

L.A. Jazz Scene / May 2013

The California Jazz Foundation Benefit

Fundraiser at Catalina Jazz Club featuring

Arturo Sandoval and his Big Band

Here I am again at Catalina's for the third time in April, for another fantastic event. Don't say I don't work hard! The non-profit CJF was organized to help musicians in need, whether it's financial, medical or the need is counseling. Catalina's was jam-packed with barely a spot left anywhere. Fans came early for the cocktail hour on the patio.

Entertainment was provided by the Keith Jones Trio, which made for a pleasant ambiance. There were silent auction items to bid on and two men rolling cigars and also a Patron Tequila photo booth set up to take individual photos. After a while everyone was ready to go inside at assigned tables. KABC 790 radio talk show host, Doug McIntyre, served as Master of Ceremonies.

A delicious dinner was served quickly and efficiently by Catalina's terrific wait staff. Wine was served and people were relaxed as a video was shown about the CJF. A young group from the L.A. County High School for the Arts, The Night Route, played some selections for the audience. They did very well. The President of the CJF, Edy Bronston, made some remarks about the work that the CJF does for musicians.

Catalina Popescu was honored by the CJF for her service and hospitality to the jazz community. She was introduced by Barbara Brighton, who heads the Young Jazz Artist series which has been in place at Catalina's for many years. Catalina thanked the CJF and the audience for many years of support the jazz community has given to her club. She also mentioned her late husband, Bob, who helped launch Catalina's Jazz Club more than 25 years ago. A live auction was held by professional auctioneer Mark Shustrin. He was really good at encouraging folks to bid for nice prizes, such as tickets for a trip on Turkish Airlines and a Jazz Cruise.

The audience had been served dessert and they were more than ready for the finale, Arturo Sandoval and his Big Band. Sandoval is one of the premiere trumpet players in the U.S. as he is equally proficient playing classical music as he is playing first-rate jazz. The evening revealed his many talents, as a trumpeter, pianist, timbales player, vocalist and joke teller.

The band began with a very loud blast, before Sandoval lifted his trumpet to his lips. "The Man I Love" was slow and sultry for a moment before it exploded into a riot of "Dear Diz, Everyday I Think of You" which was the title for the next tune and also the title of Sandoval's new CD. Dizzy Gillespie was his mentor and friend and Sandoval sang in a heartfelt, soft voice. It was a totally touching homage to a departed friend. "Dear Diz, you set me free."

Dizzy's "Hot House" was a riot of colors, speed and energy and all the musicians were on their toes, delivering a Latinized version of Dizzy's famous tune. John Beasley played a spectacular sax solo as Sandoval played timbales. Other gems included "Body and Soul" with Rusty Higgins providing a fine solo. A Gordon Goodwin tune that (I think) was titled "Maynard

and Waynard” which had Sandoval and Bergeron as a duo in a snappy arrangement and lots of fireworks from both trumpeters.

The audience was going crazy with joy. It was a longish set and when Sandoval started to scat and vocalize on “Oop pappa dop” well, that was just it! What more can this man do? He played trumpet, timbales, played the piano, told funny jokes between songs and totally captured a large audience. Now he scats and sings like a champ? Sure he did. As Sandoval said, “I play a lot of notes because I practice a lot!” That he does. What a show, what a band! Arturo Sandoval is the complete showman!

Myrna Daniels