

CONCERT REVIEW: THE HOT SARDINES IN NEW YORK CITY WITH A SURPRISE GUEST ALAN CUMMING

By: Elizabeth Smith
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Joe's Pub is becoming a cornerstone club in New York City. Opened in 1998, the spot is an intimate music venue with the perfect mood lighting for a romantic date. In my case, it provided a great low-key vibe for a Tuesday night performance by The Hot Sardines.

If your first thought now is "Who?", let me introduce you to the band: singer Elizabeth Bougerol and pianist Evan Palazzo lead the jazz collective with trumpet player Jason Prover, drummer Alex Raderman, saxophonist and clarinet player Nick Myers, and Mike Sailors on trombone and cornet rounding out the group. While they make up the core of the band, a live show from these jazz lovers now comes equipped with a string section, which might be news for those who already know and love them.

Starting their late-night set with "Gramercy Sunset", a new, original song from their upcoming album, *French Fries & Champagne*, they set the tone immediately for a fun and relaxed show. As the instrumental track came to a close, Bougerol made her appearance in the back of the venue to instantly up the volume with a foot-stomping number.

Throughout the rest of the night, the hot jazz band weaved in and out of original tunes and remixed standards, like an upbeat rendition of "Running Wild" (inspired by *Some Like It Hot*) to a New Orleans soul-steeped version of "Addicted to Love". These covers paired perfectly with originals like "Here You Are Again"—an ode to the moment when a man comes back one last time but the woman has moved on.

If the flawless performances onstage, with ample features of every instrument, weren't enough to keep you entertained, Bougerol or Palazzo always took a minute to introduce the songs and interact with the audience making you feel like you're in on a secret with the band. Plus, did I mention the tap dancer? His gravity-defying dance moves provided an integral beat to the tracks and a breathtaking display of athleticism.

But one of the highlights of the night for me was when the collective launched into their brand new single, "French Fries & Champagne". The infectious track embodies the ideal of throwing a party even when life is hard, as it often is according to Bougerol.

After an hour of the hottest jazz in New York City, the band took their leave. But they were only gone for a minute when they came back for one last song, and a surprise. Before launching into "When I Get Low, I Get High", Bougerol introduced Alan Cumming to the pub to help them end their album release party on a high note.

In my opinion, Alan Cumming should come out for every future show as the performance was equal parts comedy and killer jazz music. Rest assured, you can hear the collaboration as much as you like

when the band's new album, ***French Fries & Champagne***, comes out tomorrow, June 17. In the meantime, you can watch the music video for the track here.

If you're looking for a classic jazz show for the modern day music lover, this band live is it. On a Tuesday night in New York City, I felt the distinct urge to be wearing a flapper dress while drinking the night away and I think I can say with confidence that's exactly how The Hot Sardines would want it.

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