

## Wedding Singer Blues (Pick)

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By Jeff Favre

Forget the ceremony, the cake, or the bridesmaids' dresses. According to Carla Zilbersmith, the key to a successful wedding is the band. That may or may not be true, but Zilbersmith's one-woman show proves that a behind-the-scenes look at the life of a wedding singer can be quite charming, funny, and touching. Zilbersmith is a solid comedic actor with strong impersonation skills, which Jeffrey Bihl successfully directs so that the audience never becomes confused. Her writing is disarming, and the story starts slowly but builds gradually through its satisfying, albeit predictable, conclusion.

Backed by a three-piece band and surrounded by white lace and floral arrangements, Zilbersmith opens her multicharacter piece as a smarmy, no-nonsense Guy, who runs a virtual factory of bands that dominate the New Jersey wedding industry. Carla has moved from Vancouver to New York to make it big. She winds up busing to Trenton, singing the same corny love songs, in particular the theme song from the movie *Ice Castles*, and hitchhiking home because she doesn't have a car and doesn't know how to drive. Carla interacts with at least a dozen kooky people. There's a foulmouthed driving instructor, a spacy waitress, and the No. 1 singer, who has a secret double life. We also meet her grandmother, a former jazz singer who gave up her career after getting married and who keeps telling Carla to give up on her dream of being a successful singer.

It takes about 15 minutes of setup for this production to get rolling. But once it does, the jokes hit their mark. A breakdown by one of the wedding singers, who has had enough of the same bad songs, is a comic gem. Zilbersmith excels in accents. She has charisma and is able to infuse the tale with a sense of realism and intimacy, as if she's telling one person her story for the first time. Her singing — including blues, jazz, and wedding-singer style — is pleasing. Bihl's direction uses the tiny stage well, incorporating plenty of movement that helps the pace remain quick. This show isn't groundbreaking, but it's well-crafted entertainment that will appeal to a varied audience.

*Presented by Breathe Productions at Upstairs at the Coronet Theatre, 366 N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood. Thu.-Sat. 8 p.m., Sun. 3 p.m. Jun. 9-Jul. 16. (310) 657-7377. [www.weddingsingerblues.com](http://www.weddingsingerblues.com).*

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