Sarabande

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Sarabande

- Original Danish version written for Fastaval 2013

- Translated and adapted for Stockholm Scenario Festival 2013

- Genre: Drama - Players: 12

- Gamemasters: 1-2 - Duration: 5,5 hours

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Introduction

Sarabande is a scenario for 12 participantsthat -- by the means of musical, bodily and dramatic effects -- lets the participants unfold relations and conflicts in a little café on Montmartre in Paris at the end of the 19th century.

The participants will establish characters based on the bohemian lifestyle and, throughout the scenario, play out a number of scenes centred round the concepts of freedom, love, beauty and truth.

The Idea

Scenarios often make use of roles with the focus on inner thoughts and conditions, where the participant receives information about the personality, conflicts, goals and relations of the role. In this scenario, the focus is on music and the body as the basis of character generation. The participants are guided to use a piece of music for building the external characteristics of the role and the inner emotional life of the character. They experience how change and development of the role happens through changes in the external characteristics.



In the same way that roles often are communicated through text and words, many scenarios are also primarily played with focus on the dialogue. This scenario instead turns to another focus and lets the scenes play out through the use of aesthetic means of expression. This way of playing focuses the dramatic intensity of the scenario. That's what this scenario really is about: Playing out great emotion and drama for everyone to see.

The Starting Point

In a small café in Montmartre, a group of people meet day after day at the turn of the 19th century. With their individual rules, conflicts, fears, assumptions and commitments, they play through the same routines again and again. It is as if their lives are frozen in one atonal unstable harmony seeking redemption, but unable to find peace.

The participants will play the 12 persons who attend this café day after day and meet again and again. Throughout the scenario, they will be given the possibility to either play out their conflicts in a series of scenes or to play out their internal tensions in small musical and bodily intermezzos.

This documents describes how you as the game master can establish the surroundings and lights needed for the scenario; how to lead the participants through the warm up and character creation; and, finally, how to run the scenario.

The Setting

As you now know, Sarabande is set on Montmartre in the 1890s, but to establish the surroundings for the actual play, some preparations must be made as described below.

The Location

Sarabande requires a room that will emulate the café where the characters meet every day. This room should be at least about eight meters on each side, but could be larger. If this room already contains disrupting elements, these need to be concealed or removed – like kids drawings in a class room, art on the walls that wouldn't be there on Montmartre, modern technology and similar items that could disturb the illusion. If you have a black box theatre room available, this would go rather nicely with the scenario, since a stage is cleaned of foreign elements and usually has sound and lighting available, which are also necessary for this scenario as detailed below.

Some small tables and chairs are required to make the interior of the café. These pieces of furniture should be covered with tablecloths and, if the venue allows it, lighted candles. If candles are not allowed, an alternative is small table lamps of neutral appearance. If placed discretely, they will light the room from the bottom up as opposed to ceiling lights, which would disrupt the intimate feel this scenario requires.

In addition the scenario makes use of wine glasses and beverages to elude to wine and absinth. This effect could be made by the use of juice in the appropriate colours.

Music is one of the key elements in the scenario, so you will need a means to play music loud enough to fill the room and overpower any noises from outside. You could use a PA System, but we have also run the scenario with a computer and a couple of loud speakers depending on the size of the room used. Music should cover noises and disturbances so the participants' can

fully immerse themselves into the scenario.

The participants will be playing artistic people who express themselves through art, so the tools for them to do this are also required. This could be paper and pen for drawing and writing, an easel and palette for painting, a guitar or another instrument to play on, etc.

You as a gamemaster will need a small bell used for marking cuts between the scenes as described later in this document.

Finally the players should be informed after enrolling into the scenario that they should wear neutral basic costumes like a black pair of pants and black shirt or perhaps a black dress. They are welcome to bring other clothes that fit the setting, but costuming is not needed for the scenario.

The gamemaster will bring along some basic shorts, jackets, hats and other props that will be used to establish the characters. A sample list of props is provided to the right, but the gamemaster can choose to bring some extra props if he deems it appropriate. Make sure at least one prop is available per participant and the props are easily recognisable for the other players. The goal is not to reconstruct historically- correct Montmartre; the physical objects are used as a part of the character creation to symbolise the role and. later on, to use in the art that the participants will produce.

