
MELISSA FORBES & THE MOVEABLE FEAST

Visy Theatre, Brisbane Powerhouse:

05.03.05

Tonight's crowd is a mixture of friends, family and supporters for the launch of Melissa Forbes's *No More Mondays* album, a celebration of the songwriter's recent retreat from the corporate world.

The backing vocalists – Emma Dean, Lana Martino and Kristin Berardi – are enthusiastically introduced by MC Stuart Fisher and are in exquisite voice. The members of **The Moveable Feast** take the stage dressed in black, bar drummer Myka Wallace who's sporting a red shirt with a white cross.

It's a full house and **Melissa Forbes's** voice floats from offstage before she appears through the haze of camera flashes in flattering pink. Her arrangement of 'Black Coffee' features Andrew McNaughton on trumpet who requests "a bit off bass" after his solo.

The sound is tight and there's plenty of chemistry in the rhythm section. However, this fantastic music isn't translating so well in such a formal venue; it's hard to get that swinging feeling when perched uncomfortably in the Visy Theatre's seats.

"Don't feel like you have to sit there like a church mouse," Forbes says, sensing the audience's rigidity. Her adlibbing helps a little and elicits a laugh.

A tribute to Chet Baker's 'Broken Wings' follows with another trumpet solo and Dave McGuire's grooving lead guitar. Forbes powers through and an energetic "dialogue" with McNaughton ensues.

Forbes sits for 'Lavender', which showcases her full range and strong voice and the crowd appreciate the saxophone. She dedicates 'Still' to her husband and co-writer Jim. The song's cohesive, well-practised sound blends beautifully with Kristen Berardi's echoing harmony. Forbes is at

ease, working the stage and engaging the audience in 'Blackheart Blues', which features a very laidback McGuire.

After a break, Forbes is funky in a slinky suit and sexy silver sandals for a clever interpretation of Michael Jackson's 'Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough'. The upbeat 'Rising up' works well with Stephen Newcomb's busy keyboard.

Observations of the CBD at lunchtime follow in 'The Weekday Sun'. Emma Dean plays violin in 'As I Sing' and Forbes urges the audience "not to waste another day" as her voice fills the room.

The self-consciously raunchy 'Thinking You Over' attempts further audience intimacy before The Moveable Feast are introduced to display their solo talent.

Forbes returns for an encore, resplendent in a red camisole and diamantes. Tonight's show illustrates her love of the jazz/blues/soul medium and the strength of her performance is in her added personal touch.

MEGAN YARROW