

# CINDY MARCHIONDA

*Press*



## **CINDY MARCHIONDA AT THE LAURIE BEECHMAN THEATER REVIEW BY JENA TESSE FOX APRIL 10, 2009**

When she strode up to the microphone at the Laurie Beechman theatre for the final performance of her latest cabaret (for the time being), Cindy Marchionda immediately began to rock out to the fun rhythm of Neil Sedaka's "Love Will Keep Us Together." In a few seconds and a few movements, she set the mood for the entire evening: a casual and funky hour of pop, jazz, comedy and...well, fun.

Somewhat unusually for contemporary cabarets, most of the numbers were popular standards from several generations, turning the show (if not officially) into a retrospective of American popular music. From Johnny Mercer and Leiber & Stoller to the Beatles and the Indigo Girls, plenty of genres were represented, letting Marchionda demonstrate not only her vocal range, but her mastery of different musical styles as well.

Andy Gale's stage direction and Ray Fellman's music direction did much to keep the pace of the evening even throughout the different styles of music, and let jazz, rock and power ballads blend together smoothly. Likewise, her banter paints a portrait of the artist as a young woman, describing her struggles with her artistic career, her job at what she calls "Douche Bank" and family stories. Through it all, she maintains a strong sense of humor and a sharp (and knowing) wit, keeping the energy up and the mood bright. (Her apparently improvised chatter with backup singers Brandon Cutrell and Michael Sheridan was equally funny.)

From her sexy and playful "Long John Blues" (who knew dentistry could be so hot?) to the smooth and jazzy "Goody Goody" (by Tommy George and Johnny Mercer & Matt Malneck, respectively), Marchionda throws herself into the emotion of each song, bringing the audience along for the ride. It's difficult not to get caught up when a performer so clearly loves what she's singing: When she sang Randy Newman's "Short People," for example, Marchionda performed it with a wide, innocent and sweet smile (the punchline was her list of famous people under five feet tall, including Judy Garland and Bonnie Parker; the visual punchline is Marchionda's own 4'11" stature); she let Lieber & Stoller's "I've Got Them Feelin' Too Good Today Blues" be adorable and swingy, reveling in the early rock 'n' roll energy one rarely hears in cabaret venues.

Marchionda's song list featured only one true showtune—"If I Sing," from Maltby & Shire's *Closer Than Ever*, which was preceded by a poignant story about her father's battle with Alzheimer's. The moment was hauntingly beautiful, and coming towards the end of the evening, it offered a poignant emotional cap on the show. Again,

Marchionda wrapped herself in the emotion of the song and the moment, performing with powerful honesty. The following two songs—Jackson Browne's "Sky Blue and Black" and the Indigo Girls' "History of Us"—were equally gentle and emotional, and let the evening end on a quiet note rather than on a raucous one. It worked quite nicely, and after the energetic fun of the beginning and middle of the show, the final triptych offered emotional closure.

Cindy Marchionda will be back at the Beechman in the fall, and will hopefully sing many of these songs again.