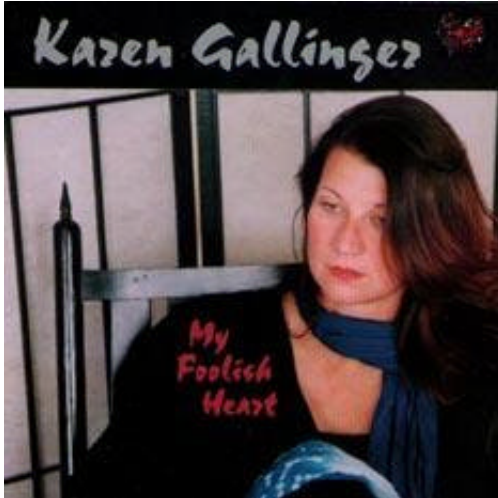


## Cabaret

### Karen Gallinger at the Boston Court Theater, Pasadena, 6/28

BY GINA ZOLLMAN



This spectacular new venue reminds one of a Frank Gehry creation, replete with aluminum siding and austere, boxlike dimensions. The blond wood and great lighting soften the mood and make it amenable to the entertainment at hand. In this case, the inimitable Karen Gallinger, a veteran jazz singer and supreme musician, albeit with a quirky act and a funny rap to go with it. Her tried and true long time associates on stage included the very talented and deft Quinn Johnson on piano, always surprising and innovative, the multi-facted Chris Wabich on drums, and the creative and giving Ernie Nunez on bass. As this episode of Cabaret at the Court began, we were eager to see what this singer had to offer.

She started of with "Nice and Easy," very confident and commanding, using her deep voice to great advantage, and showing us an edge right off the bat. She segued into "Bridges," and offered a verse in Portuguese. Her midrange in this song proved to be the cleanest and most sonorous. After her original and offbeat rap, we were treated to a signature "Love For Sale," one of her most satisfying and heartfelt renditions of the night. Her high notes were a bit

toppy at times, and her band really came through for her in a topnotch arrangement. On the Bill Evans tune, for which she penned the lyrics, "Funkolero," we were truly impressed with her talent as a songwriter and felt the lyrics did justice to a unique, bittersweet tune. The string bassist showed off his dexterity on this number, and we also enjoyed the ministrations of the experienced drummer. Another Bill Evans tune showed the less enjoyable, self-indulgent part of jazz performance, with Miss Gallinger closing her eyes frequently, and singing for herself. She showed us some enviable dance moves, as she was really feeling the music, but I prefer when the singer is making more visual contact with her audience, more cabaret than jazz, as it were. My favorite of the night was her definitive "Ain't About to Give it Away," funny and tender at the same time.

Other highlights included a beautiful ballad from "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," "Your Imagination," by Anthony Newley, with nicely placed vocals. The Sticks Hooper Blues song was really moving and well-executed, begging for more of this red hot mama style of singing. Her encore was another signature tune, an accomplished "At Last," with an original vocal interpretation and fabulous shredding of jazzy notes on the part of her piano player. Karen Gallinger showed some great musicianship and some terrific singing, amongst a very particular kind of show, her own. Catch her around Southern California, with her trusty bandmates. The Boston Court Theater is located at 70 North Mentor Avenue, Pasadena, (626) 683-6883.