

# The New York Times

## THE Arts



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**Lucie Arnaz** The performer, with Ron Abel on piano and Tom Hubbard on bass, at Café Carlyle.

## A Little Zaniness and a Little Cabaret

As Lucie Arnaz, her eyes aflame, swiveled onto the stage of Café Carlyle on Tuesday evening and spat out the lyrics to the sizzling Lena Horne hit

**STEPHEN HOLDEN**

**MUSIC REVIEW**

“Love,” she emulated the attitude of combative challenge that was a Horne signature. No matter that Ms. Arnaz, 62, is not as glamorous as Horne was even in her 80s, or that her voice isn’t as full-bodied or her manner as insinuating. The Horne tribute was still a smart, effective opening salvo in her show “Spring Is Here.”

The song also announced the theme of her show, which intertwines a lighthearted history of her romantic life with her professional ups and downs. The love part reached a happy ending in

1980 with her marriage to the actor Laurence Luckinbill, after some false starts with men she said she didn’t realize were gay.

One of Ms. Arnaz’s most endearing traits is a zaniness that spontaneously bubbles forth. As effectively as she evoked Horne in songs like “Love” and “It’s All Right With Me,” she also conjured memories of her parents, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, who were America’s top show business couple when she was born in 1951. The show suggests that there is a little more Desi than Lucy in her stage personality.

Behind Ms. Arnaz was an ensemble led by her musical direc-

*Lucie Arnaz performs through Saturday at Café Carlyle, 35 East 76th Street, Manhattan; 212-744-1600.*

tor, Ron Abel, on piano. Tom Hubbard played bass, and Ray Marchica on drums added spicy Latin-American accents to several numbers.

As an interpreter Ms. Arnaz is not a performer to elicit tears even when a song is sad, although her wistful, slowed rendition of “Just One of Those Things” came close. Her nightclub technique is precise and intelligent, and her body language and expressions are designed to illustrate lyrics while remaining safely outside a song, even on a breakup ballad like “Where Do You Start?” Every syllable and gesture was choreographed down to the tiniest detail.

So who is Lucie Arnaz? A superprofessional entertainer who knows what she’s doing and is very good at it.