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[The Anyway Cabaret, a Different Kind of Cabaret](#)

By Megan Daley



Photo by Anthony La Penna.

No one seems to be listening to the animals of the Anyway Cabaret. But they'll keep performing it anyway.

It's a line that's repeated in the first big number of TUTA Theatre Chicago's production of [*The Anyway Cabaret \(an animal cabaret\)*](#), which opens the company's 14th season. The animals of the Anyway Cabaret" have a message for the audience between their rapid-fire quick changes and haunting sounds of gunfire. But, the message might just get lost if the audience can't get beyond the silliness.

The cast of animals is led by the Deer (Sean Ewert), who seems acutely aware of how ridiculous this band of animals -- including a Goat, Skunk, Rabbit and Fish -- may appear to the audience, something he fully acknowledges. Each animal has its own issues and worries: the "Fish with a Wish," "Rabbit with a Habit," and the Goat who might be on its last breath. The cabaret doesn't allow for a dull moment with this group of misfits.

The voices of all the animals of *The Anyway Cabaret* were a highlight of the production. Ever enthusiastic, they all encouraged audience participation and executed the embodiment of each animal through both movement and sound, down to the smallest detail (the black painted fingers of the Deer were a favorite.) The actors were able to fully embrace their characters, and it was fun to watch.

However, it was easy to get lost in the silliness of it all. In some ways, the production felt like a children's production for adults. The cabaret seemed to be attempting to get at more complex themes, but those themes often got lost in the simplicity of the lyrics. The lyrics were often repetitive (there's only so many times you can hear "Fish with a Wish" before it gets to be a little much) and unimaginative. In order for the cabaret to make more of the impact it appeared they were going for, the lyrics shouldn't have been lacking. It needed just a bit more to really get there.

If you're looking to be fully immersed in a production, this show is a fun way to spend an evening. It's a cabaret that isn't afraid to tread off the beaten path. There's something to be said about a show that isn't like anything you've ever seen before, and that's something the animals of *Anyway Cabaret* can offer.

The Anyway Cabaret (an animal cabaret) runs Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sunday matinees at 2pm through November 16 at the Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph St. Tickets to all performances are \$15; buy them at tix.com or call 1-800-595-4TIX (4849). And don't be fooled by the animal theme; it's not for tots. Recommended for age 13 and up.