

Cambridge Chronicle Established 1846 AT&T

January 29, 2004

Voices of Love: Popular Singers Scan the Romantic Horizon

By Matthew S. Robinson

Though spring may be the time when young hearts turn to love, it is never too soon to get your ticker in gear, especially with Valentine's Day just around the corner.

To help get people in the mood, local cabaret stars Bobbi Carrey and Will McMillan will be performing a set of romantic musical numbers in a new show called "If I Loved You" at Scullers Jazz Club on Wednesday, February 11, 2004.

"Music is all about connecting with people's hearts," Carrey observes, "so a Valentine's Day show was a natural."

From romantically minded duos like Rogers and Hart ("Blue Moon"), Sager and Manchester ("Come in From the Rain") and Jenkins and Mercer ("P.S. I Love You") to solo songwriters like Jonathan Larson ("I'll Cover You") and Cole Porter ("What is This Thing Called Love?"), "If I Loved You" will explore the many faces and aspects of love.

"Everyone seems to have something to say about love," Carrey observes, "from artists, scientists and inventors to cartoon characters and, of course, composers and lyricists." In fact, Carrey explains, she and McMillan have been collecting quotes on the subject from such legendary lovers and love-minded writers as Plato, Shakespeare and - Albert Einstein?

"Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love," Carrey said, quoting the apparently romantic genius. "It is a brilliant combination of physics and romance!"

Musically speaking, "If I Loved You" is a combination of the many popular performances Carrey and McMillan have done together previously along with a number of new selections.

"For the past two years, Bobbi and I have toured New England with shows about Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, Broadway favorites, and songs that were nominated for Academy awards," McMillan said. "*If I Loved You* allows us to include some of our favorites from these shows, and then spice things up with newer songs."

Though many of the selections featured in this "musical valentine" are beloved standards by the legendary likes of Stephen Sondheim and Irving Berlin, there will also be some love

songs that come from off the beaten path.

“Will is performing a great song by Babbie Green about finding a dog at the pound,” Carrey says, “and I’m doing a wonderful song by Amanda McBroom called ‘The Portrait’ about a woman remembering and longing for her mother.”

And even though the songs vary greatly in terms of their mood and point of view, Carrey and McMillan find common threads weaving among them all. “Many of the older songs alluded to sex and sexiness, whereas more contemporary songs come right out with it,” Carrey observes. “Still, the traditional romantic ballads are still as lush and rich as anything today, and vice versa.”

As love is such a broad topic, Carrey and McMillan have tried to put together a show that represents as wide an array of relationships as possible.

“This show is about connecting ourselves to the song and then connecting ourselves to the audience,” Carrey explains. “From the love between partners to the love between owners and pets to the love between ex-spouses, the show will run the gamut of the heart.”

And even if you are not presently involved in a relationship, that is no reason to avoid the issue, especially when it is presented so thoughtfully and beautifully. “When people hear about a show like this, they worry that they can’t go because they are not in a relationship,” McMillan said. “This is a show you can go to either with a date or alone. It is a performance of beautiful music about a topic we all have known...and hopefully will experience again.”

When asked what makes a great love song, McMillan and Carrey reveal a few more selections from their forthcoming show. “Peggy Lee’s ‘Fever’ is one of the sexiest songs I have ever sung,” Carrey said. “But we also do a song from *Rent* that, though more contemporary, is full of wonderful metaphors that make it as lovely as any love song.”

Such diverse yet similar selections make it difficult to give a cut-and-dried definition, Carrey admits. “That is why we are doing the varied show we are,” she says. “It’s about connection.” McMillan suggests. “Of the thousands of love songs that have been written, perhaps only a few really relate to your present situation. So, for you, those songs are ‘great.’”

And though the topic is inherently personal, Carrey and McMillan are hoping to connect with others through their varied selections. “There are so many facets of love, and we want to deal with as many as we can,” McMillan says. “Love is not ‘either-or.’ It’s ‘both-and.’”

Bobbi Carrey and Will McMillan will perform with pianist Doug Hammer at Scullers Jazz Club (400 Soldiers Field Road, Allston) on Wednesday, Feb. 11th. For information, go to www.scullersjazz.com.

© Copyright Cambridge Chronicle