

## Cracked Ice

By [Andy Propst](#) • Apr 29, 2009 • [New York](#)

Given the constant headlines about the country's continued economic woes and a potential flu pandemic, a little fun really is the order of the day. Luckily, some much-needed theatrical zaniness can be had at Jennifer Miller's *Cracked Ice, or the Jewels of the Forbidden Skates*, a drag vaudeville noir now at P.S. 122.

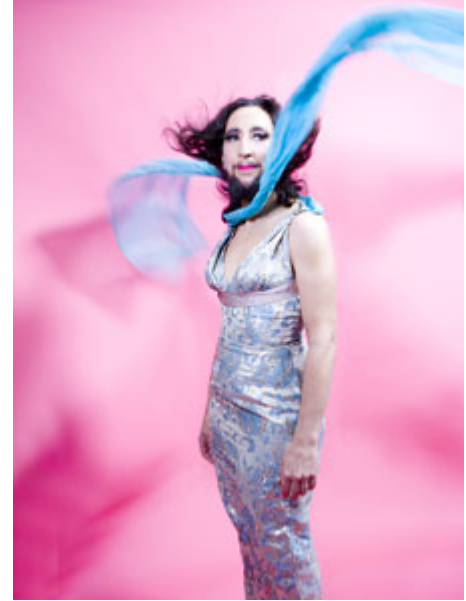
The 90-minute show is set in Eddie's Rhinestone Cabaret where the Liberty Sisters -- Sybil (Miller) and Statua (Carlton Cyrus Ward) -- are the headliners. They have dreams of transforming their act -- a wild mélange of juggling, dancing and saucily passé political humor -- into an ice spectacle. However, Sybil has invested everything they have -- including Statua's prized Dorothy Hamill skirt collection -- with Bernie Madoff (Rae C. Wright), but he's lost it all.

Not surprisingly, Sybil goes on a blind rampage trying to find Bernie, but finds herself strangely drawn to Tom (also played by Wright), a plumber at the club. Statua also finds herself embroiled in a love affair with Bernadette (Wright as well -- get the picture?) a new performer at Eddie's. Meanwhile, a pair of Dutch kids (played by the inestimable Wau Wau Sisters) is also looking for Bernie; he's their long-lost dad and they're also destitute.

The hide-and-seek farce that develops with the characters is smartly punctuated by deliciously frivolous sketches on stage at the club. The Wau Wau Sisters reappear as a pair of raunchy and very funny country western singers with a bit-too-strong attachment to one another. Conceptual artist Flo (Salley May, who looks a bit like an ostrich on silver glitter platform shoes) delivers a hysterically surreal dance routine involving mechanical birds and feather boas. As for the Liberty Sisters themselves, one of their zippiest routines is a song that's made up entirely of tongue-twisters.

The clever tunes and lyrics are from Kenny Mellman -- who's also on hand as the Cabaret pianist -- whose invaluable contributions include the folk anthem that morphs into polka played by Novice Theory on the accordion. Meanwhile, Obie Award winner Deb Margolin has crafted a series of Spalding Gray-like monologues for Bernie, which cuttingly comments on the financier's arrogance and greed -- and which Wright delivers with frightening forthrightness. An appearance from another of Madoff's "victims," Alexandra Penny (played by Lee Houck), the author of *How To Make Love to Your Man*, only underscores the commentary about gender roles that's at the heart of this cross-dressing spree.

As the plot twists and turns, the homespun production (which includes a clever set and a host of blissfully tacky costumes from Jonathan Berger) can lose focus. But just as the piece seems to have entirely lost its forward



Jennifer Miller stars in *Cracked Ice*  
(© Karl Giant)

momentum, it rights itself, inducing laughter and smiles. And before the show has concluded, Miller and company conspire to create a happy ending for most of the folks at Eddie's Rhinestone Cabaret, sending audiences away with the knowledge that a certain amount of merriment can generally be found in even the direst of times.