

michael's thing



cabaret

MARTIN SCHAEFFER

Loose change usually refers to those few extra coins floating around your pockets ready for one of life's little extravaganzas. It's also, however, the name of a brash and exuberant quartet that's been raising the rafters at **Panache** these past few weeks.

With the theme of waiters and their survival in the sometimes messy world of public mastication, the group embarks upon a fast-paced junket of mostly obscure songs from Broadway musicals. The effect is often captivating, at times toe-tapping, especially when the quartet performs in unison.

Introducing the show's theme with "It's An Art," from "Working," a number extolling the dubious virtues of the food service profession, **John Ahlers, Nancy**

Donner, Ron Goldberg and **kStan(ly) Lanning** take us on a sometimes up, sometimes poignant hike through the hills and valleys of restaurant, acting, love and working in the Big Apple. "It's A Hard Knock Life," from "Annie," was spiced with waif-like yet peppery camp by **Mr. Goldberg** and **Ms. Donner**. **Mr. Ahlers** and **Ms. Lanning** were wittily optimistic in "You Mustn't Be Discouraged," from "Fade Out, Fade In." While solos were perfectly satisfactory, they lacked the verve and brio of ensemble numbers. **Ms. Lanning** however, gave us a moving, sentimental, but never maudlin "I Could Have Been Something," from "Working."

This group succeeds because of the collective enthusiasm of its performers. The closing moments,

a medley of perhaps twenty songs which "... have been done to death" is a side-splitting, on-target commentary upon the commercialization of popular music. From "No Business Like Show Business," "People," "Blue Moon," and "You Light Up My Life," to "Cabaret," "New York, New York," and "Tonight," **Loose Change** left no musical cliché unturned. Their ten-second parody of "Over The Rainbow," in which **Ms. Lanning's** long brown tresses are plaited around her head a la Judy Garland, is worth the price of admission alone.

This act has been tightly directed by **Ilene Berson**, whose emphasis upon energetic movement keeps our interest finely honed and our funny bone well oiled. **Kay Stonefel** on percussion deserves an outstanding note of appreciation for her wizardry. In those 'spare moments,' **Loose Change** is the pause that refreshes.

MICHAEL DEVON - MUSICAL DIRECTOR, ARRANGER - has appeared in and around New York both as pianist, accompanist and arranger. He has served as musical director for productions of "Runaways", "Man of La Mancha", "Jacques Brel", "The Sound of Music", "Babes in Toyland", and "Oliver". In addition to extensive work in children's theatre, Michael also composes songs for cabaret singers and revues.

KAY STONEFELT - On Percussion- has played for over twenty Broadway and Off-Broadway productions. She has performed with the Baltimore Symphony, Arthur Fiedler, and numerous Contemporary Ensembles. She currently appears with the Jazz Quartet, "Mott Street" and the classical trio, "Tapestry. Next: A solo percussion recital!

LEE AHLIN - On Bass - has a varied musical background which includes both performing and teaching. In addition to playing Bass, Lee is also a vocalist and classical guitarist.

BOB KNEELAND - TECHNICAL DIRECTOR - is convinced that, "it's all done with tightsi!" While tightening is his forte, Bob has been involved with all areas of New York cabaret. He was technical director for the Grand Finale for three years and most recently acted as lighting designer for Sarah Vaughan at Radio City Musical Hall. Last year, Bob received the 1980 award for Best Audio from the National Academy of Cabaret and Concert Artists Association (NACCA).

OUR SHOW TONIGHT IS IN TWO ACTS. AS THE ENTERTAINERS ARE ALSO YOUR WAITERS, THERE CAN BE NO SERVICE DURING THE PERFORMANCE. PLEASE ORDER WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SHOW OR DURING THE INTERMISSION. THANK YOU.

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