The Props:

- A Top Hat
- A Sixpence Hat
- A Students Hat
- A Bowler Hat
- A Flower
- A Feather Pen
- A Monocle
- A Palette
- A Cravat
- A Ladies Hat with Veil
- A Vest
- A Dark Skirt
- A White Skirt
- A Red Skirt
- A Pair of Gloves
- A Moustache
- A Scarf
- A Bow Tie
- A Pair of Suspenders
- A Pocket Watch
- A Notebook

Running the Scenario

The scenario has an estimated duration of 6 hours, given that the room has been prepared before start. The preparation of the room will probably take a couple of hours. After that the course of the scenario is as follows:

- 15 minutes presentation of the scenario
- 30 minutes warm up
- 60 minutes character creation
- 30 minutes training of personal routine
- 15 minutes of dramatic techniques
- 135 minutes of played scenes
- 30 minutes debrief

This gives a duration of 5,5 hours and half an hour for unforeseen events and delays. The specifics of each part of this course are explained below.

Presentation

When all participants have arrived, the scenario starts with a presentation by the gamemasters of what will happen in the next few hours. This presentation should include:

- A general introduction to the form and setting of the scenario
- An overview of the scheduled course of events

It is important that this presentation is done in a way to create a safe atmosphere, so the players will have the confidence in the gamemasters required to immerse themselves fully. At the same time, the tone of the scenario should be set. This is a scenario about drama and emotion, so from the very beginning it should be communicated as a tragic opera and not a comedy.

Warm up

The warm up for the scenario is a number of exercises with the purpose of getting the participants acquainted with each other and to loosen up tension. The scenario will push the participants' limits several times, so its important that they aren't afraid of exposing themselves in front of the rest of the group.

They should be taken through the following exercises:

- Names and Presentation
- Flamingo and Penguins¹
- Moving in Space
- Helper/Opponent
- The Weight of Age

The goal of the first exercise is to give the participants an initial familiarity with one another. We need to break the ice and we need them to start focusing on their body language. Gather all of the participants together in a circle standing up. One of the gamemasters starts by introducing herself by name and by making a clear gesture, like a jump or a big bow all the way to the floor. After that, all of the participants repeat the name and the gesture as to mimic what the gamemaster just did. Now the participant to the left of the gamemaster says her

¹ This exercise is intended primarily for groups who don't know each other well beforehand and can be left out if people are already well acquainted.

name and makes a new gesture and everyone repeats the name and the gesture. The same procedure is repeated all the way around the circle until everybody has presented themselves.

The rest of the exercises can be found "Workshophåndbogen" – a guide to workshops for role-playing – so they are not described further here.

The Archetypes

In the appendix of this document, a series of short descriptions are provided for the 12 archetypes that will appear in the scenario. They are not tied to a specific gender, age or social status. These short descriptions, in combination with the props and the workshop, will create the characters that the participants will play. The descriptions are very short and are meant as open proposals with a few central personality traits available for the participant to use while creating her role. They are intentionally worded as questions that require interpretation to make the participant take ownership of the role.

They describe universal types of people that could be present in all types of settings and are carefully selected and juxtaposed to create tension and conflict.

The Twelve Archetypes

- The Grey
- The Adventurer
- The Lover
- The Caregiver
- The Rebel
- The Scholar
- The Innocent
- The Ruler
- The Hero
- The Creator
- The Jester
- The Idealist

Character Creation

The process of character creation is about bringing the participants, props and archetypes through a series of exercises that will combine them and give them body and weight.

Through this process, the participants will define the physical demeanor of the character, a number of relations to other characters, a goal, and a personal routine expressing the inner life of the character.

Before the scenario starts, the gamemaster needs to have a printed copy of the archetype descriptions, so that they can hand these sheets out to the participants. To gain the participant's engagement and motivation, the archetypes are handed out in a way that allows the participants to choose their own archetype. The names of the twelve archetypes are read out loud one after another. Each time a name is read out loud the participants are asked whether they would like that archetype. If only one participant asks to play that archetype, it is given to her, if nobody asks for it or if several participants want the same archetype, then it is skipped until all the other archetypes have been read out loud. At this point, hopefully there will only be one left with an interest in that archetype and it can be given to this person. Either way, the archetypes are given away one after another until each participant has exactly one archetype.

