

CINDY MARCHIONDA

Press

CINDY MARCHIONDA - "LIVE AT THE BEECHMAN" AN EX "SPIDER WOMAN" SPINS HER WEB IN CABARET ... BY JOHN HOGLUND SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

With a very clever song list and enough spunk and charisma to light up Times Square (which is down the block), Cindy Marchionda took over the stage at the Laurie Beechman like a tiny tornado, on her opening night of a four show, once-a-month run, through November. No surprise there; she didn't win all those musical theatre raves for nothing (among her accolades came some rave reviews for playing the role of Aurora in *Kiss Of The Spider Woman* out of town; the same role won a Tony for Chita Rivera on Broadway.) Here, directed by Andy Gale with musical director Ray Fellman at the piano leading the band, Marchionda ripped into some complex tunes by a vastly diverse mix of composers, and made them her own.

This spunky musical theatre gal is in the beginning stages of making her mark in the cabaret world. And from the looks of it, she's heading in the right direction. After a somewhat loud opening two numbers, she sensitively segued into Jamie Cullum's visceral "Photograph," "... just another story, caught up in another photograph I've found ... seems like another person."

Marchionda delivered this trenchant story song with sensitivity and heartfelt conviction. But again, the band was a bit loud, causing her to lose some of the intimacy she was going for.

Between songs, she told funny anecdotes including one about a wise music teacher who stopped her from singing "Losing My Mind," when she was very young, and a wordy tale about a dentist, that was humorous. Some of it was marred just a bit by her penchant for profanity (which, incidentally, is no longer raunchy-hip, but boring). Occasionally, this took away from some more serious moments she was going for, and, she took so long to get to the point in the graphic tale of a periodontist, causing a slight lull. Ultimately, it all led into a cute blues/comedy ditty, "Long John Blues" ("... he said he wouldn't hurt me but he filled my hole inside"). She continued with even more jabs about the dentist who is short and Jewish.

This sent into her into Randy Newman's tricky "Short People," which she handled well.

By the time she got around to The Beatles' "Got To Get You Into My Life," in medley with Smokey Robinson's "Oooh, Baby, Baby," she was flying and back in game. This medley became a serious highlight for her with another beautiful arrangement. She was so effective, that it was worth the price of admission alone just to hear this imaginative treatment. It also served to show what she is truly capable of, without some random cluttered patter. She let loose, and her emotionality and understanding of words was inherently effective. She also shined big time on a silly ditty called "I've Got Them Too Good Today Blues." Her set up for the heartfelt "If I Sing" (Maltby- Shire) was full of meaning even if just a bit graphic on the delicate subject of dementia, which is a personal issue in her family – and often for unsuspecting others.

A burlesque-style "Goody, Goody," arranged by Mark Janas, worked really well. Another Jamie Cullum song, "Mind Trick," wasn't quite as effective. Jackson Browne's folk/rock ballad, "Sky Blue and Black," was a hands down winner across the board, giving this petite-size pretty lady the finest moment in her show. An eighties love song, "History Of Us" by Indigo Girls, almost recalled a Jane Olivor style that worked to perfection.

Overall, this musical theatre lady with a history of spider webs, is off and running in cabaret. Some careful editing might help weed out the excess banter and shape her show into the perfect one she has the full potential for.

Cindy Marchionda is on the move. Watch out world.

She appears next on Saturday, Oct. 17 and Nov. 21 at 8pm.