

Joan Crowe

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Cabaret Scenes

Review of The Devil in Miss Joan

by Peter Leavy

"For the first few minutes of Joan Crowe's *The Devil in Miss Joan*, it was hard to square the title with the angelic figure garbed in a white satin robe who launched the evening with a reverent "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the bible tells me so..." But that was only until the songstress, with a shrug, tossed off that pure white exterior, revealing a blood red dress beneath, fixed a hard gaze on the audience and belted out an unambiguous *Trouble, and I Want to be Evil*. As she acknowledged, "according to the sisters at St. Agnes of Perpetual Guilt, I'm going to hell." It was easy to see why. Irreverent would be a mild description. In second grade, "I loved to smoke. To put my lips together with a filter tip between." And, as if sealing her fate, she even conjured up the image of a pot smoking God. Joan's take on good and (primarily) evil was so amusing and absorbing that it was easy to overlook what a lovely voice this lanky, leggy siren possesses. From Cy Coleman's and Michael Stewart's *Ev'rybody Today is Turning On*, to Alan Menken's *Lie to Me*, to Claude DeMetrius' *Mean Woman Blues*, she handled the music deftly and with panache. Unseen but definitely at work here was the perceptive guidance of Mark Nadler, who directed the show. More visibly, Shawn Moniger's lighting was inventive and highly effective, and Tedd Firth was a worthy accompanist.