

L.A.

NOVEMBER 2013
Issue No. 314

L.A.'S ONLY JAZZ PAPER

JAZZ

SCENE

DIANE HUBKA At CATALINA JAZZ CLUB

Guitarist/vocalist Diane Hubka celebrated her new CD, *West Coast Strings*, at Catalina's early in October. She was backed by an excellent group of musicians: Bobby Pierce-keyboard, John Pisano and Barry Zweig-guitars, Jeff DeAngelo-bass and drummer Kendall Kay. Hubka is not a "shouter" but sings in a laid back, easy style very compatible with her guitar playing. "Moondance" was very hip with Hubka enunciating crisply. Zweig swings as easily as he breathes, playing with a jazz swagger that is so engaging. Likewise John Pisano is a guitar master who serves as a mentor to so many other guitarists and singers.

Hubka sang Jobim's "Fighting No More" in Portuguese. I'm not an expert but she sounded spot on. Her voice is so soft and subtle, well suited to the calming tune while Pisano's solo was so intimate, so lovely. You can almost hear the audience sigh as the tune ended. Hubka talked about the tunes and why she chose them for her CD. A beautiful Horace Silver tune (sorry, I didn't get the name) had Pierce's quiet organ effects on his keyboard. Everything was played in a hypnotic whisper, "There's a place I know where daffodils had their fun. Peaceable as the day is done." Kay's use of cymbals added a shimmer of sound. "Peace for everyone" ended the lovely tune.

Guitarist David Eastlee joined the group, with his full, buoyant sound. Sitting next the Zweig the two made a great team. "It Ain't Necessarily So"

had Hubka telling the tale vocally and it was excellent. Pierce's organ added some snap. A bossa nova, "Amanacer" written by Pisano, with lyrics by his wife Jeanne Pisano, was light and delicate as Kay added a tapping rhythm. Hubka got her first guitar at age 11 and she has become a fine interpreter of a wide range of tunes. She sang "Never Let Me Go" as Eastlee added soft accompaniment. What a gem it became! "Moonray" (arranged by Eastlee) was a mid-tempo tune, new to me.

Hubka played a 7-string guitar for a duo with Pisano, "Slow, Hot Wind" which became a dramatic, enticing tune. I loved her version of Strayhorn's "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing" which was just gorgeous. Hubka began vocalizing for "One Note Samba" which gave everyone a chance to shine again. What can I say about such a group of wildly talented musicians except that they were good, extra, extra good. The longish set closed with Hubka singing a sassy "You've Been Steppin' Out." With lyrics like "While you were steppin' out someone else was steppin' in. I've got a smile on my face and you didn't put it there." which allowed Pierce to really stretch out on a wow solo! It was a very fine night of first-rate entertainment, almost like listening to a master class. Her CD features Pierce plus seven great guitarists, three of whom were heard tonight. To purchase Hubka's CD go to: www.diane-hubka.com.

Myrna Daniels