The scenario has no secrets, so the participants are welcome to read each other's archetypes and give each other recommendations and good ideas.

² "Workshophåndbogen" is available for download at: http://www.munthe-kaas.dk/downloads/wshb.pdf

The participants are now divided into four groups based on their Archetype as described below. The groups are

composed as to give a good base for group tension and dramatic

stories:

- 1) Group 1
 - a. The Grey
 - b. The Adventurer
 - c. The Lover
- 2) Group 2
 - a. The Caregiver
 - b. The Rebel
 - c. The Scholar
- 3) Group 3
 - a. The Innocent
 - b. The Ruler
 - c. The Hero
- 4) Group 4
 - a. The Creator
 - b. The Jester
 - c. The Idealist



With the groups formed, the participants are introduced to the four central themes: Beauty, Freedom, Truth and Love.

The groups must now decide to have at least one of them as the centre of their conflict. It is allowed to use more than one theme and it is allowed for several groups to focus on the same theme.

The themes are open for interpretation, so Love could both be romantic love, physical desire, love for your family, God, nation or something else. Freedom could be the freedom from a domineering wife, freedom to create your art, or perhaps the fight for political freedom.

The themes ensure the connection between the conflicts and the bohemian setting and give the participants inspiration for creating characters and conflicts.

The conflicts that the participants create are featured in the scenes, so the participants must be inspired and provoked to create conflicts that have great importance to their character and cannot be solved in a way where everybody wins.

The groups are now seated at four separate tables and given about 15 minutes to brainstorm roles, relations, and conflicts in their group. The gamemasters move around and help the groups in this process by giving them feedback and making sure that they cover roles, relations, and conflicts. When the gamemasters feel that a group is beginning to take form, the next step is to ask about the details of the role: What is their name? What is their profession? Do they have family? Why do they visit the café?

When all the groups are ready, everybody is gathered in a circle. A participant from each group briefly tells the rest of the participants about her group's roles, relations, and conflicts. The other participants are now allowed to give feedback to the group. After all groups have presented their concept and have received feedback, they are allowed a couple of minutes to integrate the feedback if needed.

The Four Themes:

- Freedom
- Love
- Truth
- Beauty

Meanwhile, the gamemasters prepare the props on a table so that when everybody is ready, the participants are allowed to pick one prop each to signify their character. When everybody has chosen one, the participants are allowed to pick further props if available. However, they still need to decide which prop is the one that signifies their characters.

Next, with names, concepts, and props, the participants are asked to perform the first warm up exercise -- Names and Presentation -- again, but now with their character's name and body language.

Afterwards, the MaxMini exercise from Workshophåndbogen is used to give the participants an understanding of the dynamics of the group of characters. They are asked to spread out based on how much or how little their characters identify with the following statements:

- Who is the first to be served by the waiter in the café?
- Who believes she has the greatest artistic talent?
- Who actually has the greatest artistic talent?
- Who has the most to lose?
- Who has the most to gain?

The Routine

With roles and group relations established, the next step is to create the personal routine. Through this process, the participants will start with just a few steps and end up having full choreography for their characters. This process can possibly evolve into a full-fledged dance, but that isn't required. The participants need to be able to remember their choreography and repeat it in beat with the music. The following steps will enable them to do that quickly.

First, the participants are asked to act as if they are entering the café – as they do every day. The action needs to take a full minute, so perhaps they take a walk, order something in the bar, drink from a glass and starts writing,

for example. All the participants first find their individual starting spot and then the gamemaster takes time while everybody moves around for a full minute. The gamemaster lets everybody know when 15, 30, 45, and 60 seconds have passed so that the participants get a feel for the length of a minute. This process is repeated 5-10 times until all the participants can fill out a full minute. Then, everybody is asked to incorporate a moment when they are high, which could include standing or a chair, jumping etc. Then, players should incorporate a moment when they are low, for example sitting on the floor, lying down, etc. Thus, the participants are forced to use the room more actively.



