**Cabaret Nation:**

**The Jewish Foundations of the Polish-Language Literary Cabaret, 1920-1939**

The Polish-language literary cabaret was a revolutionary phenomenon in terms of Polish culture, Jewish culture, and notions of Polish national identity. It flourished mainly in Warsaw between the world wars – that is, in the capital of a newly independent nation that doubled as a great Jewish metropolis, where an impressive third of its residents identified themselves as Jews or “of Jewish background.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This is not to claim that Warsaw held a monopoly on innovative, high quality cabarets in Poland. The lively city of Lwów, long a center for Polish theater, offered Warsaw stiff competition in the form of cabarets such as *Ul* [The beehive] and *Chochlik* [The hobgoblin], and the very popular radio show, “Wesoła Lwowska Fala” [Lwów’s merry wave]. Nor did Warsaw’s Polish-language literary cabaret attract the many Jewish Varsovians who resisted Polish acculturation for religious and/or political reasons. The most innovative Yiddish-language *kleynkunst* theater, *Ararat,* was basedin Łódź, where its director, the poet Moyshe Broderson (1890-1956), generated inspired songs and sketches and ensconced the famous Yiddish comedy team of Shimen Dzigan (1905-1980) and Yisrael Shumacher (1908-1961), a voluble chatterbox paired with a phlegmatic straightman.[[2]](#footnote-2) Yiddish cabaret arrived later in the capital, when director/actor Dovid Herman opened the cabaret *Azazel,* and Dzigan and Shumacher toured Warsaw with the *Yidishe Bande* troupe.[[3]](#footnote-3)

To be specific: the Warsaw cabarets that overturned a staid cultural hierarchy and popularized a pluralist Poland were *Qui Pro Quo* (1919-1932), a 514-seat theater squeezed into the Luxemburg Gallery (a shopping arcade) on Senatorska Street, and its five to six descendants founded by the directorial talent who had perfected itsmagnificent paradigm. These last were *Banda* [The Band] (1931-1933), *Cyganeria* [Bohemia](1933-1934), *Stara Banda* [The Old Band](1934), *Cyrulik Warszawski* [The Barber of Warsaw] (1935-1939), Mały *Qui Pro Quo* [Little Qui Pro Quo](1937-1939) and, as some argue, *Ali Baba* (1939).[[4]](#footnote-4) The achievements of the Polish-language literary cabaret rested in large part on the work of the many Jewish artists who created it – writers, composers, performers, musicians – and the Jewish characters, sketches, and songs it regularly presented to an educated Jewish and Christian public. Though the Jews on both sides of the footlights were acculturated, choosing Polish as their lingua franca, they did not mask their Jewish identity, instead embracing Warsaw’s many local types – Jewish and Christian, aristocratic and working class, officers and flappers – as desirable and entertaining characters onstage.

***Cabaret as highbrow entertainment***

The literary cabaret that dominated Warsaw nightlife between the wars emulated neither the exclusive artists’ get-together of Paris’s first cabaret, *Le Chat Noir* (1881), nor the extravagant spectacles-cum-beauty pageants exemplified by the *Casino de Paris* in France or the *Ziegfield Follies* in New York.[[5]](#footnote-5) *Qui Pro Quo* was performed for paying customers and appropriated the revue format of varied acts (sketches, songs, dances) joined together by the charismatic persona and clever patter of a *conferencier*.[[6]](#footnote-6) Yet the directors and producer of this pioneering literary cabaret prided themselves on showcasing original material written by Varsovian artists or quickly recruited transplants to the capital. This material included comical sketches, monologues, song lyrics, and most of the song melodies and dance tunes performed by the in-house orchestras.

That so many acculturated Jewish artists were drawn to cabaret production in Poland iterates different patterns observed elsewhere in Europe and the United States, albeit in different decades. In analyzing the performing arts scene of pre-World War I Berlin, Marline Otte, Peter Jelavich, and Hans-Peter Bayerndörfer note how eagerly German Jewish artists ventured into new theatrical venues (cabaret, revue, film) where they could circumvent the exclusiveness of traditional and official German cultural institutions.[[7]](#footnote-7) The greatest of these new ventures was the Metropol Theater. Middle-class Christian and Jewish Berliners discovered common ground in celebrating the modern prowess of their capital through the Metropol’s magnificent shows. As Otte declares: “At the fin-de-siécle no other entertainment genre so aptly captured the new spirit of mobility, curiosity, and frivolity as revue theater, which gave voice to the seemingly boundless optimism and pride of Berlin’s upper middle classes.”[[8]](#footnote-8) The Metropol attracted the best talents from Germany and Austria, most of whom were Jewish – for example, the talented lyricist Julius Freund (1862-1914), the prodigious composer Victor Hollaender (1866-1940), and the legendary operetta diva Fritzi Massary (1882-1969).[[9]](#footnote-9)

It is important to note that this common ground of metropolitan pride and growth remained firm in Germany only through the last decades of the Wilhelmine Empire. During the Weimar Republic, the gloom of postwar national defeat and severe economic crises sundered ties between different political camps and ethnic groups and consequently the audience appeal of live theater venues. In the Polish case, a similar common ground between Christian and Jewish Varsovians solidified two decades later, once Poland regained national sovereignty in 1918 and Warsaw followed in Berlin’s footsteps, striving to become a thoroughly modern metropolis, an aspiring European capital. Despite the political turbulence of the Second Polish Republic’s first years, astute entrepreneurs and impresarios got on with their respective businesses of supplying the city’s affluent with luxury goods and the latest entertainments. The right-wing National Democrats (*Endecja*) aggressively promoted Polish national identity as Catholic and non-Semitic, yet the new Poland, unlike Germany, could not muster the same rigid template of a “racially pure,” meticulously regimented middle class to impede Jewish acculturation. Polish-speaking Jewish Varsovians did not have to pass the same rigorous performance tests that dogged Jewish Berliners – “the cultured *Bildungsbürgertum*, with its middle-class standards of respectable behavior, refined modes of speech, lowered decibel level, and so on.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

