as follows:</p> <p>[Agter Glas] is soos glas – verleidelik, helder en skerp. [...] Die hoofbestanddele is korrels sand in die vorm van sosio-politieke kommentaar wat in ‘n skitterende glas kristaliseer met Elzabé se unieke byblywende stem en Janine se meesterlike komposisies en verwerkings (Fine Music Radio 2014).</p> <p>The mention of Zietsman’s voice is very significant here. Especially in this performance, Zietsman does not use a soothing voice which is easy to listen to in the musical numbers; her voice is sharp and cuts through the ears into the soul as glass would. Combined with sharp, cutting-edge commentary and subtext, even the material resembles the sharp edges of glass on a figurative, abstract level. Additionally, a metaphorical magnifying glass or pair of critical spectacles is used to expose the wrongs in society in the lives of seemingly ordinary people. These stories are presented as if Zietsman could be a tour guide through a museum, guiding the audience to significant scenes exhibited behind the glass display cabinets.</p> <p>On a more concrete level, the stage décor and costume seem to visually complement the theme, as well as the fact that both Zietsman and the pianist, Janine Neethling, are wearing glasses during the performance. These visual aspects are further explored under the Spectacle section of this evaluation.</p> <p>Mention of glass-like characteristics – such as shining objects, reflection or broken shards – in the musical numbers is significant. The title of the first musical number is <i>Die Museum van Doodgewoon</i>, and it opens with the lyrics:</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Theme-driven (cont.)					<p>In die Museum van Doodgewoon Bewaar ons dit wat is en was Want gewoon word ongewoon As jy dit uitstal agter glas</p> <p>It continues to state all the different types of rooms in a museum with all its objects displayed behind glass, the effect optimised by the correct lighting. The episode <i>James: Die Bloemis</i> describes <i>James'</i> flower shop as “een van daai ou winkels met die groot glasvensters”.</p> <p>In <i>Die Ballade van Anna Marais</i>, the protagonist meets aliens in spaceships, and her alien-lover gives her a ring that shines like the stars. She then, too, exhibits her house and life for the temporary recognition of being more than normal. <i>I had a dream last night</i> sings of the moon, which reflects the sun and ultimately lost its light when the sun died out. <i>Porseleinkat</i> involves a wide range of references to glass – the porcelain cat is described as being exhibited in the protagonist’s house behind glass in a glass cabinet. After an argument between the protagonist’s parents, the porcelain cat lies broken on the floor – in shards. The porcelain cat essentially becomes a metaphor for the marriage and when it ends up broken and thrown out as rubbish, the end of the marriage is signified.</p> <p>The references to glass, together with the visual and aural aspects supplementing the theme, completes its full circle when the narrative ultimately builds to Zietsman’s personal confession about her struggle with alcohol – living not only behind glass but also “in glass”.</p> <p>In the episode titled <i>Boererate en resepte</i>, Zietsman shares a home remedy she learned from an elderly woman that apparently works for everything – a marijuana joint soaked in a bottle of whisky for a month from which you drink one glass a day religiously, without exceeding</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Theme-driven (cont.)					<p>the recommended dose. She goes on to admit that for too long she drank only the whisky for pain relief – an overdose. Her rendition of David Kramer’s <i>Botteltjie Blou</i> about alcohol in a bottle chills to the bone. The image of glass, or a drink in a glass, is strong in the spoken monologue as well as the musical number.</p> <p>Zietsman opens up in her final speech about the moment she decided to stop drinking:</p> <p>Ek het vir 20 jaar agter glas en in glas geleef – ‘n glas wyn, ‘n glas whiskey, ‘n glas whatever. Maar 5 jaar gelede het ek myself deur iemand anders se bril gesien, en ek het nie gehou van wat ek sien nie, toe het ek opgehou drink. [... D]is actually soos om ‘n tweede kans te kry, ‘n nuwe lewe te begin. Fok die glas, dis soos kristal... skerp, tingelend, genesend.</p> <p>In the closing song, she reveals that she is happy in her house of steel and glass.</p>
Overarching Theme				STRONG	It has been determined in the column above that the overarching theme of “glass” or “behind glass” directs all aspects of the performance and material.
Topical themes				STRONG	The themes that Zietsman addresses in the performance are topical since they were contemporary issues that audiences heard of in the news and dealt with in their daily lives at the time of the performance in 2008. There is even mention of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. But most of the themes are still relevant today. Topical themes will be discussed in more details over the next few columns.
Individual and social themes				STRONG	<p>A wide variety of individual and social issues are touched on in <i>Agter Glas</i>. In truth, every section of scene and song seems to deal with a different aspect of social commentary.</p> <p>The first two musical numbers deal with less serious personal topics – <i>Die Ballade van Anna Marais</i> is driven by love and a need for fame, while <i>Jakobregop</i> is quite a naughty number in which flowers become metaphors for male genitalia. Upon deeper inspection, it seems as</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Individual and social themes (cont.)					<p>though this number might signify an inter-racial relationship or attraction between <i>Smaragda du Toit</i>, who grows orchids, and perhaps the man who works in her garden, who could easily go by the name of Jakob. Her husband is often away on trips, and her children are out of the house, so <i>Smaragda</i>'s eye might be wandering.</p> <p>Maar niemand sou verwag, dat die blom waarna sy smag beter aard in die tuin as agter glas. <i>Smaragda</i> se smagting, haar diepste, teer verwagting, is vir haar bestel, helaas, geheel en al onvanpas.</p> <p>The word "bestel" can be translated to an establishment, often political and associated with a governing body. Apartheid has been described as a "politieke bestel", and interracial relationships were not tolerated during those times. <i>Smaragda</i>'s peers and her community would possibly still frown upon the idea, which makes her longing inappropriate.</p> <p>The first lyrics of the song then reads:</p> <p>Jakobregop Ek wil jou in my voortuin hê Met jou helder blommekop Vrolik jy dowwe kolle op</p> <p>The first song in which serious social commentary is present is <i>Vlieg 'n voëltjie</i>, in which sexual harassment of a little boy by his own grandfather is implied. Zietsman had indicated in an interview on the DVD that there were two instances when male audience members passed out in their chairs during her performance when she sang that song. She does not want to believe that it is just a coincidence (Agter Glas 2008). The song is preceded by the episode entitled <i>James: Die Bloemis</i>, in which Zietsman seems to imply that <i>James</i>' grandfather molested what is presumed to be his relative, little <i>Kosie</i>, who helped water</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Individual and social themes (cont.)					<p>the roses that his grandfather grew. When <i>Kosie</i> is asked if he also can let anything grow like his grandfather, he reluctantly says he hopes not. The possibility that <i>James</i> suffered the same fate is suggested in the sentence, “soveel as wat hy van lelies hou, so haat hy rose”. Roses are directly connected to his grandfather, which explains why he hates them so much.</p> <p>Obesity comes under scrutiny with the episode and song about <i>Dirk</i>. <i>Dirk: Vetvrou-fiksasie</i> and the subsequent song <i>Dirkie</i> involves <i>Dirk</i> and his female partner, <i>Marina</i>, who never seems to be big enough for <i>Dirk</i>. She already has trouble moving, but he keeps feeding her.</p> <p>In <i>Porseleinkat, Frikkie</i>, the scene about <i>Joe en Hantie Smit</i> and the song, <i>What love is not</i>, that succeeds it, domestic problems are dealt with, such as unhappy marriages, poverty and domestic violence. Violence in relationships and possibly rape is brought to the forefront in the section about <i>Marie van der Merwe</i>, who has trust issues as a result of some violent encounter with a man.</p> <p>The last couple of scenes and songs address alcoholism, with which <i>Zietsman</i> herself struggled for 20 years, and how <i>Zietsman</i> was able to break free from the addiction.</p>
Political themes				OCCASIONAL	<p>The middle section of the performance engages in some political commentary, mostly in subtle references or subtext. One song blatantly comments on the economic situation in South Africa, as well as on Jacob Zuma who was about to become president of the country, making references to load shedding, potholes and financial struggles. The song is introduced with the words, “‘n ou draadtrekkertjie wens mos hy kan ploeg...” Using the melody of ABBA’s <i>Money, money, money</i>, <i>Zietsman</i> sings:</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Political themes (cont.)					<p>Moolah, moolah, moolah Always coolah In bra Zuma's world Moolah, moolah, moolah Who's the roolah In bra Zuma's world All the things we could do If we had a little moolah – in this madman's world</p> <p>Crime is addressed in the scene following <i>Moolah, moolah, moolah</i>. <i>Gert Burger: Handsakmaker</i> tells the disturbing, but humoristic, story of Gert and Justice, who make handbags of human skins that they get from the Leeupan jail. Both of them have been victims of crime – Gert's son was robbed and killed, and Justice's vehicle had been stolen. They guarantee that their handbags will not be stolen, or even returned once the thief realises that human material is used. The increasing crime rate in South Africa is subtly indicated: "Die skoonheid van hulle onderneming, sê Gert, is dat hulle nie gou uit velle uit gaan hardloop nie. En as iemand hom vra waste vel dit is, sê hy sonder om te blik of te bloos: Vark". The use of the word Pig is multifunctional: Gert can either be a good liar, or he implies that he views criminals as pigs, inferring a subtle tone of vengeance in what he is doing.</p> <p>More crime, murder, and to some extent racism, directs the heartfelt anecdote about Minah Radebe, whose son, Kagiso, was killed by "'n woedende wit geweer" (an angry white gun) on his way to a spaza shop. Some reference seems to be made to the 1976 Soweto Uprisings. Zietsman's words, "[m]aar sy vriende het sy lyk teruggedra, soos 'n held", reminds of the iconic photo of Hector Pieterse, whose wounded body is being carried by another young man.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Autobiographical subject matter				OCCASIONAL	<p>Even though the words to the songs and monologues were written for Zietsman by Emma Bekker, the narrative involves quite a few instances where Zietsman herself is the subject under discussion. In the opening monologue, Zietsman speaks about herself and pianist Janine, who have travelled a lot and have gathered many stories from a lot of people that they met along the way. The narrative builds towards her personal story about beating alcoholism. The final musical number, <i>Agter Glas</i>, was newly created especially for Zietsman, containing her own feelings and wishes.</p> <p>Hulle vra my waar is my gunsteling plek Hulle vra my waar wil ek die graagste wees Ek antwoord saam met my hond op my “deck” Terwyl ek rustig ‘n boek sit en lees [...] Hulle vra my om my lewe op te som Hulle vra my hoe kry ek alles ingepas Ek sê ek doen wat my hand vind om te doen Ek is gelukkig in my huis van staal en glas</p> <p>Zietsman really does have a structure/room on her property that consists almost entirely of glass.</p>
Biographical subject matter				OCCASIONAL	<p>As previously mentioned, there seems to be a subtle reference to Hector Pieterse and the Soweto Uprisings, and Jacob Zuma is referred to directly in the song <i>Moolah, moolah, moolah</i> for the actual political situation in South Africa.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Character					
Single performer				STRONG	Elzabé Zietsman is the main performer during <i>Agter Glas</i> , leading the narration and delivering the lead vocals in all the musical numbers. Zietsman is, however, joined on stage by her pianist, Janine Neethling, who is visible for the duration of the performance. The opening monologue introduces Neethling to the audience using her first name, Janine, and the fact that she also wears glasses is significantly utilised in the opening episode. Neethling at times harmonises in the songs, and the scene entitled <i>Minah Radebe</i> is delivered by Zietsman while sitting on the piano stool next to Neethling.
Character-driven					No significant evidence found.
Performer-driven				STRONG	The narrative is driven by Zietsman, whose unique performance style and voice gives the extra edge to the production that ensures its success. Zietsman oversaw the creation of the material and appointed the different parties involved, such as the writer, composer, director and producer. Audiences buy tickets to see Zietsman, and the most significant part towards which the narrative progresses is the personal struggle with alcoholism that Zietsman herself faced. Her honesty in using her own personal experiences, and her sharp, cutting voice gives authenticity and individuality to <i>Agter Glas</i> which would unlikely be reached by an artist other than Zietsman performing the same material.
Characterisation				OCCASIONAL	The spoken monologues/binding script is presented by Zietsman as narrator. She does, however, deliver a large number of songs in the character of the protagonist introduced in the narrative preceding it. These characterisations are not always three dimensional or fully developed, but there is a change in voice and/or physical presentation, and the characterisation is carried out until the end of the musical number, essentially turning the song into a monologue by a character.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Characterisation (cont.)					<p>An example is found in <i>Dirkie</i> when Zietsman takes the character of <i>Marina</i>, the obese woman that <i>Dirk</i>, who is obsessed with large women, keeps feeding in order for her to grow even bigger. The change is especially noticeable physically – Zietsman waddles to the piano and hangs on it as if she is an obese woman just sitting/lying on a bed. She also becomes a very sensual/provocative <i>Smaragda du Toit</i>, who craves her Jakob Regop flower in ways that would seem a bit inappropriate for others.</p> <p>Clearer characterisations are found in <i>Vlieg 'n voëltjie</i> and <i>Porseleinkat</i> in which Zietsman becomes a little child. One we can assume is <i>Kosie</i>, who was molested by his grandfather. The other, not given a name, witnesses the deterioration of his/her parents' marriage until an argument between them results in the mother breaking a porcelain cat that the father once gave her as a gift.</p> <p>Similarly, Zietsman immerses herself in the character who sings David Kramer's <i>Frikkie</i>. Her name is not revealed. Zietsman crouches, lights a cigarette, and proceeds to deliver the monologue over music on the piano. Zietsman adds inflections in her voice, an Afrikaans accent and sits with her legs crossed like a lady. In <i>Botteltjie Blou</i>, Zietsman becomes a drunk woman, speaking in a Western Cape, possibly mixed race, Afrikaans dialect.</p>
Fictional characters				STRONG	<p>All of the characters in <i>Agter Glas</i> were created by Emma Bekker for the purpose of the production. The characters evoked, even though they are not always embodied on stage, are in order of appearance:</p> <p><i>Anna Marais</i> – she meets an alien, he gives her a ring and promises to return and marry her. She becomes instantly, but temporarily, famous through sharing her story with the <i>Huisgenoot</i> magazine.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Fictional characters (cont.)					<p><i>Smaragda du Toit</i> – grows orchids at home while her husband is away, but longs for a certain “Jakobregop”-flower in a sexual way.</p> <p><i>James, Klein Kosie</i> and his aunt – <i>James</i> seems to be related to little <i>Kosie</i> since they share a grandfather. It is implied that <i>Kosie</i>, too beautiful to be a boy, and possibly <i>James</i>, was molested by the grandfather.</p> <p><i>Dirk</i> and <i>Marina</i> – <i>Dirk</i> has an obsession with obese women and feeds <i>Marina</i> so that she can become just as big as the women in the pictures he collects.</p> <p><i>Miem Jonker</i> – she wants to sell small tractors made of wire, called “draadtrekkers” in Afrikaans, at the 2010 Soccer World Cup.</p> <p><i>Gert Burger</i> and <i>Justice Moeketsi</i> – they make handbags from human skins they get from a jail. <i>Gert Burger</i> seems to be out for revenge after his son was killed by robbers. <i>Justice</i> is also fed up with crime after his vehicle was stolen. Now they use the skins of criminals who die inside the jail to make handbags that will not be stolen.</p> <p><i>Minah Radebe</i> – simply walking to the spaza shop to buy bread and washing powder, her son was killed by a gunshot from a white man.</p> <p>Child singing <i>Porseleinkat</i> – anonymous character, but fully embodied in the song. The child sings about the fights between his/her parents and their crumbling, unhappy marriage.</p> <p>Woman in <i>Frikkie</i> – sings about how she wanted to be a rock ‘n roll star, but now she is a cashier and hardly ever sings after she got married.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Fictional characters (cont.)					<p><i>Joe en Hantie Smit</i> – Joe is a tough and strong guy from Benoni, who hits his wife, but she stays with him.</p> <p><i>Marie van der Merwe</i> – something, possibly rape or abuse, in Marie's past is causing her to not trust men and to get a fright when a man holds her.</p> <p><i>Lettie Harmse</i>, her husband <i>Peet</i>, the <i>Dominee</i> and <i>Klara Harmse</i> – Lettie shared the home remedy of whisky in which you soak a marijuana joint with Zietsman. Her husband, <i>Peet</i>, once took too much and it made for a very entertaining communion at church.</p> <p>Drunk woman – most probably in the character of a mixed race Afrikaans speaking person from the Cape, singing <i>Botteltjie Blou</i>.</p>
Non-fictional characters					No significant evidence found.
Narrator				STRONG	The spoken scenes that serve as binding script between musical numbers are all delivered to the audience by Zietsman as a narrator. <i>Frikkie</i> is mostly spoken text over music, but is here classified as a musical number, and is narrated by Zietsman as an anonymous female character.
Persona				STRONG	As honest as the material gets and Zietsman's confessions about her personal life are, she still takes on a stage persona for the duration of the performance. The words that she utters are pre-written and rehearsed, and definite performance choices are made in terms of voice usage and movement on stage. Zietsman reveals in the very first monologue that she always wanted to be a performer, which does imply that she takes on some form of persona, a performer version of herself. The performance persona is especially visible in the presentation of the spoken text for <i>Smaragda du Toit: Orgideë-koningin</i> , which is written as a poem. More exaggerated, almost elocutionary techniques are opted for.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Persona (cont.)					Subtle truths about the more personal and private version of Zietsman seems to be revealed in the final song, entitled <i>Agter Glas</i> . She sings that she would rather sit and read a book, and that she loves silence around her. This is different from the outgoing, uninhibited performance persona that she takes on when performing, and often also when being interviewed. The statement that Zietsman is presenting a version of herself that is slightly different from her real personality, is substantiated by her lyrics “ek het vrede met wie ek regtig is”.
Caricature & Grotesque					No significant evidence found.
Mimicry / Impersonation				OCCASIONAL	Zietsman briefly changes her voice and posture into that of an older lady in the episode <i>James: Die Bloemis</i> . This takes the form of mimicry more than it does characterisation, also due to the short duration of the embodiment.
Multiple characters				STRONG	<i>Agter Glas</i> features many characters, most of which are only implied through narration. There are a few, however, who are embodied to different degrees of characterisation by Zietsman. The full list of characters has been discussed under the section “Fictional characters”.
Multi-roling				STRONG	As the only performer, Zietsman is obliged to take on all of the characters that need to be created, and every capacity that needs to be fulfilled during the performance.
Audience-performer relationship				STRONG	By speaking to the audience directly, and initially presenting herself in no particular character, Zietsman establishes a relationship with her audience early on. The audience enjoys her more comical scenes and songs, but are equally moved by the emotional episodes. By the end of the production, Zietsman talks about her own addiction to alcohol. Her honesty and uninhibited performance certainly create a special bond between her and the audience.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Direct address				STRONG	Even when in character, Zietsman speaks and sings directly to the audience, defying the fourth wall convention.
Language					
Conversational / Prose				STRONG	<p>The binding script or spoken episodes are predominantly presented in a conversational tone by Zietsman to the audience. The words are, however, very carefully chosen to provide subtle socio-political commentary which might not be understood by everyone immediately. Once it is understood, however, the degree of substance in <i>Agter Glas</i> becomes much stronger and goes deeper than simply a collection of stories.</p> <p>Most of the stories and songs are presented in Afrikaans, but some musical numbers are delivered in English. Zietsman's use of language is generally a bit cruder than that of Strydom and Nataniël, with the occasional swear word uttered as an interjection.</p>
Poetic language / Verse				OCCASIONAL	<p>The scene titled <i>Smaragda du Toit: Orgideë-koningin</i> is presented entirely in verse, with rhyming couplets, and occasionally enclosed rhyme, except for the first sentence. Alliteration and assonance can also be identified. What follows is the entire poem/scene written in verse to better expose the rhyme. In the script, it is written in prose form.</p> <p><i>Smaragda du Toit</i> is die orgideë-koningin van Pretoria. Met haar man gereeld op reis en haar drie kinders uit die huis, kan sy haar tyd vryelik bestee aan die kweek van orgidieë. Haar blommekinders slaap op mos en hulle kry net die beste kos,</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Poetic language / Verse (cont.)					<p>nes kinders van hulle stand betaam. Met haar konservatorium as kasteel, kan jy soggens <i>Smaragda</i> sien streele oor die koppe van haar eksotiese klein bestaan. Maar niemand sou verwag dat die blom waarna <i>Smaragda</i> waaragtig smag beter aard in die tuin as agter glas. <i>Smaragda</i> se smagting, haar diepste, teer verwagting, is vir haar bestel, helaas, geheel en al onvanpas.</p> <p>The musical number <i>Frikkie</i> has a conversational tone, but the music underneath creates a rhythm or metre of sorts that gives it a lyrical and poetic quality.</p>
Substantial Lyrics				STRONG	<p>Every song in <i>Agter Glas</i> comprises of lyrics that either tell a progressive story on its own or comment on the scene that establishes the character and theme right before the musical number. The naughty musical number <i>Jakobregop</i> provides ambiguous lyrics with a sexual connotation, which is mostly perceived in a comical fashion. Even with a less serious tone, it does still provide commentary, most probably on interracial relationships.</p> <p>The first musical number is especially worth mentioning, since it's lyrics sum up the theme of the production, and in actuality foreshadows all the lighting cues and moods that will be created throughout the performance.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Substantial Lyrics (cont.)					<p>Die Museum het baie kamers Met baie stories en gesigte Gewone lewens word verdraai Onder helder ligte Die portaal van plesier Is pienk en baie prettig Dis parmantig en plesierig En dalk ampertjies onwettig! [...] Nou kom ons stap 'n bietjie Deur die vertrek van versugting Die begeerte en verlange Word versterk deur blou beligting [...] Vir die enclave van eensaamheid Het ons opsetlik wit gekies Dis so lieflik en so skoon En wit beklemtoon so goed die verlies.</p> <p>Under the lighting section of this evaluation, the manifestation of these lyrics will be explained.</p> <p>Another musical number that is worthy of discussion is <i>Vlieg 'n voëltjie</i>, which provides a glimpse into the sexual abuse that the little children experienced:</p> <p>Dit is net ons Geheimnis het my oupa gesê En hy gee my peppermintjies As hy by my kom lê</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Substantial Lyrics (cont.)					<p><i>Landmynhoender</i> reveals Zietsman's state of mind while she was absorbed by her alcohol addiction, with clear mention of exhaustion and emotional burnout as a trigger.</p> <p>Jy kan een klein hoendertjie net so ver rek Jy kan net soveel monde met haar voed Maar mense soek al meer van haar Sy gee maar later haar bene en haar bloed Sy rek die water met die dop Sy gee haar vlerke en haar kop En sy sink na die bodem van die kastrol</p> <p>Her triumph over her addiction is voiced in the chorus of the final musical number <i>Agter Glas</i> when she proclaims:</p> <p>Want my elikser kry jy nie in 'n bottel nie Die geluk wat ek soek, kom sonder glas Dis 'n fontein wat ontspring in die hart se diepste grot Dis so groot, jy kan 'n lewe daarin pas.</p> <p>More of the substantial lyrics and messages behind musical numbers will be investigated under the Music section of the framework.</p>
Satirical				OCCASIONAL	<p>Many instances of satirical language can be found in the spoken text and the lyrics. Words that seem to be comical and is laughed at actually contains strong commentary.</p> <p>In <i>James: Die Bloemis</i>, <i>James</i> is said to laugh about the days of sexual abuse now, most probably as a coping mechanism. He jokingly says "he's a florist by day and a de-florist by night". The final sentence, however, reveals the stigma that is left, with the fact that <i>James</i> hates roses – the flower he associated with his grandfather.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Satirical (cont.)					Miem Jonker's humoristic phrase, "'n ou draadtrekkertjie dink mos hy kan ploeg" (a wire-tractor thinks he can plough) garners in laughs from the audience for its ambiguity – the word "draadtrekker" means wire-tractor, but is linked to masturbation in Afrikaans. However, there is a strong reference to Jacob Zuma's inadequacy as president.
Character's vernacular				STRONG	Two instances stand out where the character that Zietsman creates involves a way of speaking and choice of words that fit with that character. Apart from changing her voice to that of a child for <i>Porseleinkat</i> , the child's vernacular involves the use of the words "mamma" and "pappa" and strange or childlike sentence construction such as "en die kat was glad en die kat was wit", "en die kat was stukkend en die kat was gebreek" (the two words essentially means the same thing) or "Pa en Ma het erg baklei en lelike goed gesê". The protagonist in <i>Frikkie</i> speaks in an Afrikaner English accent, and uses interjections such as "Ag man" and "Ag fok", and stereotypical words like "boerebop", "ou toppies" and "bazaar" that someone coming from a poorer Afrikaner community would likely use (the character seems to come from a community like Parrow, whose people are often classified as "common Afrikaners").
Disruptive, nonsensical language					No significant evidence found.
Music					
Music-driven				STRONG	The largest part of the social commentary and essence in scenes are carried out through the musical numbers since the lyrics are already substantial. The spoken scenes in between are therefore mostly binding script, providing the exposition to the song that follows.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Atmospheric music				OCCASIONAL	Neethling at times starts playing some music underneath the last lines of a spoken section to lead Zietsman and the audience into the musical number. <i>Frikkie</i> is mostly spoken but qualifies as a musical number. It features piano music as underscore for the duration of the monologue, and the protagonist ultimately does sing the last four lines.
Actors voice				STRONG	<p>Zietsman's voice is not only varied in volume, pitch, pace and timbre as any trained actor strives towards, but the sound of her voice ties in with the overarching theme of the entire production. At times piercing, her voice reminds of the sharp edges of glass – it cuts through the ears, and the sharp commentary reaches deep for audiences.</p> <p>Zietsman occasionally changes her voice when characterisation takes place. One instance of a voice change stands out for consideration:</p> <p><i>Porseleinkat</i> is mostly sung in a child's voice from the perspective of a child looking on as his/her parents fight. The final four lines of the song, however, is sung in a very deep adult voice. This could signify time passing and that the child had grown up, or it could be Elzabé's own voice commenting the words:</p> <p>Nog 'n porseleinkat op die ashoop En mamma het vergeet om te lag Pappa se huis is op 'n ander plek En mamma het ophou wag</p>
Original songs				STRONG	All the songs, except 4 feature newly written lyrics by Emma Bekker and music by Janine Neethling. The melodies and rhythms fit well together with the mood and lyrics of the song. <i>Jakobregop</i> , for example, has playful music as the foundation for its naughty lyrics.

