

CENTER REPERTORY COMPANY PRESENTS  
KANDER AND EBB'S MUSICAL MASTERPIECE

**CABARET**

May 26 – June 23, 2024 (opening night: May 28)

LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS, WALNUT CREEK

Expanded audience events include **Bike to the Theatre Night, Pride Night, and more.**

WALNUT CREEK, CA (24 April 2024) — Willkommen, bienvenue, and welcome to **Center Repertory Company**'s 2023-24 season finale, the Tony Award-winning musical masterpiece *Cabaret*. At the close of the 1920s in Berlin, hedonistic nightlife thrives and expats, locals, and artisans congregate at the seedy Kit Kat Club, where an irreverent Master of Ceremonies implores all to leave their troubles outside. In this hotbed for free expression and love, American writer Clifford Bradshaw falls for the club's chanteuse Sally Bowles. As an ominous and violent situation emerges throughout Germany, some remain oblivious or apathetic, while others sound the alarm or flee. With provocative grit, scintillating choreography, and a highly celebrated score by Broadway legends John Kander and Fred Ebb (*Chicago, Kiss of the Spider Woman*), *Cabaret* vividly brings to life the end of the Weimar-era jazz age, as the club's nihilistic habitués mock the ominous political rise of the Nazis to power. Center REP Artistic Producer **Markus Potter** will helm this iconic musical. *Cabaret* will perform **May 26 – June 23, 2024**, at the Leshler Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek. For tickets (\$48-\$73) and more information, the public may visit **CenterREP.org** or call the box office at **925-943-7469** (open Wed-Sun, 12:00pm-6:00pm).

“At the onset, *Cabaret* immerses us in the vibrant energy of Weimar Berlin, an era marked by artistic liberation and social progress, particularly for the queer community,” says director **Markus Potter**. “However, as the story progresses, this beacon of cultural freedom is ominously overshadowed by the rise of authoritarianism, illustrating the fragility of such progressive periods and a stark reminder to fight for the values that we hold dear. In reimagining *Cabaret* for today's audience, we delve into the dichotomy of art and identity against the backdrop of political upheaval. This production is not merely a reflection but an urgent dialogue with history—challenging us to confront the realities of a society at the brink.”

Center REP will be offering expanded audience and accessibility events for this production. The Walnut Creek based company will partner with **Bike East Bay** to host **Bike to the Theatre Night** on **Wednesday, May 29**, offering cyclists a special price that includes hosted bike parking at mobile bike racks. Center REP then celebrates Pride 2024 on **Wednesday, June 12** with their first **Pride Night**, which includes a post-show party in the Leshner Center for the Arts' Vukasin Theater with cast members, a specialty cocktail, desserts, and dancing. Center REP offers ASL interpretation for deaf and hard of hearing patrons on **Saturday, June 15** during the 2:30pm performance. The Pay What You Can performance for *Cabaret* on **Sunday, May 26** is already sold out. For more information on all audience events and performances, the public may visit **CenterREP.org**.

*Cabaret* premiered on Broadway in 1966, where it won 12 Tony Awards and ran for 1,166 performances. It has been seen across the world and received five revivals on Broadway, including the newest production that opened earlier this month following a sold-out run in London's West End. *Cabaret* was adapted into a 1972 film directed by Bob Fosse, featuring an iconic cast including Liza Minnelli, Joel Grey, and Michael York, and was recognized with 8 Academy Awards. *The New York Times* hailed *Cabaret* as "a stunning musical, offering a marionette's-eye view of a time and place that was brassy, wanton, carefree, and ultimately doomed to crumble."

Director Potter has assembled a talented group of actors to bring this classic story to the stage. **Monique Hafen Adams** plays Sally Bowles, a vivacious cabaret singer whose outrageous style is matched by her powerhouse voice. **Rotimi Agbabiaka** performs as the Master of Ceremonies, the exuberant and mysterious host at the Kit Kat Club. **Jacob Henrie-Naffaa** appears as Cliff Bradshaw, an American writer and English teacher traveling to Berlin who dives into Sally's world. **Kelly Ground** plays Fräulein Schneider, a landlady who rents rooms to Cliff, Sally, and several other characters in her large flat. **Richard Farrell** portrays Herr Schultz, a Jewish fruit shop owner who falls in love with Fraulein Schneider. **Michelle Drexler** performs as Fräulein

Kost, a quick-witted, and sharp-tongued prostitute who is renting in Fraulein Schneider's boarding house. **Paul Plain** plays Max, a wealthy German baron playboy. **Charlie Levy** appears as Ernst Ludwig, a friendly German who takes English lessons from Clifford.

**Landan Berlof, Faustino Cadiz III, Syndey Chow, Jesse Cortez, Elizabeth Curtis, Elizabeth Cowperthwaite, Andrio Jordan Fong, Antonia Reed, Jillian Smith, Adria Swan, Anne Warque, and Dedrick Weathersby** round out the ensemble as dancers and inhabitants of the Kit Kat Club.

*Cabaret* features scenic design by **David Goldstein**, costume design by **Becky Bodurtha**, lighting design by **Wen-Ling Liao**, sound design by **Lyle Barrere**, and prop design by **Alyssa Tryon**. **Penny Pendleton** is Stage Manager, with **Joe Coe** as Assistant Stage Manager.

