

# ASF's 'All Night Strut' a fitting tribute to swing

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MILFORD — Half a century later, swing's still the thing.

The 1940s bebop, big-band sound that. Nouveau-swing bands like the Poppin' Daddies (with "Suit Riot") and Squirrel Nut Grope (with "Hell") have hit the charts in the '90s. A television commercial for khaki pants shows Generation X crowd jitterbugging to the sounds of their grandparents' era.

Amazingly moly! The current offering of the American Stage Festival goes a way towards explaining why the resurgence of '30s and '40s music is such a welcome trend. "All Night Strut," which continues through this weekend at ASF's summer home in Milford, includes some of the best tunes to be found here.

You think this isn't a really good

## Review

show? Here's proof that it is:

"A Fine Romance," "I Get Ideas," "Java Jive," "Fascinating Rhythm," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "It Don't Mean a Thing if it Ain't Got that Swing," "In the Mood" plus a parade of 20 other hits are part of the show. Or, to put it better, *are* the show.

Unlike other ASF productions this season, "All Night Strut" isn't a play at all. It is, however, pure entertainment. "Strut" is directed by Jim Weaver, who broke ASF box office records in 1996 with "Ain't Misbehavin'," and is on the way toward bringing ASF its biggest commercial hit this summer, as the opening crowds were strong, and this weekend's performances may sell out, ASF administrators say.

The cast comprises four young

singers and dancers with Broadway experience. The range of talent runs from pretty dang good to exceptional. The latter fits diminutive Debra Walton, who debuted on Broadway with "Street Corner Symphony." In "Strut," her knock-'em-dead vocal solo on the Gospel song, "Operator," is the show's high point.

Another cast member, lanky Dennis Stowe, gives "Minnie the Moocher" the perfect touch of showboat Cab Calloway's outlandishness. His haunting rendition of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" also is a crowd-pleaser.

Lyn Philistine's powerful vocals shine particularly well in "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square." And Gregg Goodbrod scores big with his rendition of "As Time Goes By."