Rather, the census data on interwar Warsaw tells us that Jews made up half of the city’s middle-class and occupied half of all white-collar jobs requiring no political appointment (doctors, lawyers, teachers).[[11]](#footnote-11) Historian Antony Polonsky additionally points out that “Jews formed a significant part of the Polish intelligentsia” in the interwar period – those well-educated, progressively minded Polish citizens who could be counted on to donate to worthy causes and to consume high quality goods and sophisticated cultural events.[[12]](#footnote-12) The Jews who patronized and worked in the Polish-language literary cabaret were largely secure in their middle-class identity and acculturated behavior. They had arrived. Once the Polish-language cabaret established itself as a chic entertainment for the “cream of society,” upper- and middle-class acculturated Jews naturally followed the fashion.[[13]](#footnote-13) Though a typical cabaret audience, at least until 1935, ranged from aristocrats and politicians in the pricey seats to students in the gallery, the cabaret’s success truly depended on the regular attendance of Jewish and Christian white-collar professionals.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Cabaret historian and artist Ryszard Marek Groński theorizes that Polish-language literary cabaret especially appealed to acculturated Jews because its repertoire at once bared and played with the pitfalls of acculturation and “the politics of discrimination” that they so often experienced and attempted to transcend.[[15]](#footnote-15) Marion Fuks, a pioneering historian of Polish Jewish culture and society, counters Groński’s theory with a hypothesis about refined preference dictated by class and education. While the Jewish petit-bourgeoisie flocked to easily understood operettas, Fuks argues, more affluent, fully acculturated Jews gravitated to the literary cabaret because it presumed its audience’s high cultural literacy and knowledge of current political events.[[16]](#footnote-16) The Polish-language literary cabaret at once engaged and distinguished them.

***Cabaret as worldly entertainment***

As luck did have it, the birth of the Polish-language literary cabaret in the 1920s coincided with the global spread of American popular song via records and radio broadcasts. The creators of ragtime, jazz, and syncopated dance music were African American, to be sure, yet American Jews, particularly the sons and daughters of recent immigrants from Eastern Europe, played a huge role in appropriating, playing with, and popularizing these new musical styles. Music historian Charles Hamm claims that the artists who emerged from the huge Jewish immigrant community in New York City quickly made their mark as “songwriters, lyricists, performers, and publishers of popular songs.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Composers such as Irving Berlin (born Israel Baline in Russia), Jerome Kern, and George Gershwin, and singers such as Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, and Sophie Tucker achieved nationwide and, in some instances, international fame in America’s roaring ‘20s.[[18]](#footnote-18) Though the songs that these artists created and performed reflected sundry musical influences and idiosyncratic talent, they won over American and European listeners as charismatically American with their “syncopated rhythms, displacement of beats, anticipations of rhythmic resolutions at the ends of phrases, and the use of triplet figures in double time” – that is, the rhythms of African American music.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Enthusiasm for America’s hybrid, jazzy popular music overtook Europe as well, overwhelming the longstanding superiority of classical music on the continent. Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin contends that the United States was “the first modern society to express its sense of identity solely through popular – rather than folk or elite – culture.” Its music industry thrived “like a vacuum cleaner,” sucking up new ethnic influences and combining them with already established styles.[[20]](#footnote-20) Cultural historian Lewis Erenberg, in turn, accentuates the “vitality” and anti-Victorian “lack of restraint” that early twentieth-century immigrants to the United States brought to American popular music. These immigrants (Jews, Poles, Italians) helped create “a mass culture removed in essential aspects from past traditions, offering visions of freedom of self and escape from limits in urban culture.”[[21]](#footnote-21) The intoxicating rhythms, vitality, spontaneity, and freedom of imported American popular music bowled over a young generation of musicians in Europe, including Jewish songwriters in Warsaw, as a global wave, a “big time” that swept them into an intoxicating modernity. Henryk Wars (1902-1977), perhaps the greatest composer of Polish popular music between the wars, remembers the moment of his conversion as he listened to American records in the Syrena Record store in Warsaw: “The performers were bandleaders Fletcher Henderson and Louis Armstrong, the masters of something I’d never heard before. It was called jazz.”[[22]](#footnote-22)

For the most part, the acculturated Jewish musicians in the Warsaw cabaret did not share the immigrant rags-to-riches biographies of new Jewish American stars such as Berlin or Jolson. The latter had fled religious persecution and poverty in the tsarist empire; their families were Orthodox and their first language Yiddish. Erenberg elaborates on how rapidly poor East European Jews adapted to the freewheeling, lucrative entertainment business in the United States: “Living in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, forbidden to own land, they had served as middlemen for both peasants and the upper classes, trading and selling; they already knew how to function among hostile cultures and in an ethnically diverse society.”[[23]](#footnote-23) Yet the restrictions blocking these immigrants’ path to stardom most often lay in the ethnic enclaves in which they had settled. Artists such Tucker, Jolson, and Berlin risked breaking with family, Orthodoxy, and Yiddish-only culture to make their fortunes on the American stage and screen.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Succeeding in American popular entertainment required not only secular venues, but also convincing impersonation of non-Jewish ethnic stereotypes – African Americans (often involving blackface for performers), Irish, Italians, Chinese, and “Yankees.” As Slobin points out: “It is hardly surprising that Irving Berlin turned his back on the Lower East Side ‘ghetto,’ pitched his songs to the popular song studios on Fourteenth Street, and turned out ‘Marie of Sunny Italy’ and ‘Yiddle on Your Fiddle, Play Some Ragtime’ as his first hits.”[[25]](#footnote-25) In *The Jazz Singer* (1927), Hollywood’s first talking picture starring Al Jolson and directed by Alan Crosland, the success story of the Jewish performer in America is summarized and sugarcoated: Jakie Rabinowitz, a cantor’s gifted son, conquers the secular stage as Jack Robin, belting out “Swanee” in blackface, then returns to sing “Kol Nidre” in his father’s synagogue, thereby maintaining a respectful (and impossible) balance between his roles as sacred and “secular” cantor.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Interwar Poland was likewise filled with Jewish musicians, most of whom were Yiddish-speaking, far from affluent, and playing in small towns or on provincial tours. Yet the trendsetters in popular Polish music – a term referring here to music popular throughout Poland, not Polish folk music – were those acculturated Jewish artists with big city access to the recordings and broadcasts of American popular music. By his own account, Henryk Wars discovered jazz in a record store on Marszałkowska Street, one of the major thoroughfares in the capital. Nevertheless, Wars finished his education at the Warsaw Conservatory in 1925, after which prolific lyricist, impresario, and talent scout Andrzej Włast (Gustaw Baumritter) (1895-1942 or 1943) hired him to write music for the cabaret and, three years later, Włast’s new *Morskie Oko* (The Eye of the Sea), Warsaw’s modest version of Berlin’s Metropol Theater.[[27]](#footnote-27) In creating his own versions of American jazz (loosely defined), Wars duplicated the American pattern of impersonating stereotyped ethnic styles – in his case, African American and hybrid New York City dance songs. His biographer, Ryszard Wolański, remarks that Wars’s first foxtrot, composed for dancers attempting the black bottom, was titled “*New York Times*.” A second “fox-stomp,” “*Szczęśliwy Henry*” (Happy Henry), thrilled *Morskie Oko* patrons with a piano duet evoking the ragtime compositions of African American Scott Joplin.[[28]](#footnote-28)

