

THE THEATER MIRROR

NEW ENGLAND THEATER GUIDE

February 2, 2007

Songs For A New Will

By Beverly Creasey

If you've been to Will McMillan's cabaret shows in the past, you may be surprised by his ultra-sophisticated *Will Loves Steve* — which is having a run at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education through February 10.

McMillan steps out of his usual (“unsung”) shining armor and into some highly polished dancing shoes. His sweet, gentle voice is still there, but now he has an edge.

You'd have to, to give Sondheim his due. McMillan does Sondheim and a passel of other Steves, including Stephen Schwartz, whose searing “Life Goes On” indicts all of us for our passive acceptance of AIDS. McMillan makes the song exquisitely beautiful and almost unbearably sad.

McMillan and keyboard wizard Doug Hammer specialize in turning tunes on their ears.

They take the chilling song from *Assassins*, “Everybody's Got The Right” and make it into a song of hope. And you haven't lived until you've heard Hammer's arrangement of the caustic (syncopated) “Everything's Coming Up Roses.”

McMillan's still got that smooth, effortless glide to his voice but now he shows his worldly wise side, maybe even a world weary side. Speaking of ‘smooth’: He dances, he moves like a pop star, and he delivers Stephen Schwartz's “Dancing Through Life” with oodles of style. Move over, Justin Timberlake.

He fit in Stevie Wonder and Stephen Foster and even a Stephen named Cat, mixing the 70's hit “Wild World” with that wildest of barbers, *Sweeney Todd*.

All of this magic was inspired by another Steve, McMillan's partner of fourteen years. So we're indebted to that Steve for yet another incomparable McMillan and company show.

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