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance										
Existing songs				OCCASIONAL	<p>Four songs have been previously written by other artists:</p> <p><i>Moolah, moolah, moolah</i> is a parody of ABBA's <i>Money, money, money</i>, which will be discussed in the next column.</p> <p>I had a dream last night is indicated on the script as being taken from <i>Soweto Story</i>.</p> <p>Two songs from David Kramer, often sung by Zietsman to the great delight of audiences and previously recorded on her albums as well, is <i>Frikkie</i> and <i>Botteltjie Blou</i>.</p> <p>Occasionally, in some of the new songs, familiar melodies can be heard for small periods of time. A prime example is found in <i>Porseleinkat</i>, where many Afrikaans speaking audience will recognise the melodies of <i>Die kat kom weer</i> and <i>Die Lappop</i>.</p>										
Parody of existing song				OCCASIONAL	<p>Entirely new lyrics were written to the popular tune of <i>Money, money, money</i> by ABBA. It was retitled to <i>Moolah, moolah, moolah</i> and exposes the poor economic situation in South Africa. Some of the phrases are kept very close to the originals. The order of the verses is at times also changed. Below, all changes are highlighted in bold letters.</p> <table><tr><td>Money, money, money</td><td>Moolah, moolah, moolah</td></tr><tr><td>I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay</td><td>I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay</td></tr><tr><td>Ain't it sad</td><td>Ain't it sad</td></tr><tr><td>And still, there never seems to be a single penny left for me</td><td>And still, there never seems to be any electricity</td></tr><tr><td>That's too bad</td><td>That's so bad</td></tr></table>	Money, money, money	Moolah, moolah, moolah	I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay	I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay	Ain't it sad	Ain't it sad	And still, there never seems to be a single penny left for me	And still, there never seems to be any electricity	That's too bad	That's so bad
Money, money, money	Moolah, moolah, moolah														
I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay	I work all night, I work all day, to pay the bills I have to pay														
Ain't it sad	Ain't it sad														
And still, there never seems to be a single penny left for me	And still, there never seems to be any electricity														
That's too bad	That's so bad														

