

## After two years of closure, local arts are opening again

Local arts and entertainment are vital for a community to grow. They help attach people to the place where they live [https://morganhilllife.com/2022/03/17/editorial-after-two-years-of-closure-local-arts-are-opening-again/?fbclid=IwAR1d3KtqR5tS\\_y-XJ\\_7wN9ul3nNJ6B4XAJwf6B3NrSdjuSGPXvF8QAvPFVM](https://morganhilllife.com/2022/03/17/editorial-after-two-years-of-closure-local-arts-are-opening-again/?fbclid=IwAR1d3KtqR5tS_y-XJ_7wN9ul3nNJ6B4XAJwf6B3NrSdjuSGPXvF8QAvPFVM)

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Photo by Marty Cheek. Sarah Duarte (center) as singer Sally Bowles and Billy Tindall (in bowler) as Emcee perform with Kit Kat Klub “girls” and “boys” in South Valley Civic Theatre’s musical “Cabaret.” The show opened March 11.

In early 2020, the South Valley Civic Theatre had just started rehearsals for their show “Cabaret.” Work by the cast and crew, however, quickly came to a stop as the COVID-19 virus began to spread rapidly across the globe. The pandemic hit the world hard as lock-downs and quarantines began — and live performances in the arts and entertainment field came to a quick close.

The human spirit can’t be killed. The arts are starting to rise back into South Valley culture. After two years of delay, SVCT opened “Cabaret” March 11, with the final performance Sunday, March 28. Other shows are coming out, including TheaterFun’s “Disney Descendants,” a children’s musical that opens for four days starting March 31 at the Community Playhouse and Gilroy’s Pintello Comedy Theater show “Clue: Onstage,” which opened March 11 and has sold out all its performances.

Live music summer performances at the Morgan Hill Downtown Amphitheater will start June 17 and go until Sept. 2 with the Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce’s annual Friday Night Music Series. It had an abbreviated run in 2021 but brought out many in the community to enjoy some of the Bay Area’s best bands performing under the stars.



For family fun on Hecker Pass, the beautiful Gilroy Gardens will open for weekends starting April 2 and 3 (with a weeklong opening from April 9 to April 17 for the spring break). The theme park is a wonderful South Valley treasure with plenty of rides designed for younger kids as well as adults — and the ticket includes live shows on the park’s stage suitable for children.

“Clue Onstage” by the Pintello Comedy Theater.

The Poppy Jasper International Film Festival opens April 6 and runs through April 13, bringing more than 150 filmmakers from around the world to the South Valley region to celebrate cinema. Over the years, the film arts festival has grown in prestige globally as it keeps its small-town roots while putting a spotlight on some of the best independent films made in recent years.

The Morgan Hill Downtown Association will host its 12th annual Wine Art and Music Stroll the afternoon of Saturday April 30. Guests can enjoy fine wines from more than 20 local wineries while experiencing downtown shops and restaurants. Take in live music and don’t miss the festivities for Air for Paws. They’ll have a pet parade and information about this fantastic local charity.

And during the summer, some of our wonderful local wineries — such as Guglielmo Winery — will hold more intimate concerts and other fun events at their vineyards.

Local arts and entertainment are vital for a community to grow. They help attach people to the place where they live. A study conducted between 2009 and 2011 by the Knight Foundation and Gallup called “Soul of the Community” found that, contrary to conventional wisdom, social offerings and aesthetics bind people to a place and to each other even more than education or jobs.

The arts and entertainment bring people together — and that stimulates the social health of a city. Culture such as theater plays, art galleries, museums, concerts and festivals stimulate social capital and enhance a city’s character. Art brings people together by telling a community’s shared story. When men, women and children connect to each other through the arts, they find themselves inspired by the human spirit. And a reflection on that spirit empowers people to form connections that transcend differences.

In the study, the Gallup organization asked about residents’ perceptions of various community attributes. The polling group then analyzed the correlation between those perceptions and the level of community attachment. The study’s report noted that “other factors, beyond basic needs, should be included when thinking about economic growth and development. These seemingly softer needs have an even larger effect than previously thought when it comes to residents’ attachment to their communities.”

Let’s support the arts and entertainment in the South Valley as much as we can by attending shows and concerts. The arts serve as an essential way for residents to come together through shared, meaningful experiences celebrating our common humanity.

## Do not look away from SVCT's 'Cabaret'

<https://morganhilllife.com/2022/03/16/entertainment-do-not-look-away-from-svcts-cabaret/>

**The classic keeps a breath-taking pace throughout**

By Camille Bounds

From the moment the curtain rises on South Valley Civic Theatre's production of "Cabaret," the momentum builds throughout the first act and holds the audience's attention until the powerful final scene. The classic musical moves like a steam roller as director Carol Harris keeps up the breathtaking pace so the audience does not dare look away.

The story tells the tale of life in decadent Berlin in 1930 as fascism rises to take over the government. It portrays a time when the world stood on the precipice of oblivion.

