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Skylight shines light on history



Skylight Opera Theatre

Colin Cabot (at the piano) and Paula Cabot bring a new revue, "The Long and Short of It," to the Skylight Theatre starting on New Year's Eve. The show looks back at the Skylight's history with songs and anecdotes.

Cabots return to help mark theater's 50th anniversary

By Jim Higgins of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Dec. 28, 2009

In celebrating both its 50th anniversary season and its survival of financial crisis and offstage drama, the Skylight Opera Theatre and its community are embracing their roots and history with hugs and kisses.

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One happy consequence of it all is "The Long and Short of It," a new revue featuring Colin Cabot and Paula Cabot, which opens New Year's Eve for a short run.

An unabashedly Skylight-centric show, "The Long and Short of It" will blend songs (by Paula with Colin at the piano), anecdotes and Skylight lore, guest performers, photographic projections and, undoubtedly, a fundraising pitch or two.

Colin was famous for his appeals during his years as Skylight managing director and as the driving force behind the construction of the Broadway Theatre Center. While the couple moved to a New Hampshire farmhouse more than a decade ago, Colin returned to the Skylight for several months this fall as interim artistic director and drummer.

Paula Cabot, formerly Paula Dewey, performed in many Skylight shows. She's excited about singing a big medley of Harold Arlen songs in this revue.

"So many people only know Harold Arlen for 'Over the Rainbow,' " she said. She'll also sing with some of her onstage buddies.

Colin will tell some anecdotes about past Skylight auditions he witnessed, or endured, then bring out a guest star to "audition" with Paula. Different performers will sing at each show. Folks who have said yes include Elaine Parsons-Herro, Ray Jivoff, Pam Kriger, Kathy Magestro, Norman Moses, Kurt Ollmann, Ellie Quint, Molly Rhode, Kay Stiefel, Chase Stoeger, Bill Theisen and Jack Forbes Wilson.

Colin wouldn't out any past performers who flubbed their auditions, but he did name two people whose auditions were so excellent they had to be given work immediately: Susan Sweeney and C. Michael Wright.

Colin began his Skylight years as an assistant to legendary director Clair Richardson; fittingly, the late Richardson's ashes, which usually repose elsewhere in the building, will join the Cabots onstage for the show. While Colin will have plenty to say about the wackier side of his mentor, he also remembers some of the theater wisdom Richardson passed on to him:

"Something has to happen in the second act that makes you glad you stayed past intermission."

If you go

What: "The Long and Short of It: A Night with Colin and Paula Cabot"

When: Saturday through Jan. 10; the Dec. 31 show is sold out

Where: Broadway Theatre Center Studio Theater, 158 N. Broadway

Tickets: \$34, visit www.skylightopera.com or call (414) 291-7800



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