A relative latecomer to the cabaret scene, Wars made up for lost time with his extraordinary industry and abilities as composer, conductor, pianist, singer, and arranger. His multiple talents recommended him to Juliusz Feigenbaum (1872-1947), the founder of Syrena Records, who installed him as the arranger and conductor for the recording studio’s dance orchestra. Entering through the side door of the cabaret, Wars joined a group of already outstanding popular composers and independent bandleaders such as brothers Henryk and Artur Gold, Jerzy Petersburski (the Golds’ cousin), Zygmunt Wiehler, Zygmunt Karasiński, and Szymon Kataszek. Fuks designates as “classics” those bandleaders who entertained elite Warsaw in the best locales – for example, the Ziemiańska Café frequented by the literati and cabaret artists or the “superdeluxe ‘Adria’” restaurant. The Golds and Petersburski topped his A-list.[[29]](#footnote-29) Music historian Isacher Fater credits excellent popular composers with establishing a dance music “’industry’ that occupied an important place in Polish culture and entertainment” – an understatement, given these musicians’ immense popularity and influence.[[30]](#footnote-30)

In contrast to their American counterparts, the famous interwar Jewish composers who wrote and played for the Warsaw cabaret, revue, café, dance hall, radio broadcasts, and phonographic recordings were, for the most part, children of classical musicians, a pedigree that guaranteed their good training and cultural prestige, if not always a good living. Henryk and Artur Gold’s father Michał performed as the first flautist for the Warsaw Opera; his premature death at the age of 48 (in the middle of a performance of *Carmen*) forced his eldest son Henryk into the role of family provider in his teens.[[31]](#footnote-31) The Golds’ mother hailed from the Melodystas, a well-known family of klezmer musicians. The father of Jerzy Petersburski (1895-1979) was a professor at the Warsaw Conservatory, where his son first trained. Wars’s father worked as an engineer and hoped his one son would excel in “a truly masculine profession, as a doctor, for example, or, best of all, a lawyer.” Yet two of Wars’s three sisters were musically gifted, and Wars won parental approval to study at the Warsaw Conservatory by invoking the example and influence of his older sibling Józefina, who made an international career as a mezzo-soprano in the Warsaw Opera and at La Scala.[[32]](#footnote-32)

These artists did not perceive composing and performing for the cabaret and other popular venues as a sociocultural “descent,” as their parents most certainly did. Instead, Wars, Petersburski, the Golds, and others were swept up in the eastward-rushing waves of syncopated jazz and music written for such sexy, ultra-modern dances as the foxtrot, the Charleston, and the tango. In emulating these compositions, young Jewish artists were not lowering their standards, but striving to break into a “big time” of at once elemental and sophisticated world music. They proved to be masters in blending different ethnic motifs and modalities with modern rhythms. According to Fater, Henryk Gold’s work successfully married “Jewish sentimentalism and European aestheticism with modern dynamism.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Petersburski’s celebrated tangos – “*To Ostatnia Niedziela”* [This is the last Sunday], “*Tango Milonga*,” to name but two – sounded more East European than South American.[[34]](#footnote-34)Wars, the most prolific and stylistically voracious of the group, ultimately wove Polish folk song motifs into jazz compositions. Even as right-wing Catholic groups wielded the term *zażydzenie* [Judaization] to demonize what they disdained as “some sort of new Jewish-Polish culture” perverting “true Poland” from within, the songs and dance tunes composed by these gifted Jewish musicians asserted *Poland’s* place on an enormously popular international music scene.[[35]](#footnote-35)

***The cabaret’s poetic pedigree professionalized***

Swing music and dance orchestras alone did not guarantee full houses of sophisticates in the Polish-language literary cabaret. For venues such as *Qui Pro Quo*, the modifier “literary” specifies a key ingredient to their cultural and social success. It was essential that esteemed young poets such as Julian Tuwim, Antoni Słonimski, Kazimierz Wierzyński, and others of the *Skamander* group stoked the cabaret show’s engine with first-rate fuel – song lyrics, monologues, and sketches that ranged from pure nonsense comedy to wickedly clever topical satire. *Skamander* coalesced officially once Poland became independent and eschewed orthodox political and unorthodox aesthetic programs, celebrating in their poetry the here and now, colloquial language and everyday experience -- in deliberate contrast to partition-era poets who felt bound to articulate Poland’s tragic history and messianic destiny. At the same time, Skamandrites loved the public spotlight that their predecessors had enjoyed; they shrewdly redirected it from displays for the sake of the occupied nation to wildly popular public readings, intellectual and creative publications, and the cabaret stage.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Educated, liberal Varsovians did not have to make excuses for attending the high quality shows at *Qui Pro Quo* if these were said to flicker with the poetic genius that Poles historically revered*.* Even if they did not recognize the quality of the lyrics and sketches they heard, they were reminded regularly by critics that Tuwim was a chief contributor to the cabaret. As essayist, translator, and cultural commentator Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński declares in his review of *Qui Pro Quo’s* September 18, 1926 premiere of *“Kiedy panienki idą spać”* [When the young ladies go to bed]:

