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The Rat Pack: Legacy and Influence
University Campus Barnsley
6th June 2012

My talk tonight is called The Rat Pack: Legacy and Influence, and I hope, over the course of the evening, to put the troupe in a history of popular entertainment, a history that its members were steeped in. In the public imagination, of course, The Rat Pack has become something of a myth, a legend, an impossibility. The individual members are seen as impossibly cool, impossibly talented, impossibly attractive and to find them all together in one film, one room, one show multiplies the impossibility at least five times. It exists in the mythical land of Las Vegas, an impossible pleasuredome where hedonism and indulgence are rewarded with wealth, sex and satisfaction. They belong to a mythical time, the early 1960s when John F. Kennedy brought the same impossible glamour into American - and international - politics. JFK's presidential court was known as Camelot, invoking King Arthur's mythical world of chivalry, loyalty and magic.

Just as JFK uses a royal myth, so The Rat Pack are also elevated - usefully, for my Diamond Jubilee lecture - to the status of kings. Quirk and Schoell, for example, give their 1998 book *The Rat Pack* the subtitle *Neon Nights with the Kings of Cool*. James Wolcott calls them 'a royal court, granting and receiving favor' (Wolcott, 1997, p.191). What lends The Rat Pack their mythical status, what makes them appear impossible, is the apparent effortless with which they perform. Shawn Levy describes their time in Las Vegas as '[a] movie, a party, a floating crap game, a day's work, a hustle, a joke: They'd make millions and all they had to do was show up, have a good time, pretend to give a damn, and, almost as an afterthought, sing' (Levy, 2002, p.3). To be that casual and yet that impressive [remembering that these singers are the seen as amongst the greatest of the twentieth century] suggests that the talent, the glamour, the magnetism is natural, genetic, a birthright, in much the same way that Kingliness is mythologised as a hereditary quality and a gift from the Gods. What is overlooked in the myth [and this doesn't take anything at all away from the individual performers] is the hidden effort, detail and precision that goes into the supremely casual performances.

Let's just take a few anecdotes to reveal the care that goes in to cultivating the impossible image of The Rat Pack. In his recent Sunday night documentary told an anecdote in which he visited Frank Sinatra in his dressing room, only to find Sinatra standing stiffly and being helped into his suit by valet George Jacobs. Sinatra then walked rigidly to the wings, awaiting his entrance. When Jacobs asked the meaning of this ritual, Sinatra replied to him that, when he walked out on to the stage, he 'wouldn't be in a creased suit, like you'. If that allows some insight into the effort, and assistance, it took to cultivate an effortless sense of style, other stories demonstrate how The Rat Pack's impressive ability to perform while under the influence was also a well-cultivated myth. Their 1960 show at the Copa Room in The Sands Hotel featured an onstage drinks trolley, which they liberally helped themselves to during the show. Jokes in the show included Dean Martin's plugging his new book *The Power of Positive Drinking*, and announcing his sympathy for people who don't drink because 'when they get up in the morning, that's as good as they are going to feel all day'.

In his 1961 book *Sinatra And His Rat Pack*, Richard Gehman discusses Dean Martin's drunken stage persona for example. 'At parties he seldom has more than two shots of Scotch or vodka; but when photographers arrive and other celebrities begin concealing their glasses, he keeps his in his hand.' Martin's wife Jeannie reveals that he borrowed the drunk act from Phil Harris, another comedian and singer [best known in Britain as the voice of Baloo in *The Jungle Book*], and Dino himself notes that the alcoholic image worked so well for him that he 'helped it along' (Gehman, 1961, p.63). Within Rat Pack shows, Sinatra comments that he 'spills more than [Martin] drinks' and Nancy Sinatra recalls how her father once described a similar philosophy of drinking at parties: "'You take a couple of sips

and you put it down in one corner and you walk away and they give you another drink and they think you're drinking a lot. It's important. They think you're as relaxed as they are, but you don't have to drink" (Sinatra, 1985, p.96).

I suppose I need now to define exactly what I mean by The Rat Pack, as there are a number of variations. The name came originally from an earlier group which gathered socially - and in private - at the house in Holmby Hills owned by Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. This gang included Judy Garland and her husband Sid Luft, David Niven and his wife Hjordis, Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn and Frank Sinatra as the Packmaster. It was Bacall, the legend goes, who gave the group a name when, as Chris Rojek describes 'she spontaneously described the dishevelled, hung-over, mildewed, supine, middle-aged group as "a god-damn rat pack"' (Rojek, 2004, p.121).

