

MUSIC CONNECTION LIVE REVIEW OF SHEILA LANDIS & RICK MATLE QUARTET IN MICHIGAN

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THE HAWK, FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN

SHEILA LANDIS AND RICK MATLE QUARTET

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Players: Sheila Landis, vocals and percussion; Rick Matle, guitar; Nick Calandro, electric bass; Karen Tomalis, drums.

Material: Whether it is original ballads, classic bebop or Brazilian rhythms Landis and Matle always deliver. The current theme of the evening is '60s/'70s rock and pop. And they bring all the charm, sass, humor and gravitas one should expect in a nearly two-hour performance. It's a cool and jazzy take on time capsule treasures like Sonny and Cher's "The Beat Goes On", Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Were Made for Walking", The Zombies' "Time of the Season" and Santana's/Tito Puente's "Oye Como Va".

Musicianship: They handle each tune with care and, in doing so, make each arrangement and segue count. This is a veteran squad that moves gracefully as a unit led by the dulcet

tones and witty repartee of Landis. She is varied in her musical skill-set of wordless sounds as well as more traditional singing. The versatile leader works bongos, shakers and, even, kazoo into the mix as well. Matle is a consummate player and provides a full palette of color through sound. He goes from Hendrix to Wes Montgomery in a single bound by way of flawless fingerstyle technique and tasteful effects. Calandro follows suit by doubling melodic lines, walking smooth counterpoint figures and laying down a steady foundation. Tomalis is almost a chameleon in the way she adapts to the various styles presented over two sets. Of particular note is her warm brush work and timbale-like snare on some of the sambas and Latin-based tunes.

Performance: The band's choice of material was masterfully curated and gave a comprehensive overview of that '60 and '70s era. Top 10 hits like Petula Clark's "Call Me" or The Classics IV's "Spooky" came with vintage telephone props on the former and beatboxing-like narrative set-ups on the latter. Landis is a seasoned performer and she, simply, shone as the ringleader and MC. She engaged the audience in between songs and gave context on much of the material and its origins. Songs like Herman's Hermits' "I'm Into Something Good" and the medley of Gordon Lightfoot's "Sundown" into the Rolling Stones' "Honkey Tonk Women" stood out for their unique swinging and country-jazz appeal.

Summary: Whether Landis and Matle are working as a duo or leading a full ensemble they always deliver and never disappoint. They are veteran professionals that know their audience, yet stay true to themselves as well. This is a great unit that assuredly will be doing more concerts like this in the future.

--Eric Harabadian