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Infectious trio makes up for missed sunshine

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Asper Foundation Jazz Performances

Berney Theatre

May 25

By Chris Smith

WITH the sun shining bright on a hot, early summer day, walking into a dark, cool (cold, actually) theatre seems like an odd way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

But the infectious music and manners of New York-based singer and pianist Daryl Sherman and her trio mates easily made up for a couple of lost hours of sunshine.

Sherman has a deep love for the Great American Songbook, the show tunes that you know from the stage, or movies, or because jazz musicians adopted so many of them.

She especially has a love for composer Richard Rodgers and devoted her latest CD to his music. But the first of her two shows yesterday as part of the **Asper Foundation Jazz Performances** series included a lot of Cole Porter and Duke Ellington, as well.

Sherman, guitarist James Chirillo and bassist Boots Maleson opened with the Harold Arlen classic I've Got The World On A String and gave the audience a taste of how tight a trio they are. A bluesy version of Ellington's In A Mellow Tone said they can swing.

The band has good arrangements of songs people know and limits the length of the solo spots, so the musicians say what they have to say, concisely, and move on.

Sherman is adept as both a pianist and vocalist; she performed a few numbers just as singer and a couple of instrumentals. But it is her piano playing that stands out, ever so slightly, as the better of the two attributes.

And as much as she sang the songs, and the praises, of Porter and Rodgers, it was to Ellington she turned for one of her instrumental numbers, Don't Get Around Much Anymore. The tune showcased all three musicians, with Chirillo and Maleson turning in tasty solos.

Chirillo is an excellent rhythm guitarist, a real find, as well as a strong soloist. His comping for Sherman's piano was just right; she, however, was a tad heavy-handed in a couple of spots as she comped during guitar solos.

That said, this is a tight, working band that has an ease of playing that comes from long hours on the road and in New York clubs and hotels.

Sherman shares her love of show tunes with an easy patter as he explains how she first came to hear a song, or recounts some other anecdote about the music or composer.

The show has the feel of a cabaret, which, after all, isn't a bad way to spend a couple of hours on a sunny afternoon.

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Lovano performs here April 8 at 8:30 p.m. and April 9 at 2 p.m. at the Berney Theatre. The series is essentially sold out, but some tickets are turned in a week or so before the show or at the door, producer Bev Aronovitch says. Hopeful fans can try at the door.

Lovano also will hold a workshop on the 9th from 10:30 a.m. to noon, U of M music faculty annex, \$5 admission.

Harper will hold a workshop on April 7 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the same location, \$5 admission.

chris.smith@freepress.mb.ca

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