

By Tom W. Kelly
Published: October 13, 2005

Cabaret is alive and well and happening at The Purple Onion in North Beach. Surrender your workaday stress to the beautiful sights and sounds of this magically romantic world.

Lovely and lively Lua Hadar (with the Jason Martineau Jazz Trio) recently presented her one-woman show *It's about Time, Already!* at this funky venue, and she'll reprise the

show two more times in the Bay Area.



Lua Hadar, Jason Emanuel Britton, Benn Bacot, Sung Min Park, Rick Lasquete in *It's about Time, Already!*

Step down a candle-lined stairway to enter The Purple Onion—filled with eager patrons, drinking and chatting in anticipation. The cozy bar offers brick walls aplenty, a few cushy booths, and lots of tiny cabaret tables just big enough to host your two-drink minimum. Warning: There IS a mirror ball. The lights dim and a spot illuminates Lua Hadar, gorgeous with long auburn hair and a passionately purple strapless gown. Her smile enchants, as delightful as her stage presence and well-balanced song selection.

Hadar opens the first set with the sweet and slow “While We’re Young” (Wilder/Palitz & Engvick). But the beat picks up immediately with a rousing rendition of “The Song Is You” (Kern & Hammerstein II). Irving Berlin’s “Let’s Face the Music and Dance” proclaims an urgency and is the evening’s first musical highlight. The pattern of ballad to upbeat to comedy is established and repeats throughout. More fun follows with “Too Old To Ingenuer” (Fox & Weingarten) and “Loads of Love” (Rodgers). But the comic highlight of the entire evening is certifiably “I’m Tired” from the Mel Brooks (composer/lyricist) film *Blazing Saddles*. Yes, it’s that depraved ditty kookily crooned by Lilly von Shtupp, this time backed up with three singing-and-dancing rabbis.

Tremendous! She also sings in French the sexy “Floating Where I Have Never Been,” written by the handsome and dashing Musical Director (and pianist) Jason Martineau and translated by Matthew Haislip. And she sings in Italian about the swiftness of time’s passing with the beautiful ballad “Il Tempo

Passó” (Reverberi). The vagaries of memory are recounted in the first set’s closer “Colored Lights” (Kander & Ebb).

For the second set, Hadar wears a gorgeous crimson dress and that ever-present, ever-radiant smile. Opening with two Bernstein, Comden/Green songs, she wows with the upbeat “Lucky to Be Me” and follows with the ode to opportunities missed in “Some Other Time.” She really sells it with a boa in “Undecided” (Shavers, Robin), follows it with an ode to self-sabotage in “It’s Time for Roses” (Livingston), and tops it with Kander & Ebb’s comic story-song “Ring Them Bells.” Her gloriously exotic encore “Nature Boy” (Ahbez), familiar to fans of the film *Moulin Rouge*, ends the evening with a mysteriously romantic flavor.

Hadar is a triple threat: comedian, chanteuse (singer) and raconteuse (storyteller). A former member of The Kitchenettes, she has a gracious ease before her audience as well as a facility for perfect patter between numbers. She especially thrives when selling a song with a kooky character as well as when crooning those slow romantic melodies. She coyly pokes good-natured fun at zen, her Jewish upbringing, and therapy. Jason Martineau is easy on the eyes as well. And he hits all-I-I the right notes as Musical Director. Bassists Mario Suracci and Aaron Germain as well as drummer Kent Bryson diligently and delightfully provide musical back-up.

Put on your dapper-est duds (or just wear black... it’s so slimming) and support local cabaret. Check out singer Linda Kosut (also a former Kitchenette) with the Max Perkoff Trio in *My Own Kind of Hat!* appearing at The Purple Onion on Nov. 18 (Fri., 8pm).

It’s about Time, Already! reprises on Oct. 15 (Sat., 8pm) at the Rainbow Room, 806 4th St., Napa (no cover, 2 drink min.) call (707) 252-4477 or www.thedepot-napa.com/rainbow AND on Nov. 4 (Fri., 8pm) at the Larkspur Café Theatre, 500 Magnolia Ave. (\$20 cover, 2 drink min.) call 924-6107 or murphyproductions.com