

May 20, 2015

The 'Mad' Man List

Eric Alterman on May 20, 2015 - 1:03 PM ET

Megan Hilty at the Café Carlyle

Last night was the second time I've seen Megan Hilty in a few months. The last time was at the Appel Room for the "American Songbook" series in February. As I mentioned then, I got weirdly attached to Megan Hilty when she played Ivy on "Smash." Her last show was a mixture of Broadway tunes and classics, with a gorgeous "Heart of the Matter" from her first and only album thrown in. This one was completely different. It focused on Ivy's greatest hits, which were a lot of fun to hear and a bunch of "Songbook" style songs that leaned heavily on Cole Porter and her recent experience of giving birth with her guitarist/band member husband. She's got a winning personality a booming voice and a face that is almost too perfect for her own good. What's not to love? Well, one thing. Ivy could use a little more irony. We got a bit when she imitated her daughter 20 years from now, making fun of her mom—though as the father of a 17-year-old, this struck me as overly optimistic—but she has the making of a big, big Streisand-style star if she could veer a little further from the straight and narrow. As it is, she is a near perfect performer for the Carlyle, in its traditional role as the keeper, and defender of this peculiarly (and wonderfully) American form of performance. (Ok, one other piece of advice: Bring back "Heart of the Matter." It can be her "Send in the Clowns.") As always the food, the décor and the atmosphere at the Carlyle were wonderful, but only if you're rich and/or on a really special occasion.