



# MAD AND INTERACTIVE

Klub Wonderland:  
frightening, charming  
and sexy.

*Mad World*, an  
immersive theatre  
experience, invites  
punters into Weimar-  
era Klub Wonderland.

IF ANY THEATRE sits outside of the square, it's the interactive or immersive variety. More than just cast of *Cats* smooching people in the isle, or water showering the front row in *Singing In The Rain*, true immersive theatre goes much deeper. In *66 Minutes In Damascus*, for example, the audience takes on the role as a group of kidnapped tourists in war-torn Syria.

Locally, *Mad World* re-opens this month in Melbourne after a sell-out season last year. In this immersive piece, the audience are transported into the subterranean cabaret of Klub Wonderland, Berlin during World War II.

Creative Director, James Cutler (*School Of Rock*) created *Mad World* with choreographer Madison Lee (*Bare*), musical director David Butler (*Falsettos*), with book by Melissa David and directed by Lauren McKenna (*Puffs*).

"We were keen to create a piece set in a German nightclub in the 1930s, and we considered how audiences could do more than simply watch. They needed to journey through it, be curious and allow themselves to enter a world as disorientating as it is charming," says Cutler.

"*Alice In Wonderland* was a strong influence," he says. "There's quite a parallel between Wonderland and Klub Wonderland; a place of illogic and paradox, at once familiar and alienating."

"Despite how absurd the characters may appear, many of them are based on real people and incidents that occurred in or around 1930s Berlin," says Cutler. "It proves that truth is stranger than fiction. Many of them identified as queer and suffered great persecution, having to hide their identities. The characters are all

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mad in some way but, for most, it's hidden well. The audience will need to follow their individual stories in order to uncover the full extent of their depravity and darkness!"

The production pays homage to early cabaret but is also influenced by popular immersive theatre pieces such as *Sleep No More*, currently playing in New York, and *The Great Gatsby* by the Guild Of Misrule in the UK.

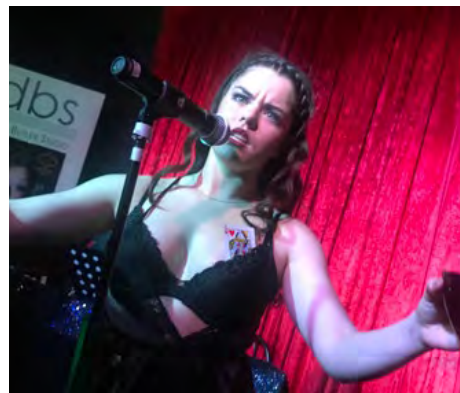
Contemporary music is used in the *Mad World* journey, with musical director, David Butler giving Gaga's *Poker Face* a Weimar cabaret reinterpretation. "The audience responded very strongly to how we treated contemporary music in the last iteration," says Butler.

"In the new production, we've tweaked the floorshow to refresh some numbers and steered away from the cookie-cutter sound of contemporary musical theatre. Instead, we've drawn on a diverse and individual cast

to create the sound, look and world of Klub Wonderland."

"Immersive theatre is a form that's resonating with people in a huge way," says Cutler. "I find audiences are becoming more interested in experiencing a whole universe, rather than simply watching a slice of it appear on stage.

"They're wanting more involvement than a regular show - laughing, cheering, gasping and heckling. These are the birth pangs of an audience wanting to break the fourth wall, to share the experience. Immersive theatre allows that opportunity. It's about our need, as humans, to be part of something and know we hold a stake in."



**MORE:** *Mad World* opens February 3 at Vau d'Vile Drag Cabaret Fitzroy  
For tickets: [trybooking.com/ZQVC](http://trybooking.com/ZQVC)