

# SURFLIGHT REVIEW

## 'Cabaret' a Guaranteed Good Time in AC

By TOM WRONA

"Cabaret" is one of the best SurfFlight productions I've ever seen. It's right up there with my faves like "A Chorus Line," "Camelot," "State Fair" and "The Scarlet Pimpernel." But you won't find it at the SurfFlight's Beach Haven theater.

Last year SurfFlight signed a deal with Trump and Jersey Shore Entertainment to produce shows at the Trump Plaza. Sure, we (and our advertisers) would like you (and your dollars) to stay on the Island, but if you insist on going to Atlantic City, "Cabaret" is the only way I know you can spend two hours in a casino, have a guaranteed good time and be out only \$25 a person.

Just one week after telling you that I'll never like musical drama as much as musical comedy, I have to tell that this musical drama (with a few very funny lines) is a superb play, superbly presented. And scenic designer Ted LeFevre – whose judgment on a minor point in "Shenandoah" I questioned last week – has created an ingenious and attractive set that operates as a nightclub, a train compartment, a boarding house and more, with a minimum of resetting. Give that man a budget and he'll give



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**HOME AWAY FROM HOME:** The cast of 'Cabaret' is playing this month at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, but the glitzy show is a production of the SurfFlight Theatre team. Christopher Sloan, center, is 'perfect' in a demanding role.

you a marvelous set.

With longer runs and a theater with almost twice the capacity of Beach Haven's, the Trump Plaza productions generate the cash needed for more elaborate production values. And the cast is top notch, too.

Erica Hanrahan plays Sally Bowles, the part so completely identified with Liza Minelli. If you're a fan of Minelli's interpretation of Sally, you'll love Hanrahan's. Yet Hanrahan doesn't try to imitate Minelli; she makes Sally her own. So if, like me, you're not a big fan of Minelli, you'll like Hanrahan even more.

Sally's leading man is the American writer Clifford Bradshaw (Tom Sellwood). Next to Sally's exuberant decadence, Bradshaw is a rather plain and reserved character. And that's exactly how Sellwood plays him. He's an excellent choice.

The supporting cast is equally good. Ed Romanoff is appealing as the jovial smugger Ernst Ludwig, and repellent when we learn the unsavory truth. Both Rebecca Hoodwin as Fraulein Schneider, the boarding house landlady, and John Dewar as her Jewish boarder, are funny and poignant. As Fraulein Kost, the boarder with a suspiciously large number of "cousins" and "nephews" who hap-

pen to be sailors, Carolyn Popp surprised me. I didn't care for her when she starred in SurfFlight's fall 2003 production of "I Do! I Do!" (I didn't care for the play, either). But as Kost, she's perfect, and appealing in a way I didn't see the first time I saw her.

I've saved the best for last. Christopher Sloan is beyond perfect as the Master of Ceremonies. This is a difficult and demanding role, and Sloan's performance is flawless. Pick any superlative you want to throw at him and he's worthy of it: amazing, superb, remarkable, to name a few. His performance alone is worth the price of a ticket.

I have only two complaints. The Atlantic City audience was, as usual, vulgar and boorish, talking non-stop to each other and even occasionally into their cell phones. And this show is a full two hours long with *no* intermission. But don't let either of these issues keep you away from this outstanding production. What good is sitting alone in your room? Come hear the music play. ■

*Tom Wrona is a writer and filmmaker based in Barnegat. You can let him know what you think of his reviews at [tom@dangerousmovies.com](mailto:tom@dangerousmovies.com). And for more Island-area entertainment tidbits, visit his web site at [wrona.com](http://wrona.com).*