Why hide the fact that one of our greatest poets devotes his spare time to showering the cabaret with sparks of wit. It’s obvious that every trifle is distinguished by talent and verve; amidst the usual “jokes” the wing of poetry will flutter on the stage or there will be a flash of first-rate political satire. Happy is the roof under which poetry resides.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Through its combination of lyricism and satire, verbal wit and pure nonsense, and, of course, artful words and infectious music, the interwar literary cabaret became the first popular culture production to challenge the hegemony of the legitimate theater in Warsaw. By the early 1930s, Arnold Szyfman, founder of the Polish Theater and long a disdainful critic of the cabaret, tried joining his enterprise with a successful *Banda* in its second season, hoping this merger would boost his sagging box office during yet another economic crisis.[[38]](#footnote-38)

The cabaret’s connection with *Skamander* and, by extension, the poets who contributed verse, essays, and reviews to *Wiadomości literackie* (The Literary News), a prestigious interwar literary journal, also linked it with Marshal Józef Piłsudski and his followers in the 1920s – particularly, with Piłsudski’s conception of a tolerant multi-ethnic Poland in which Jews and Catholics might enjoy good relations and the same status as Polish citizens. Piłsudski’s May coup d’etat in 1926 and his behind-the-scenes support of religious tolerance until his death in 1935 provided the lone common shelter for Jews and liberal Gentiles against the racist, socially conservative nationalism of the right-wing National Democrats.[[39]](#footnote-39) When Piłsudski was more present in Warsaw’s public life, *Qui Pro Quo* attracted the patronage of high-ranking military bureaucrats in the Marshal’s government, and was invited to give a command performance at the Marshal’s Belweder Palace residence.[[40]](#footnote-40) *Qui Pro Quo* and its successors rarely pursued any programmatic political agenda, yet their shows always presumed and presented a multi-ethnic, socially emancipated ensemble of characters.

To be sure, the language of its performance was Polish, with more interjected and mangled French than Yiddish. But acculturated Jews figured prominently as its writers as well as composers, and Jewish characters, impersonated by Jewish and Christian performers alike, appeared like clockwork in monologues and sketches. The cabaret projected a multi-ethnic Polish society utilizing a multi-ethnic cast throughout the interwar decades, even when the post-Piłsudski government openly abetted anti-Semitic boycotts and protests in the late 1930s. In contrast to other businesses that Jews owned or managed, the Polish-language literary cabaret faced no government boycotts and endured only occasional demonstrations of zealous Endeks in front of their box office.[[41]](#footnote-41) The obstacles that the cabaret management mainly dealt with were financial – ironically enough, the ballooning salaries of the performers that they had launched as stars.

The literary foundation of the Polish-language cabaret was almost exclusively built and maintained by acculturated Jewish writers, with Tuwim in the lead. Stępień distinguishes Tuwim as “the most Skamandrite of Skamandrites” in his literary and social ambitions, managing the great leap from provincial middle-class Łódź to the Parnassus of Warsaw even as he sought to play the anti-establishment jester through his cabaret satires and songs.[[42]](#footnote-42) Polonsky elaborates how Tuwim relished baiting the anti-Semitic right in his embrace of the big city with its diverse residents, pleasures, and language styles.[[43]](#footnote-43) Tuwim loomed largest as a guarantor of poetic genius under his various cabaret pseudonyms – Brzost, Dr. Pietraszek, Oldlen, Pikador, Roch Pękiński, Schyzio Frenik.[[44]](#footnote-44) His lyrics encompassed ardently defiant love songs (“*Pokoik na Hożej,”* the ubiquitous “*Miłość Ci wszystko wybaczy”*), sensually evoked nostalgia (“Kiedy znów zakwitną białe bzy”), and scenarios reflecting the crazy fortunes and Babel of the modern metropolis (“Stara piosenka,” “Telefony”). Tuwim composed entire shows with input from other writers, including his fellow Skamandrite, Słonimski, who specialized in ferocious satire and comic *szmonces* sketches featuring Jewish characters.

Yet the Polish-language literary cabaret’s claim to a poetic pedigree conveniently obscured its forging of a new kind of high quality popular writer. Tuwim’s real peer in building the cabaret was no Skamandrite, but Marian Hemar (Jan Maria Hescheles), an acculturated Jew born in 1901 into a businessman’s family in Lwów. Hemar, seven years Tuwim’s junior, initially longed to be both modern poet and cabaret artist. He had been overwhelmed by a Skamander group reading held in Lwów’s Philharmonic Hall in the early 1920s, thrilled by their poetry as well as their huge and enthusiastic audience.[[45]](#footnote-45) A few years before, however, Hemar had had the opportunity to admire and envy the cabaret writer-actor Konrad Tom (Runowiecki) on the Warsaw stage, a performer he later commemorated as a “public idol…at the height of his fame”: “No one sang songs so well or wrote such clever texts.”[[46]](#footnote-46)

It would seem, then, that Hemar’s contradictory dreams came true when a wealthy oil man, Leon Orlański (an aspiring songwriter), sponsored his move to Warsaw and the young man from Lwów signed a contract with *Qui Pro Quo.*  Within a year, Hemar began to excel as a lyricist and sketch writer, creating under his own series of pseudonyms – Harryman, Marian Hemarinetti, Marian Wallenrod, Jan Mariański, and O’Mega. From late 1925 until the 1939 German invasion forced him out of the capital, Hemar was a powerhouse of cabaret production, composing lyrics for over a thousand songs and texts for as many sketches.[[47]](#footnote-47) Utterly absorbed in the day-to-day operations of the cabaret, Hemar came to know actors and musicians, tailored his material for specific performers, and interjected directions whenever he was permitted to do so. His writing sparkled with sharp wit, distinctive and lively characterizations, and a deft blending of foreign phrases (German, French, English) into verse or dialogue. By 1932, after the close of *Qui Pro Quo*, Hemar had risen to the status of impresario, joining Tuwim and the consummate conferencier and artistic director, Fryderyk Járosy, to form the “Three Musketeers,” the trio that masterminded the creation of new cabarets based on *Qui Pro Quo*’s model.