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Parody of existing song (cont.)					<p>*In my dreams I have a plan If I got me a wealthy man I wouldn't have to work at all, I'd fool around and have a ball... [*compare Zietsman verse 3]</p> <p>Money, money, money Must be funny In the rich man's world Money, money, money Always sunny In the rich man's world Aha-ahaa All the things I could do If I had a little money It's a rich man's world</p> <p>A man like that is hard to find but I can't get him off my mind Ain't it sad And if he happens to be free I bet he wouldn't fancy me That's too bad *So I must leave, I'll have to go To Las Vegas or Monaco And win a fortune in a game</p> <p>*In my dreams I have to go Maybe to London, or Toronto Where there's [sic] no potholes in the road And no-one needs to shed a load. [*compare ABBA verse 2]</p> <p>Moolah, moolah, moolah Always coolah In bra Zuma's world Moolah, moolah, moolah Who's the roolah In bra Zuma's world Aha-ahaa All the things we could do If we had a little moolah in this madman's world</p> <p>And relocation just won't work Our rand just isn't worth a "fourk" [sic] Ain't it sad And all the friends I'll leave behind Is [sic] worth more than my peace of mind They make me glad But there are places I can go I think it's called a casino Or I could win the lotto game</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance	
Parody of existing song (cont.)					<p>My life will never be the same. [*compare Zietsman verse 1]</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>[*verse 1 for comparison]</p> <p><i>*In my dreams I have a plan If I got me a wealthy man I wouldn't have to work at all, I'd fool around and have a ball...</i></p> <p>(AZLyrics.com)</p>	<p>My life might end up just the same</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>[*compare ABBA verse 1]</p> <p>*I think I'll make another plan And find myself a wealthy man That's a plan I'll go and surf the internet and see what catches I can get That's so sad But should I fail, I have a plan Of how to get me a powerful man I'll wear a skirt above the knee And beg JZ [Jacob Zuma] to marry me...</p>
Commentary song				STRONG	<p>While most of the songs are placed after scenes for commentary purposes, they often fulfil other roles as well, such as plot-advancing or character songs, which will be discussed shortly. Musical numbers that seem to fit the description of "commentary song" best are <i>Vlieg 'n voëltjie, I had a dream, Marie</i> and <i>Landmynhoender</i>.</p> <p><i>Vlieg 'n voëltjie</i> is an emotively charged song about a child being molested by his grandfather. The melody is simple and fitting to a children's song. A twist in the lyrics of a seemingly similar verse at once touches and disturbs:</p>	

