

MELISSA MAIN'S SUITCASE CABARETS

A GUIDE

DEFINITION

A cabaret is a broad, flexible art form.

It is a well-kept secret that ***almost anything can be cabaret!***

A Suitcase Cabaret, in this case, is loosely a collection of stories and songs, with minimal extra staging resources (except perhaps those that can be transported in a suitcase).

There may be a narrative or a theme, theatre, poetry, movement, dance, audience participation, social commentary, audio-visual, puppetry and storytelling “segues” (or transitions) in between musical numbers.

It could be performed anywhere, in a variety of venues or spaces with a variety of audience types (size, intimacy and formality) and complexity (acoustic or PA, solo or group arrangements, instrumentation etc).

Main's Suitcase Cabarets tend to have an emphasis on inclusion, empathy, humour, creative freedom, inclusive feminism and the human experience. She encourages performer collaborators to choose personally meaningful themes.

VISION

A series of unique cabarets facilitated by Melissa Main's Suitcase Project providing multiple entry points for inclusive participation that allows for a variety of skill, confidence, energy, time, interest and resource levels. ie: no matter where you're at, if you want to be part of what we are doing, you are included!

COMMITMENT AND CHALLENGE LEVELS

The below level list is not a hierarchy or definitive step-by-step guide, you may choose your own adventure throughout the levels in any order that suits you.

Level 1: *Vicarious Darling Lurking Audience Collaborator:* You watch what we do on social media or interwebs from the comfort of your own home on your own time: building your understanding of what we are doing and dreaming of being part of it at a higher level one day (or just being glad that we exist, living our creative life in the same world as you!). Even though we can't see you, we know you are there, we still love you and dream that we might have a more committed and challenging relationship one day...

Level 2: *Vicarious Audience Collaborator:* You see what we are doing on social media and connect in some way: maybe you comment, “like” what we do or share our events. We see you and we love you, on those days we feel like we make art in a vacuum, your online actions count a great deal! Sharing our work online and letting other people know that you love what we do contributes to our work. Please note that Facebook algorithms are making it hard for us to share what we are doing, so if you see something and “like” it or “share” it immediately, more people will see our posts. If you'd like to follow **Melissa Main Musica** or **Melissa Main Band** you may also see more posts.

Level 3: *Real-life Audience Collaborator:* You commit to attending our shows, witnessing our work and making what we do mean something. You clap. You laugh. You say nice things to us afterwards. You bring your friends. You buy tickets beforehand so we're not panicking about losing money by putting on a show. Thankyou, we really appreciate the effort it takes to attend things in real-life these days. In return, we get to share the same air and perhaps a hug or two. Ps Melissa is much better live, she has been told...

Level 4: *Ideas Collaborator:* You contact Melissa and start talking about any or all of your songwriting/scriptwriting/performing/costuming/stage-managing/producing/promoting/events dreams AND your reservations/fears/limitations of making any of them come true. Melissa wants to collaborate with you and will probably get excited about where your art/healing/skill-set align with or complement hers, but you can always say “no/not-yet/not-ever thankyou”.

Level 5: *Resource Collaborator:* You contribute creative, physical or financial resources to a show from afar: perhaps you have some poetry, a song you have written (or half-written!), some costumes or some cool ideas. Maybe you are emotionally, physically or financially supporting a partner or friend to participate. Maybe you have a venue idea, own a printing company, know how to make Apps or have no clue of how to help creatively but have just won the lottery? Financial outlays for participating in festivals, hiring venues, promoting and resourcing shows can be hefty, and any financial assistance to enable our art form is always welcomed.

Level 6: *Single Number Performance Collaborator:* You plan, rehearse and perform a single song (your own or Melissa's) as part of a bigger show, curated by Melissa. Equally, you might like to perform a single poem, dance or something else.

Level 7: *Full Show Performance Collaborator:* You work with Melissa to devise, rehearse and perform a show with a full themed set of Melissa's songs and scripted poetic/movement/theatrical segues. (example: Melissa Main and the F**k You Betties). This level has sub-levels of group, trio or duo.

Level 8: *Full Show Writing and Performance Collaborator:* You work with Melissa to write, devise, rehearse and perform a full themed set of songs and segues by Melissa, yourself and other collaborators. This level has sub-levels of group, trio or duo (example: The Patron Saints of Disappointment).

Level 9: *Full Solo Show Writer-Producer-Performer:* You work with Melissa as a facilitator to help you put together, rehearse, perform and modify your own show, with your own songs and self-devised segues.

Level 10: *Suitcase Cabaret Facilitator:* You work with Melissa as a coach to facilitate your own group of collaborators to participate at the appropriate level. We all have stories that need to be told. Once we have any power, it is our responsibility to share it and hold space for others to find theirs. Don't go thinking that helping others is particularly hard: if you want to do it, you can do it too, and this project will gain the most success when everyone who wants to participate is able to at the level their heart desires.