



Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

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HARKENING TO THE DAYS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CABARET ROOMS

Sweet and Hot: The Songs of Harold Arlen

Chicago, June 14, 2010 – No Exit Café is being reconfigured to resemble a late 1940s/early 1950s neighborhood cabaret by Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre for its next show, “Sweet and Hot: The Songs of Harold Arlen,” performed in association with Michael James, opening Sunday, June 20.

Theo Ubique is going back to its cabaret roots by producing a summer musical revue paying homage to an individual composer and/or songwriter. “Sweet and Hot” features 37 songs of the more than 400 Arlen wrote during his five-decade career, presented in two sets in two hours. Previous musical revues by Theo Ubique honored Kurt Weill, Jacques Brel and Stephen Sondheim.

Arlen lived a quiet life with his wife, son and dogs during a time when composers and songwriters received less notoriety. His popular tunes are among the best known and most favored in the 20th century with “Over the Rainbow” from “The Wizard of Oz” voted the top song of the century by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts. The American Film Institute also ranked “Over the Rainbow” the greatest movie song of all time on the list of “AFI’s 100 Years. . .100 Songs.”

Fred Anzevino is directing fresh from his Jeff Award-winning production of “Chess” that he co-directed with Brenda Didier. Steve Carson as music director is bringing his traditional cabaret style to the show and accompanying the cast on piano. David Heimann as choreographer and Bill Morey as costume designer are incorporating dance and fashion styles of the same era.

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"The new staging will be cozy and intimate, using all corners at the No Exit," said Anzevino. "The biggest change is bringing the audience on stage and creating an arrangement where the entire audience is part of the performance, so they can sing and dance along in the spirit of the old piano bar scenes."

Heimann said he studied the original musicals with Arlen's songs. "I tried to capture the spirit of the great dance numbers of Judy Garland and Groucho Marx and pay homage to them."

"I love this music," said Carson. "And, I fell in love with Harold Arlen's music as soon as I learned about him. The cabaret style of singing is, or should be, more improvisational, so the interpretation of the songs by the singers can be new every night based on what they are feeling in that moment. Because I'm always listening to them, I can compliment what they are trying to get across by adjusting my playing, changing my style and looking for new musical ideas to support them."

Arlen's songs were made famous by legends in the industry, such as Judy Garland with "Over the Rainbow" and Ethel Waters and Lena Horne with "Stormy Weather." He also wrote with nearly every famous lyricist from Ted Koehler, Johnny Mercer and Ira Gershwin to even Truman Capote late in his career. The "Sweet and Hot" song list is available at www.theoubique.org or www.theo-u.org under 2009-2010 Season>Sweet and Hot.

"Everyone knows Harold Arlen's music . They may not know he wrote it, but they know and love his songs," Carson added. "Harold Arlen and his lyricists were able to completely grasp the joy of life in songs like 'Get Happy' and 'Happy As The Day Is Long,' the sadness of lost love in songs like 'Stormy Weather' and 'The Man That Got Away,' and unrequited love in songs like 'I Had Myself A True Love' and 'This Time the Dream's On Me.' Often during rehearsals for this show, the performers have become teary-eyed because the words and melodies evoke such strong emotional reactions."

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"It's happy music, but also emotional or soulful. The older generations can come and reminisce, while the younger generations can be introduced to Harold Arlen's body of work," Anzevino said.

The musical troupe is comprised of three women and three men: Sarah Hayes, Stephanie Herman, Bethany Thomas, Eric Lindahl, Eric Martin and Kristofer Simmons.

Previews are 8 p.m., June 18-19, and regular performances are 8 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays and 7 p.m., Sundays, June 20-August 8 at the No Exit Café, 6970 N. Glenwood Ave. in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. Dinner is served one hour prior to curtain with cast members as servers. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays and 5:45 p.m., Sundays.

Tickets are available online at www.theoubique.org or www.theo-u.org and through the ticket order line at 800-595-4849. Theo Ubique's information line is 773-347-1109, where updated theatre and show information are available. The emergency phone number to the box office, available at 5 p.m. on performance nights, is 312-898-0672.

Preview tickets are \$15, and regular performance tickets are \$25. A show/dinner package is optional for \$45 (dinner reservations recommended). Patrons are encouraged to use the free parking at the corner of Morse and Ravenswood with free transport on the Lifeline shuttle van to and from the lot, because of construction on Glenwood and Morse. The No Exit Café is a half block north, west of the tracks on Glenwood from the Red Line's Morse stop. Special discounts are offered through Theo Ubique e-news, available by signing up through the web site.

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Founded in 1997 by Fred Anzevino, Artistic Director, Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre is a Rogers Park-based cabaret-theatre company. It initially began performing at the Heartland Studio, producing an array of straight drama, comedy and musicals, and started the cabaret theatre trend in the Chicago area in 2004 when it began producing musicals and revues at Michael James' No Exit Café—its home since then. During its 12-year history, Theo Ubique has produced more than 30 productions and received 25 Jeff Awards Non-Equity (including 7 this year for Chess) and 3 After Dark Awards. The name Theo Ubique (pronounced thee-oh oo-bah-kway) is a combination of Greek and Latin words reflecting the company's mission to engage actors and audiences in an intimate and honest conversation with great theatrical works. Visit the web site at www.theoubique.org or www.theo-u.org.