

THEATER NOTES by Sidney B. Simon (482 WORDS)

A 1966 CLASSIC GIVEN FRESH LEGS

This is short and sweet. I urge you to get it together and treat yourself to evening off Island and go to The Laboratory Theater of Florida production of “Cabaret.” You may have seen it before, but not like the brilliant version they have put together out there on Second Avenue in downtown Ft. Meyers.

“Cabaret” was a hit musical and ran up an amazing run of 1,166 performances on Broadway. It was the show that launched Joel Grey into his illustrious career.

Lucky us, we have a chance to see an utterly fresh take on the musical. You enter a delightful replica of the famous Kit Kat Cabaret, the way it might have been back in Berlin in the early 1930's. You can sit with wine and snacks and be taken on a journey that will shake you up the entire evening.

The Nazis are rising to power, and the impact on everyone connected to the shabby nightclub has to face it. The romantic plot involves a 19-year-old English cabaret performer Sally Bowles and her lover, or one of her lovers, a young American writer Cliff Bradshaw. There is a tender subplot involving the owner of the boarding house (sometimes brothel), Frau Schneider and her aging suitor, Herr Schultz. You won't be surprised to find out he's Jewish.

The triumph of the evening goes to the outstanding director, Brenda Kensler. One of the cast members, Jason Drew who plays Cliff Bradshaw says in the Playbill. “I couldn't be happier to have met the amazingly talented team of “Cabaret,” especially the uber-talented, daring visionary director.”

Imagine Community Theater (these people mostly have day jobs) risking a play with 15 characters, not any who are just rare walk-ons? Kensler wove this thing into a “spectacle” of dazzling proportions. What performances she gets out of her cast. What power her choreography gets from the amazing array of Kit Kat dancers. She risked putting some very heavy women into all the dances. Highest accolades to you Ms. Kensler, for the risks at veery edge of the evening. And you won.

My dear readers, just wait until you see the bright kid who steals Joel Grey, with his very first “Welcommen, Welcommen,” He dances, he mimes, he punches

those line, and never misses a beat. I'm applauding Ty Landers. We will hear from you again, I know. In the big time. So, too, the bubbling Taylor Adair who nails the role of Sally, a back breaking task, and she does it.

Enough. It's a must see. Get there fast. I predict a sell out house. And you only have until Feb 28th. Pick up that phone. When the stage lights go dark, there will have been no other place you would have wanted to be. That was true for me in spades. (239) 218-0481. And the website for ordering tickets is:

www.LABORATORYTHEATERFLORIDA.COM

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