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance	
Commentary song (cont.)					<p>First verse:</p> <p>Vlieg 'n voëltjie van ver af en kom sit op my voet Hy't 'n briefie in sy bekkie van my oupa wat groet</p> <p>In <i>I had a dream</i> follows the spoken monologue about Minah Radebe whose son was killed by the gun of a white man. The melody is slow, and the almost melancholic metre takes the audience on an emotional journey. The lyrics conjure memories from the riots and struggles that black people faced during apartheid before a democratic South Africa was established. Unfortunately, the murders continue – from all sides of the racial spectrum.</p> <p>The sky tonight looks set to fall Bloodred and bullet-grey Perhaps the sun won't rise at all Perhaps he's turned away I recall when we were young And stupidly naïve Times were also violent then But we fought so we'd be free Now freedom means we're free to stare down the barrel of a gun Or free to go and use one, rob a mother of a son It's no wonder that the angels turn their backs and look away This isn't what we fought for; we didn't die to die again</p>	<p>Third verse:</p> <p>Vlieg 'n voëltjie van ver af en kom sit op my voet Hy't 'n briefie in sy bekkie met my oupa se bloed</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Commentary song (cont.)					<p>Domestic abuse is the driving force behind <i>What love is not</i>. It shows a woman who comes out stronger on the other side since the abuser has walked out the door. She thanks him for teaching her what love is not, since she would not have learnt it on her own. It does, however, come in strong contrast with the spoken scene preceding it, in which <i>Joe's</i> partner, <i>Hantie</i>, stays with him despite the "permanent blue eyeshadow", not standing up to him. The song then possibly presents a version of <i>Hantie</i> that does build up the courage to get away from the abuse, answering a question of "What if she does not just accept what is happening to her?" Women in the audience who could possibly relate to <i>Hantie's</i> situation are, thus, presented with the two sides of the spectrum.</p> <p>The song <i>Marie</i> is sung from an outside perspective, not from the protagonist's viewpoint, but it does reveal <i>Marie van der Merwe's</i> emotional struggle. She does not trust men anymore, most probably due to a bad sexual experience or even rape.</p> <p>Marie sê sy's jammer, het jy maar net geweet Daar's 'n man in die maan wat haar nagte opvreet Sy aptyt is angswekkend en sy lyf ruik na sweet [...] Marie sê sy's jammer, sy sukkel met vertrou En sy skrik as 'n man haar styf teen hom hou Sy wens sy kan ophou om mure te bou [...] Maar eendag, sê sy, sal sy sterk wees Sy sal haar loswoel uit sy greep En haar naels sal net soos kloue word En haar woorde soos 'n sweep</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Commentary song (cont.)					<p>Once again, the melody supports the emotive quality of the lyrics. In the final verse, quoted above, the music builds to a climax, illustrating the strength of will that <i>Marie</i> strives to achieve in order to overcome this emotional obstacle in her life.</p> <p>The last musical number scrutinised as a commentary song is <i>Landmynhoender</i>, which is presented just after Zietsman first mentions her alcoholism. She compares herself to a chicken that is being boiled to feed masses of people, and how this can drive you over the edge, causing you to burn out and seek elixir in things like alcohol to soothe the pain. The result is being even less grounded and empty.</p> <p>Ek het my les te goed geleer Ek het my kragte swak bestee Ek het gevoel wat met 'n mens gebeur As jy jouself vir 'n hoender uitgee Doller as kop-af, kop-af dollie Maar landmyn-hoender maak niemand vol nie [...] Ek voel hoe dryf my oë tussen wortels en uie Daar's gans the veel sous en te min kruie My pote soek skroppende na vaste grond En my boude dryf los op die oppervlak rond</p>
Plot-advancing song				OCCASIONAL	<p>Plot-advancing songs are rather difficult to identify when the different scenes and songs are quite divergent. A song may show progression in the development of lyrics, almost forming a plot or story of its own, but it does not necessarily influence the development of plot and narrative where the entirety of the performance is concerned.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: AGTER GLAS	Manifestation and significance
Plot-advancing song (cont.)					The first musical number, <i>Die Museum van Doodgewoon</i> , would most probably fit this category. A more accurate description would be “plot-introducing song”, since the musical number essentially serves as prologue, introducing to the audience a summary of everything that they are about to witness. Almost like a tour guide, the song takes the audience through the museum and allocates certain emotions and colours to certain rooms. They have, for example, the portal of pleasure (portaal van plesier), the room of consternation (kamer van konsternasie) and the room of longing (vertrek van versugting) under which the stories will be categorised. Hobbies are also mentioned, and foreshadows multiple scenes in which people’s hobbies will be revealed, including growing plants, making handbags or selling wire-tractors – not without the necessary emotive connotations that go with them.
Character songs				STRONG	<p>In some musical numbers, especially those that seem to be delivered in the guise of a character, reveal the inner feelings or circumstance of these characters.</p> <p>Zietsman sings <i>Dirkie</i> in the character of <i>Marina</i>, the very obese woman who needs to grow even bigger to reach the ideal weight that <i>Dirk</i>, who has a fetish for obese women, finds most attractive. In the song, she reveals that she had always been slightly overweight, but when she entered into a relationship with <i>Dirk</i>, he fed her so much that she is now basically immobile. Still, she needs to grow more in <i>Dirk</i>’s opinion, so he feeds her chocolates and cakes. She is not happy with her weight, but he loves it. She reveals that she thinks he is a bit sick in the head and hopelessly exclaims “<i>Dirkie, Dirkie, wat het jy gedoen?</i>”</p> <p><i>Porseleinkat</i> has been explored in many different sections throughout this evaluation. It can also be categorised as a character song since Zietsman sings in character and reveals the domestic situation of the child in a very innocent and naïve way. The child only sings what he/she sees. The melody complements this childlike sound in Zietsman’s voice. There is progression in the story. At first, the porcelain cat, a gift from the child’s father to his/her</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
					<p>mother, is exhibited behind glass. The marriage deteriorates before the child's eyes, building up to a fight in which the mother destroys the porcelain cat by throwing it to the floor. The child movingly sings, over slower music:</p> <p>Die kat was stukkend en die kat was gebreek Pa het dit vir Ma gegee En die ander dag more het ma maar self Die stukke weer bymekaar gegee</p> <p>The line "ander dag môre" is associated with the well-known Afrikaans song <i>Die kat kom weer</i>, of which parts of the melody is used during the chorus of <i>Porseleinkat</i>.</p> <p><i>Botteltjie Blou</i> is a song written by David Kramer, which divulges what goes on in the life and mind of an alcoholic.</p> <p>Jou oë is geel en jou vel is vuil Vanaand steek die honger weer soos doringdraad En ek sê nog 'n paar sente vir die leë bottels Maak toe jou oë maak oop jou gorrel Die duiwel het lankal die engeltjies opmgepraat Ek se jy sny die brood ek is in die nood En ek lê hier stukkend in die sloot Dis die blou dis die blou dis die blou wat aan jou derms so kou</p> <p>The musical number, <i>Agter Glas</i>, is special in the sense that it reveals the inner feelings of the actual performer, Zietsman. While she still delivers it in her stage persona, some truths about the more private Zietsman are also revealed in the lyrics.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Songs as monologue/soliloquies				STRONG	<p>Most of the musical numbers are delivered as monologues to the audience since there is only one person on stage performing. Those that are presented in character are the best examples of monologic songs.</p> <p><i>Frikkie</i> is essentially spoken monologue over music but is treated as a musical number in the show. This song and <i>Agter glas</i>, involve a lot of spoken sections, which turns the musical numbers into musical monologues and spoken monologues. <i>Agter Glas</i> involves autobiographical material from Zietsman's personal life, revealing truths about herself to the audience.</p>
Songs as separate scenes/dramas				STRONG	<p>The musical numbers in <i>Agter Glas</i> often sport an entire storyline within the song, with most of them showing progression in the narrative to some extent. Most of these songs have been dealt with previously. Honourable mentions to be made include <i>Porseleinkat</i>, <i>Botteltjie Blou</i>, <i>Agter Glas</i>, <i>Die Museum van Doodgewoon</i>, <i>Frikkie</i> and <i>I had a dream last night</i>.</p> <p>One particular musical number that has not been discussed lengthily is <i>Die Ballade van Anna Marais</i>. The character, Anna, essentially narrates an entire story to the audience. In a slow ballad, she starts telling her story. Tired of her routine life, Anna Marais wished for some miracle to happen and bring some excitement to her life. She then encounters aliens, and one of them hands her a ring. This part of the story is accompanied by more upbeat music, with what could be described as a circus sound. A waltz can be heard when she meets this alien lover face to face.</p> <p>As she waits for him to return to marry her, she phones the magazines and becomes famous for her story. She is quickly forgotten, however, and is now back to waiting for the day he returns and her life can be exciting again.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Spectacle					
Set design supports theme				STRONG	The stage is mostly bare with black floors. There is an A-frame silver ladder stage right, and a black polished piano stage left. In front of the piano stands a silver table and on top of that, a tin vase with flowers. The entire scene seems almost translucent, like glass, with the black floors and piano reflecting what is being shown on stage. Hence, the stage setup certainly supports the overarching theme.
More elaborate staging					No significant evidence found.
Minimalistic & intimate				STRONG	The décor is minimalistic but supportive of the theme. Its simplicity and visuals add to the honesty and transparency of the script. The décor never overshadows the substance.
Costume change					No significant evidence found.
Single costume or minor changes				STRONG	<p>Zietsman and Neethling, the pianist, wear outfits made from the same material and more or less the same cut. They both wear their glasses. They never change costume. Zietsman briefly takes off her silver shoes for <i>Die Ballade van Anna Marais</i> to climb to the top of the ladder.</p> <p>The colour of the costumes is a light grey, with buttons that resemble glass. Zietsman's costume forms sharp edges around the bottom of the trousers and on the collar, with the shoes also pointed sharply, resembling the sharp edges of broken glass. Her shaven head seems to shine and reflect in the stage light, and she wears shiny dangling black earrings. These details to costume help create a cohesive visual image on stage, all in service of the theme.</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Significant lighting changes				STRONG	<p>Except for carefully placed definite blocks and circles of light on stage, there is another interesting factor with regards to the lighting of <i>Agter Glas</i>. If the audience listens closely to the lyrics in the opening musical number, the different emotions that are to be explored in the performance are all indicated with the help of a certain colour of light. The lyrics read:</p> <p>Die truuk lê in beligting En die hoek wat jy gebruik En met die regte lig en hoek Kan jy alle oë fnuik</p> <p>As previously mentioned under the Substantial Lyrics section in this evaluation, the colours of the stage lighting for specific scenes and their emotions are foreshadowed in the lyrics of this song. A list of the colours and what they aim to represent follows:</p> <p>Pink – the portal of pleasure; it is pleasant, cheeky, fun and maybe a little illegal. Blue – the room of longing; it shows desire and possibly melancholy and emptiness. White – the enclave of loneliness; it accentuates loss, but is also said to be pure and lovely.</p> <p>In most cases, these colours seem to be visible on the silver ladder whenever that certain emotion is evoked through the musical number.</p> <p><i>Die Ballade van Anna Marais</i> involves different phases of white lighting. White is used to represent her loneliness, and need of love. The first verse is sung on top of the ladder, with only a bright spot of white light on the top half of Zietsman's body. This isolation of her body highlights the loneliness and social isolation she is feeling. As she sings about the circular UFO descending to earth on her lawn, a round spot of bright white light is seen on the stage floor, with Zietsman (as <i>Anna</i>) staring up as if to look at the flying saucer while climbing</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Significant lighting changes (cont.)					<p>down the ladder. After her alien lover leaves, and she is alone once again, waiting for him, the intensity of the white lighting is dropped together with the music.</p> <p>A pink hue is noticeable on the ladder when Zietsman starts singing the naughty <i>Jakobregop</i>. This confirms the mood of the scene, which is cheeky, sexual and could seem like a taboo for sensitive viewers. The same colour can be seen in <i>Moolah, moolah, moolah</i>, a rather naughty parody of an ABBA song, in which Jacob Zuma is not sung about with a lot of respect, which could make the political reference slightly illegal.</p> <p>The emotively charged song, <i>Vlieg 'n voëltjie</i>, is washed in blue lighting, also visible as it reflects off the steps of the ladder. The ladder is left in the dark for <i>I had a dream last night</i>, but a clear blue circle of light illuminates Zietsman as she sits next to Neethling singing this melancholy song about a woman longing for her son to come back. More serious emotions in <i>What love is not</i> and <i>Marie</i> are augmented by blue lighting.</p> <p>The ladder is left dark for <i>Dirkie</i>. Only a large pool of white light is projected towards stage left, where Zietsman (as <i>Marina</i>), Neethling and the piano are situated at that stage. The purity and innocence of the little child singing <i>Porseleinkat</i> seem to be visually enhanced by the white lighting. It also ties in with the fact that the porcelain cat is white. As the lyrics become more serious, a slight blue hue can be observed on the ladder. Loneliness is once again illuminated in <i>Frikkie</i> by a predominantly white lighting state.</p> <p>The final three musical numbers all involve Zietsman herself as the subject. Her own loneliness is accentuated in a white lighting state for <i>Landmynhoender</i>. A slight red or pink hue is visible at the back of the ladder, which could signify an oven or heat used to boil the</p>

