

Soundbites From The Stage
Review by Laura Bennett
22nd September 2010.

A cabaret of theatre songs and jazz standards was promised by vocalist Roslyn Ure and jazz pianist Jeffery Wilson in their presentation "Soundbites From The Stage", and the intimate audience at the Audrey Longman Studio in Brentwood were treated with just that.

The first half of the programme spun a knowledgeable guide through some highlights of the great American Songbook, as well as some lesser known work by the Songbook's great composers. Roslyn's sparkling vibrato and Jeffery's lithe tinkling wove around such classics as Porter's 'Night & Day' and Loesser's 'I've Never Been In Love Before', but Roslyn's wonderful comic timing and hilarious characterisation were especially prevalent in Porter's lesser known 'The Physician' and the insightful 'Usherette's Blues', which she dedicated to her past and present colleagues in the theatres she has worked at over the years.

The evening's musical numbers were interspersed with anecdotes and insights from this charismatic pair, who clearly worked well together and whose stories added a relaxed dimension of both intimacy and fun to the events.

Act two brought us more up to date with some Jazz versions of Disney's musical favourites, followed by Sondheim, who could hardly be missed among this evening's greats. There followed my two highlights of the evening, firstly 'The Apathetic Man' by Zina Goldrich & Marcy Heisler, the comedy of which suited Roslyn's acting skills perfectly and was an unexpected gem from these modern, lesser known female composers among the musical greats on the bill. This was followed by a number written especially for the evening by Jeffery and Roslyn themselves, 'Where Would Opera Be Without Dead Women'. This hilarious look upon the fates of leading female characters in tragic leading roles was insightful and beautifully delivered, well within Roslyn's comedic comfort zone. The evening was rounded up with Kander & Ebb's 'Nowadays' and Roxie from Chicago, with the appreciative audience clicking along with full Fosse timing. Overall, a wonderful evening's entertainment... and all that jazz!

Laura Bennett