A man of extraordinary ambition, Hemar undervalued his genius for song and show writing. Despite the fact that he invested most of his prodigious energy in the cabaret, he longed for recognition as a poet, perhaps to duplicate Tuwim’s achievement. Before the war, Hemar managed to publish just one book of poetry, *Koń trojański* (Trojan horse) (1936).[[48]](#footnote-48) Or perhaps Hemar’s desire for a poet’s prestige stemmed from his wish to be accepted unequivocally as a Pole. Hemar had converted to Christianity in 1935, presumably to marry the singer Maria Modzelewska, though his biographer Anna Mieszkowska notes that he often defined himself as “a Polish wannabe” [Polak amator].[[49]](#footnote-49) Juxtaposed, Tuwim and Hemar demonstrate the appeal and the trap of the cabaret for those who still felt bound to a traditional Polish cultural hierarchy, particularly for acculturated Jewish writers. Tuwim never found complete gratification as a feted, highbrow poet, even though he did not dare to abandon his pedestal for good. Hemar, when he could take a breath between shows, agonized over the ephemeral, contingent nature of his cabaret work, no matter how much it engaged him in the moment. To these men, the cabaret’s “poetic pedigree” proved to be either a burdensome sanction or a phantom ideal.

Yet this was not the case for almost all the other writers who worked in the Polish-language literary cabaret before and after Tuwim and Hemar, a fact evident in Hemar’s conveniently distanced memory of Konrad Tom’s heyday. Both Tom and Jerzy Boczkowski began writing extensively for the Warsaw cabaret before World War I and remained very active in show business until 1939. These two acculturated Jews approached their work as painstaking craft, as a synthetic, collaborative art that was in no way second-class. Like Wars and the Golds, they defied their parents’ middle-class expectations, Tom dropping out of business school and Boczkowski rejecting a career as an engineer. Tom earned renown as lyricist, sketch writer, and onstage actor and singer; in the 1930s he gravitated towards screenwriting. Boczkowski, a gifted songwriter, assumed the role of artistic director and exacting mentor for new writing talent trying to break into the literary cabaret. As Boczkowski would inform another aspirant, Hemar himself had had to train with him before his compositions passed muster in *Qui Pro Quo*: “For several long months, we had to throw out everything he wrote.”[[50]](#footnote-50)

The young men longing to follow in Hemar’s footsteps likewise passed through Boczkowski’s “tough school” in order to qualify as a cabaret writer. These “graduates” included Bronisław Horowicz, Światopełk Karpiński, Andrzej Nowicki, Janusz Minkiewicz, Emanuel Szlechter, Ludwik Starski, Tadeusz Wittlin, Władysław Szlengiel, Emanuel Schlechter, and Jerzy Jurandot .[[51]](#footnote-51) Jurandot (Glejgewicht), who emerged as the heir apparent of Tuwim and Hemar by the late 1930s, evinced awe for the cabaret alone, for what he worshipped from his cheap student seat in *Qui Pro Quo* as a synthesis of producer-writer-director-performer-composer-designer *.* To a certain extent, Jurandot’s attitude towards the cabaret represents the inevitable professionalization of those involved, the shift from the daring or slumming poet to the well-schooled lyricist and sketch writer. Yet Jurandot never loses his reverence for the cabaret as miraculous spectacle and cabaret work as a high calling. In his personalized history of interwar Polish cabaret, *Dzieje śmiechu* [The history of laughter], Jurandot expounds on the *art* of composing the “theatrical song” as well as the hit (*szlagier*):

In a theatrical song (or stage song, eventually a cabaret song – what you will), the words are just as important and often more important than the music. These songs are designed for the actor’s interpretation, they are songs with a plot, songs in which something happens – the stage is set, the action unfolds and moves ultimately towards an ending *pointe….[[52]](#footnote-52)*

The composition of a hit song, according to Jurandot, is governed by different rules: “Though its text may be poetic and beautiful, it does not exist apart from its melody; without the melody, it loses all sense and taste.” While composers needed to devise a catchy musical hook, lyricists had to produce an equally catchy *szlagwort* – that is, “the first words of the refrain”: “The higher school of songwriting depended on creating a *szlagwort* which would fit as the right response to multiple questions – this enriched the song with unexpected changes in mood, making it deft and witty.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

Jurandot’s acute understanding of how to write songs for the Polish-language literary cabaret was matched by his productivity and, in a rare happy turn, longevity. By the time *The Barber of Warsaw* held auditions in 1937, Jurandot had slipped into a coveted front-row seat along with Járosy, Tuwim, Hemar, and another frequent cabaret contributor, Jan Brzechwa, to review the talent.[[54]](#footnote-54) One of the performers they hired was Stefania Grodzieńska, a dancer, actress, and Jurandot’s future wife. Singled out by Boy-Żeleński for his solo creation of a show for *Mały Qui Pro Quo* (Little Qui Pro Quo) in May 1938, Jurandot continued to write for *Barber of Warsaw* and was already at work on Járosy’s new cabaret, *Figaro*, when the war erupted.[[55]](#footnote-55) Unlike Tuwim and Hemar, Jurandot and Grodzieńska remained in Warsaw with his family; Jurandot directed two theaters in the Warsaw Ghetto until Járosy and a few other close friends succeeded in rescuing the couple during the Ghetto’s Great Liquidation in 1942.[[56]](#footnote-56) After the war Jurandot and Grodzieńska, together with other surviving artists, sought to continue the *Qui Pro Quo* tradition by founding the Syrena Theater, first established in Łódź and then, as only seemed right, moved to the capital under reconstruction. Jurandot’s postwar work and the impact of the Polish-language literary cabaret’s legacy in the People’s Republic of Poland have still to be explored.

***The cabaret’s Jewish celebrities***

In his first book of memoirs, singer-comedian Kazimierz Krukowski (a cousin of Julian Tuwim) recalls how cabaret writers began to build characters and, consequently, signature stars with their songs in the mid-1920s. Hemar enthusiastically took up writing for specific performers, thereby creating a “thread of friendship between authors and actors that held fast for many, many years”: “Authors knew what to write, and actors knew just how to perform what was written.”[[57]](#footnote-57) Tuwim readily produced pure nonsense songs, often tongue twisters, for his favorites – zany actors such as Adolf Dymsza, the fast-talking master of all impersonations, or Mira Zimińska, the madcap and highly versatile comedienne. As the performers tested their talents on the *Qui Pro Quo* stage, writers and directors quickly helped them shape their best array of characters. A keen observer of this trend, Boy-Żeleński celebrated the Polish-language literary cabaret as a school for generation after generation of stars.[[58]](#footnote-58) Though its established performers circulated widely in search of greater fame (and fortune), they regularly returned to the cabaret for an entire show or a guest spot. Reviewers and historians praised *Qui Pro Quo* and its successors for creating a contemporary Varsovian commedia dell’arte of local types.[[59]](#footnote-59)

