



Alexandra Magdaleno of Art Rocks 247 talks with Sarah LeClair, actor-musician and performing-arts educator. Sarah is currently starring in “CABARET” at the Coronado Playhouse

The phone interview took place on February 23, 2019

*“CABARET”:* Coronado Playhouse presents Kander and Ebb’s award-winning musical Cabaret, opening Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> and playing until Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at Coronado Playhouse. When Cabaret was originally produced and directed by renowned Broadway director Hal Prince in 1966, conflict in America was the central theme found in politics and society at large. Despite the Civil Rights Bill being signed in 1964, race riots and shootings of African Americans were commonplace in our country. Hal Prince was very cognizant of these events, and he wanted to use the musical theatre art form to create a cautionary tale set in pre-World War II Germany to illustrate to a 1960s audience how important it is to not repeat the errors of the past. It is undeniable that this tale is still relevant today. Playing on these themes, Coronado Playhouse’s production will evaluate the psychology of how our well-intended goals can easily degrade because of fear and lack of empathy. Audience members are invited to be active participants in this drama from the moment they step into the theatre where their “table is waiting,” as they become patrons at Weimar’s 1931 Kit Kat Club and interact with the Kit Kat Girls and the fabulous Master of Ceremonies. The intimacy and immersive quality of the Playhouse will lend a hand in creating a unique theatre experience for the audience.

Alexandra: Hi Sarah, so glad we were able to connect here with our crazy schedules! I understand you are playing “Sally Bowles” in the new production at the Coronado Playhouse of “CABARET – Right this Way. Your Table’s Waiting,” and it’s interactive?

Sarah: Yes, it’s really fun (giggle), and the role of Sally is hard work but and very rewarding

A: Wow, Sally is one of my favorite characters in “CABARET”! Ok so in the interview I like to keep the pace fast and snappy, so don’t over-analyze the questions, just tell me the first thing that pops into your head!

S: Great!

A: What is your current state of mind? You can have three words for this one...

S: As I tackle the role, you mean?

A: Just anything, how are you feeling right now...

S: Ok. So as an actress, just right now, I’m grateful, I’m joyful, and I’m excited!

A: What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

S: I’m too hard on myself

A: Yeah, I’m guilty of that one too. But you know, I think that’s a good thing because it pushes us, you know, if we were just complacent and settled for mediocrity, we wouldn’t be where we are’ so, I think that’s actually a good thing

S: Yeah, I agree

A: What trait do you most deplore in others?

S: Tardiness

A: Oh, that’s a good one



Sarah LeClair

S: I think anytime somebody wastes your time, you know, they're just stealing from you. So whether it's being disorganized or, being rude about being late or whatever, that just drives me crazy

A: What do you consider the most overrated virtue?

S: Oh gosh, um, perfection

A: Yeah, I like that as an artist myself, I dabble in painting and jewelry making, and some of my best work comes out of it being "not perfect" you know, off-center or unbalanced, it just that human element

S: Yes, as a singer, my training is classical, and that is a world that demands perfection. There is no imperfection in the opera. Um, and then transitioning into musical theater is a challenge for me because I have to let go of the perfection of the voice to tell a story

A: On what occasion do you lie?

S: Do I lie? Oh gosh. Um, mm. Uh, I lie to myself all the time and tell myself that I'm not scared or that it doesn't matter that other people are judging me or, you know what I mean? I think with my anxieties, uh, as a performer, you have to sort of lie to yourself and say, well, that's not getting to me, or that doesn't matter. To always have that mask on of, "I am going to be professional, and I'm going to get through this" ...

A: Yeah, it's having that armor on, so the negative reviews or negativity around you doesn't eat you up!

A: What is most treasured possession?

S: I would say my piano. I'm really blessed. My good friend Nicholas was downsizing his home and had an extra beautiful grand piano, and he just wanted it to go someplace where it would be loved and played all the time. So, it lives at my house now. Yeah, and it's one of those pianos that I really feel like there's a, uh, energy that's in objects where I think all the time about all the songs that have been played into this piano, its over a hundred years old and all of the opera rehearsals that it has lived through, it embodies it around the sides of this piano. Where has it been? It's played everything from church hymns to opera to now the musical theater things that I play on it, and it's just had this journey. So, it's the soul of my house.

A: If only it could talk, I'm sure it would have some wonderful stories to tell

S: I feel so fortunate to have, something that just imbues all this wonderfulness... you know, soul into my house and into my hands

A: Well music is soul, it comes from our souls

A: Are you naturally good at accents?

S: I think I have an ear for it, but you know, it takes a lot of dialect work. We're really lucky to have Vanessa Dinning, who works with all the big theaters like the Cygnet and the Lamb's Players theatre. She is our guide through this whole process, and she's scientifically able to break it down. I think a lot of people can mimic, but you're not going to get every single consonant and vowel the way it's meant to be and the stresses and the syllables. So, um, so yeah. So, I work with her a lot, and then I go through my script every day, slowly to make sure that I'm hitting all the specific words. I'm thinking of words like, um, "temporarily," what do you do with the "Rs" of "temporarily" when you're British? Hmm. Right. So, I know I have like my tricky words and then she'll listen to it and go, okay, well all your long "OZ" need more length. So, I'll go back and focus on that and certain words that she likes to have, she calls them "delicious" so we have to lengthen and then make them dramatic

A: Ok, I am going to wrap this up, so I have one last question. What is one thing your parents told you that you listened to?

S: Oh Gosh. My Dad always had this attitude, mmm. "Pushiness" because he thought that he is deserving, you know what I mean? So many times, as a kid, uh, if I had a paper that I had to do, he would set up an interview with the head of surgery at a major hospital, and he just walked right in there and sat me down and that was going to be my primary source, you know? And, I think that was really embarrassing as a child; but it also gave me this understanding that if you believe that you deserve to learn, to grow to, to achieve, to perform, that you have that ability in you, you just have to have that confidence. I think that's definitely been a lesson that he taught me

A: Great, got it. Well, it's been an absolute pleasure getting to know you. I think you might be a little pushy but in a good way, it takes guts and that type of confidence to be a good actor and you certainly have that, here's to Dad!

Art Rocks 247 – Alexandra Magdaleno / Cultural Correspondent