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Takin' Care Of Business at Scullers

By Joel Brown

Will McMillan and Bobbi Carrey debuted their new cabaret show, *In Good Company*, at Sculler's last night, summoning the power of the Great American Songbook to explore the world of business.

But of course that's not at all what they're talking about — the real subjects are money and self-worth, greed and morality and inspiration. Deep stuff. Both performers were in fine voice — nimbly aided by Doug Hammer on piano — and McMillan in particular was a vigorous comic presence in this surprisingly physical and often funny show. A section where Disney tunes are matched with a litany of Disney properties was particularly sharp.

The setlist, which evolved from a performance for BC's Center for Corporate Citizenship, uses numbers by Stephen Sondheim in particular but also Berlin and Loesser and Kander & Ebb, along with James Taylor and Tracy Chapman. It's tricky to keep a show like this from being merely a revue, but as shown by their previous *If I Loved You*, McMillan and Carrey are up to the task of constructing something that's more than the sum of its parts.

They ask, if not answer, questions about what we do at work and why, what our work says about us and the world, and what our children will think of us. You wouldn't expect a show about business to be so rich in sentiment, but it is.

There are a couple of occasions where love of a good song leads them slightly off point.

But the only real off note for me — and this is strictly metaphorical, not literal — comes with a broad performance of Janis Joplin's "Mercedes Benz." Joplin turns that that simple lyric into a bone-deep lament of a woman who has nothin' and is never gonna. And even if she gets the car, it isn't going to be what she really needs — it's not her pockets that are empty, it's her heart or maybe her soul. But at Scullers, the song was played for laughs as a lampoon of our materialism. The largely silver-haired audience cackled appreciatively, so maybe I'm just being a cranky Baby Boomer. But it's the one time in the show when McMillan and Carrey make a song shallower instead of deeper by their performance. Re-think that one, folks.

But otherwise, bravo!

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