As the brassy "Sally Bowles," Sarah Duarte is the driven free spirited, diva with a vengeance. Her phrasing of "Come to the Cabaret" and "Maybe This Time" is impeccable and never delivered better. She handles the role with just the right amount of grit and chutzpah. In contrast, Vaughn Mayer as "Cliff Bradshaw," Sally's sensitive, patient boyfriend, comes across with a sweet innocence until the end of the show when he realizes Germany is falling to an evil political party.



Photo by Chris Foster

The glue of the show, Bill Tindall as "Emcee," takes the spotlight on stage as the insidious, leering, tacky master of ceremonies of the sleazy Kit Kat Club. He guides us through the plot and subplots with his creepy, amoral characterization that almost becomes uncomfortable to watch until you realize he is a sign of that turbulent time.

The show's most tender moments come from a fine-voiced Mary Beth Anderson as "Fraulein Schneider," the widowed landlady, and the sympathetic, gentle Jewish fruit merchant "Heir Schultz" played by a somber Peter Mandel. Their doomed sweet love affair is tender and poignant.

The glitz and glitter of Michelle Griffin's costumes are spectacular. The creative lighting by Peter Mandel, Clara Shem-Tov and Coco Crowley with great sound by Kris Snook make for a super production. Christine Seadina's choreography is right on mark with an energetic chorus. The Kit Kat Klub's orchestra under the direction of Mark Gaetano is a hoot and makes great sounds.

It's disturbing how easily a dark time in human history — one that destroyed the lives of tens of millions of people — can be forgotten. SVCT's "Cabaret" serves as a reminder of how a cultured society can fail from apathy. The audience left the theater with the realization of what was about to happen would change the world forever and think about how parallel our world seems to be today.

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<https://morganhilltimes.com/after-two-year-delay-cabaret-ready/>



**Performers:** Sarah Duarte and Vaughn Mayer two of the leads in South Valley Civic Theatre's "Cabaret" opening March 11at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse. Photo by Chris Foster

## Show Time!

South Valley Civic Theatre returns to the MH Playhouse

By: [Erik Chalhoub](#)

March 3, 2022

It may have taken two years because of circumstances beyond its control, but South Valley Civic Theatre is at last ready to perform its dark musical, "Cabaret," in front of a live audience.

Ten performances will run on select days from March 11-27 at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse, 17090 Monterey Road.

The show was originally scheduled to hit the stage in April 2020, but just a month earlier, the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in earnest, bringing an end to countless in-person activities and transforming daily life for most.

SVCT was a few weeks into rehearsals for “Cabaret” at the time when it was forced to postpone the show to an uncertain date.

Meanwhile, the theater company held a few virtual performances in 2020, and in the [fall 2021, was able to host its first in-person](#) show since the pandemic, albeit on a much smaller stage inside the Gilroy Center for the Arts.

But come March 11, the lights will shine bright once again inside the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse.

“It’s like coming home to an old friend,” “Cabaret” Co-Producer Robin Bezanson said. “The excitement when we all got in here was phenomenal.”

Bezanson said SVCT, which manages the Limelight theater inside the Gilroy Center for the Arts, not only had to postpone “Cabaret” in March 2020, but was only a week away from opening another show, “Tigers Be Still,” in downtown Gilroy.

“Tigers Be Still” has been rescheduled to open on May 6.

“It was disheartening at the time, but it made coming back together so much sweeter,” she said.

“Cabaret” Director Carol Harris said some performers had to be recast due to scheduling conflicts, but the show now has a larger cast than before.

She added that the cast was a little unsure how to proceed when rehearsals began, as the uncertainties of Covid-19 makes planning a nearly impossible challenge. But their dedication to their craft never waned.

“They’re all dedicated and all excited,” she said. “They want to perform because that’s what performers do. They’ve been working their tails off.”

“Cabaret,” an award-winning musical that originally opened on Broadway in 1966, takes place in a Berlin nightclub in 1929-1930, as the Nazis begin their rise in power. The story follows an American writer who forms a relationship with an English performer as a tense political landscape develops around them.

The show features a number of performers new to SVCT, including two of the leads, Sarah Duarte and Vaughn Mayer.

Duarte, who plays Sally Bowles, said her character is a “self-destructive” woman who is addicted to alcohol and drugs.

“A lot of the characters in the show are one version you could see yourself slip into if you allow yourself to indulge in self-destructive behavior,” she said. “It’s not unrealistic. That’s what makes this show relatable to a larger audience.”

Mayer, who plays Clifford Bradshaw, said “Cabaret” can be “heartbreaking” at times, which further helps audiences connect to it.

“All stories are supposed to remind people that we’re human, and it’s good to be human,” he said.

Harris said “Cabaret” is timely for audiences in 2022, especially with today’s divided political climate across the world.

“We want people to leave here and talk about it afterward,” she said. “And I think they will.”

“Cabaret” runs select days from March 11-27 at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse, 17090 Monterey Road. General admission is \$32, \$29 for seniors and \$22 for youth 18 and under. Audience members will be asked to show proof of Covid-19 vaccination at the door. For tickets and information, visit [svct.org/2022\\_cabaret](http://svct.org/2022_cabaret).