Now, the music is added and the participants repeat the Routine to the music; the tune used is "La valse d'Amélie." After about five repeats of the Routine, the participants should have a feel for the music. Now, they are asked to do the Routine with as much anger as possible, then afterwards, with as much joy as possible and then they are asked to perform it with double their normal effort. At this point, the gamemaster can tell the participants that they are even allowed to dance if they feel like it and will give them a few more runs through the Routine. Now, probably several of the participants will actually dance their way through it.

³ The tune can be found on Spotify: Yann Tiersen – La valse d'Amélie (Version orchestre) – Only the first minute is used until the ending scene, when the full tune is played.

The participants now have a basic Routine. The next step is to use these Routines to build relations. The participants should be asked during this phase to pick a "friend" among the other participants who isn't a part of the participants' group. The participant should incorporate the friend into the routine and show that this is a friend with her body language. After that process, the participants talk with their chosen friend about what their relation should be and with anybody who might have chosen the participant as a friend. Afterwards, the process is repeated, but this time, the participants should choose an enemy while performing the Routine. In the same way, the participants are allowed to talk about the specifics of their relationship after the Routine.

The Play

After the workshops, the scenario is played in a series of scenes where each scene starts with all the characters performing the Routine to the music. The purpose of the Routine is to set the feel and mood of the scenario and to open up the participant's creativity. The Routine also lets the participants expose the emotions of their characters with their body.

As described previously, the Routine is rehearsed in the warm up and the participants are supposed to use this Routine between each scene as a way of cutting the scene. They are allowed to evolve the Routine and change it into something else if they are inspired by the scenario or if other characters force their characters to do something else. However, they are still required to start and stop at the same place and at the same time. The change in the Routine is one of the scenarios' core mechanics, because the first time one character changes what she is doing, she will cause a cascade of effects throughout the whole Routine, where other characters are forced to adjust what they are doing. The players bring these changes in the Routine back into the game. Thus, the Routine sets the frame for the evolution of the physical actions of the characters and the changes in other aspects of the character that will follow.

During the Routine, talking is not allowed -- only moving to the music.

The end of each scene and thus the start of the Routine are marked by a gamemaster acting as the owner of the café. She rings the small bell signalling that the café is serving the last round. This is a queue for the players to find the start position for their Routine. When the Routine is complete, the next scene starts. In this way, each scene is like a day in the café played in just 10 minutes. Each Routine marks the passing to the next day with the same events happening over and over again until somebody decide to do something else.

In the scenes, the play will revolve around the dramatic tensions and conflicts thought up by the participants. To ensure that focus is on the aesthetics and dramatics, the scenario has an alternative form for the scenes. By limiting the ways that the participants can express their characters, the scenario forces them to concentrate and condense their effort in the scenes.

We find ourselves on Montmartre in a bohemian era with bohemian characters and a focus on what you might call the primary virtues of this era: Freedom, Truth, Beauty and Love. These themes are not only incorporated into each group setting as the frame of the stories to be told, but also sets the frame for how the participants are allowed to express themselves. On Montmartre there is no need to express yourself if not to express Freedom, Truth, Beauty and Love. Therefore, all regular talk is prohibited in all the scenes of the scenario. The artistic spirits of Montmartre care not for small talk and idle conversation. So, the characters will have to express themselves through dramatic and aesthetic means. You can recite a poem, give a speech, sing a song, paint your emotions on the canvas, quote a scene from a play, etc. to communicate what you feel and think.

These aesthetic conversations should be visible for everybody. The scenario has no secrets and the participants should be urged to bring out their conflicts and dramatic scenes in the open for everybody to enjoy.

Of course, these methods are in no way a normal way to communicate and probably there was a lot of small talk in the real Montmartre, but this scenario isn't realistic and it isn't about the real Montmartre. It is a symbolic and

surreal scenario, where the focus is on the drama and emotion of the scenes and not the plot and the historical realism of the setting.

Some participants will probably find this form of play challenging, which is why we use the Routine as a cut scene. The Routine inspires and awakens the creative notions in the participants and gives them a minute of reassurance in something known between the scenes.

Some participants will sit low in some scenes and perhaps not do a lot. That shouldn't worry the gamemaster; it is part of the scenario that they will need time to think, and enjoy what the other participants come up with.

