

By WILL FRIEDWALD

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Shana Farr *Lynn Redmile*

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The Laurie Beechman Theatre

407 W. 42nd St., (212) 695-6909

Thursday

There were at least four Cole Porter shows in Manhattan in March alone, and, lately, Noel Coward songbooks are nearly as plentiful. While the idea of combining those two sages together isn't particularly original, soprano Shana Farr has created something surprisingly new by intertwining the words of those twin colossi of songwriting, weaving songs both familiar and offbeat, both singing and speaking the texts aloud as if they were prose—something that isn't supposed to work, yet somehow, it does. The combination of Ms. Farr's delightfully old-fashioned, pure operetta chops and musical director's harmonically advanced arrangements (enhanced by Adam Fisher on cello) give the overall effect of being very traditional and very modern at the same time.