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## Extraordinary ‘Pal Joey’ in 42nd Street Moon spotlight

By Janos Gereben



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COURTESY PHOTO

- Taking the lead: Deborah Del Mastro and Johnny Orenberg are excellent in 42nd Street Moon’s production of the 1940 musical “Pal Joey.”

Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart’s “Pal Joey” is an unusual 1940 musical with an antihero who changes not a whit and a quiet, inconclusive ending featuring protagonist Joey alone onstage, quite lost.

Unlike many shows presented by San Francisco's 42nd Street Moon — whose mission is to revive forgotten Broadway productions — “Pal Joey” has a recognizable title and well-known song, “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered.”

Based on a book by John O'Hara, “Pal Joey” is about a young hustler and Lothario who meets his match in a rich, older woman who takes him under her possessive wings.

In the title role, Johnny Orenberg gives an excellent, nuanced performance in the difficult part of a young, crude punk. His singing and dancing are strong, too.

He's matched by Deborah Del Mastro as the rich and powerful Vera Simpson, who looks like she easily could step out of a Fifth Avenue mansion. On opening night, she stopped the show with her rendition of “Bewitched.”

"SF Examiner.com"

Pal Joey" a zippy musical comedy with nightclub cons and great singing

December 3, 2012 12:24 PM MST



The director with Del Mastro (Vera Simpson) and Alex Shafer (O'Brien, Ernest, Herman and others)

*Cindy Warner*

## *"Pal Joey" at 42nd St Moon*

Rating:

Star

Star

Star

Star

Star

“[Pal Joey](#)”, a zippy musical comedy by Rodgers & Hart, should make some new friends in San Francisco as [42nd Street Moon](#) returns the 1957 San Francisco Sinatra film to the stage, the original Broadway musical starring Gene Kelly in 1940. Director Zack Thomas Wilde and 42nd Street Moon put the budget into first rate singers who can act and do justice to the Rodgers & Hart songs.



*David Allen*

Deborah Del Mastro makes a captivating debut at 42nd Street Moon as Vera Simpson, the likeable and fun-loving married socialite who finances a den of iniquity with the lying, egotistical dreamer who's short on brains, Joey. The dame also finances "Beauty's" dream of opening his own nightclub until their tryst gets derailed by other con artists of the nightclub world who want their cut of the action.

Del Mastro puts the heart in Rodgers & Hart with a mature softer note in songs like "Take Him", where she must pass Joey along to the young girl he really loves, cupie doll Linda English played by Chloe Condon. Likewise in the reprise of "Bewitched" where it's all said and done and the spell has been broken. In the film, Vera's an ex-stripper and played by Rita Hayworth while Kim Novak plays the innocent Linda English, a showgirl.

## **Benicia Herald**

### **Willows' 'Light' is warm, professional**

FEBRUARY 6, 2012 BY [EDITOR 2 COMMENTS](#)





**DEBORAH DEL MASTRO (left) and Rachel Robinson in “The Light in the Piazza,”  
at the Willows Theatre through March 3. *Judy Potter photo***

*Theater review by Elizabeth Warnimont*

*Special to The Herald*

[Willows Theatre's](#) 2012 season opener, “The Light in the Piazza” by Craig Lucas and Adam Guettel, has a distinctly professional feel, and the critical role of Clara, a young woman finally breaking free from her mother’s protective presence, is carried off superbly by Willows musical director Rachel Robinson.

Actors’ Equity Association member Deborah Del Mastro is Margaret Johnson, a mother who has brought her adult daughter on a vacation to Florence, Italy. Just as Margaret is coming to bemoan the lack of romance in her marriage, her daughter Clara (Robinson) seems to be falling desperately in love with a young Italian man.

Del Mastro is also a powerful presence on the stage as a woman with a solid, heartfelt determination to navigate some crucial conflicts in her family life.

Other strengths of the performance include a sensitive, emotional rendition of “Dividing Day” by del Mastro