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: <i>AGTER GLAS</i>	Manifestation and significance
Significant lighting changes (cont.)					<p>chicken (figuratively referring to herself and a psychological burnout). In <i>Botteltjie Blou</i>, dramatic blue lighting comes from the back of the stage from what seems to be a strip of smaller blue lights on the floor upstage. This is the only time that these lights are used. Together with well defined blue blocks of light with sharp edges created from top lights, they visually create lines all around Zietsman from behind, enclosing her in a rectangle of blue light. This almost visually places her inside of a blue bottle or some form of glass box.</p> <p>The final musical number sees Zietsman in a basic round white spot of light, with the ladder slightly visible as a silver structure glowing behind her. This could signify a purity of life that she has now found.</p>
Basic lighting				OCCASIONAL	During the stories, lighting is mostly kept to a basic setting, a neutral colour and a level that illuminates the most important aspects, which is primarily Zietsman presenting the spoken narrative.
Extensive use of props					No significant evidence found.
Minimalistic props / mime				STRONG	Props consist of the microphone Zietsman is holding, and a cigarette she smokes in the musical number <i>Frikkie</i> . Zietsman opts for minimalism so as to not distract from the message she wishes to convey through the stories and songs.
Dance / Bodily movement					Zietsman does not dance in the production. There are, however, definite movement choices made. For <i>Die Ballade van Anna Marais</i> , Zietsman climbs to the top of the ladder and dramatically climbs down when she experiences the UFO landing in her backyard. A very effective position at the end of the song is that of Anna lying arms crossed against the ladder, waiting for her lover to come back. This reminds of the image of Snow White in the glass coffin, which fits perfectly into the overarching theme of <i>Agter Glas</i> .

	Concept Musical	Cabaret	One-person Dramatic Show	Evaluation: AGTER GLAS	Manifestation and significance
Dance / Bodily movement (cont.)					Another good example of character movement is found in <i>Jakobregop</i> , which essentially involves some suggestive movements. Zietsman very effectively extends her body on the first “reg-OP”. <i>Dirkie</i> showcases Zietsman as a waddling obese woman who “lies down” by hanging on the piano. At some stage in the lyrics, she sings about “exploding”, and Zietsman strikingly lifts her pelvis and torso slowly to mimic swelling, as the musical notes also slowly climb in scales.
Gestus					While it may not have been intentional, Zietsman seems to make the black power salute with her fist in the air – palm facing to the audience – during <i>Jakobregop</i> with the words “selfs al word die akker droog, hou jy steeds jou kop omhoog”. When it is considered that an interracial relationship might be implied to the dismay of <i>Smaragda</i> ’s peers, and judging by the amount of political commentary Zietsman is willing to engage in, it may have been an intentional gesture with a slightly political connotation. This notion is strengthened when considering Aucamp’s (2013:228) statement that, in his opinion, nothing that Zietsman does on stage is a coincidence.
Media & Technology					No significant evidence found.

8.3. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF EVALUATION: *AGTER GLAS*

The last case study and evaluation displays similar evidence to the two preceding it. Like *State of the Heart* and *COMBAT*, Zietsman's *Agter Glas* appears to be a point of convergence for the three subgenres, featuring narrative and structural characteristics from the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show. Zietsman promotes *Agter Glas* as cabaret, and although this production certainly seems to resemble cabaret more than the other two case studies, this writer is not convinced that *Agter Glas* is pure cabaret. This writer rather suggests that it is a unification of all the subgenres that informs the Combined Framework against which the case studies are evaluated. An interpretation of the evaluation done on *Agter Glas* will now follow.

