

L.A.

L.A.'S ONLY JAZZ PAPER

JAZZ
SCENE



By Myrna Daniels

RedWhite+Bluezz has a history in Pasadena. It was located for several years at the other end of Colorado Boulevard. The small place attracted jazz fans with the fine musicians they hired; often duos, trios and solo guitarists, who warmed up the room. At some point the owners decided to sell the business so today Red White+Bluezz is located in the theater district further East down Colorado Blvd. The restaurant has the good fortune to be located next to The Pasadena Playhouse on El Molino Avenue. Another plus is that there is plenty of parking around the theater.

I arrived at the restaurant on a chilly Saturday night. As I entered, a young woman was playing the piano. It was immediately welcoming. Yuko Mabuchi sat at a baby grand and played classic tunes during the evening. It was obvious that she knew how to turn well known classics such as “Days of Wine and Roses” into enjoyable jazz-flavored gems. After a soft intro she went into a wonderful extension of the melody. Very nice, very effective. The restaurant is roomy with a large bar area on the left of the entrance; the better to serve thirsty theater patrons at intermissions. The open kitchen is visible to the comfortable dining area. The menu is varied, with tapas, such as truffle garlic fires (\$7), lobster mac ’n cheese (\$14), Waygu beef burger (\$19), grilled chicken (\$22) and cowboy steak (\$39) among many other choices, plus wine, draft and bottled beer.



I ordered the butternut squash puree which was a cup of delicious golden “fluff” with red dots of spicy sriracha. Spicy shrimp and sausage over pasta was also very good. There’s a lot to like here and music just caps it all off. Mabuchi

warmed up the atmosphere with her varied style. She sang with a modulated tone on “So Danco Samba” and followed with a sweet and mellow “Misty.”

Mabuchi has a firm grasp of the classic jazz piano style. She’s not a big belter when she sings but instead gives the lyrics a tender touch. At the break she gave me two CD’s that she’s completed. She wrote all of the material herself and was mentored by pianist Billy Mitchell. As the evening progressed she continued with “LOVE,” “Girl Talk, ”a brisk and bright “Corcovado” and “Fly Me to the Moon” became a very swinging affair as she sat at the piano creating a great pulsing force that embraced the room. Her version of “The Autumn Leaves” was simple and gorgeous.

It was a warm, welcoming respite after days of never-ending rain. This evening is the way jazz works all the time. A musician shows up, or a group shows up and instantly the vibe changes. Music brings an interesting aura to a room. Musicians create magic that soothes a rough day, brushes away the normal stress of busy lives. People around me were enjoying their meals, laughing with each other at the end of the day.

RedWhite+Blues is in an excellent location. The Pasadena Playhouse was dark on this night but the restaurant certainly fills the bill before and after performances. Jazz, as an art form is versatile in many settings. The jazz community needs to support all those venues out there, where talented musicians perform every night keeping jazz alive. I’m going to keep my eye/ear on Yuko Mabuchi. She’s talented and dedicated to this genre of music so the future looks bright for her.

RedWhite+Bluezz is located at 37 S. El Molino Avenue Pasadena 91101 info/res (626) 792-4441