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SoBe Arts resurrects 1930s Berlin, SoBe style

by Manny Meland on February 02, 2010



Ivette Vinas

room added to the cabaret experience.

A solid jazz band occupied the main stage which had a movie screen suspended at stage front center. The gentlemen of the orchestra were Carson Kievman, as conductor; Osvaldo Fleites on trumpet; Paul Gordillo, clarinet; James Quinlan, bass; Luis 'Kiki' Sanchez, piano; Juan Silvera, saxophone; and Tony Suarez on drums.

The program opened with the antics of Bugs Bunny, the Tasmanian Devil, Porky Pig, Roadrunner and the endearing Loony Tunes projected on the screen. Then, actress/singer Monserrat Franco, a Betty Boop lookalike, appeared on stage to sing with her 'toon' double. They did the Betty Boop theme song — "I Want to be Loved by You.... Boop, Boop Be Doo". And what could be more cool than when the orchestra played with the animated orchestra "Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals."

A spot that flashed on the main stage illuminated Ivette Vinas, a ravishing redhead who torched us with that old Johnny Green song "Body and Soul." Not to be outdone, on a small stage at the opposite side of the room, Philip de la Cal and Andre Lefevre improvised a scene from the Peter Ustinov play "The Love of Four Col onels." The spots and stage changes kept up at an unrelenting pace. The action and fun never stopped.

Later, a quartet of Ivette Vinas, Philip de la Cal, Moserrat Franco and Andre Lefevre sang "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off."

Actually, by popular demand, the show's run was extended for one more sold out weekend.

Congratulations SoBe Arts Institute. Bravo! Carson Kievman.

For future program information, call 305-674-9220 or visit www.sobearts.org

Carson Kievman, executive director of SoBe Arts Institute, conceived an entirely novel version of the musical Cabaret. He presented it at the reopened 1937-vintage Little Stage on Washington Avenue in Miami Beach. Carson's drive and determination are responsible for rescuing this city-owned Little Stage from disuse. The scheduled nine-show run, that played the weekends of January, was all sold out.


Kievman, who I call Mr. SoBe Arts, played in a scene in this program too. Look at his credits. He is a composer, who holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University and an MFA from the California Institute of Arts. He has taught or lectured at top universities here and in Germany. His many artistic residences include Tanglewood Music Festival, the Public Theatre in New York, Shakespeare Festival, the Eugene O'Neill Opera/ Music-Theatre Conference, Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, the Piccolo Spoleto Festival and the National Theatre Manheim.

If you were at the show, you would have been seated at a table in a room whose atmosphere harkened back to a cabaret circa 1930 Berlin. The space had an intimate and comfortable feel. It allowed a maximum of 60 people to be seated at individual tables. Several small stages placed at various locations around the perimeter of the room facilitated rapid scene changes and perspectives. Wine, soda and tapas sold at the bar in the




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