In comparison with the composers and writers, performers in the cabaret troupe combined middle-class acculturated Jews and working-class Christians, men and (at last) *women.* Most of these players were young, coming of age in an independent Poland and either born in or quickly moving to the big city of Warsaw. Such a diverse troupe intimated that Warsaw society was multi-class, multi-ethnic, sexually emancipated, and liberally tolerant of everyone, the more so since they resisted their own essentialization onstage. These players took on the challenge of incarnating all sorts of types, often in funny juxtapositions: effete aristocrats vis-à-vis tramp-intellectuals, snooty society ladies vis-à-vis vamps and flappers, officer-bureaucrats vis-à-vis lower-class street toughs, semi-acculturated Jewish businessmen vis-à-vis visiting provincial bumpkins. The cabaret and its comedians thrived on parody and impersonation, mocking outmoded conventions and trying out the modern possibilities of self-reinvention.

In consequence, acculturated Jewish performers were not obliged to mask or caricature their identity. Highly trained vocalists, for example, gained renown as romantic singers, the attractive lovers given a sentimental solo spot amidst the show’s rambunctious comic songs and sketches. The diminutive Zofia Terné (known to her parents as Wiera Chajter), a classical soprano too short for operatic performances, earned the title of “Warsaw nightingale” on the *Qui Pro Quo* stage and was adored for her voice, sweet lyricism, and good looks.[[60]](#footnote-60) The handsome Gwidon Borucki (actual surname Gottlieb), who debuted in *The Barber of Warsaw,* was soon established as a romantic crooner and later developed into a genial conferencier.

Those comic actors who sang (or, in one case, a classical singer who remade himself into a comedian) impersonated a variety of semi-acculturated Jewish characters along with non-Jewish types. The elegant, blasé-looking Tom specialized in cosmopolitan dandies, while Ludwik Lawiński (Latajner), with his husky build and basset-hound face, excelled as maniacal maestros and bombastic politicians; the two also regularly played Jewish businessmen (young and old), marveling at the modern world and sorting out family and financial affairs (Maks and Moryc, the two Gwircmans). In effect, these actors circled above or below their actual class backgrounds, marking as Jewish those characters still struggling to climb Poland’s socioeconomic ladder. Dora Kalinówna, the lone acculturated Jewish comedienne in *Qui Pro Quo* and like cabarets, incarnated various petit-bourgeois and nouveau riche Jewish women – included the wronged fiancee dictating a letter of protest to her beloved and an array of “snob-idiots” such as the wife of a Jewish industrialist who, “from her front row seat at the symphony, itemized the costs of her neighbors’ gowns and criticized their paste jewelry to the music of a Liszt rhapsody.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Two actors were conflated with their respective Jewish *dramatis personae* – Józef Urstein as the ebullient Pikuś and Kazimierz Krukowski as the beleaguered, self-ironizing Lopek. Given the cabaret troupe’s penchant for impersonation, non-Jewish actors such as Romuald Gierasieński, Czesław Skoneczny, and Eugeniusz Bodo, to name just a few, also played Jews.[[62]](#footnote-62)

The writers for the Polish-language literary cabaret presented these Jewish characters in *szmonces* songs and sketches, a genre originating in Viennese theater and defined there as a comic rendering of “the broken German characteristic of the local Jewish community,” according to literary scholar Agnieszka Uścińska.[[63]](#footnote-63) The *szmonces* subsequently produced in Warsaw varied a great deal in terms of quality and sensitivity. Urstein’s materials was written by Andrzej Włast, a gifted acculturated Jewish artist whom critics later labelled the “king of trash” due to his overproduction, reliance on hackneyed rhymes and metaphors, and wholesale import of Parisian songs for his *Morskie Oko* revue*.[[64]](#footnote-64)* Though Urstein launched his persona with Włast’s songs and monologues in “broken Polish embedded with Yiddish, German, Russian, and even Hebrew words and phrases,” he incarnated his bald, short, stocky Pikuś as a lovable, energetic charmer dressed up in a smoking jacket. Marion Fuks argues that Pikuś’s humor did not ridicule the Jewish petit-bourgeoisie; rather, it seemed “good-natured and characteristic of the jokes told by Jews.”[[65]](#footnote-65) Pikuś’s one-sided phone conversations with his wife, Micia Titipulka, broadcast topical satire -- encompassing Warsaw gossip, local scandals based on actual events, and commentary on current politics.[[66]](#footnote-66) Urstein delighted *Qui Pro Quo* audiences until October 1923, when he died of a heart attack during a show.

For a little more than a decade thereafter, Tom, Tuwim, Hemar, Słonimski, and other writers made *szmonces* monologues and sketches a staple of the Polish-language literary cabaret, to the extent that some right-wing newspapers declared “a war on szmonces” in the mid-1930s.[[67]](#footnote-67) *Szmonces* did parody the speech and worldview of the urban Jewish petit-bourgeoisie and could devolve into anti-Semitic caricature. But the Jewish writers for the Polish-language literary cabaret transformed *szmonces* into the language of modern comedy, infusing it with the illogic and nonsequiturs of pure nonsense as well as an outrageously affected intonation, syntax, and neologisms that underscored the gap between the speaker’s aspirations and his actual grasp of a rapidly changing new world. *Szmonces* characters were scripted and performed as sympathetic – expansive, voluble, absurd and arcane in their interests, and refreshingly frank in their processing of strange new fashions.[[68]](#footnote-68) These semi-acculturated Jewish characters replaced Warsaw cabbies and couriers onstage as the new everymen who shared their impressions of a bewildering metropolis.

Krukowski’s career skyrocketed once he became a *szmonces* regular. Trained as a classical tenor, Krukowski at first balked in 1926 when Hemar and Boczkowski insisted that he perform a solo as Lopek, a much put-upon Jewish shopkeeper decked out in a bowler hat, shabby raincoat, and greasepaint mustache; this son of a medical doctor and a German teacher feared that playing *szmonces* would be demeaning**.** Yet Krukowski was surprised by the cleverness of his debut song, “Wekselek” [Bill], a Hemar creation, and pleased with his character’s subsequent development, courtesy of Hemar, Tuwim, and Tom, into a family man (with wife Malcia, son Hipek, and daughter Mincia) and a home-grown philosopher.[[69]](#footnote-69) Lopek’s first-rate songs bemoaned his fate as a small businessman in a rollercoaster economy and the worldly pleasures that he, as a Varsovian, could see onscreen or in a shop window, but never afford. His worldview is laid out best in Tom’s Lopek hit, “Jak się nie ma co się lubi, to się lubi, co się ma” [When you don’t have what you want, then you want what you have]. As one of the choruses explains:

When you don’t have what you want,

Then you want what you have.

