



November 19, 1998

## **Celebrating The Food Chain**

by Beverly Creasey

If you thought Will and Lil's "WATER" show made a splash, then their "FOOD" show — a Potluck Cabaret — will have you begging for seconds (and you can have a second helping this Saturday, November 21, at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education).

Will McMillan and Lillian Rozin cook up a light and fluffy theatrical souffle of scenes, stories, songs and oddities, all centering on "food, glorious food," as they say in the musical *Oliver*. Aside from the grand notion of gathering all (well, a lot) of the songs written about comestibles, Will and Lil bake, borrow and steal delicious bits from the theater (like the Wolf from Sondheim's *Into The Woods* serenading his next meal) as well as from traditional cabaret (like Cole Porter's frisky tale of the oyster who went down and came right up again).

From social climbing bivalves to the biting satire of Sondheim's "The Ladies Who Lunch," Will and Lil serve up treats to ingest as well as digest. Will stuffs celery and passes it around, and Lil makes popcorn while singing Stephen Schwartz's ode to waitressing "It's An Art." Not a kernel was unpopped.

Both performers are master comedians who can deliver a serious song, like Will's touching version of "Feed the Birds" with heart wrenching sincerity. Lil has a vocal range most singers would kill for. She can ride a wild blues parody like the sexy "I Can Cook, Too," then soar to baby-voiced heights in "Peel Me A Grape," and top it all off with an operatic roulade — or perhaps it was a remoulade.

Lil's flair for the comic is reminiscent of another Lil who played with her food: the late, great Bea Lillie, whose meal ticket was actually a meal. You may recall her signature confrontation in gloves up to her elbows with a lobster.

Will, too, is a wonderful deadpan, not to be rivalled in the sensational Will and Lil S&M version of "Have an Eggroll, Mr. Goldstone." Lil ties Will to a chair, tormenting him with juicy morsels of food. Not even Blue Man Group can match what Will & Lil do with a banana. And you can just imagine what they do with the stately Gilbert and Sullivan banquet song from *The Sorcerer* about strawberry jam and rollicking buns.

The audience gets to watch, and eat, and play an edible "Name That Tune" game complete with prizes, both tasteless and yummy. Even their fabulous accompanist, Mark Shilansky, is inspired to leave the safety of his Steinway grand and join in on "Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries."

After the musical feast, the audience is invited to an actual repast with goodies enough for a Queen's ransom — and to satisfy the heart as well as the stomach, Will and Lil are donating a portion of the box office to the Cambridge Food Bank.

If you leave the Cambridge Center with a tummy ache, it's from laughing nonstop.

For tickets (\$10) to the *Will and Lil Show* at the CCAE, 56 Brattle Street in Harvard Square, Cambridge, please call 617-547-6789 x1.

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