

## RICHMOND DRAMA AWARDS

## Much fine characterisation here

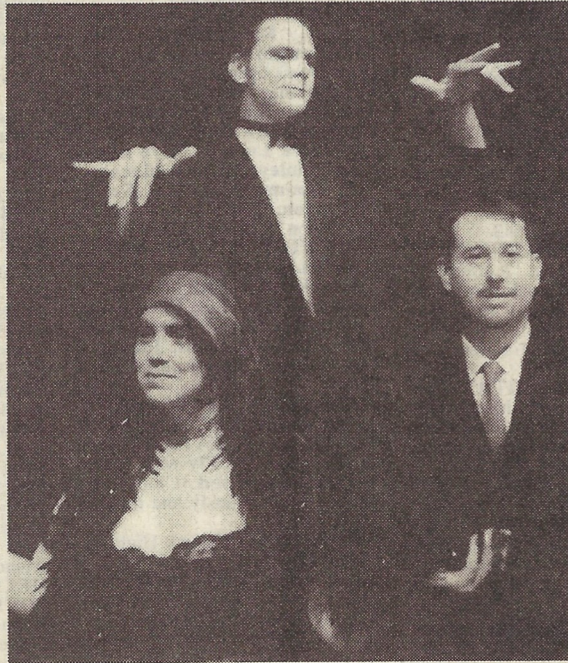
**T**EDDINGTON Theatre Club may be justly proud of their production of the Kander and Ebb musical *Cabaret* performing at the Hampton Hill Playhouse this week.

Based on the play 'I am a Camera' by John van Druten, which itself drew from the stories of Christopher Isherwood, *Cabaret* is set in Berlin in the 1930s and portrays the problems arising in Germany at that time. We see through the eyes of a young American writer, Cliff, played with wide-eyed sincerity by Marc Batten. He acted convincingly but his singing left much to be desired.

The main stage setting was of the Kit Kat Nightclub. Tablecloths and curtains were in a dark shade of red and red lighting added great atmosphere. Emcee was played with authority and distinction by David Wheatley. His bare foot bravura portrayal of the camp nightclub boss was a delight. He acted, moved, danced and sang very well indeed and his diction was impeccable.

The role of Sally Bowles was taken by Catherine Early. She struggled to sustain the frenetic pace the character demanded and cigarette smoke took toll of her singing voice.

There was much fine characterisation in the supporting roles. Ian Summers was impressive as Ernst Ludwig and John Kipps was menacing as Max. The spinster landlady, Fraulein Schneider and the



A scene from *Cabaret* as presented by Teddington Theatre Club last week at Hampton Hill Playhouse.

Jewish fruiterer, Herr Schulz, were sensitively played by Brenda Stevens Baker and David Crawley. Their duet 'Married' was most affecting.

The Head Waiter, played by Didier Mahy, and his three Kit Kat Boys added style to the show. Their drag ballet act, though brief, was for me one of the highlights of the evening. Their vocal rendition of 'Tomorrow Belongs to Me' was particularly beautiful.

The six rather mature Kit Kat Girls performed their dance routines with enthusiasm. One, named Helga, even did the splits.

Fight scenes were well

staged and convincing.

A seven piece orchestra under the direction of Brian Chapman gave strong rhythm and pace to the production. A skillfully designed and executed set enabled the musicians to perform from an overhead platform at the back of the stage and thus be a visual part of the show.

Costumes were well in period, though not always flattering to the wearers.

Many congratulations for Directors Richard Eliot and Sally Halsey for providing a musical reminder of a sinister historical period.

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