

SCENE: War zone. Ornate, baroque cabaret in ruins, bombed out. Dust, dried leaves. Seating on several levels. Windows covered with translucent paper, newspaper.

PROPS: Broken chairs and tables. Plates of stale bread and jars of water. Old, torn theatre curtains. Yellowed pieces of newspaper. Lanterns and candles. Glitter and confetti. Two fans. Ropes, knotted cloth, hanging from mezzanine.

COSTUMES: Torn and dirty evening clothes.

CHARACTERS: Singer, piano player, violinist. Host. Master of ceremonies. 5 to 8 persons to be dispersed among the audience.

Action: Audience made to wait outside, in line, for an uncomfortable length of time. Line infiltrated by some of the performers, mute. From inside, explosive sounds, sirens, flashes of light. Doors open to silence. Scene lit with lanterns and candles. Plates of bread and water on tables. Singer and musicians seated along wall. Fans blowing dust, leaves, pieces of old newspaper. Audience silently greeted and seated by host in groups around tables or boxes that serve as tables, performers dispersed among them. Fans off, silence. Master of ceremonies, who has been standing silently by a microphone, starts speaking. Unctuous manner, smirks, asides, all in a made up language. Laughs uncontrollably at own jokes. Introduces singer with many words and large gestures. The only intelligible words are name of singer. M.c. exits with much bowing, singer and musicians move up to microphone. Singer sings 8 songs in various languages (English, French, Hungarian and German) accompanied by piano and violin. Stiff, dramatic gestures. Wearing tattered evening gown. Barefoot and dirty. Musicians wearing dirty and torn tuxedos, also barefoot. Deadpan. During performance, taped sounds of explosions, sirens, shouts in background. Flashes of light play on the windows from outside. At various times, one of the performers in the audience attempts to climb the ropes to the mezzanine, is pulled down by the others and is lowered gently to the floor. Everyone is seated once again, the climber crawls back to his seat. Eats a piece of bread. This happens 4 or 5 times, always different climbers. Near the end of the performance, the musicians are playing in 3/4 time, the m.c. walks up to singer, bows, they start to slowly waltz. Other performers stand up, bow to their tablemates, silently ask them to dance. Everyone is waltzing, fans are turned back on. Pieces of paper and leaves are blowing among the dancers. Musicians gradually quicken tempo, host and technicians are throwing glitter and confetti from the mezzanine. Taped background noises getting louder and louder until the last eight bars of the waltz and noise mixed painfully loud on tape take over. On the last chord all lights are turned on for a few seconds and all performers quickly leave. Lights back down, audience is left standing among the lanterns, lights on the windows, leaves and newspaper blowing on the floor, silence but for the whirring of the fans.

Set Rennie