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## Local Stars Return To Town

By Matt Robinson

As so many of us know, love can be a difficult pursuit — from choosing the “right” partner to maintaining the passion and romantic fire to overlooking those little foibles. Despite its difficulties and often inherent pain, however, love remains the most prevalent and popular topic of discourse throughout the world. Literally thousands of books, plays, poems, and songs have been written on the subject, with millions more burning in the hearts and minds of the afflicted.

It can be an overwhelming morass to muddle through. Fortunately, there are musical guides like the award-winning pair of Bobbi Carrey and Will McMillan to help us all get through it. On Wednesday, December 1, 2004, the pair will return to Scullers (400 Soldiers Field Road) to continue to harmoniously hack their way through the jungles of musical romance.

“It’s eternal,” says McMillan of the genre. “Love has been around for so long and is so tied in to so many other aspects of life, I am surprised that there are any songs that are not about love.”

As a historically minded cabaret singer who has written and performed shows on such topics as the music of Broadway and the music of the World Wars, Bobbi Carrey is well versed in the ways in which music has changed. And the love song is no exception.

“How we fall in love has changed since the days when people sent letters by horseback to now when people fall in love over the Internet,” Carrey remarks. “And the music of love has changed as well. That is why we wanted to include Cole Porter alongside Billy Joel and Rodgers & Hart with Stephen Sondheim. They are all great love song writers, but the songs are very different.”

In addition to the changes in message, the media of love songs has also affected the style.

“Before microphones, people had to belt out the songs, and that made them write songs that had certain vowels in certain places,” McMillan suggests. “When electricity and amplification came along, people were free to sing more lightly and to express themselves differently. And that changed the nature of the songs.”

As the talent wrangler at Cambridge Center for Adult Education's Blacksmith House and a founding member of the Boston Association of Cabaret Artists ([www.bostoncabaret.org](http://www.bostoncabaret.org)), McMillan has seen and heard more than his share of singers blessing and bemoaning their social lives and knows what it takes to be a great love song singer.

"It has everything to do with how connected the person is to the song and how much they are able to let their own personal experiences filter through and be expressed by the song," he says. "Many people consider cabaret to be a venue for people to air their laundry and tell inappropriate stories, but it is really a place for people to connect with the music. And that is what we try to do."

Having wowed the hometown crowd at their Valentine's Day show, Carrey and McMillan have decided to return to their favorite local room (aside from the Blacksmith House) to showcase their latest duets.

"We're back at Scullers because we love it, and they are so good to us," McMillan says. "Our last show was one of the most successful ever, and we want to do it again. We want to make that connection again."

Taking songs from their new CD, *If I Loved You*, the December 1st show will feature such timeless favorites as the Rodgers & Hammerstein-penned title track, Rogers & Hart's "I Wish I Were In Love Again," and a melding of the Jimmy Van Heusen/Sammy Cahn chestnut "The Tender Trap" and Cole Porter's "True Love," as well as more contemporary favorites like Jonathan Larson's "I'll Cover You" (from the award-winning musical *Rent*), Stephen Sondheim's "The Little Things You Do Together," and Billy Joel's "And So It Goes."

"The music we have chosen is evocative of so many different places and times," Carrey says. "And love songs are powerful, in that they tap into not only history, but future fantasies."

"It's been a surprisingly emotional undertaking," McMillan adds, "but that's because we picked songs with which we strongly resonate." For the new show, the duo will return with talented accompaniment of pianist Doug Hammer.

"The album is filled with all these musical colors," McMillan explains, "but for the show, we want to keep it simple and let the songs' essence through."

And though many fans will return to hear the dynamic duo perform again, McMillan and Carrey hope to reach new people with a newly revised program.

"We have changed some of the songs and some of the quotations about love we use in the show," McMillan says, "but most of the songs that made it on the CD we are keeping so they can get a feel for what they can hear at home."

"Our hope is that people take this musical journey with us," Carrey says, "and that, when they are done with it, they feel they have gotten somewhere."

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