Like the previous case studies, *Agter Glas* showcases a need for intellectual entertainment which does not go over into a protest action. It is worthy of note that Zietsman material for *Agter Glas* is significantly more politically inclined. It does, however, not overshadow the more abundant social commentary on different aspects of life. Once again, the mode chosen for *Agter Glas* is a presentational one.

The plot is structured much like Amanda Strydom's *State of the Heart*, with a fragmented and episodic structure, an absence of subplot and an unconventional approach to time. These characteristics are indicated in all the subgenres. While dialogue is occasionally indicated, *Agter Glas* relies much more on narration and monologue to convey the story, which are features associated with cabaret and one-person dramatic shows more than with concept musicals.

While *Agter Glas* is theme-driven, which indicates a strong tendency towards concept musicals, the actual themes have a tendency to look like those found in cabaret. At times blatantly political, the themes in *Agter Glas* are serious and topical issues that people deal with in society. There is, however, more emphasis on individual and social issues, an inclination found in all of the subgenres. Similarly, the presence of an overarching theme is displayed in the one-person musical in question as well as in the informing subgenres. There is an occasional indication for autobiographical subject matter, which bears a resemblance to cabaret and one-person dramatic shows, and the occasional interest in biographical material, which is indicated in varying degrees in all of the subgenres. Summatively, with regards to theme, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show are resembled very strongly by *Agter Glas*.

It is the one-person dramatic show that seems to bear the largest resemblance to *Agter Glas* when considering the approach to character. Firstly, there is only one performer, which coincides with the one-person dramatic show completely. Apart from being performer-driven, featuring a narrator, and establishing a special audience-performer relationship, *Agter Glas* occasionally makes an attempt at deeper characterisation, which seems to be the case in one-person dramatic shows as well. Strong evidence for multiple characters matches the concept musical, while the consequential Brechtian method of multi-roling by the single performer is in accordance with cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. *Agter Glas* also indicates an occasional inclination towards mimicry when it comes to the portrayal of the fictional characters. As is the case in the previous two one-person musicals, concept musicals, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows, direct address (also a Brechtian method) is strongly indicated.

Agter Glas shows an identical pattern to the concept musical under the Language section, with the addition of the occasional use of satirical language which is more connected to cabaret but not necessarily excluded in the other two subgenres. There is a strong conversational tone to the storytelling scenes, and even some musical numbers, while Zietsman does occasionally engage in poetic language. Substantial lyrics are indicated, which is observed in the concept musical and cabaret, while the character's vernacular is indicated as strongly as in all three subgenres.

In terms of music, *Agter Glas* is a very strong amalgamation of the concept musical and cabaret. While these two subgenres correspond musically in many ways, including the use of commentary and character songs, and songs presented as monologues/soliloquies or as separate scenes. They also differ in some regards as is evident in the table above. *Agter Glas* seems to incorporate all of the possible characteristics listed in the Combined Framework, which means that it also incorporated all aspects of cabaret and all aspects of concept musicals into its music. Like the concept musical, *Agter Glas* is music-driven, features some songs that could be classified as plot-advancing songs, and the majority of the musical numbers are newly written, original songs with lyrics by Emma Bekker and music by Janine Neethling. Like cabaret, some of the songs are existing numbers, and one of these songs, ABBA's *Money, money, money*, is changed into a parody version about the economic crisis in South Africa.

The element of spectacle in *Agter Glas* seems to resemble cabaret and one-person dramatic shows equally, with a more minimalistic approach to set design, costumes, props, movement, and occasionally lighting. The musical numbers do, however, feature more significant lighting changes, a characteristic more associated with concept musicals. The concept musical also comes into play when it is considered that the set design for *Agter Glas* supports the overarching theme of “behind glass”.

In this final evaluation, evidence has been presented to support this writer’s suggestion that the third South African one-person musical evaluated here, is an amalgamation of the three informing subgenres. The evidence has been constructed around the narrative and structural characteristics of Elzabé Zietsman’s *Agter Glas* which were applied to the Combined Framework in which *Agter Glas* can be evaluated against the narrative and structural characteristics in the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic shows, many of which coincide with some modernist techniques such as those used in Brecht’s Epic Theatre and the revue subgenre. After a thorough evaluation, *Agter Glas* does, in fact, appear to indicate strong resemblances to all of these subgenres in different facets of performance.

SECTION D

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 9:

CONCLUSION

An apparent lack of academic research into the South African one-person musical, a seeming confusion in nomenclature with regards to cabaret in South Africa, and a genuine interest in the one-person musical inspired the researcher to undertake an investigation into the narrative and structural characteristics of the South African one-person musical. The investigation was launched with the primary goal of establishing a Combined Framework through which certain South African one-person musicals, and possibly future one-person musicals, can be evaluated. The Combined Framework, in table format, consisted of a list of possible characteristics that have been identified in three subgenres that seemed to relate to the one-person musical. The informing subgenres were the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. Secondly, it was the researcher's mission to establish whether the South African one-person musical is, in fact, an amalgamation of the three subgenres, since prior research seemed to suggest the possibility of such a statement.

The study commenced with Section A consisting of an introductory Chapter in which background to the study, the research problem, research questions, objectives and value of the research, demarcation and methodology were established. Additionally, clarification of concepts and a layout of the ensuing chapters were presented. From here it was established that the investigation would include three more sections. Section B would take the form of a literature study aimed towards the creation of the Combined Framework. The first three chapters in Section B (Chapters 2-4) were devoted to a literature study of the three informing subgenres – the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. The ultimate aim in these literature studies was to investigate the way in which the six elements of Aristotle – plot, theme, character, language, music and spectacle – interrelate in the subgenre since these elements seemed to be the most appropriate established set of characteristics from which to identify and organise possible narrative and structural characteristics to be listed in the Combined Framework in the subsequent chapter. The Combined Framework in Chapter 5 would be constructed from the findings in the literature study in table format.

Section C included Chapter 6 to Chapter 8 and incorporated the Combined Framework into three Case Studies by applying it to three South African one-person musicals by

established South African artists, namely Amanda Strydom, Nataniël and Elzabé Zietsman. The interpretation of each evaluation informs the researcher and reader on the narrative and structural characteristics of the three South African one-person musicals, as well as confirming or denying the suggestion that the South African one-person musical is an amalgamation or point of convergence for all three of the informing subgenres. It can be noted at this point that, after thorough research, this writer concluded that the three Case Studies did, in fact, reveal strong evidence that the one-person musical favours not one particular subgenre in its construction, but indicates aspects of all three. The evidence will be discussed in this conclusive chapter, Section D of this study, continues.

9.1. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first subgenre to be scrutinised in the literature study under Section B was that of the concept musical. Firstly, a historical background of the subgenre was presented, including ways in which the revue and Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre seemed to relate to the subgenre in terms of structural components. Features that stood out in this regard were the fragmentary nature of the plot-structure, a political approach in the presentation, direct audience address, the concept of multi-roling in which one performer portrays a number of characters, a presentational mode of performance or set design and *historisierung*, most of which facilitate Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* in which audiences are distanced emotionally from the production to engage them in a more intellectual, mobilising way. Secondly, the interrelationship between the six elements of Aristotle was investigated under the headings Plot and Theme, Character, Language and Music, and finally, Spectacle. This same procedure was followed in the other two literature studies of cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. Chapter 3 was devoted to the Cabaret subgenre, and Chapter 4 explored the One-person dramatic show as a guideline for the narrative and structural characteristics in South African one-person musicals. Since modernist artist, Samuel Beckett, is a prominent figure in the solo performance spectrum regarding the individual's struggle with the inadequacy of language and memory to define life, his work and influence were also included for discussion in the latter subgenre.

It was established that the three informing subgenres in the literature study all presented scholars with some problems regarding the delineation and classification of the subgenres. They seem to be flexible in form and execution. There are, however, certain

reoccurring characteristics which aided the scholars in establishing a definition. The concept musical is a type of avant-garde musical in which the narrative and all of the other elements in the production are driven and informed by a central concept or theme as opposed to a linear storyline. Cabaret is an art form that can take on many different theatrical, musical or art techniques which were largely connected to the rise of the avant-garde movement in art. It shows a strong aim for socio-political commentary or *protest* and was especially prevalent in turbulent political milieus of the late nineteenth century and twentieth century. The one-person dramatic show is a theatrical subgenre that has roots in ancient storytelling but has evolved into a legitimate theatrical form in which modernist techniques are explored to stretch the limits of solo performance and the possibilities for a single performer on stage.

The literature studies yielded important information to guide the investigation forward. After a detailed discussion of the narrative and structural characteristics observed in the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show, it was evident that shared features seemed to surface in all three subgenres. The majority of these features indicate a modernist, Brechtian influence. The first aspect is a need for intellectual entertainment, although cabaret also typically utilises its theatrical platform for *protest* purposes. Secondly, the three subgenres each presented abundant evidence for a tendency towards a presentational mode of performance, instead of a realistic and representational one. Thirdly, alienation devices such as direct audience address, multi-roling, narration, topical, political or social themes, a fragmented structure of episodes or events, and an unconventional time structure were observed throughout the literature study's investigation of the six elements and how they manifest in the three subgenres. This fragmentation, as well as the topical subject matter, is also observed in the revue, which was used as a comparison in the literature study too.