This group drifted apart after Bogart's death in 1957. In 1958, Sinatra began to put together his own inner circle, which was known by its members as The Clan. This retained some members of the Holmby Hills Rat Pack - songwriter Jimmy van Heusen, restaurateur Mike Romanoff and agent Swifty Lazar - and added some new faces, such as Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh, Eddie Fisher and Elizabeth Taylor, Milton Berle and Sammy Cahn. Like the Holmby Hills Rat Pack, although a subject of gossip columns, this was essentially a private group that met socially. In 1960, however, Sinatra invited selected members of The Clan to join him in Las Vegas for a very public outing: Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr, Peter Lawford and Joey Bishop gathered to perform together in the Copa Room at The Sand's Hotel by night, and make the film *Ocean's 11* during the day.

Sinatra called this group of five The Summit, as a comparison with the summit conference of world leaders Eisenhower, Krushchev, MacMillan and de Gaulle that was scheduled to take place in Paris in 1960. Playing on a double meaning, Sinatra's event - the extended title of which was 'the summit conference of cool' - was a gathering of celebrated entertainers at the peak of their abilities. It was the politically-Republican media which resurrected the memory of Bogart's earlier group and renamed them The Rat Pack - not out of affection, but in an attempt to undermine The Summit's support for Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign by depicting them as morally dissolute.

It is this public Rat Pack, aka The Summit, that I want to focus on for the rest of the lecture, and in particular to think about as a single performance troupe. If we see them simply as a fortunate collection of talented individuals then we will add to the mythical - but misleading - perception of their effortlessness. How they are organised, how they interact with and engage each other in performance is as carefully cultivated and constructed as the dress sense and appearance - but not reality - of drunkenness. Michael Seth Starr describes the nightly event at the Copa Room involved 'a freewheeling show that seemed ad-libbed. In reality, the show would be carefully scripted by Joey, who would also serve as emcee' (Starr, 2002, pp.55-6).

Sinatra also credited Bishop's MC role as critical to the act, calling him 'the Speaker of the House' and 'the hub of the big wheel' (2002, p.58). A stand-up comedian with a solid reputation as a live performer, and a comedian's comedian, Bishop was born Joseph Gottlieb to East European parents in the Bronx, and was raised in Philadelphia. In his teens, he formed a comedy act with two friends, who named themselves *The Bishop Brothers* after another friend. The trio became a duo, and eventually a solo with Joey retaining his stage name. He worked steadily as a club comic until hitting the big time when his admirer Frank Sinatra booked him as an opening act at the Riviera Club in New Jersey in 1952. If his experience as a comic made him the hub of the wheel onstage, Bishop is less significant in the film *Ocean's 11* which is his first major film appearance, and he has a relatively minor role as a result. His persona in The Summit combines world weary cynicism with warmth, allowing him to deflate pompous egos and get away with it. He also possesses the least suave and

stylish persona, allowing a point of audience identification that marks him as 'in it. but not quite of it' in Gehman's words.

Sammy Davis Jr is also less experienced in films than the other members of The Rat Pack, and his gregarious style of performing is perhaps more suited to the stage than the subtle requirements of film acting. His background was in vaudeville performance, as a child performer on the variety circuit since the age of five. He matured into a highly skilled singer, tap dancer and impressionist. He came to public notice as part of the variety act Will Mastin Trio. Mastin was Sammy's uncle, and his father Sammy Davis Senior rounded out the trio. Their major break came when Sinatra, particularly impressed with Davis's ability, booked the Trio as his opening act at New York's Capitol Theater in 1947. What he brought to The Rat Pack was the versatility that characterised the act's nightly performances and put them in the tradition of American variety entertainment. His persona is eager to please and ingratiating. Being black, Jewish and the youngest, shortest member of the pack, he is also made the frequent butt of jokes and ridicule. But he is also quick and agile in both his dancing and his defence.

Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Peter Lawford all had track records as serious actors. English-born Lawford came to prominence in Hollywood as an actor, following the trail blazed by other English leading men like David Niven, Cary Grant and Freddie Bartholomew. His films included *Son of Lassie*, *Little Women*, *Easter Parade* and *It Happened In Brooklyn* with Sinatra. Sinatra had won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor, following his comeback role as Maggio in the 1952 adaptation of James Jones's novel *From Here To Eternity*. Other serious roles followed including *Some Came Running* in 1958, which co-starred Dean Martin and marked Martin's initiation into The Clan.

Martin's rise to fame came when he formed a double act as the straight man to comedian Jerry Lewis. By 1946 they were 'the biggest act in nightclubs; two years later, they were the biggest act in the world' (Levy, 1998, p.45). After they disbanded the act in 1956 it was widely expected that Martin would return to obscurity while Lewis's star would continue to rise. On the contrary, however, Martin continued a successful solo career as a recording artist and transformed himself into a serious actor with roles in *The Young Lions* and *Rio Bravo* paving the way for *Some Came Running*. Martin also escaped his straight man reputation, as his comic ability came to the fore. Comedy was a driving force in The Rat Pack, and all members had to turn their hand to it: Jerry Lewis, however, sees Dean Martin's contribution here as most essential: 'Frank looked to Dean for bits and extras that only a comic force like Dean could supply....[W]hat Dean brought to that group was his half of Martin and Lewis - he just replaced Jerry with four other guys. And he made it work, big-time, for all of them' (Lewis, 2006, p.102). Martin's persona epitomises the effortlessness for which The Rat Pack is renowned, and his couldn't-care-less attitude leads him to debunk his own performance as well as the work of others.

Sinatra's credibility in Hollywood made The Summit possible, as by producing *Ocean's 11* he found a way to bankroll the onstage performances, and it was for his unrivalled power as well as his status as a performer that he was known amongst The Summit (and The Clan) as The Leader. Richard Gehman describes him in 1961 as 'the foremost entertainer of his time, perhaps of all time....[who] stands today, in the vernacular of showbusiness, as the greatest of them all in every field into which he thrusts his talents - recordings, radio and nightclubs, television and films' (Gehman, 1961, p.9). His persona is infused with a sense of his own power, but also a romantic vulnerability that is the primary quality of his singing. Despite his expertise and reputation in all of the major media of twentieth century entertainment, it was the live nightclub work that enthused him most, and it was the expertise and enjoyment in this arena, the variety arena, more than the filming of *Ocean's 11*, that brought all members of The Rat Pack to Las Vegas.

All, that is, except Peter. His inclusion in The Rat Pack is cynically - but probably correctly - linked with his marriage to JFK's sister Patricia. Befriending Lawford would give Sinatra access to Kennedy, and as Sinatra was both addicted to power and a lifelong supporter of the Democrats, this was a serious opportunity. It earned Peter a place in The Clan and the nickname 'Brother-in-Lawford'. His role at The Summit was equally cynically - and probably equally correctly - due to owning the rights to *Ocean's 11*. Jerry Lewis is more cutting about Peter's abilities as a variety performer, writing of his contribution to the Rat Pack 'Peter was Peter (he would have been a *Star Search* loser)' (Lewis, 2006, pp101-2). This is not wholly fair. In addition to film work, Lawford also worked in nightclub seasons with Jimmy Durante, one of the greatest American variety entertainers and so had some schooling in the field. He could sing a little, dance a little, and tell a few jokes and if he was worse at this than the others onstage, that worked well to clarify just how good they were. It was as essential to the construction of The Rat Pack to have a Peter as well as a Sammy, so that the audience could measure the sublime by its contrast and proximity to the merely competent. His persona lends class to the proceedings through his classic good looks, suave English accent and manner and his connections to the American nearly-Royal family.

At the height of its power, The Rat Pack requires all five members working in an integrated way to unite their individual contributions - both in performance skill and persona - into a single, coherent act.