**Joe Masteroff** (Playwright) began his writing career with his first play *The Warm Peninsula*, which premiered on Broadway in 1959. In 1963, he achieved acclaim for his book for the musical *She Loves Me* and reached new heights with his adaptation of *Cabaret*. Masteroff continued his creative endeavors, writing for musicals and operatic adaptations including *70, Girls, 70*; *Six Wives*; *Paramour*; and *Desire Under the Elms*.

Composer **John Kander** (Music) and lyricist **Fred Ebb** (Lyrics) are renowned for their contributions to musical theatre. Together, they wrote the scores for 15 musicals, including *Cabaret*, *Chicago*, *The Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Act*, *The Rink*, *Woman of the Year*, *Zorba*, and *Steel Pier*. Their music can also be heard in *Curtains*, *The Visit*, *The Scottsboro Boys*, *Prince of Broadway*, and last year's *New York, New York*. They won Tony Awards for the score of *Cabaret*, *Woman of the Year*, and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. They received Grammy Awards for cast albums of *Cabaret* and *Chicago*. Kander and Ebb frequently collaborated with legendary performers including Liza Minnelli and Chita Rivera. With Minnelli, they won Emmy Awards for specials "Liza with a 'Z'" and "London, Steppin' Out." Kander and Ebb received Kennedy Center Honors, and Kander received a 2023 Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement.

**Markus Potter** (Director) is the artistic producer at Center REP and the artistic director and assistant professor at the University of Kansas. His recent directorial works include the Off-Broadway production of *Stalking the Bogeyman* at New World Stages. Past shows at Center REP include *Our Town* and *Red Speedo*. His other credits include works at London's Southwark Playhouse, Portland Stage, and CSV Flamboyant Theater.

**Jessica Chen** (Choreographer) is based in New York where she has choreographed Off-Broadway productions of *The Portal* at Minetta Lane Theater and the New York Musical Festival production of *INTERSTATE*, an Asian-American pop-rock poetry musical. Her work has been featured on Google Arts & Culture by the Asian American Arts Alliance and at the MoMA Museum of Modern Art for New York Fashion Week in 2021 and 2022. Chen's work has also been presented at Lincoln Center's Restart Stages for GALLIM, Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, MACY's Thanksgiving Day Parade, TEDx Semester at Sea, and World Expo-USA Pavilion in Shanghai.

### **About Center Repertory Company**

Led by Artistic Director **Matt M. Morrow**, **Center REP** is the resident professional theatre company of the Leshner Center for the Arts. Its season consists of six productions—a variety of classic and contemporary musicals, dramas, and comedies, presented with artistic excellence and high professional standards. Center REP's mission is to celebrate the power of the human imagination by producing emotionally engaging, intellectually involving, and visually astonishing live theatre, and through Outreach and Education programs, to enrich and advance the cultural life of the communities it serves. As a producing theatre, its presentations are conceived and developed at the Leshner Center. Whether the production is a Bay Area premiere or a Shakespearean classic, each is devised to be a one-of-a-kind, artistic creation offering a unique theatre experience for audiences.

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**WHAT:** Willkommen, bienvenue, and welcome to **Center Repertory Company's** 2023-24 season finale, the Tony Award-winning musical masterpiece ***Cabaret***. At the close of the 1920s in Berlin, hedonistic nightlife thrives and expats, locals, and artisans congregate at the seedy Kit Kat Club, where an irreverent Master of Ceremonies implores all to leave their troubles outside. In this hotbed for free expression and love, American writer Clifford Bradshaw falls for the club's chanteuse Sally Bowles. As an ominous and violent situation emerges throughout Germany, some remain oblivious or apathetic, while others sound the alarm or flee. With provocative grit, scintillating choreography, and a highly celebrated score by Broadway legends John Kander and Fred Ebb (*Chicago*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*), ***Cabaret*** vividly brings to life the end of the Weimar-era jazz age, as the club's nihilistic habitués mock the ominous political rise of the Nazis to power. Center REP Artistic Producer **Markus Potter** will helm this iconic musical.

***Cabaret***

Book by Joe Masteroff

Based on the play by John Van Duten and Stories by Christopher Isherwood

Music by John Kander, Lyrics by Fred Ebb

Directed by Markus Potter

Choreographed by Jessica Chen

**WHEN:** Previews: Sunday, May 26, 2024  
*Opening: Tuesday, May 28, 2024*  
Closing: Sunday, June 23, 2024

Pay What You Can performance: Sunday, May 26, 2024

Bike to the Theatre Night: Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Pride Night: Wednesday, June 12, 2024

ASL interpreted performance: 2:30pm Saturday, June 15, 2024

**SHOWS:** Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays: 7:30pm  
Saturdays: 2:30pm & 7:30pm  
Sundays: 2:30pm

**WHERE:** Leshar Center for the Arts (1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek)

**TICKETS:** For tickets (\$48-\$73) or more information, the public may visit [lesherartscenter.org](https://lesherartscenter.org) or call the box office at 925-943-7469 (*open Wed-Sun, 12:00pm-6:00pm*). Prices subject to change.

*“Pay What You Can” tickets (suggested price of \$25) offered for the performance on May 26, 2024.*

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**PRESS:** Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.  
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**PHOTOS:** Downloadable high-res photos are available: <https://cbpr.co/press/cabaret>