

## Ain't Misbehavin'

by Louise Adams

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**Ain't Misbehavin'** - music by Thomas "Fats" Waller, based on an idea by Murray Horwitz and Richard Maltby, Jr. - is as toe-tapping now as it was over thirty years ago when it inducted Nell Carter's chops into the belting hall of fame. San José Rep's revival is a solid production; the trio of ladies offering proficient vocal sizes and shapes, and the pair of gents making up in personality what their voices might lack.

A celebration of Waller's riotous and poignant stride piano and swing songs, the back-to-back numbers offer plenty of colorful costumes (by Austin K. Sanderson), joyful choreography (Byron Easley) and sassy banter. The show segues skillfully from snazzy novelty numbers like "Your Feet's Too Big," to the dazzling-smiled quintet's showpieces including the titular "Ain't Misbehavin'," the familiar frolic "This Joint is Jumpin,'" to melancholy solos such as "Mean to Me," soulfully delivered by Angela Grovey (one of the tunes not penned by Waller; music and lyrics by Roy Turl and Fred E. Ahlert).

### One never knows, does one?

For those craving some male striptease in their evening, Christopher L. Morgan's "The Viper's Drag" and "The Reefer Song" delivers a hilariously sensual double whammy of trippy Chippendales; bringing his joint-puffing chiseled lungs directly into the anxious audience.

The set (by Emily Beck) is a simple music hall, with pianist Darryl G. Ivey riding the keys around like a car; later joined by a solid six-piece back up band. However, the star of the show remains the music and words - "Somethin' 'bout you I can't resist / when you kiss me, I stay kissed," "the sky is high and so am I" (Stuff Smith), and the repeated rhetorical query "one never knows, do one?" One knows that Ain't Misbehavin' is headed strongly into its second century, effusively "Spreadin' Rhythm Around."

**Ain't Misbehavin'** continues through April 19 at San José Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San José, CA. For more information visit the