While there were obvious correlating aspects between the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show, there were also points of divergence. These differences would ultimately inform a substantial part of the investigation to follow since they were the aspects that distinguished the three subgenres from each other. When dissimilar features can be observed, and different aspects of all of these subgenres could be identified in the South African one-person musicals to be explored, it would be possible to conclude that the one-person musical becomes a midpoint at which the three subgenres converge, and

in essence becomes an amalgamation of the concept musical, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show.

The concept musical and the one-person dramatic show seemed to share similar timelines with relation to their growth in prominence as theatrical forms in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Added to their modernist influences, a tendency towards the post-modern also seemed to surface in these two subgenres. Cabaret differs from the concept musical and one-person dramatic show especially with regards to its need for *protest* and the extent of political content in the typical cabaret show. It is also worthy of note that cabaret originated and came into prominence in several European countries rather than the United States of America, several decades before the other two subgenres.

More distinctions that seemed imperative to the study's ultimate goal of exploring the one-person musical, was the pre-requisite of a single performer in the one-person dramatic show (notably the case in a one-person musical as well) and the prerequisite that the production would be music-driven such as the concept musical (as the inclusion of the word "musical" in the classifications of these subgenres would suggest). Cabaret also showed a strong indication with relation to the presence of music, but it did not seem to be a prerequisite or deciding factor. Both cabaret and the concept musical feature commentary songs that comment on the action or episodes. Likewise, there seemed to be a strong indication for character songs in both, which give a certain character or persona the opportunity to voice his/her thoughts or provide more insight into his/her personality. What is very important in cabaret and the one-person dramatic show, is the significant role of the performer as a performer, with a smaller interest in characterisation than a performer-driven approach. The three subgenres showed major differences when it came to spectacle, with the concept musical opting for more elaborate staging than the other two subgenres.

The formation of the Combined Framework in Chapter 5 was the final chapter in the literature study undertaken for Section B. Here, an extensive list of possible narrative and structural characteristics was presented in table form, informed by the features identified in the interrelationship between the six elements in each of the subgenres explored. The Combined Framework consisted of eight main sections with a list of possible, more detailed characteristics and features under each section. The main sections were: the

purpose of the production (which could be either intellectual entertainment or *protest*), the mode of the performance (presentational or representational), plot, theme, character, language, music and spectacle. Columns were created for each informing subgenre and the presence of a certain characteristic within that subgenre was indicated as either 'strong', 'occasional' or left blank when insignificant evidence was found.

Section C's Chapters 6-8 were devoted to the Case Studies of three South African one-person musicals. The productions were: Amanda Strydom's *State of the Heart* (1993, performed for live DVD recording in 2008), Nataniël's *COMBAT* (2011) and Elzabé Zietsman's *Agter Glas* (2008). After providing a brief overview of the artist and the one-person musical in question, the one-person musicals could be evaluated according to the Combined Framework. Each one-person musical was applied to the table, indicating which narrative and structural characteristics could be identified and to which extent they were present in the specific production. Detailed explanations and examples from the performances were provided in a separate column. For each show, a summative discussion was launched in which the table was interpreted and primary findings were discussed.

In general, all three of the South African one-person musicals present significant evidence for the presence of most of the modernist techniques associated with Brecht's Epic Theatre and the shared features of the three informing subgenres. *State of the Heart*, *COMBAT* and *Agter Glas* share the fragmented, episodic structure indicated by all of the abovementioned theatrical entities. The revue can also be added here for its resemblance in this regard. Likewise, a presentational mode of performance is opted for in each of the one-person musicals. More Brechtian techniques such as narration, direct audience address and an intellectual approach to the material can be observed in all of the productions. In terms of multi-roling, *State of the Heart* and *Agter Glas* involved the single performer portraying the range of characters evoked in the stories or songs, while *COMBAT* showed insignificant evidence since Nataniël's stage persona does not engage in the portrayal of other characters.

Important features which all three one-person musicals shared is the prerequisite aspect of a single performer, which is also strongly indicated in the one-person dramatic show. The presence of only one performer strengthens the possibility that monologue and narration would become the primary methods through which the performer converses

with the audience. This is also the case in the three one-person musicals and is especially indicative of the cabaret and one-person dramatic show subgenres. Two productions, *State of the Heart* and *Agter Glas* did, however, also indicate some attempt at or suggestion of dialogue in the narrative.

Moreover, all the productions indicated strongly for a performer-driven approach under character, a quality most often associated with cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. Consequently, a performance persona, a theatrical version of the performer, is created by Strydom, Nataniël and Zietsman through which they approach the audience to strengthen and facilitate this performer-driven method. As a result, a strong audience-performer relationship is prevalent in the three one-person musicals, in which the audience is recognised, at times encouraged to interact, and presented directly with subject matter and themes that challenge them intellectually.

An overarching theme is present in all of the one-person musicals, although the extent to which the overarching theme is incorporated, differs: *COMBAT* and *Agter Glas* use their theme as basis around which all of the other elements would be structured and towards which these elements work in the aim of creating a holistic product on stage. These productions are therefore considered to be “theme-driven”, a defining quality in concept musicals. For *COMBAT*, the overarching theme is “uniform”, while *Agter Glas* chose “glass or being behind glass” as the theme which drives the performance. The choices made regarding the element of spectacle were largely influenced by this main theme for both of the productions. Costume and décor, and at times props and movement, revolve around the primary themes. In the same way, the stories and subject material are chosen to fit within this theme. In *State of the Heart*, “prejudice” becomes the principal theme, but the theme does not direct the way in which spectacle or the other elements is utilised.

A number of subthemes are addressed in the South African one-person musicals in question. The Combined Framework provided categories for topical themes, individual and social themes, and political themes. All of the informing subgenres indicated a strong presence for individual and social themes. This has a lot to do with the avant-garde and postmodernist movement’s preoccupation with the psychology and function of the individual in society, contrary to Realism’s focus on the broader spectrum of society and social systems. Topical themes, associated primarily with the revue, cabaret and the one-

person dramatic show, are strongly indicated for *Agter Glas* and occasionally observed in *COMBAT*, but not significantly indicated in *State of the Heart*.

Political themes are only occasionally indicated in all three one-person musicals. Of all the one-person musicals in question, *Agter Glas* is the more politically invested production, although none of them reaches the level of protest or politically-driven content that cabaret seeks to accomplish. The one-person musicals' subtler approach to political commentary is more in line with the concept musical and one-person dramatic show. Generally, *State of the Heart* bears more resemblance to concept musicals with regards to theme. In contrast, the one-person dramatic show and cabaret seem to compare better to the other two one-person musicals under this section. A strong deciding factor for the previous statement lies in the use of autobiographical subject matter in *COMBAT* and in *Agter Glas*, a characteristic that does not seem to be significantly present in *State of the Heart*.

For all three one-person musicals, cabaret and the one-person dramatic show seems to inform the element of character. This is largely due to the performer-driven approach and stage persona already discussed. Additionally, the persona generally fulfils the role of the narrator through whom the narrative takes shape, which is present in all of the one-person musicals. *Agter Glas* does feature an occasional attempt at characterisation, which is a feature more associated with the concept musical, and occasionally with the one-person dramatic show. This addition to *Agter Glas* directs the one-person musical towards one-person dramatic shows more than the other subgenres. In the absence of characterisation in *State of the Heart*, Strydom relies more on mimicry and impersonation when creating her characters. Nataniël engages neither in characterisation nor in mimicry or impersonation. Instead, *COMBAT* occasionally incorporates the cabaret-method of grotesque visual portrayals of characters, at times touching on surrealism.

The concept musical seems to dictate language and music to the largest extent in all of the evaluations undertaken, with certain aspects of cabaret also being displayed. The language used in the one-person musicals predominantly take the form of prose in a conversational tone. Only occasionally in *Agter Glas* and *State of the Heart*, a more poetic quality can be felt in the words, bearing a resemblance to cabaret and the one-person dramatic show. The presence of substantial lyrics in the three one-person musicals

evaluated adds to the intellectual approach of the productions and a need for socio-political commentary.

Most importantly, the one-person musicals are all music-driven, since music is a prerequisite for any production classified as a “musical”. Here, the concept musical clearly takes prominence as a comparative subgenre. Resemblances to cabaret are also quite prevalent, but mostly to a lesser degree than the concept musical. The commentary song is strongly indicated in all the evaluations, while character song seems to feature strongly in *State of the Heart* and in *Agter Glas*. The plot-advancing song occasionally associated with the concept musical is also indicated occasionally for these two one-person musicals. *COMBAT* and *Agter Glas* include mostly original songs, with the occasional addition of an existing one, while *State of the Heart* only uses existing music. *Agter Glas* features the only case of a parody of an existing song, which is strongly associated with cabaret. This addition brings about that *Agter Glas* seems to show equal evidence for concept musical and cabaret in its approach to music.

Of the three one-person musicals evaluated here, Nataniël’s *COMBAT* is by far the most elaborately staged performance, which seems to favour the concept musical’s approach to the element of spectacle. The revue is also a relevant comparative source in this regard. Still, it should be noted that the spoken sections in *COMBAT* resemble the simplicity of the other two one-person musicals, in which a stronger inclination towards the one-person dramatic show and cabaret is indicated. Dance is only indicated strongly for *COMBAT*, while the Brechtian concept of *gestus* is present to a small extent in *State of the Heart* and *COMBAT*. In both *COMBAT* and *Agter Glas* the visual elements are in accordance with the overall theme, a feature most associated with the concept musical.