This particular construction is, perhaps, the most influential direct legacy of The Summit, at least as far as popular culture is concerned, providing the template for subsequent popular vocal groups. If we think about the boy bands and girl bands of the 1990s, at their most potent and successful, they repeat this formula. Take That demonstrate the case most effectively, with the individual members occupying clearly defined roles: Songwriter and lead vocalist Gary Barlow provides the Sinatra-esque leadership, in terms of authority and artistry; Robbie Williams adds Sammy's showmanship and Dean's devil-may-care attitude; Mark Owen brings the personable warmth of Joey Bishop and the boyish good looks of Peter Lawford; Howard Donald uses his own sense of style to incorporate an alternative to the otherwise clean-cut image, just as Joey Bishop is, in Gehman's words, 'in it, but not quite of it'; and with all due respect to Jason Orange, he occupies the essential Lawford role as a fifth member whose skills lie in a related but other field and whose deficiencies accentuate the qualities of his bandmates.

The balance of five individual members is also significant here. When Robbie Williams first left the band in 1995, the remaining four members struggled to maintain their momentum, separating as an act one year later. Only Williams continued on to an equally successful solo career. When Barlow, Owen, Donald and Orange reunited as a four-piece in 2004, they went on to greater success than they had had before, yet one of the preoccupations remained a 'full' reunion as a five piece with the return of Williams. When this reunion finally happened, 1.34 million tickets for a live tour were sold within 24 hours.

The Spice Girls allow an even more explicit illustration of the five-piece formula. United through their gender under the banner of Girl Power, the individual identities of the members are pithily captured by catchy nicknames, with the band's identity of 'Spice' added as a mock surname: Sporty Spice, Scary Spice, Baby Spice, Posh Spice and Ginger Spice. As with Take That, the act lost a great deal of potency when reduced from a five-piece to a four-piece on the departure of Ginger Spice, Geri Halliwell. As with Take That, they broke up shortly afterwards. When they reunited in 2007, it was once again with five members. In both cases, success is contingent on the interrelated strengths of the generic identity of the troupe, the individual identities of the separate members and the synthesis of both.

The departure of a single member in both of these cases doesn't simply create an imbalance in the artistic coherence of the acts, however. It also unsettles two further traits that are quintessential to The Summit construction: friendship and unequivocal leadership. A key unifying feature - and illusion - of The Rat Pack is that their onstage chemistry, relationships and antics are identical to their offstage chemistry, relationships and antics. This is elemental to the myth of casualness, suggesting that the five friends have simply stumbled on to the stage and continued playing just as they were doing in the steam room. It collapses the distinction between the public and the private world and leads us to believe that we are privileged in seeing the truth of their relationships, rather than a performance of them. This blurring of the difference between the artificial, professional relationships of performers and the personal, private relationships of friends continues in the marketing of later boy and girl bands, even those as openly manufactured as Take That and The Spice Girls. According to Leach, in the case of the Spice Girls 'the world of the wannabe nevertheless gave them an authentic group identity' (Leach, 2001, p.156). Leach continues to argue that the movie *Spice World* constructs a kind of 'truth' about the authentic group nature of The Spice Girls, the pre-fame dating of whose friendships defends them from being an inauthentic industry product' (Leach, 2001, p.159).

Leach sees this as influenced by rock and roll tradition, suggesting The Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night* as a model in which 'real-life pop stars play themselves and may thus exercise a (playful) self-critical perspective' (Leach, 2001, p.157). This could clearly be taken as a description of The Rat Pack on stage, and suggests that the rock and pop world owe something of a debt to The Summit. This is certainly true of another King, Elvis Presley. In his book *Dino* Nick Tosches recognises the influence that Dean Martin had on the vocal and personal style of Elvis. In Frank Sinatra's 1960 TV special *Welcome Home Elvis* all of The Summit are on hand with the exception of Dean Martin, almost as though having Elvis and Martin together would overbalance the act. Elvis was also partial to Las Vegas, and on one visit there, the media imposed the name The Memphis Mafia on this gang as though Elvis needed to have his own Clan.

