



LONG ISLAND CLOSET DESIGN



Nancy Atlas, Randi Fishenfeld Bring Down the House in Sag Harbor



NANCY ATLAS AND RANDI FISHENFELD AT BAY STREET THEATRE IN SAG HARBOR FOR THE JANUARY 24 FIRESIDE SESSION. PHOTO CREDIT: DANIEL GONZALEZ

JANUARY 27, 2014 BY ELLEN DIOGUARDI & KEN GRILLE

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Friday's Fireside Session with Nancy Atlas and Randi Fishenfeld cemented the fact that these special nights may just be the best and most creative music series to ever take place in the Hamptons.

The shows are also becoming the hottest ticket in town as this was yet another sellout.

The word "phenomenon" has been tossed about concerning these Fireside Sessions and this seems reasonable except when you consider that phenomenon is generally used for "a fact or situation... whose cause or explanation is in question." There really is no question about this particular phenomenon. Atlas has the talent, guts, following and musical friends to have raised the bar on the local music scene for herself and everyone else. The truly impressive part is she just keeps on hitting that mark. Let's be honest, most of us expected she was leading with her biggest gun, Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and while Smith may just be that big a gun, this series seems to be more about what Atlas and her regular band members are putting out every week. The guests are a special propellant tossed on what would already be one heck of a roaring set of Fireside Sessions.

While picking a favorite show from these four unique and amazing nights is nearly impossible, this past Friday night was right up there with the rest and nearly rocked the roof off Bay Street Theatre. Besides some of the best electric violin and fiddle playing ever seen offered up by Fishenfeld—flown in from Florida for this occasion—Atlas and her incredible band sufficiently warmed up the crowd on this frigid night as they were on fire from the opening notes.

Atlas has called Fishenfeld her "musical soul sister" and it was clear there is sheer delight and lots of musical inspiration bouncing between these two friends when they get on stage to perform. The eclectic and crowd-pleasing show included covers of Bonnie Raitt ("Angel from

Montgomery”), the Beatles (“Come Together”), Santana (“Oye Come Va”), T- Bone Walker (“Stormy Monday”), and Ervin T. Rouse (“Orange Blossom Special”). These classic covers were brilliantly blended in with Atlas original songs including all time fan favorite “Boots,” an as yet un-recorded, crowd-pleasing “King City,” and the always danceable “You’re Gonna Miss Me When I’m Gone” as well as a Fishenfeld original titled “Gypsy.”

While some in the crowd fully expected to hear the Rolling Stones “Wild Horses,” which is the only cover Atlas has recorded to date and includes Fishenfeld as backup on Atlas’ *It Ain’t That Way Now* record, nobody complained that the ladies ripped up the house with another Stones classic and Atlas favorite “Honky Tonk Woman.”

The enthusiastic crowd was delighted when Nancy called her husband, Thomas Muse, up on stage for a husband/wife rendition of the Johnny Cash tune “Ring of Fire.” Any regulars to Atlas’ Surf Lodge gigs in the summer are well aware that Muse has a great way with this song. He did not disappoint.

All it took were the first few notes of the Who’s “Baba O’Riley” for fans and dancing fishermen to rush the stage to rock out to an exciting rendition of this Pete Townsend classic tune. Fishenfeld’s violin took over a good portion of Townsend’s licks with regular Atlas guitarist Johnny Blood proving once again he’s up for just about anything.

Friday’s show was the first in a couple of weeks featuring the full Nancy Atlas Project band. Each and every member is deserving of praise for his part in this extraordinary series. The aforementioned Johnny Blood, drummer Richard Rosch, bassist Brett King and keyboard/accordion player Neil Surreal are one of the tightest groups you’ll hear and both support and inspire Atlas throughout these evenings.

As she has every week Atlas made sure her guest star’s talents were featured and what number showcases a fiddler more than Charlie Daniels’ “The Devil Went Down to Georgia”? So of course Fishenfeld made that song her own and kept Atlas on her toes belting out the lyrics. It certainly felt like an especially scorching version in honor of the Fireside Sessions.

Always a personable and very real performer whose ability to reach the heart of every song could never be in question, Atlas gave a particularly emotional introduction to her own composition “Miscalculations.” Written at a particularly tough time in her career the song about the path chosen, plans made and how “these things that run wild and free never seem to run tried-and-true” evidently was almost the last Atlas original ever written. Happily there was a fortunate turn of events and it was abundantly clear to all in the audience Friday night that this path Atlas has chosen *is* tried-and-true.

As this astounding show came to a close, everyone left feeling satisfied, fulfilled and with a smile on their face. Most were thirsty for more and were already talking about next Friday’s show—featuring blues man Jonny Rosch—with eager anticipation.

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