

Play critique of cabaret

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Cabaret takes place in the years 1929 to 1930 Berlin before Hitler's appointment as chancellor. The play follows Cliff Bradshaw, an aspiring American writer, and Sally Bowles, a performer at the Kit Kat Klub and their friends through the trying times before the Nazis. The story shows the struggles of those torn between what they want, and what is acceptable and how blind some were to the problems staring them right in the face. In the words of the emcee: "Leave your troubles outside! So-life is disappointing? Forget it! In here, life is beautiful-the girls are beautiful-even the orchestra is beautiful! Willkommen im Cabaret!" As the story unfolds, we see how this blindness affects those who would rather not see.

Cabaret is the first professional play that I have seen. I did not know what to expect and told myself that no matter what, to just make the most of it. There was no need, it was a truly captivating show that had me laughing and crying and dancing along the whole way through. I even talked a few of my friends into going so I could see it a second time. The story was easy to follow and I thought the characters, the costumes and the performance as a whole were good, but there were a few problems that I thought needed work. The first thing that caught me was, of course, the emcee, played by Lee Ernst. He immediately got my attention with his flamboyant costume and held it with his charismatic and energetic attitude.

When he first came out on stage, he addressed the audience directly, asking us to leave our troubles outside and enjoy the wonders of the cabaret. It made me feel like I was actually sitting in the club, and not out in the audience of a play. Throughout the entire production he would pull us in and even brought audience members on stage to do a dance with him. He had an

excellent ability of setting the mood for the audience and keeping us wanting more. The rest of the characters were also very well played and the actors did a good job of portraying their respective personalities. They were believable and real, and truly made me feel for them. The only one I thought was a little awkward in his role was Geoffrey Hemingway, who played Cliff.

There were times in the play where he seemed to know his line, but didn't quite use the right inflection, as if he knew the words, but forgot what his character was supposed to be feeling. Other than that, I think that the actors were great. The second thing that impressed me was how simple the sets were. There was usually only one or two pieces that told you where the scene was taking place, but along with the lighting and sound, it was easily put together and it worked very well. The one problem I had with it was during the play I was under the impression that the room with the couch was some kind of common room for the building, but while reading the study guide, found out that it was supposed to be Fraulein Schneider's room. This confused me because I don't get why Fraulein Kost would be bringing her sailors through Fraulein Schneider's room, but I guess they needed some place to show that part of the story. Also, there were times when there was just too much happening on stage and I got dizzy and confused as to what I should be paying attention to.

Over all, I was impressed with their use of space and simplicity. Cabaret was performed on a thrust stage which also added to the feeling of unity and closeness between the performers and the audience. I think that in a play that is meant to make you feel like a part of the show, which Cabaret

definitely is, this is important. It was one more way of pulling the audience in and making us “ part” of the show. With this stage the action was happening within almost arm length of the front row and there was even a point at the beginning right before the show that actors were talking to the audience. It helped us relate more to the story then if they used a proscenium stage and told the story “ at us”. Next, I think that the costumes were perfect, they did a wonderful job of depicting the many characters.

They were sexy and scandalous for those at the Kit Kat Klub, yet did not hinder the actors from doing the many dance numbers, and showed the modesty and decency of characters like Fraulein Schneider. Along with the scenery, the costumes helped so there was no guess work as to where and when the story took place, the lifestyles lived by the various characters, their personalities and who they were as people. I have to add that after seeing the show, me and some of my friends, even one of the guys, wanted to dress up as dancers from the Kit Kat Klub for Halloween. I think they did a terrific job and instead of distracting, they made the story that much more entertaining, especially the guys in fishnets! Lastly, I thought all the singing and dancing really enhanced the show. I was worried that it would be hard to follow the story line with them singing parts of the script, but not at all. I think that it livened up the show and made scenes that would have been boring really great. One example of this was the scene where Fraulein Schneider sings “ So What? ”.

It was a fun way of her character giving us a little history, without just going into a biography. Also, songs like “ Two Ladies”, “ Tomorrow Belongs To Me”

and “ If You Could See Her” express the feelings, viewpoints and ideas of the play in a manner that would have been much more difficult to do in conversation. All in all I thought it was a wonderful show and I think that everything worked well and flowed nicely. The few problems that I did have were minor and didn't take away from the overall experience. The actors, director, and everyone else who had a part in this show should be proud, they made me truly enjoy myself and am looking forward to seeing more.