

WOB to present Iowa Premiere of New Version of Cabaret

Written by Randal K. West
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Way Off Broadway, Iowa's only professional musical theatre company and the residential company at the Stephen Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts is delighted to announce their Iowa premiere production, the newest version of Cabaret which won the Tony for Best Revival. Cabaret is a musical based on a book written by Christopher Isherwood, music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb. The 1966 Broadway production became a hit and spawned a 1972 film as well as numerous subsequent productions including a major "re-think" revival in 1998, which WOB will present.

Cabaret is based on John Van Druten's 1951 play, I Am a Camera, which in turn was adapted from the 1939 short novel Goodbye to Berlin by Christopher Isherwood. Set in 1931 Berlin as the Nazis are rising to power, it focuses on nightlife at the seedy Kit Kat Klub and revolves around the 19-year-old English cabaret performer Sally Bowles and her relationship with the young American writer Cliff Bradshaw. A sub-plot involves the doomed romance between German boarding house owner Fräulein Schneider and her elderly suitor Herr Schultz, a Jewish fruit vendor. Overseeing the action is the Master of Ceremonies at the Kit Kat Klub which serves as a constant metaphor for the tenuous and threatening state of late Weimar Germany throughout the show.

The 1967 original production won 8 Tony Awards including Best Musical and the Bob Fosse movie won 8 Oscars including Best Director. The 1998 version, which is what WOB is producing in its Iowa premiere, won 4 Tony's, including Best Revival. Nationally known pop music singer Lyric Benson will make her WOB debut as Sally Bowles and Jonathan Christopher will return after performing in WOB's successful tour of "Plaid Tidings" this past fall. Other WOB favorites include Robert Kemp as Cliff, Margaret Clair as Frau Schneider, Brendan Thomas as Herr Schultz, George Kelley as Ernst, Natalie Saunders as Frau Kost, The Kit Kat Girls are played by Madeline Sloat, Noel Wotherspoon, Pricilla Marljar, Rebecca

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Frasier, Sara Hawthorne, and Nina Benjamin. Shawn David Walker and Brian Graziani as German Sailors, Mitchel Price plays Max and Gareth West is the Nazi youth.

Cabaret is produced by Paul Praither, will be directed and choreographed by Artistic Director Randal K West and musically directed by Shari Rhoads who will also conduct the live orchestra.

Cabaret will open at the Stephen Sondheim Center in Fairfield, Iowa on March 29 and also play on Saturday the 30th, both at 7:30pm. Another 4 shows run the following weekend Thursday-Saturday April 4-6 at 7:30pm and will close its Fairfield run at 2:00pm on Sunday April 7th. Following the Fairfield dates Cabaret will travel to the new Coralville Performing Arts Center for another two shows on April 12&13 both at 7:30pm. The Sondheim Tickets can be reserved by calling the box office M-F 12-6pm at 641-472-ARTS or going to FairfieldACC.com. The Coralville tickets can be reserved by calling [319.248.9370](tel:319.248.9370) or going to coralvillearts.org