## Main story: South Valley Civic Theatre's 'Cabaret' brings 1930s Berlin to life on stage

<https://gilroylife.com/2022/02/24/main-story-south-valley-civic-theatres-cabaret-brings-1930s-berlin-to-life-on-stage/>

Show uses fun songs, dances, jokes to reveal dark side of human nature

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Photo by Marty Cheek

Sarah Duarte (center) as singer Sally Bowles and Billy Tindall (in bowler) as Emcee perform with Kit Kat Klub "girls" and "boys" in South Valley Civic Theatre's musical "Cabaret." The show opens March 11.

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By Marty Cheek

Life is a cabaret! And it's especially so in the South Valley Civic Theatre's musical that takes a dark look at how a society can fall to fascism.

"Cabaret" opens March 11 for a three-weekend run at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse. Blending singing and dancing with comedy and drama, the show takes audiences to a seedy nightclub in 1930 Berlin. The story explores the last days of Germany's Weimar Republic where characters fall in love but find their romance threatened by the rise of Nazism.

The show is co-produced by Robin Bezanson and Judy Grant and directed by Carol Harris. SVCT originally planned to perform it in spring 2020 but, after a few rehearsals, the COVID-19 pandemic forced it to be delayed.

After being gone for two years and the stress of what happened during the past two years, there was a question of whether or not SVCT should do such a serious show, Bezanson said.



Photo courtesy Chris Foster/SVCT

"I think people have come to a place where they want 'real' — and this is real, this is what really happened. This is what we have to deal with," she said. "And it's time for us to learn from those times and move forward with love and acceptance and helping your neighbor. The things that happens to some of the characters are very relevant."

The heavy themes of the show — which include racism, the rise of autocracy, and the darker side of human nature — is lightened by the slapstick jokes and comic music interlaced into the story's plot, Harris said.

"It's a very dark show but it does have a lot of humor. Act One and Act Two are totally different," she said. "Act One has some happy spots and romantic relationships. But Act Two is a downer. Nothing goes right from the beginning to the end. The show is an omen to us that if we don't pay attention to our history, it may repeat itself."

The main performers are Billy Tindall as the eccentric master of ceremonies of the Kit Kat Klub, Sarah Duarte as the nightclub's star performer Sally Bowles, and Vaughn Mayer as struggling novelist Clifford Bradshaw who comes to Berlin seeking inspiration. Other performers include Joy Reynolds, Mary Beth Anderson, Peter Mandel, Michael Grimm, Marty Cheek, Marilyn Pifer, Joyce Bedard, Helen Huang, Reggie Reynolds, Megan Griffin, Patty Reinhart, Christine Carrillo, Jillian Grotz, Brooklyn Butler, Mason Bell, Eric Bruckner and Christopher Cruz.

Tindall said he hopes audiences will see the parallels with Germany's history of fascism and the world's current events.

"Here are these people living their lives and then all of a sudden everything is pulled out from under them. It's just like Ukraine now," he said. "I feel like it's an important message that's out there all the time but people forget."

What is the show's message? "Be aware of what's happening around you. Be knowledgeable about what your government is doing and what other people are thinking," he said. "The message is current as it can possibly be right now."

Emcee is "the conscience of the show," he said in his approach to playing the part.

"He lures the audience into really seeing what's going on," he said. "He gives them a sense of complacency at the beginning — and then he wants to give them the message. He's not the storyteller but he's the one who leads them down the path to the story."

Duarte studied opera in college and has performed in various bands, empowering her to belt out the songs at the cabaret with a powerful voice. She performs the role of Sally Bowles as a superficial party girl using drugs, alcohol and sex to fill a tragic void in her soul.



Photo courtesy Chris Foster/SVCT

"She's very sad. I think she's relatable because she's self-destructive and, unfortunately, I think that's something all of us are subject to at one point in time or another," Duarte said. But you have hope during the show that at some point she's going to be able to turn it around. And then she doesn't. And that's really the tragedy."

Vaughn auditioned for a role as a Kit Kat Klub "boy" in the cabaret, and soon after received a call from the producers offering him a starring role as Cliff.

"It was a pleasant surprise. I love the story of 'Cabaret' and I love how all the characters are all broken in certain ways," he said. "What I love about Cliff is that he's got that writer's observation. Like most writers, he's taking in his surroundings . . . He has the right ideas and his heart's in the right place. But where he really falls short is that he expects people to change when he's not really acknowledging who they are, particularly Sally."

Although the show is inappropriate for young children because of its darker tone and open sexuality reflecting Jazz Age Berlin society, Tindall encourages high school students and adults who like to be challenged to attend as a "civics lesson" about how fragile democracy can be if citizens take it for granted.

"Cabaret" is about stepping back to a moment in history," he said. "The setting and the time and what's happening to the country of Germany is very real and pertinent to today."

And the show's lessons from the past are served with plenty of song and dance numbers and comedy for audiences to enjoy, he said.

"They'll be entertained," he said. "The music is wonderful. The dancing is wonderful. It's an opportunity to enjoy all that but also get a very pertinent message about what's going on these days."