

Quiana Lynell at the Bop Stop (Aug. 23)

by Mike Telin



If you don't know the outstanding vocalist Quiana Lynell, you need to.

I was first introduced to the exquisite artistry of this rising star back in November of 2018 when she was part of the premiere performance of Terence Blanchard's *OUR VOICES: DEMOCRACY RE:visited*, commissioned by Tri-C JazzFest and Cuyahoga

Community College. Since then I'd been most curious to hear her again.

On Friday, August 23 at the Bop Stop, Lynell, the winner at the 2017 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, proved that she is unquestionably the real deal during a 90-minute set that explored the many sides of love. Her rich, honey-hued voice along with her spot-on intonation and impeccable diction held the good-sized audience in rapt attention from her first note until the last.

The playlist drew mainly from her latest Concord Records release, *A Little Love*. Her vocal prowess was in full evidence during Donny Hathaway's and Leroy Hutson's "Tryin' Times," which opened the show. Throughout the evening Lynell and her excellent collaborators — Sasha Kashperko (guitar), Daniel Meinecke (piano), Joshua Muir Cotton (bass), and Nate Winn (drums) — performed from a single mind, deftly anticipating each other's musical nuances.

Lynell was in full voice during Joshua Campbell's "Sing Out, March On," and her sensual rendition of Barry Mann's and Cynthia Weil's "Just a Little Lovin' (Early In the Mornin')" had a *je ne sais quoi* that made you wish it would go on forever.

The vocalist's commentary was well scripted, personal but not self-indulgent. In one moment, she simply asked, "What is love?" — introducing Monte Croft's song of the same name. Here, Lynell and Meinecke delivered an arresting *pas de deux*. She showed her humorous side during Willie Dixon's "I'm Built for Comfort, I Ain't Built for Speed."

This was a show to remember — it's not often that 90 minutes fly by so quickly.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com August 27, 2019.

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