To suggest that The Rat Pack invented the idea of a sharply defined troupe would be to add to their mythology, however. Such a structure is a staple of popular culture, dating back at least to the commedia dell'arte in Europe. Stanislao G. Pugliese (2004, p.4) suggests that 'Sinatra conflated within himself several of the stock characters of the Italian tragicomic art form of *commedia dell'arte*' including the smart, sophisticated Arlecchino, Brighello the cunning trickster and Pulcinella the melancholic dreamer. As we have seen, The Rat Pack is already constructed along the lines of defined roles which, as with the original commedia dell'arte, become the specialist parts of individual performers. The comparison extends beyond this: both forms also rely on given performance structures which loosely organise the material but can also be filled with improvisation and variation. Joey's script acts in this way, rather than as an inflexible film script. For example, at some point in the performance one member of The Rat Pack would initiate a conversation about wearing a dress suit. Invariably, this would invite the line 'I say if you're going to look dead, dress dead', but the line could be delivered by Joey, Frank or Peter as appropriate. Similarly, Joey scripted a line which played on Sammy's height and which either he or Dean could seize the opportunity to deliver. In Joey's hands, it became about the faith that he and Davis Jr shared, as he would point to Sammy and thank the Jewish organisation the B'nai B'rith for this award. Martin's delivery worked on notions of racial difference, as he would pick Sammy up, saunter to the mic and thank the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for this wonderful trophy. With the script acting in this way as both a solid foundation and an improvisational platform, The Rat Pack could maintain an air of spontaneity and freshness that captured, in Pugliese's words, 'a certain character trait that is common in these personalities of the *commedia dell'arte*: they are always attempting to create and control anarchy at the same time' (Pugliese, 2004, p.5).

Where the commedia dell'arte would focus its anarchy on differences in social hierarchy, dividing its cast of characters into masters and servants, The Summit treated racial issues with similar irreverence, often drawing attention to Sammy's black identity set against the backdrop of racial segregation and the advancing civil rights movement.

In exploring racial identity as the subject of popular entertainment, The Rat Pack also connects itself with a longstanding American form, the blackface minstrel show featuring white performers masquerading as black performers through a variety of musical and dramatic stereotypes. In the nineteenth century this format, however distasteful to contemporary sensibilities, was hugely influential in developing conventions that, according to Robert C. Toll 'not only restructured American popular stage entertainment, they also revealed its huge audiences' central concerns, needs, and desires' (Toll, 1974, p.26). This had a long and influential reach, and its impact on The Summit and entertainers of their generation can be directly argued. Al Jolson, the most successful blackface performer of the recording era, had been as celebrated as Bing Crosby, the idol of both Sinatra and Martin. Martin recorded cover versions of many of Jolson's songs, and his former partner Jerry Lewis was the son of a blackface performer in the Jolson mould. Sammy Davis Jr impersonated Jolson as part of his act and, incredibly, had himself appeared in blackface as a child performer for a parody of Jolson's *Sonny Boy*. Within The Rat Pack, Martin, Sinatra and Davis Jr were all given to impersonating the Kingfish, a character from the sitcom *Amos 'n' Andy* which, although performed on TV by black actors, had been created on the radio by white performers in the stereotypical blackface tradition. Sinatra himself had performed in blackface - to his later shame - while cutting his teeth as a performer with his original band The Hoboken Four.

The construction of The Summit is more indebted, though, to the way in which nineteenth century minstrelsy organised itself into troupes. According to Michael Pickering, the format was the means by which 'it concentrated into one whole package an array of talent that included dancing, dramatic, comedic, acrobatic, juggling and other skills, as well as vocal and musical prowess' (Pickering, 2008, p.15). Such a core structure was equally essential both to accommodate and facilitate the versatility of The Rat Pack, and they achieved it by adapting the same fundamental framing device. At the centre of the minstrel troupe was a figure called Mr. Interlocutor, who 'symbolized weighty dignity' and 'acted as a guiding spirit, orchestrating the progress of the whole show' (Pickering, 2008, p.16). He was undermined in doing so by two 'end-men', commonly known as Tambo and Bones, who would 'undercut the pretension and gravitas of Mr. Interlocutor' and generally offer 'subversive humour, as for instance when they struck up grotesque attitudes frantic contortions during the performance of musical numbers' (Pickering, 2008, p.16). These figures persist in American popular culture: Dean acted as Mr. Interlocutor to Jerry Lewis's *Bones*, and Peter Lawford occupied a similar role as the foil to Jimmy Durante. In The Rat Pack, the combined experience of seasoned nightclub performers absorbed them to such an extent that they circulated much more fluently. As The Leader and The Hub of the Big Wheel, Sinatra and Bishop largely shared the role of Mr. Interlocutor, though either could adopt the more comic, subversive position. Martin and Davis Jr, in deference to Sinatra, stayed more or less in the roles of Tambo and Bones throughout, while Lawford, as ever, was the understudy to everyone else, filling the necessary gaps where needed.