Some participants might try to engage in parallel monologues, so it is important to tell the participants before the scenes begin that they should be careful to avoid regular dialogue altogether.

When the participants get the hang of this form of play, they will obtain an extremely focused way of communicating and build up a lot of tension in the scenes-- tension that will be let out in the Routines.

The players should be informed about the style of play after the warm ups and having practiced the Routine. At this point, they will be ready to believe that they can be creative and express themselves through art. If this information comes too early, you might scare the participants and they will never discover how truly creative they can be when given the right circumstances.

Still they will probably react with anxiety at this point and be unsure about how to actually do this. Before the scenario begins, a few dramatic exercises are performed to let them try the form.

Dramatic Exercises

To prepare the participants for the form of play, we do a monologue exercise. All the participants gather round in a circle with the gamemasters. One gamemaster starts by showing a monologue, where she tells about her morning: first, in ordinary terms and then, afterwards, she repeats it with dramatic expressions. This could be pauses, accentuations, rhymes, repetitions etc.

Then, the participants are paired up two and two. Each couple does the same exercise, taking shifts reciting their morning, with the small addition that they are asked to stand back to back. They aren't allowed to tell their partner when the story is finished. The partner should pay attention and start her monologue when she hears that the first one is over. This forces the participants to pay attention to each other and not to interrupt.

When everybody is done, the participants are gathered in a circle again. Now they have tried verbal dramatic communication; the next step is to try non-verbal dramatic communication.

The participants should again pair up two and two to tell the partner about their morning, but this time they aren't allowed to use words. Now, they have to mime, dance, or in some other way show the partner their morning.

The Symbol

As the participants now know the form and style of the play, the gamemasters should tell them the reason they each have a prop, which should be significant for their character. The players should use this prop a symbol when referring to the character in art. It is so much easier to paint a red flower in a woman's hair or a man with a top hat then to give a naturalistic painting of another person. For example, the participants are welcome to use the symbol when mentioning somebody in a speech instead of the name of the character.

The Execution

The last preparation before the scenario can start is to inform the participants that the gamemasters will function as the waiters in the café, but they won't interfere in any way with the play. From this point on, the participants own the scenario and everything that happens.

The gamemasters should tell the participants the following:

- 1) The scenario consists of 10 scenes of 10 minutes duration.
- 2) The scenario starts with the Routine and between each scene we have the Routine.
- 3) Before ending each scene, the gamemasters will ring the bell and everybody should find their starting positions for the Routine within 10 seconds.
- 4) In the 9th scene, the gamemasters will yell "Final Rounds" when ringing the bell, signalling that the next scene is the final one; anything the characters have been holding back should be let out in this last scene.
- 5) After the last scene, the scenario ends with a double Routine.⁴
- 6) In the scenes, only dramatic or aesthetic forms of communication are allowed.
- 7) In the Routine, words are not allowed.
- 8) The participants have responsibility over their own story line, so they should not play out the full scenario in the first scene.

And just to make sure everyone understands the mechanics, a single scene that starts and ends with a Routine is run as a drill. This can be cut short with just a couple of minutes in the scene. If any of the players started dialogues during the drill, this should be commented on by the gamemaster, so that everyone knows, that dialogues are not allowed, and the participants should be allowed to ask any questions, they might have.

The number and the length of the scenes is based on our experience with the scenario, but you might want to cut some scenes a bit shorter or longer during the scenario if it fits with the dramatic feel in the scenes. It can often be a good idea to stop the participants while at the peek of a tension to keep that energy in the Routine. During the scenes music should be played, as it motivates the participants to move, dance and express them selves. A Spotify playlist has been made for the scenario⁵, and our experience is that the music from Amelie From Montmartre is the most inspiring for the participants, but we welcome experimentation on the choice of music.

As you will experience as gamemaster, the music is the way you can direct the participants, so if used correctly it can make scenes more intense and steer the action in certain directions. So the best advice here is, that you should hear the music for the scenario until you know it really well and then pick the numbers to suit the participants style of play as the scenario plays out.

Debriefing

After the scenes the scenario is ended with a short debriefing, where the participants are given the opportunity to share their thoughts of the scenario and the gamemasters can thank them for their participation.

