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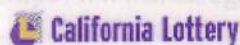
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Jazzy show reveals beauty and the beast

Susan Egan's sumptuous but overly sugary voice clashes with the demands of cabaret performance.

By STACY DAVIES
Special to the Register

Susan Egan has a beautiful voice - there can be no doubt about it. Known as the voice of Disney's Belle from "Beauty and the Beast," as well as other live-action and animated songbirds, Egan's timbre is itself like a clear, crisp bell, laden with femininity. Hers is a voice made to sing songs of love and divine inspiration. In her new one-woman, cabaret-style show, she tests her perfected pipes on jazzier material, but with only moderate success.

In cabaret, as opposed to concert hall performances, singers must be warm, gushing with personality and charm, and have a rawness to their voices that makes up for range. Egan does not lack range, but does lack the interpretation to make more sensual numbers resonate.

Egan seems to know her limitations, however, and has smartly arranged this show to try to distract from her virginal-voice image. She doesn't drift too far from sugary, kewpie-doll interpretations and delivers some nice standards like Rodgers and Hart's "Where or When" and Christine Lavin's not so standard, but amusing, "You Look Pretty Good" in which she wanders through the audience, addressing unsuspecting, yet pleased, older men. Her inability to convey passion often results in emotionally hollow numbers, however, as in her perky rendition of the Gershwin classic, "Someone to Watch Over Me."

Fortunately, Egan is smart enough to pepper in a great deal of comedic songs - which she excels at delivering - mostly by newer songwriters Zina Goldrich and Marcy Heisler, whose material is so hysterical, it would be hard to go wrong. She engages help from gal pal Lisa Richard, a slightly Bette Midler-esque belter, to add some husky depth to her angelic range, creating a nice balance of sweetness and sex. These two especially excel in the medley of "Get Happy/Happy Days are Here Again," originally performed by Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand on Garland's television show. Richard



SUSAN EGAN: The singer has range but lacks the ability to make some numbers resonate.

Susan Egan	
WHERE:	Founders Hall, Orange County Performing Arts Center
WHEN:	Oct. 28
NEXT:	Tonight through Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH:	\$46

also gets a couple solo numbers, and they're terrific.

INFORMATION: (714) 740-7878 or www.ocpac.org

Egan rounds out her show with one of her (and my) favorite songs that she currently performs in New York's final run of the "Cabaret" revival, "Maybe This Time." Her light, slightly English-accented performance keeps in line with the revival's casting choices of Sally Bowles (which, after experiencing the barrel-chested Liza Minnelli, I've never understood) but feels as empty as the actresses who've come before her.

And this is perhaps Egan's only flaw - if she's going to admirably attempt to venture out of her stereotypical saccharine cage, she needs to blow the lock off, not just rattle the bars.