

Live Review

Pam Pentony and the New River Jazz Series

Singer Pamela Pentony's a pro and has the chops to prove it. Earlier this winter, her performance with the Jeff Siegel Trio at Gillie & Mac's in Catskill, was a shot in the arm for jazz lovers.

The range and quality of Pentony's vocal instrument can be downright sneaky. It may hang back in a haze of smoke and chocolate or step forward with the vibrato and ring of a big band era singer.

Irene Wilson's tune, "I'm Pullin' Through" was executed, beautifully sad and hopeful, in Pam's rich lower register. I learned from her, it was written in response to the composer's divorce from renowned jazz pianist, Teddy Wilson. Bless Pam for keeping the songs and the stories alive.

I was elated to hear Dave Frishberg's "Peel Me a Grape"; the wickedly funny answer to the eternal question, "What do women want?" Pentony lays it out like a grown up gal; wry, but pretty. "Pop me a cork; French me a fry..." God, I love that song!

As my companion observed, Pam's hips seem to be an entity of their own, but never disconnected from the music, the players and, of course, the audience. In addition to hips and chops, she's making damn sure the music is not lost but active, vibrant and evolving along the shores of the Hudson. Pentony teaches jazz vocals at Bard College and hosts The New River Jazz Series, currently tucked into Stella's at Catskill Point; Sundays, 7:30 pm. The Series is a jam, welcoming professionals and practiced amateurs who are ready to jump in and play.

www.pamelapentony.com For bookings (845) 246-1058

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