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## Love Gives Fans an Embrace

By Aiden Fitzgerald

"A love song is just a caress set to music," said composer and lyricist Sigmund Romberg. In *If I Loved You*, a show of romantic musical numbers Wednesday night at Scullers, singers Bobbi Carrey and Will McMillan showed a tender and persuasive touch.

The sold-out show explored love's ubiquity — from passionate affairs to parental and familial love, to the relationship between ex-spouses, and even between owners and their pets. Songs ranged from standards by Rodgers and Hart, Lerner and Hollander and Irving Berlin to contemporary tunes by Steve Sweeting and Jonathan Larson.

Carrey and McMillan's vivaciousness, perfect diction and seamless vocals captivated the mostly over-40 crowd. Sentimental but not at all schmaltzy, *If I Loved You* transported listeners into a daydream, blurring the lines between romance, wit and melancholy.

Highlights of the show included a duet of Peggy Lee's sizzling "Fever," prompting slow, rhythmic finger-snapping from the crowd. Heavier songs, such as Carrey's rendition of Amanda McBroom's "The Portrait," a heartbreaking song about a woman longing for her mother, ended with the audience's sigh of release. Also poignant was McMillan's beautiful version of "Catch Me," a dark and desperate song about the will to survive love gone wrong.

In between songs, Carrey and McMillan lightened the mood with humorous anecdotes about relationships and sex, reading from spam e-mails offering "extra help in the romance department" and relevant quotes from Plato, Oscar Wilde and Albert Einstein.

By the end of the show's final, title song by Rodgers and Hammerstein, audience members were wiping tears and clapping madly.

Now that's amore.

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