⁴ The gamemaster should just let the track run until end in the final Routine.

⁵ http://open.spotify.com/user/1146095552/playlist/0KPkfYDFrS25sCmSlIi3wT

The Archetypes

The Innocent

Your goal is to be happy by doing things the right way.

Do you fear you'll do something wrong?
Do you sometimes become dull in your naive innocence?

Is your greatest strength your faith and your optimism?

You could be: The Idealist, The Child, The Traditionalist, The Naïve, The Saint, The Romantic or The Dreamer.

The Adventurer

Your goal is to find yourself by always seeking new places and escaping boredom.

Du you fear to be caught op in normality? Is your greatest weakness a lack of a goal? Do you run the risk of ending up as an outcast? Are you independent and ambitious?

You could be: The Adventurer, The Individualist, The Pilgrim, The Iconoclast or The Seeker.

The Grey

Your goal is to belong somewhere by showing classical virtues, being grounded and regular. Do you fear that you'll stand out of the flock? Du you run the risk of losing yourself in an attempt to fit in with all the others? Are you realistic, empathic and sincere?

You could be: The Orphan, The Proletarian, The Hardworking Labourer, The Good Neighbour or

The Rebel

Your goal is to overthrow all that doesn't work by disturbing, destroying and chocking.

Do you fear being powerless?

Do you run the risk of turning to a darker path and end up as a criminal?

Is your greatest strength your ferocity and freedom of thought?

You could be: The Outlaw, The Revolutionary, The Misfit, The Suffragette or The Iconoclast.

The Hero

The Nice Girl.

Your goal is making the world a better place through strong and competent action in all situations.

Do you fear being seen as a coward or as week? Is your greatest weakness your arrogance and your need to always find the next battle? Are you competent and brave?

You could be: The Soldier, The Victor, The Celebrity, The Saviour or The Winner.

The Lover

Your goal is to obtain a close relationship with another person, whom you love or desire by being as physically and spiritually attractive as possible. Do you fear being alone or being unwanted? Do you run the risk of losing your own identity in your pursuit to do what others would have you do? Is your greatest strength your passion, gratitude and commitment?

You could be: The Partner, The Friend, The Enthusiast, The Wife/Husband or The Lover.

The Caregiver

Your goal is to protect others by helping them and doing things for them.

Do you fear being perceived as egoistic or ungrateful?

Is your greatest weakness that others exploit you? Do you run the risk of making a martyr of yourself?

You could be: The Saint, The Altruist, The Parent, The Helper or The Follower.

The Creator

Your goal is to create something of lasting value through your creative abilities.

Do you fear being mediocre?

Is your greatest weakness your perfectionism? Du you run the risk of making premature solutions? Is your greatest strength your creativity and imagination?

You could be: The Artist, The Inventor, The Musician, The Innovator, The Writer or The Dreamer.

The Jester

Your goal is to live life for your own pleasure by making fun and games.

Do you fear being boring?

Is your greatest weakness your levity?

Do you waste your time?

Is your greatest strength your enthusiasm?

You could be: The Fool, The Scoundrel, The Swindler, The Joker or The Comedian.

The Idealist

Your goal is to make dreams become real by building a vision and following it.

Do you fear that you might hurt somebody unwillingly?

Do you manipulate others in your attempts to make them follow your vision?

Is your strength your ability to find solutions where everybody wins?

You could be: The Visionary, The Inventor, The Leader, The Revolutionary, The Union Man, The Fanatic.

The Scholar

Your goal is to understand the world by using your wit and by gathering information and knowledge. Do you fear that you might be tricked or deceived? Are you slow to act?

Is your greatest strength your wisdom and your cunning?

You could be: The Expert, The Sage, The Detective, The Advisor, The Thinker, The Philosopher, The Academic, The Teacher or The Mentor.

The Ruler

Your goal is to create a successful society or family through the use of power.

Do you fear losing control and everything will end in chaos?

Are you an authoritarian?

Is your greatest weakness that you can't hand over responsibility?

Is your greatest strength your accountability and your leadership skills?

You could be: The Boss, The Aristocrat, The King, The Politician, The Role Model or The Administrator.