

PHYLLIS PASTORE

Reviews & Quotes

Back Stage, March 2004

John Hogle

In the past, I've said that the acid test for cabaret performers is in how much of their offstage persona they can bring on stage with them. Phyllis Pastore passes that test with flying colors. With a smile that could light up Gotham and a gurgling laugh that can make your heart giggle, she remains one of cabaret's sweethearts. In her recent series of shows at the Duplex, Pastore offered *Tribute: Songs I've Stolen From the Friends I Have Left*. With musical director D. Jay Bradley on piano, Marco Brehm on bass, and Leslie Anderson and Jennifer Pace on backup vocals, this was a lively, loose hour filled with guffaws and tender moments. It was not a big or grandiose act. Rather, a sweet, warm, enjoyable one that works because she makes you feel as though it's your best friend up there in the spotlight singing her heart out. It gives the audience pleasure just to participate in the process. Phyllis Pastore embraces a room with open arms and reveals herself with a sincerity other singers in town can learn from. A veteran of the piano bars as well as cabaret, she cajoles and cavorts with a lot of in jokes and campy setups—to the delight of an audience filled with piano bar and cabaret friends.

There were several terrific highlights, including a tenderly phrased *In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning* (Mann-Hilliard), Bob Dorough and Lynn Gibson's *Right on My Way Home*, and a campy *When I See an Elephant Fly* (Wallace-Washington).

Special guest Mark McCombs brought his riotous character comedy to the stage in a raucous hillbilly turn that was R-rated fun. His whole bit had the room screaming with laughter.

But it was Phyllis Pastore who gave one heckuva show. With her backup singers, she tore the place apart singing the '80s disco anthem *It's Raining Men* (Shaffer-Jabara). Closing with a tender *In My Life* (Lennon-McCartney), a long-time staple in her shows, she made us all glad that this gal with the warm voice and big heart is back on the scene again.

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Various

Conde Nast Traveler

“Montparnasse is not a place to go for dancing. It’s a place to have cocktails and conversation. . . and where an American, Phyllis Pastore, sings. When Phyllis sings, the place is packed, season after season.”

--*Conde Nast Traveler, July 2002*

“A warm and powerful presence. Pastore has a voice that’s every bit as big as her heart. She belts the bluesy and bawdy . . . and she can caress a ballad with a girlish whisper.”

--*Wyman Wong, New York Daily News*

“...just the medicine that Cabaret needs.”

--*Marco Brehm, New York City*

“Not only does Pastore have a swell set of pipes, but . . . she beams with positive energy, her patter is funny and winning, her laugh is generous and spontaneous, and her smile can light up a room.”

--*Roy Sander, Backstage*

Whether tugging at the heart strings or just going for the silly, Pastore communicates forcefully and does something all too many performers in cabaret seem to forget about: She entertains. She also leaves the audience wanting more.”

--*John Hoglund, New York Native*

“A powerful vocalist with an impressive high belt, Pastore seems comfortable singing just about every kind of song. She’s a pip with a novelty number . . . [and] sings ballads with ineffable sensitivity . . .”

--*Bob Harrington, Backstage*

“...what she is serious about is entertaining her audience...Phyllis’ versatility as an artist and her eclectic taste in music...demonstrated how she could belt out a showstopping number one minute, and then treat a Cole Porter classic with tenderness the next. And if that isn’t enough, behind that great voice is an even greater sense of humor.”

--*Lisa Martland, The Stage, London, 1998*

“I predict nothing less than stardom for this remarkable singer!”

--*Bob Goodman, Stages, New York City*