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## **QUICK TAKES**

Review of *I'm Still Here*

by Jules Becker

After seven acclaimed shows, song stylist and cabaret virtuoso Will McMillan is very much 'still here' in Cambridge and surrounding towns, and the Hub should be very grateful for it.

A lyrical tenor one moment and a resonant baritone the next, McMillan can soar off into the magical enchantment of a Michael Crawford then bring rich coloring and vibrant tone to a style all his own. There's a remarkable joy and a limitless fervor in his renditions that make the most celebrated standards and over-recorded favorites fresh once again.

No wonder then that McMillan is one of 37 cabaret performers invited to Connecticut's Eugene O'Neill Theater Center for a special cabaret symposium including master classes, critiques, workshops and performances.

His fellow performers will be all the more insightful and blessed after hearing this gifted artist bring his own takes and touches to songs as different as the vivid survival anthem from *Follies* with which he named his concert and the lushly sensual Weill modern classic “Speak Low.”

If any of his colleagues should find themselves struggling to find the soul of an over-sung number or the wonder of an un-respected lyric, they need only take their cue from the title of the David Friedman gem "Help Is on the Way" that McMillan enriches with a tightrope-walking evocation in a musical odyssey enhanced by pianist Doug Hammer's wonderfully funky jazz finish.

During his smartly eclectic retrospective show — with selections from Garland and Sinatra songbook repertoire as well as Sondheim and his various theme shows — the unassuming but wide-ranging stylist brings new feeling to the catchy Kermit the Frog signature number “It's Not Easy Being Green.”

His Brattle Street triumph should leave both fans and newcomers with no doubts about this inspired cabaret performer's favorite hues.

It's not easy being rainbow red and orange after you have heard Will McMillan's dazzling artistry.

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