That’s the law I go to sleep with,

Where my Malcia shares the bed.

Maybe I would rather be with

Greta Garbo, Pola Negri,

But at bedtime I will settle

For whatever Malcia gives me.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Krukowski quickly attained mega-stardom as Lopek. His fans came to address him as his *persona*, and he capitalized on Lopek’s fame when he launched a new show or a new locale with Lopek’s imprint.[[71]](#footnote-71) In the late 1930s, when anti-Semitic boycotts, press attacks, and demonstrations plagued the capital, Krukowski-Lopek still figured as the most beloved character on the cabaret stage and the most famous Jewish citizen in the multi-ethnic cabaret nation**,** held onstage encore after encore and entreated to sing all the hits of his life story.[[72]](#footnote-72)

***The Polish-language literary cabaret as ephemeral community***

Regardless of its world-class music, clever and original writing, and deep bench of extraordinary performing talent, the Polish-language literary cabaret could never exercise mass appeal. Its insouciance, secularism, and Jewish-Christian creative team repelled right-wing Endeks, zealous communists, and Orthodox Jews alike. Its language of performance excluded Yiddish-language speakers, and its high ticket prices meant it was inaccessible to the working class and the lower middle-class. Indeed, the Polish-language literary cabaret only survived because it competed so well for the intelligentsia patrons of serious theater, opera, and ballet. For the first time in Poland’s history, a popular entertainment form not only passed as highbrow, but also dominated this elite market with its innovation, topicality, informality, and star power.

The success of the Polish-language literary cabaret as an interwar *social* phenomenon was ensured by the intimate, lighthearted relationship that composers, writers, and performers cultivated among *everyone* in the house. By the mid-1920s, Boy-Żeleński publicly marked the miracle that cabaret wit, play, and talent had worked on its Warsaw patrons: “This same public, which had been rather phlegmatic and gloomy a few years back, has grown lively, more refined, and so friendly with the players that they are ready to take part in the performance.”[[73]](#footnote-73) The Warsaw cabaret was founded on intense interaction. Its best actors, be they Jewish or Christian, projected immensely appealing charisma and excelled at improvisation.[[74]](#footnote-74) Audiences went to shows prepared to drop their inhibitions even as they stayed on their toes to catch an arcane reference or a new bit of stage business. Everybody came to play. Seasoned cabaretgoers strived to nab tickets for the last night of the show, when the actors traditionally cut loose in their final performance, trying to top each other with improvised material.[[75]](#footnote-75) By integrating real Jewish and Christian Varsovians into their play, demonstrating genuine camaraderie amongst themselves, and projecting an informal relationship between onstage stars and patrons in the house, cabaret artists transformed the theater itself into a shared social space of irreverence, enjoyable difference, and abiding good will.[[76]](#footnote-76) Here a multi-ethnic, cross-class, cosmopolitan Warsaw was performed and experienced as a scripted party buoyed by enormous talent and inclusive high spirits.

