

Now for something quite different – Mechelec, the cabaret festival, is about to spring into life, as **Samantha Freestone** reports



Marcus Cassidy-Anderson is excited about the festival.

Picture: ADAM ELWOOD N09HT359

Musical spice of life

CABARET

A CABARET festival is coming to Williamstown.

Mechelec the festival is part of the Williamstown Musical Theatre Company's production list for 2007.

It will run six shows over three days from this Thursday at the Williamstown Mechanics Institute on Electra St.

Artistic director and co-producer Marcus Cassidy-Anderson, who organised the event with technical director Caroline Behnane, said he

was excited about the shows. "We wanted to do something that was a bit different from a lot of other musical theatre companies in Victoria," Cassidy-Anderson said.

The festival name is a combination of the building where it will be held and the street this building is on.

Cassidy-Anderson said the event was a first for the local musical theatre company, which was until recently known as Williamstown Light Opera Company.

Will Conyers, host of *Broadway at Bedtime* on JOY 94.9, will be master

of ceremonies. When asked about Conyers' role, Cassidy-Anderson said:

"It's musical theatre. Hello?"

It is this sense of fun that has seen the cabaret style of performance grow throughout Melbourne recently with burlesque and variety-type shows reclaiming their popularity.

Cassidy-Anderson is hoping this year will not be the last for Mechelec. "I would love to produce it next year," he said. "It gives patrons variety. It is nice to offer them something different."

Cabaret is traditionally translated from French, meaning to serve liquor.

It came to mean much more with the opening of the first Cabaret-style saloon called Le Chat Noir in Montmartre, Paris, in 1881.

Le Chat Noir was an open house for composers, poets and entertainers and the venue became known for its great – and cheap – entertainment.

Traditionally customers would sit and drink at small tables and be entertained all night. It seems not much has changed at all.

SENSE OF FUN

What: Cabaret Festival

When: September 6-8

Where: Williamstown Mechanics Institute, Electra St

Bookings: 1300 881 545

Visit: www.wmtc.org.au for a full performance list