

STU HAMSTRA'S **Cabaret Hotline** ONLINE

SAN FRANCISCO CABARET REVIEWS



LUA HADAR IN "IT'S ABOUT TIME ALREADY"

Reviewed by Stacy Horn

"It's About Time, Already" is a celebration of maturity. Lua Hadar's latest show, performed at THE EMPIRE PLUSH ROOM on February 28th, mixes sentimentality and wit to tell her personal story of entering the middle third of life. She pokes fun while lamenting its arrival.

Lua's beautiful, rich, full soprano voice with its alluring resonance is pure joy. You believe this singer. She feels deeply, and she makes the audience do the same. She's calm, seasoned and knows where she's heading. And she's as comfortable singing in French and Italian as she is in English.

Lua's attractive personality, captivating stage presence and on-target interpretations are

enough for me to overlook the show's somewhat uncomfortable beginning, which seemed slightly out of step due, most likely, to the performer's nervousness. But please know that once Lua warms up, she goes for the gusto.

By nature, cabaret performance is about intimacy - a daunting concept. A younger singer who hasn't yet processed life's lessons will fall flat. But Lua has the maturity to tackle the format. She opens up and reveals herself to the audience - the mark of a good cabaret performer. Lua is a wonderful actress who seeps into her characters. And we willingly follow.

Lua illustrates her life's lessons through a diverse song list that highlight her vocal talent while making a pointed commentary on topics relating to leaving youth behind: from "Let's Face the Music and Dance" (Irving Berlin) to "Dancing in the Dark" (Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz) to "I'm Tired" (from Mel Brooks' Blazing Saddles).

Other show highlights include "Il Tempo Passó" (Luigi Tenco / Reverberi), a beautiful composition sung with great intensity, and "It's Time for Roses" (Dennis Livingston), a wonderful new song premiered on her latest CD release, "It's About Time." And, for me, the evening's piece de resistance: "Nature Boy" (Eden Ahbez), a haunting melody that literally gave me chills.

The impressive Jason Martineau Jazz Trio accompanies Lua. Martineau is a gifted pianist who also wrote two of the evening's highlights, "Floating Where I Have Never Been" and "Just Me." Those who are unfamiliar with Martineau's work will be thrilled to discover this wonderful talent.

Please note that this slick, well-produced show is not beyond silliness. The Boys from Bialystock, a hilarious team of backup singers having fun with Borscht Belt-like comedy, add genuine chuckles to a short portion of the evening.

THE EMPIRE PLUSH ROOM at the York Hotel is located at 940 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA - 415-885-2800 - <http://www.empireplushroom.com/> .

Copyright 2006 Stacy Horn