

# 'Cole:' Remembering best of songwriter



Chas Metivier/Special to Viva

The cast of 'Cole' lets out all the stops on a number appropriate for the first performance: 'Another Openin', Another Show.'

By Melissa Peabody  
Dispatch Staff Writer

With satire, sympathy and art, songwriter Cole Porter's tunes lit up the glitzy, sometimes jaded life of the upper crust in the 1920s.

Starting Friday, South Valley Civic Theater will bring the poet of the idle rich to South County residents with its dinner show of Porter's most well-known — and most obscure — music.

"It looks very classy. I'm very pleased with the show," said George Costa, who directed the show and designed the set.

Costa, the former executive producer and director of San Jose Civic Light Opera for 20 years, said two of the *Cole* performers also are light opera alumni. Doug and Stella Hagdahl of San Jose, who worked frequently with the Civic Light Opera and owned a theatrical company of their own, are in the revue.

Others in the cast are Janet Ackerman, Kevin Sallis, Tom Hepner, Carol Harris, Andrew Donlon, Jeanene Morgan and Betsy Andrade, all of Gilroy; Chris Souza of Morgan Hill; and Mary Jane Spohr of San Jose.

Costa describes the show's 11 cast members as "strong individuals who have a great variety of levels of talent, which is good because the show has a little something for everybody."

The revue of Porter's life and times unfolds through a series of musical vignettes strung together with frequent narrative asides to the audience.

Although the stage of platforms and cascading stairs is almost completely bare, Costa said the show imparts texture, variety and movement through musical arrangements that alternate

nightclub."

Limited stage space was one reason SVCT chose to put on the *Cole* revue.

"We had a lot of stage concerns, because the Good Food Company doesn't have a regular stage or backstage," said Marion Pintello, a member of SCVT's board of directors.

She said *Cole* was also chosen because it is "a classic music revue" that offered words and music, rather than just one or the other, and "it gives our actors and actresses a chance to do something a little different."

She said most people have heard at least a few Porter songs, even if they don't know it.

"He's obviously so prolific, we knew a lot of people will hear some of the songs begin and then say, 'Oh my God, I know what that is.'"

Costa agreed that most of the audience, "especially middle-aged people and older," would

recognize some Porter songs like *I Get A Kick Out of You*, *Anything Goes*, *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*, *Take Me Back to Manhattan*, *Love For Sale*, *I Love Paris* and *You Don't Know Paree*.

"There's some really good stuff in (the show)," he said. "You can't miss with it, just like with Gershwin music."

"We didn't want it to be hokey," said Pintello. "It will be fun, but sophisticated fun."

She said SVCT expects to break even on the \$8,000 production, with approximately \$6,000 going to cover dinner expenses.

The show will play Nov. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21 and 22 with dinner at 6:30 p.m. and the revue at 8 p.m. at the Good Food Company, 17835 Monterey Road, in Morgan Hill. Tickets are \$17.50.

In addition, a benefit performance for the San Benito County Arts Committee will be held Nov. 16 at 2 p.m. in Hollister at the Elks Lodge.

# Anything goes at Cole Porter revue



The ensemble cast for the 'Cole' revue will sing Cole Porter songs and tell of his life and times.

*I Love Paris*, *Anything Goes*, and *Night and Day* will be just a few of the songs theater-goers will be humming after attending South Valley Community Theater's dinner musical, *Cole*.

Directed by George Costa and produced by Rosalind Farotte, the revue-style show will be staged at the Good Food Company in Morgan Hill on Nov. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21 and 22.

Dinner is at 6 p.m., and curtain time at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$17.50.

The show consists of 40 Cole Porter favorites interspersed with narration about the composer's life.

The 11 members who make up the cast are Carol Harris, Janet Ackerman, Chris Souza, Andrew Donlan, Kevin Fallis, Tom Hepner, Jeanene Morgan, Mary Jane Spohr, Betsy Andrade, and Doug and Stella Hagdahl.

Reservations may be made by calling 842-SHOW or 842-2432.

The cast will also give a benefit performance at the Elks Lodge in Hollister, at 2 p.m. Nov. 16. Proceeds will aid the San Benito Art Commission.

For information on the benefit, call 637-2952.