***Beth Holmgren***

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1. See, especially, the introduction to *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolish, Essays in Honor of the 75th Birth of Professor Antony Polonsky,* Glenn Dynner and François Guesnet, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 1-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For descriptions of such satirical numbers, particularly those performed by the great Yiddish comedians Shimen Dzigan and Yisroel Shumakher, see Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars: A World History of Yiddish Theater (*New York, Hagerstown, SF, London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), 325-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For information on the founding of *Azazel,* see Sandrow, 1977, 323-24; and Natan Gross, “Mordechai Gebirtig: The Folk Song and the Cabaret Song,” *POLIN*, vol. 16, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Tomasz Stępień provides this lineage in his study, *Kabaret Juliana Tuwima* (Wydawnictwo Śląsk, 1989): 6. In *Kabarety i rewie międzywojennej Warszawy* (Katowice: Śląsk, 2007), Dorota Fox provides this information about the seating in *Qui Pro Quo*, counting its 136 rows and 10 loggias (214). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Harold B. Segel, *Turn-of-the-Century Cabaret. Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Zurich.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1987): xii-xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Fox, 2007, 11, 14-15. Stępień, 1989, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Marline Otte, *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 8; Peter Jelavich, “How ‘Jewish’ was Theatre in Imperial Berlin,” in *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre,* Jeannette R. Malkin and Freddie Rokem, eds. (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2010): 43; and Hans-Peter Bayerndörfer, “Jewish Cabaret Artists before 1933,” in Malkin and Rokem, 2010, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Otte, 2006, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Ibid.,* 230, 231, 234-5. Massary was the daughter of a Viennese businessman. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Steven E. Aschheim, “Reflections on Theatricality, Identity, and the Modern Jewish Experience,” in Malkin and Rokem, 2010, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Marion Fuks, *Żydzi w Warszawie: Życie codzienne, wydarzenia, ludzie* (Poznań: Sorus, 1992): 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History* (Portland, ORE: Oxford, the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013): 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Dorota Fox, *Kabarety i rewie międzywojennej Warszawy* (Katowice: Śląsk, 2007): 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ryszard Marek Groński, *Jak w przedwojennym kabarecie: Kabaret warszawski, 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1978): 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Ibid.,* 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Fuks, 1992, 329. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1979): 329. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ibid.,* 332, 345-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Ibid.,* 372. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Mark Slobin, “Putting Blackface in its Place,” in *Entertaining America: Jews, Movies, and Broadcasting,* J. Hoberman and Jeffrey Shandler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003): 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Lewis Erenberg, *Steppin’ Out: New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981): 187-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Quoted from Wars’ 1972 interview in Ryszard Wolański, *Już nie zapomnisz mnie: Opowieść o Henryku Warsie* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA, 2010): 24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Erenberg, 1981, 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *Ibid.,* 176, 187-88, 190; Hamm, 1979, 329-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Slobin, 2003, 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. See J. Hoberman’s “On *The Jazz Singer,*” in *Entertaining America,* 2003, 77-81. Hoberman notes that singers of Jolson’s and Tucker’s calibre were often dubbed “secular cantors.” [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Wolański, 2010, 25-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Ibid.,* 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Ibid.,* 28; Isacher Fater, *Muzyka żydowska w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym,* trans. from the Hebrew by Ewa Świderska (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnictwa Rytm – Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, 1997): 118; Marion Fuks, *Muzyka Ocałona. Judaica Polskie* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Radia i Telewizji, 1989): 97-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Fater, 1997, 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Fater, 1997, 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Wolański, 2010, 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Fater, 1997, 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Fuks, 1989, 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ronald Modras, “The Interwar Polish Catholic Press on the Jewish Question,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences,* 1996, v. 548, n. 1, 182. Modras points out that *zażydzenie* also targeted Christians “who attempted to advance liberal ideas and attitudes”; it “became another word for secularity.” [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Stępień, 1989, 46-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, *Flirt z Melpomeną. Wieczór siódmy i ósmy* in *Pisma, t. xxii* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1965): 607-8. Original text appeared in *Kurier codzienny,* 18 IX 1926. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński writes about the first dress rehearsal of this combined theater-cabaret in *Okno na życie. Ludzie i bydlątka. Wrażenia teatralne* in *Pisma,* t. xxiv, 1966, 663-65. The original feuilleton appeared in *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny,* 1932, nr. 269. Szyfman’s disdain for the cabaret is even more ironic, given the fact that he founded Warsaw’s first commercial cabaret, *Momus,* before World War I. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Eva Plach, *The Clash of Moral Nations: Cultural Politics in Pilsudski’s Poland, 1926-1935* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006): 2-4, 7, 12, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ludwik Lawiński, *Kupiłem: Wspomnienia zza kulisami* (London: N. MacNeill & Co. Press, 1958): 48. Mira Zimińska-Sygiętyńska, *Nie żyłam samotnie*, ed. Mieczysław Sroka (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1984): 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Tacjanna Wysocka, the founder of the modern dance troupe, the Tacjan Ballet, worked with *Qui Pro Quo* in the late 1920s and remembers how a group of Endek students protested in front of the cabaret, singling out its Jewish producer, the generous, gentle Seweryn Majde, as their target. Tuwim witnessed this with her. Wysocka account of his exchange with one of the young women who accosted him as a Jew seems groomed for the ages: “Yes, I’m a Jew. But your daughter will be studying my verses in school.” Tacjanna Wysocka, *Wspomnienia* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1962): 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Stępień, 1989, 274, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Antony Polonsky, “’Why Did They Hate Tuwim and Boy So Much?’: Jews and ‘Artificial Jews’ in the Literary Polemics of the Second Polish Republic,” in *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland,* ed. Robert Blobaum (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005): 196, 198-99, 202, 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Kazimierz Krukowski*, Moja Warszawka* (Warsaw: Filmowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1957): 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Anna Mieszkowska, *Ja kabareciarz: Marian Hemar od Lwowa do Londynu* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA, 2006): 21, 28, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Ibid.*, 29-30. Mieszkowska is quoting from Hemar’s September 1957 interview on Radio Free Europe. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *Ibid.,* 32, 35, 37-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. For a positive review of Hemar’s work, see K. W. Zawodziński, “Poezje Hemara,” *Wiadomości Literackie*, 710, 6 June 1937, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Mieszkowska*,* 2006,33, 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Jerzy Jurandot, *Dzieje śmiechu* (Warszawa: Iskra, 1959): 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Groński, 1978, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Jurandot, 1959, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *Ibid.,* 24, 25-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Stefania Grodzieńska, *Urodził go „Niebieski Ptak”* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Radia i Telewizji, 1988): 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Boy-Żeleński, *1001 Noc Teatru. Wrażeń teatralnych seria osiemnasta,* in *Pisma, t. XXVIII* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1975): 561. Original review appeared in *Kurier Poranny,*  31 V 1938. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. For more details about the relationship between these three artists, see my “Cabaret Identity: How Best to Play a Jew or Pass as a Gentile in Wartime Poland,” *Journal of Jewish Identities,* Issue 7, number 2, July 2014, 15-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Krukowski, 1957, 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Boy-Żeleński, *Flirt z Melpomeną. Wieczór Dziewiąty i Dziesiąty,*in *Pisma,* T. XXIII, 1965, 566. Original review appeared in *Kurier Poranny,* 2 XI 1930. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Fox, 2007, 225-227. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Anna Mieszkowska, *Była sobie piosenka. Gwiazdy kabaretu i emigracyjnej Melpomeny* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie, MUZA SA, 2006): 86-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *Ibid.,* 132; Agnieszka Uścińska, “Elegia Starozakonna, czyli szmonces w kulturze polskiej jako żart z pogranicza kultur,” in *Jaki Jest Kabaret*, ed. Dorota Fox and Jacek Mikołajczyk (Katowice: Oficyna Wydawnicza, Uniwersytet Śląski, 2012): 109. Uścińska notes that Stefania Grodzieńska characterized Kalinówna’s standard nouveau riche type as “snobki-idiotki.” [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Fox, 2007, 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Uścińska*,* 2012, 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. *Ibid.,* 102-104; Jurandot, 1959, 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Fuks, 1992, 330. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. *Ibid.;* Uścińska, 2012, 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. *Ibid.,* 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Fox, 2007, 168, 170-74; Groński, 1978, 44-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Krukowski, 1957, 81, 73. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Text in Kazimierz Rudzki, ed., *Dymek z papierosa, czyli wspomnienia o scenach, scenkach i nadscenkach* (Warsaw: Iskry, 1959): 497-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ludwik Sempoliński, 1968, about the show “U Lopka” (522); in his *Mała Antologia Kabaretu* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Radia I Telewizji, 1982), Krukowski mentions the locale called *The Lopek Dancing* (30-31). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Jurandot, 1959, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Boy-Żeleński, *Flirt z Melpomeną: Wieczór siódmy i ósmy*, 1965, 582. Original published in *Kurier Poranny,* 1926, nr. 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Fox, 2007, 216; Groński, 1978, 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Fox, 2007, 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. *Ibid.,* 249-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)