

BARBARA ROSENE

JAZZ VOCALIST

CAUGHT IN THE ACT: BARBARA ROSENE

Birdland, New York City
October 17, 2010

By Joe Lang

Barbara Rosene is a vocalist who is by turns swinging, sweet, sensual and saucy. During the month of October, she held down the early evening slot at Birdland, and injected her effervescent personality and jazzy vocalizing into the room with panache. On the evening that I made the scene, her support came from Simon Wettenhall on trumpet and flugelhorn, Conal Fowkes on piano, James Chirillo on guitar and Boots Maleson on bass.

The instrumental quartet got things off to a start with an easy swinging take on "It Was Just One of Those Things." Rosene then joined her band to sing "S Wonderful," and it was surely that.

Having spent the last few years as the vocalist with the Harry James Orchestra, Rosene has had plenty of opportunity to hone her big band chops, and during this evening she turned her attention to several selections that were popular with the big bands like "I Want a Sunday Kind of Love," "I'll See You in My Dreams," "How Am I to Know," "It's Been a Long, Long Time," "Perfidia," and "If I Had You."

During her career, Rosene has frequently revived songs from the 1920s and 1930s that have fallen into relative obscurity. On this occasion, she revisited tunes like "Sweet Georgia Brown," "I Never Knew What the Moonlight Could Do" and "My Blackbirds Are Bluebirds Now."

The enthusiastic reception she received from the audience when she sang "You've Got the Right Key, But the Wrong Keyhole," a song loaded with double entendres, encouraged her to head back in the same direction when she offered up the racy Bessie Smith staple "Kitchen Man."

Two guests dropped in, soprano saxophonist Michael Basden, who joined in for two tunes, and vocalist Miles Griffith who helped Rosene close with a reprise of "I'll See You in My Dreams."

Rosene is a superb singer, and has a fine stage presence, making everyone on stage and in the audience feel like it was truly party time. The band perfectly accompanied her, and each of the players acquitted themselves superbly when they were put in the spotlight. The performance of Rosene and her men sent all present off into the evening with a smile on their faces, and, if I am a good barometer, lighter hearts.