



Some cool and smooth jazz
for a hot summer's night

Description

The Mary Ann Lacey quartet does double sessions both in and out of doors

By **Byron Toben**

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For some time now, pitch-perfect jazz vocalist **Mary Ann Lacey**, supported by a swinging trio of instrumentalists, has been belting out standards and rediscovered gems at the restaurant **La Petite Marche**, often on alternate Saturday nights at 7:30 pm.

Depending on the weather, this show is on the outdoor terrace (80 seats) or the spacious indoor stage (140 seats). Her set is usually preceded by another act at 5 pm and followed by yet another group at 10 pm. On the night I ventured there, the late-night group cancelled, so her show ended up performing a double session, both outside and then inside.



Mary Ann Lacey performing

Pianist **Sylvain Lebuis** nimbly switched from his outdoor keyboard to the indoor piano while timpanist **Sophie Charpentier** and bassist **Paul Van Dyk** lugged their respective instruments to the raised indoor stage.

Between the two settings at least twenty toe-tapping selections were chosen. Ms. Lacey appeared in a becoming turquoise dress rather than her usual red cladding.

The evening started with Lee Hazelwood's 1966 *These Boots Were Meant For Walking* and publicized by **Nancy Sinatra**. (Who would have thought that it would be used as sound warfare by the Canadian armed forces to wear down the native protesters in the 1990 Oka crisis?)

A later hot number was the popular *Fever* by Ed Cooley and Otis Blackwell (1956), recorded by most jazz greats and most notably by **Peggy Lee** in 1958. We have no visuals of Ms. Lacey doing that song, so here is Ms. Lee's version.

I always enjoy Kurt Weill music and here, with unexpected romantic lyrics by New Yorker magazine odd rhymester Ogden Nash, was the 1943 hit *Speak Low When You Speak Love* from the musical *One Touch of Venus*.

Broadway has been a source of adapted jazz standards, and two were both Rodgers and Hart creations, *There's a Small Hotel* from *On Your Toes* (1936) and *My Romance* from *Jumbo* (1935).



This being July, the Gershwin brothers' *Summertime* (1934) from *Porgy and Bess* was inevitable and appreciated.

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Summertime is a time for love, so the song *I Can't Give You Anything But Love Baby* (1928) by Jimmy McHugh and Dorothy Fields, given a Bossa Nova beat, was rousing.

Another Brazilian-inspired tune, *Corcovado* by Antonio Carlos Jobim (1960), was on the bill as were several French titles, *Douce France* (1943) by great singer/songwriter **Charles Trenet** (who composed 1000 songs!) and *Les copains d'abord* (1960) by poet/ chansonnier **Georges Brassens** (14 albums!)

I am indebted to Ms. Lacey for introducing me to these two who are perhaps under appreciated in North America. Trenet's hit *La Mer* did become famous as translated into English as *Beyond the Sea*. Here is **Tatiana Eva-Marie** and her **Avalon Jazz Band** doing the original in French.

As the evening drew to a close, chairs were cleared for a dance space and the group played a jazzy/waltzy piece as an apparent regular (Victor?) and wife celebrated their 7th anniversary, soon joined by others.

The Mary Ann Lacey Quartet plays next at La Petite Marche's outdoor terrace, 5035 St-Denis, at 5 pm on **July 28**.

Images: courtesy of Mary Ann Lacey

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Byron Toben, a past president of The Montreal Press Club, has been WestmountMag.ca's theatre reviewer since July 2015. Previously, he wrote for since terminated web sites Rover Arts and Charlebois Post, print weekly The Downtowner and print monthly The Senior Times. He also is an expert consultant on U.S. work permits for Canadians.



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