

CABARETSCENES

Shana Farr

Whistling Away the Dark (Through Songs of Julie Andrews)

The Crazy Coqs Cabaret
London, UK



Award-winning Shana Farr is a well-respected and established artist in the United States, but little was known about her on this side of the pond. At The Crazy Coqs, she made her triumphant London debut, paying tribute to her much-admired Julie Andrews, an inspiration to generations of artists.

Farr introduced her act with “A Julie Andrews Medley,” arranged by Fred Barton, which included a small selection of the legend’s most famous numbers (among them “The Sound of Music,” “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” and “My Favorite Things”) and transfixed us immediately with her beautiful voice that smoothly filled the room, even without a mic. She then took us back in time when, at the age of 13, Andrews sang “Je suis Titania” from *Mignon* in front of a young Queen Elizabeth.

Her songlist contained breathtaking renditions from the unlucky musical *Star!*, (the title song, and later on “Someday I’ll Find You” and “Someone to Watch Over Me”), a wonderful and cute medley from *Mary Poppins* (“A Spoonful of Sugar” and “Stay Awake”), a magical “Once Upon a Long Ago” (*High Tor*), and two exquisite interpretations from *Darling Lili* (“I’ll Give You Three Guesses” and the title song of Farr’s show).

She also beautifully executed “Ten Minutes Ago” and “In My Own Little Corner” from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella*, and gave us two outstanding numbers from *Victor/Victoria*: the thought-provoking “Living in the Shadows” and the unforgettable “Crazy World.” She finished her act with the simply adorable “Feed the Birds” (*Mary Poppins*), a great ending to a beautiful show that put a smile on everybody’s face.

It must feel like a big step for an American songstress to debut in London with material taken from the career of one of Britain’s living legends, but Shana Farr handled her subject of

admiration with humility and respect. Her rich, warm and perfectly pitched voice proved best suited for the task and, in the group of performers whose abilities can handle songs that Andrews rendered immortal, Farr must shine as a leading member.

With her singing, the artist carried us away to the world of each one of the songs and her warm feelings for the lyrics were immediately transmitted to the audience. As for the chat, it was simply built to provide as much information as possible about the life and career of her subject. Naturally. This was a proper salute to the quintessential British nanny, so respect was due all around, and last night it was paid with this fabulous debut, which was a tour de force of singing ability and interpretation. I am thrilled with anticipation for Farr's next visit to London, when she will be free to also share with us more about herself.

On piano, Nathan Martin was as elegant as always.

Thanasis Kalantzis

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