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Lua Hadar's "Jazz without Borders" criss-crosses continents musically

By **Jazz Music Examiner**, Carol Banks Weber
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Jazz singer Lua Hadar thinks of herself as a cultural diplomat.

There's a little bit of the Broadway, the cabaret and exotic French to jazz singer and San Francisco Bay area vocalist [Lua Hadar](#)'s intimate, engaging performances. [She and her TWIST band](#) just thrilled audiences in San Francisco's downtown Nikko Hotel-Razz Room last Sunday, while debuting their new show, "French Connection."

The "French Connection" is a part of her worldly charm. The native New Yorker and her band have done gigs in Paris, New York and Bangkok – hence, the "Jazz without Borders" theme – to much acclaim, slowly but steadily gathering even more of a loyal following. Hadar's background is as varied and as interesting as her versatile performances (she's equally comfortable in jazz clubs or on-stage, whether she's doing a gig or a play).

Her TWIST band is made up of solid, experienced musicians: Dave Miotke-jazz accordion, Tony Malfatti-saxophone, Daniel Fabricant-bass, and Jim Zimmerman-drums. Backed by such pros, Hadar managed to again enchant fans with her smooth, bi-lingual, continental vocal stylings. Writer Robin C. Evans is one such long-time fan who got to enjoy Hadar's classic French/American gig at the Razz Room recently.

Evans fondly mentioned the effortless manner in which Hadar translated French standards ("Under Paris Skies") and American classics ("My Heart Belongs to Daddy"), as well as original material by music director/arranger/accompanying pianist Jason Martineau. Hadar even managed to show off her Broadway and comedic leanings with "Do We Really Need Another Song About Paris?"

Explained Evans: "Their brand of crossover jazz is built on Hadar's eclectic background and

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Martineau's experience composing for orchestra, solo piano and chorus, as well as a full-length musical and multiple film scores."

Hadar also performed a duet with special guest artist Professor R.J. Ross, a founding member of the legendary Detroit funk band, Brainstorm. Ross just completed his own debut solo album.


Despite her worldly glow, while singing "Someday My Prince Will Come," a 1937 Disney classic from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Hadar revealed her American roots—and perhaps, her philosophy to life. "I grew up in Long Island watching Disney films, where I learned that the perfect man would come along and solve everything. Life's not like that," she told the Nikko Hotel-Rrazz Room, San Francisco audience. "We have to make our own destiny. But it's important to hope and wait for the right life condition to come along."

Hadar and her band, TWIST, will gig again in New Orleans, LA on November 13 at the Westin, opening for [Powerful Women International](#) (PWI), a San Francisco-based organization founded – post-Hurricane Katrina – by New Orleans native Valeri Bocage to help women live their dreams.

And then it's back to San Francisco for a special November 21st Fairmont Hotel Cirque

Room gig. This isn't just a regular gig spotlighting her and her band. It's a presentation and performance for Hadar's vocal-master-class students and other teachers, as part of their eight-week fall class.

A quick peek at Hadar's [artist bio](#) reveals a schooled, studied resume: [Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre](#) and the Dalcroze School of Music, coached by Metropolitan Opera's Joan Dornemann, off-Broadway, five-year residency in a Verona Italian theatre company, subsequent tours in Italy, Spain and Switzerland, further memorable stays in Bali, Japan, Russia, Thailand, four produced CDs, jazz collaborations, teaching stints, acting, comedy... Sounds like she does it all.

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