

REVIEW: PARIS COMBO'S WORLD MUSIC MIX TRANSFORMS CABARET

By: Tom Alvarez

April 29, 2013

It felt like you were in a swinging, bohemian Parisian nightclub of the '20s and '30s. That was the effect created by Paris Combo during their one-night-only appearance, titled "Paris Combo: An Evening in Paris," Tuesday, April 23 at the Cabaret at the Columbia Club in downtown Indianapolis.

Fronted by vocalist Belle du Berry, the band consists of David Lewis on trumpet/piano, Potzi on guitar, Emmanuel Chabbey on bass and Francois Jeannin on drums.

The group's music is an eclectic and colorful international mash up of jazz, French pop and cabaret, gypsy swing, Latino, and African and Middle Eastern rhythms.

The engaging band, which is based in Paris, has toured extensively in Europe, Asia and Australia. Paris Combo's newest release is its fifth studio recording, simply titled "5." After a five-year break from touring, their current U.S. tour marks the 17th time they have visited the states.

Sassy and sultry-toned, du Berry — with her pixie haircut, looking every inch the quintessential chanteuse — was the first to admit that her English "is not so good." She charmed a full-house audience as she sang songs with mostly French lyrics drawn from the group's CDs.

Doing her best to explain what tunes were about, and with the help of Lewis who is from Australia, it became a running joke as she repeatedly introduced nearly all songs as being about love.

With the exception of one ballad, the set list was mostly up tempo and included such titles as "Ce Que J'Amie," "Comptez Sur Moi," "Fibre De Verre," "Chez Nouse" and "Je Te Vois Partout."

Lewis, who occasionally switched to the trumpet (which he often muted) while still seated at his piano, dazzled the audience with his virtuosity on both instruments during solos and while executing a fascinating musical trick. As du Berry sang a torch song entitled "Sous La Lune," Lewis distorted the sound of his trumpet and created a surreal musical effect by immersing the bell of his instrument in a bowl of water.

Potzi, a Gypsy of Algerian descent, regaled the crowd with his Django Reinhardt-influenced guitar playing that also contributed to the band's intriguing and distinctive continental sound.

Transporting the audience to cosmopolitan Paris, the band inspired a lot of laughter and moved several couples and individuals to dance amongst the Crystal Terrace Room tables (which was encouraged by du Berry).

In an evening that can best be described as simply enchanting, the only downside (unless you spoke French) was the language barrier in regard to the song's lyrics. Otherwise, the eccentric Paris Combo and

its captivating music stylings proved to be one of the Cabaret's most exciting and rewarding, not to mention simply fun, attractions so far.

Source: <http://www.thecabaret.org/news/review-paris-combos-world-music-mix-transforms-cabaret/>