It is important to keep in mind that the solo artists discussed in the case studies are all commercially successful in South Africa and, therefore, need to tailor their productions to still attract large audiences. This could be held as a reason for the more elaborate staging in *COMBAT*, the use of existing songs in *State of the Heart* and the choice to tone down the political commentary and opt for more individual themes in *Agter Glas*. These productions do not engage in nonsensical language or incomprehensible in the Beckettian absurdist or Dada style, nor do they involve unrelatable material, since they believe that it is important for the audience to decode the message the production is trying to convey. The productions should, above all, still be enjoyable for the general public,

and the South African theatre community, especially the Afrikaans-speaking portion of it which, unfortunately, appears to not be as trained in theatre conventions and a theatre culture as elsewhere in the world.

Finally, none of the productions scrutinised can or should be classified as only one of the discussed subgenres, and most certainly not as pure cabaret, which is often the case in media and theatre circles in South Africa. These productions are a point of divergence between the three informing subgenres and, therefore, the term “one-person musical”, used throughout this entire study, is, according to this writer, a more appropriate classification.

The term “one-person musical” is still a very broad, inclusive term under which many different types of solo musicals can be classified. For example, the international one-person musical, *Tell Me on a Sunday* (1984), written for Sarah Brightman by Andrew Lloyd Webber is a sung-through solo musical with numerous costume changes, a large multifunctional steel structure as a set and extensive use of props²⁶¹. Under the same umbrella term, the South African artist, Gera Phielix, presents *Trek* (2013), inspired by the Great Trek of the “Afrikaner-volk” in nineteenth-century South Africa. It features four newly written songs, a simple but effective and multifunctional set, and definite moments of dialogue between the four fully developed characters²⁶². In the same way that the concept musical, cabaret and one-person show have been described as “difficult to define or limit”, the one-person musical leaves room for a lot of diversity. This seems to be the case with many phenomena within the qualitative paradigm, with its subjective approach to its subjects.

9.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

When reflecting on the original research question and research objectives defined in Chapter 1 of this investigation, it can be concluded that the research done has been successful in answering the questions and reaching the objectives. The main question was: “How can the structural elements of the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show aid the construction of a framework which could facilitate the analysis of

²⁶¹ *Tell me on a Sunday* was performed as the first part of a two-part evening programme called *Song and Dance* and is available on YouTube (wangzhehuaxin 2012).

²⁶² The researcher saw a live performance of *Trek* in Bloemfontein in 2013 as part of a workshop presented by Gera Phielix. Phielix was also so kind as to provide the script of *Trek* and answer questions about her work through e-mail correspondence. The correspondence with her has been helpful in the execution of this study.

South African one-person musicals in terms of their narrative and structural characteristics?” It was determined that a thorough literature review had to be undertaken into each of the informing subgenres, culminating in an investigation into how Aristotle six structural elements interrelated in each. These six elements could provide the main headings within the framework under which more differentiated structural characteristics could be listed for evaluation and discussion. The objective, subsequently, was to establish such a framework to facilitate the analysis of South African one-person musicals to identify their narrative and structural characteristics. After consulting the three informing subgenres in literature studies, a Combined Framework was drawn up and applied to three South African one-person musicals as case studies. The framework was an effective way to investigate the narrative and structural characteristics of the one-person musicals. It seemed clear and comprehensive and was effective in interpreting after the evaluation had been completed.

A subordinate objective of the study was to identify possible links between the concept musical and cabaret within the South African context since both of these subgenres seemed to share similar characteristics, but were also found difficult to classify and problematic to demarcate by scholars in the field. Where Herman Pretorius suggested in 1994 that the South African cabaret was a hybrid form of theatre between European cabaret and African storytelling techniques, the researcher would like to suggest that the South African solo cabaret has developed into another form of theatre – the one-person musical, which is an amalgamation of the concept musical, cabaret (international and local forms) and the one-person dramatic show.

For the researcher, the one-person musical represents the epitome of the modern and postmodern musical. With clear modernist techniques and postmodern qualities, this subgenre also questions the individual psyche and the limits to which the individual can be pushed, also in terms of solo performance. With a simplistic, inexpensive approach, the individual is placed at the centre of the performance and the conveyance of the narrative lies solely on the shoulders of the performer and his/her talents. It is simultaneously the most contemporary and most ancient form of storytelling within the musical theatre spectrum.

9.3. LIMITATIONS

With regards to the development of concept musicals and one-person shows in South Africa, the researcher identified a lack of source material from which to establish a South African history of the art forms. Cabaret in South Africa seems to be documented more, especially during its peak in the 1980's. Furthermore, the flexibility of a subgenre like cabaret limits the researcher from establishing boundaries within the art form to facilitate better discourse into the subject. The limitations of space in a dissertation for a Masters degree makes a comprehensive investigation into the subgenres more difficult. Additionally, the researcher would have wanted to evaluate more productions to test the viability of the Combined Framework. The framework could have been utilised to create an entirely new production, which would have strengthened its viability and the value of the thesis. More conversations with practitioners in the field could have complemented the study, as well as conversations with audience members.

9.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher hopes that the venture of this study can start a conversation with other academics and scholars about the musical theatre industry in South Africa, especially with regards to the academic documentation and classification thereof. There seems to be much written on cabaret in South Africa and arguments about what cabaret in South Africa is, but very little research seems to exist with regards to the development of the concept musical in South Africa. Surely a lot of South African revivals of international concept musicals have been staged – *Cabaret* at the Fugard Theatre in 2015 comes to mind – but what of newly written South African musicals which could be classified under this genre? In an e-mail conversation, the researcher and R. Perold (2014, pers. comm., 23-27 October) discussed the absence of a written chronology or history of South African musicals or a database in which new musicals could be entered, classified and discussed. Recent noteworthy postgraduate theses that have engaged in research into South African musical theatre include André K. Gerber's unpublished doctoral thesis titled *After the Megamusical: Exploring the Intimate Form* (2017) and Marli Katzke's unpublished master's thesis, *Die Ontwikkeling en huidige aard van musiekblyspele in Suid-Afrika* (2014).

Present classifications and categorisation within the musical theatre subgenre in South Africa might have to be reviewed. A lot of the live music productions, especially in the Afrikaans industry, do lend themselves towards the classification of musical theatre, or at least revue, with a clear narrative informing the order of the songs and the development of the performance. It is worth noting that Afrikaans rock music, like the work of *Fokofpolisiekar*, has been scrutinised by Nel (2011:95) for its cabaret tendencies due to its socio-political commentary. While this genre seems to join early South African rock music, most notably the *Voël*-movement, at the more left-wing side of the political spectrum, some commercial Afrikaans singers have recently produced work that appears to sprout from a right-wing mindset. The researcher does not necessarily support these steps taken within the Afrikaans music industry, especially when considering the tumultuous environment clouding South Africa in terms of race and economy. However, the controversy surrounding these artists' works, the strong reaction and condemnation of it from the current political establishment, prompts the researcher to acknowledge these works as a form of *protest*, aiming at strong political commentary with a strong nationalistic drive.

As with the concept musical and musical theatre generally, this study has revealed an apparent lack of documentation of the history of the one-person dramatic show in South Africa. In 2017, CC Spaumer submitted a dissertation at the North-West University in Potchefstroom, entitled *Die skryf van 'n Afrikaanse eenpersoondrama: teorie en praktyk*, in which he provides a useful start towards the bridging of this gap. However, more of these historical chronologies should be published for a complete overview.

The Combined Framework for this study was devised for, but not limited to, the evaluation of one-person musicals. The researcher would like to invite other scholars to test the Combined Framework on other productions or subgenres to determine its efficiency. The framework is not set in stone and some changes to it could strengthen its effectiveness or broaden its range. A suggestion that could be made is to establish a certain scale that enables the researcher to determine more accurately towards which subgenre the evaluated production leans according to its position on the scale.

Lastly, in Section C, during the case studies of *State of the Heart* and *COMBAT*, mention was made of the unofficial term "quantum-autobiography" (see 6.3. and 7.3.). The researcher takes particular interest in this concept and would promote more conversation

around the topic. The theatrical representation of quantum physics in the one-person musical appears to be a fresh and exciting way to look at the subgenre. When a person is being put into the situation of being observed, a change in behaviour is often indicated. This seems to be intensified in the case of performers, in which a performance persona is frequently created for these moments of observation. Alternate realities and levels of consciousness or time structures are interesting topics within the field of theatre. In musical theatre, the interspersing of musical numbers between spoken scenes creates a certain change in time structure, altering the performer's reality and his/her field of consciousness.

9.5. FINAL REMARKS

It can be concluded that there seems to be no set of rules to which the creators or performers of one-person musicals abide. A fixed list of narrative and structural characteristics of South African one-person musicals cannot be established here. Suggested prerequisites are that there should be a single performer driving the narrative and that music and song should take prominent roles in the execution of the narrative. This study would, therefore, not present itself as the source of a fixed model on which one-person musicals should be built, but rather as a study in which an effective Combined Framework has been created and tested to facilitate the evaluation of one-person musicals, and possibly other subgenres and singular productions in the future.

It is with a sense of pride, positivity and enthusiastic curiosity for the further possibilities of the study that the researcher wants to conclude this chapter. The completion of an informative, enriching literature study aided the researcher in the compilation of an extensive Combined Framework to which three South African one-person musicals could be applied. The result was the formation of an effective method to dissect the narrative and structural characteristics of these one-person musicals, while simultaneously concluding that the one-person musical appears to showcase a range of characteristics found in the concept musical, cabaret and one-person dramatic show combined.

This study opened with a quote from Amanda Swart concerning Hennie Aucamp's decision to no longer write for the South African cabaret scene. Cabaret in South Africa did not fare well commercially. He concluded that new South African audiences in the 1990's sought something else from theatre artists. South African artists seem to have found a better, more rewarding alternative to cabaret: the one-person musical.

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