

L.A.'S ONLY JAZZ PAPER

L.A.

NOVEMBER 2008

Issue No. 254

LA JAZZ SCENE

By Chris J. Walker

SPECIAL MENTION

New York-based singer, Tessa Souter, who doesn't perform too often in Southern California, did a two-day stint at the **Jazz Bakery**. It proved to be a great opportunity for those unfamiliar with her to become better acquainted, while also showcasing a very entertaining and engaging approach. Imaginatively supported by Jamie Rosenn-guitar, Jason Harnell-drums and Jeff DiAngelo-bass, Souter launched into a sultry version of "Caravan." Rosenn's slow-burning solo further adorned it and coolly enhanced the English/Trinidadian singer's efforts. She additionally has an affinity for world music and incorporated touches of it during her set. "You Don't Have to Believe" was a perfect example, encompassing light Middle Eastern motifs and bass/guitar harmonization. Yet, in sharp contrast, pop tune "Eleanor Rigby" was starkly done with a touch of swing that highlighted Souter's melodious talents and was accented by DiAngelo's solo.

Continuing with the scaled-down theme, the bassist and singer worked beautifully together, performing "No Moon at all" as a duet, along with "Moon and Sand" before the other band members joined in. Returning to world orientation, French number "I Will Forget," full of poignant and captivating lyrics, and bolstered by Rosenn's willowy solo enacted drew strong reactions from the audience. Also Dori Caymmi's bossa nova grove "Obsession," subtlety sang by Souter, got their attention and maintained the emphasis. Still, the singer saved room for jazz with "I can Only Give You Love," and rendered it with solid singing and accompaniment. For a bit of fun and nostalgia, Souter revealed her classic rock roots with a poetic and jazzy version of Cream's "White Room" that, of course, finished with a fiery drum solo from Harnell. For more info and downloads go to: www.tessasouter.com.