The treatment of racial concerns, embedded within the traditional structures and strategies of performance, was one area that did cross between the private and public concerns of The Summit. Rojek (2004, p.138) observes that '[t]hey were outsiders by virtue of the first generation immigrant status of the four white performers. This was reinforced by Sammy Davis Jr's color and the treatment of him by the others as an equal. Mixed race acts were relatively rare during this period.' Davis's membership of The Rat Pack was a conscious and public challenge to racial segregation, a battle that both he and Sinatra had been fighting for years, however compromised this might have been by the aesthetic structures they adopted.

Sinatra's commitment to civil rights came from a personal belief that Italian-Americans, African-Americans and other minority ethnic groups shared the same experiences and the same fight. Recalling the lynching of Italian immigrants, he pointed out that 'it wasn't only black people hanging from the ends of those[...]ropes' (Smith, 2005, p.17). His Italian heritage was as much a part of his public persona as his singing, and attracted almost as much media attention. The Italian-American identity does not play out its influence in the nightclub, variety arena, however, but follows a lineage down from the film work, and *Ocean's 11* in particular. Sinatra was already associated with the mafia in the popular imagination, and so even a semi-comic film that involved a gang heist in Las Vegas could only reinforce this association. The patterning of movie gangsters since *The Summit* is as indebted to Sinatra's Rat Pack as *The Rat Pack* is to the world of blackface minstrelsy.

The Godfather is a case in point. Sinatra is widely seen as the model for the character of Johnny Fontaine, the singer whose career has hit the skids but gets resurrected thanks to a horse's head and a plum film role. When Fontaine sings however, the deeper, smoother sound and Italianate accompaniment, complete with mandolins, is far more reminiscent of Dean Martin. It is also not too fanciful to see the characters and hierarchy of the brothers, and their loyalty to Don Corleone (a role that Sinatra coveted) as invested with the spirit of *The Clan*. Wolcott sees this patterning recurring in post-*Summit* gangster films. 'Rat Pack male-bonding infiltrates such revisionist guy pictures as *Goodfellas* (a rotting-carcass Rat Pack) and *The Usual Suspects* (the twist being that the soulful gang leader is played for a fool by the Joey Bishop mascot, portrayed by Kevin Spacey). Quentin Tarantino's stuff has a perverse Rat Pack streak' (Wolcott, 1997, p.199).

Tarantino's perverse adoption of *The Rat Pack* is most evident in *Reservoir Dogs*, with Lawrence Tierney recalling Sinatra in both his gang-leader persona and his 'My way or the highway' speech. Michael Madsen's portrayal of Mr Blonde also assumes the casual saunter and drawl of Dean Martin's stage and screen persona. When Bacall saw the bedraggled, dishevelled, rabble rousers in the 1950s she could just as easily have called them reservoir dogs as a rat pack. The film explicitly announces its debt to *The Rat Pack* in the classic opening sequence which picks up exactly where *Ocean's 11* left off.

The gang in Tarantino's vision is also organised, dressed and named in a manner which maintains distinct identities within a unifying framework, just as the Spice Girls would do a few years later. The four surviving members of the disastrous robbery - Mr Pink, Mr Blonde, Mr White and Mr Orange - meet in a pre-arranged hideout, still in their sharp suits and shades. They are joined there by shell-suited Nice Guy Eddie, who, like Joey Bishop, is 'in it, but not quite of it'. Despite the urgency, drama and severity of the situation, they still find time to crack jokes, show off, talk about music. Mr Blonde even sings and dances. But these names and performances are meant to hide the real identities of their owners, not reveal them. And so Tarantino pursues the myth of the Rat Pack to its logical conclusion. In the ultimately private world of their hideaway, they must keep their fake identities, maintain the performance, both offstage and on, right through to the bitter, bloody and still-glamorous end.

Within the history of American popular culture, then, *The Rat Pack* drew from its own skills and knowledge in a variety of media and styles to both draw on and reinvent the tradition of the troupe. Their redirection of this tradition focussed on the successful blurring of their private and public personas, with their friendship masking the careful artistic construction of their seemingly spontaneous cabarets. This shift has also been absorbed into popular culture, in all of its glory, all of its glamour and all of its danger.