

*Gig Review*

**Bridie King**

**Circle Café, Balmain 8/3/08**

From the opening bars of 'Yon Gimme Thum' I had goosebumps. They stayed with me (and my two very discerning companions) until the closing bars of 'Love is the Thing.' This was one of the tightest and most enjoyable shows I've been to in a long, long time.

The line up of Bridie King on baby grand piano, Vito Portelese bass and Jake Cook on drums was superb. I admit there were doubts about there being no guitar, but the sound coming from the beautifully miked grand piano, bass and drums was so fat as to be positively obese. A guitar would have been superfluous.

I've been listening to Vito Portelese for over twenty years now and regard him as one of the tastiest and most versatile players around, but Jake Cook was a revelation to me. I'd heard about him though and his growing reputation is richly deserved. This is one fine drummer, able to play full tilt boogie, gospel, jive and the devilishly tricky rhythms of New Orleans luminaries such as Professor Longhair and Alan Toussaint with seemingly effortless ease. Jake's playing is technically proficient, but it's the innate musicality about it that makes it so lovely to listen to. This terrific rhythm section allowed Bridie to kick back and play some of the finest music I've ever heard her play. I've been a fan for around 27 years, but I felt that on the night I was hearing Bridie at her peak. Playing her heart out, loving every moment. Her joy in the music was infectious. The whole room was buzzing.

Vocals on the night were supplied by Stephanie Marchant lead vocals with Karana Nepe and Narelle Evans on backing vocals. Natalie is the possessor of a big, powerful voice that is capable of belting out the big numbers like 'Tossin & Turnin' & 'Brickyard Blues', then can turn around and do a lovely rendition of Memphis gospel group Perfection's 'Make Room', a song and group I'd not heard of. Bridie told us that she

heard them in a church in Memphis and bought their CD. Anyone with a search engine and a love of good gospel is urged to try and find them. The backing Singers Karana and Narelle were superb and you just know that either of them could have taken over lead vocals at any time. I particularly loved their cheeky vocalese on the largely and undeservedly forgotten Y-Holt Trio's arrangement of Donovan's 'Mellow Yellow.' That old hippie never sounded so funky.

A highlight of the night was Daniel Neurath's beautiful solo playing on 'Blue Moments.' Daniel, Bridie's student of seven years, came second in the state in the HSC music exams. Birdie is justifiably proud of him. A lovely, lilting and soulful player, he's got the chops to go a long way. His next gig was at the Opera House, the following Monday. Not a bad place to start.

The entry fee included tasty anti-pasto platter, beer and wine, all in the beautiful surrounds of the Circle Café, which has another life on Sundays as the Uniting Church.

A special mention has to go Jeff Macklin who did the sound and lights. His lighting set the perfect mood and the sound was perfection.

If you've ever had a night of music stuffed up by bad sound (and I've had many), you really appreciate it when it's done right.

The next supper club is up in the air at the moment. Hopefully a good venue can be found and no doubt you will find the details in forthcoming editions of this newsletter. I urge you to get along to the next one. Bookings are essential.

\* *Gayle Kennedy*

Get out and see some live blues this month. When it comes to live gigs - **SUPPORT 'EM OR LOSE 'EM!**

