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Musically eclectic Basia melts Houston audience with icy voice, presence

By JOHN MABRY
Looking like Paulina Porizkova and sounding like an iced-down Aretha Franklin, the London-based jazz vocalist Basia gave a pleasantly refined performance to enthusiastic Houston Music Hall goers.

Although Basia (pronounced Basia) was fairly cool throughout the hour-and-a-half set, she was exactly what the bohemian crowd wanted.

Even though she limited most of her physical movement, it was Basia's voice, in absolute top form, that dazzled the audience, prompting loud applause on those incredible high notes from "Time and Tide" and "Promises."

It's a refreshing change, I must say, from those dancing dolls all over MTV these days like Paula Abdul or Janet Jackson, who focus all of their energy in concert into slick choreography and leave what's left for their vocals.

Basia, however, has none of that superimposed artificiality and contrivance. Onstage, she is real and unaffected, speaking impromptu to the audience, keeping her friendly cool even when tripping over a box of wires during a break.

Her vocal ability is all she needs to stand on. Her two albums, the million-selling *Time and Tide* and her latest, *London Warsaw New York*, showcase her flexible chords against an optimistic and relaxing tempo of Brazilian music, jazz and Euro-synth pop.

And while she ain't got a whole lotta soul, Basia is one performer who is just as commanding in concert as she is on vinyl. From "Freeze Thaw" to "Cruising for Bruising" to "Best Friends," her vocal acrobatics lost none of their appeal that is so prominent on the records. In fact,

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her singing got better as the set progressed.

Her performance was a far cry from the disappointing performance Madonna gave last spring on her "Blonde Ambition" tour. Poor Madonna couldn't sing to keep up with her over-ambitious dancing. When her vocals got bad, it was rumored that she depended on pre-recorded music to finish the set.

Basia, however, is a heavyweight vocalist who doesn't need to depend on flash to cover up studio-masked vocal deficiencies. She's simply great.

This is not to say that her musicians aren't outstanding, either. The nine-member jazz band showed they could stand on their own during the solo performances given to each member.

Particularly entertaining were Basia's backup singers: two sequined, spirited soul mamas who came to the front with Basia with "How Dare You" and later did a little rap for the audience during the encore.

Their voices blended beautifully with Basia's, creating just the right volume and intensity on the harmonies.

The performance won over the initially frigid crowd. Each number received generous applause. And when Basia called for the crowd to dance during her remake of Stevie Wonder's "Until You Come Back To Me," the audience immediately did so.

Her last number received a vigorous standing ovation, followed by two encore numbers, the popular "New Day For You" and "Prime Time TV."

Selleck's Quigley goes down under for western action

By CAROL GLENN
If trying to find a job in the 1990s is difficult, imagine the challenges employment seekers faced in the 1880s.

Just one century ago, Matthew Quigley (portrayed by Tom Selleck in the western thriller "Quigley Down Under") encountered an employment opportunity that he couldn't pass up.

After answering an advertisement in his local western newspaper for the best long-distance marksman in the world, enduring a three month ocean voyage, and a long, dusty wagon ride through the sweltering heat of the Australian terrain, his ability as a sharpshooter is put to the test (or an interview as we would call it today).

After amazing his comrades and his potential employer, Marston, (portrayed by Alan Rickman, known for his bad-guy role in the film "Die Hard") with his extra-long rifle and his precise sharpshooting abilities, he is granted the job. But what his job duties would include as a sharpshooter, he has yet to discover.

Marston invites Quigley to dinner that evening to discuss what his job would entail. But after Quigley throws Marston out the nearest window during dinner, the audience quickly learns that Quigley is not flattered by Marston's offer.

An offer that included Quigley killing local aborigines who have managed thus far to stay out of the firing range of most rifles. Marston wants Quigley because he could shoot targets from an incredibly far distance, and with incomparable accuracy.

Marston, who is now embarrassed

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and angry, has Quigley severely beaten and dumped out in the desert with a recent acquaintance of his, Crazy Cora (portrayed by Laura San Giacomo, known for her role as the sultry lover in the film, "sex, lies and videotape").

Marston does not expect Cora and Quigley to befriend each other and the aborigines during their journey to find civilization and their struggle for survival. Nor does Marston expect Quigley to seek revenge.

Directed by Simon Wincer (who also directed the miniseries "Lonesome Dove") and written by John Hill, "Quigley Down Under" ends up being an interesting western movie with humor, thrills, chills, suspense and action.

Selleck does a good job of making Quigley believably come to life in a role that he hasn't encountered thus far in his acting career. He does such a good job in fact that he is comparable to the Duke in some of the scenes.

The music by composer Adrian Carr encourages a western style ambience through his eight bar melodies similar to those found in many western movies.

The incredible breath-taking scenery of Australia further adds to the enjoyment of "Quigley" giving the audience an alluring vision of the setting.

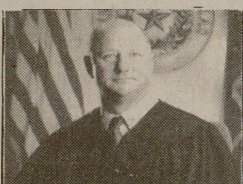
Even if you aren't an avid western movie lover or a Tom Selleck groupie, you'll still enjoy "Quigley Down Under" which is rated PG-13 and is now showing at Schulman 6.

Panjandrum returns to Front Porch Cafe

Panjandrum returns to the Front Porch tonight in support of its new release. The funk-based group from Houston has steadily usurped Ten Hands as local funk monsters, punctuating the switch with its great show in September.

Within the broad spectrum of funk, Panjandrum is more upbeat than a Ten Hands, yet less vociferous than a Sprawl or a Joe Rockhead. The group eases on the ballads, but also preserves melody over aggression.

As always, a portion of the proceeds of the weekly funk jam goes to KANM, Texas A&M's student-run, cable radio station. The show is scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. For more information, call 846-LIVE.



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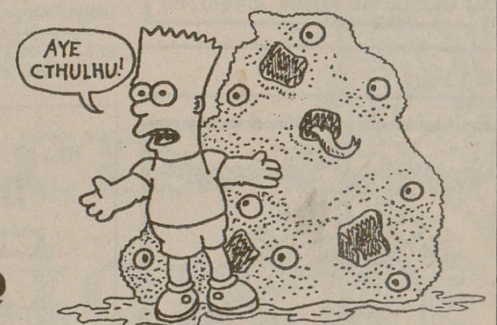
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and don't forget to join us for

Quest!

Quest is a live role-playing fantasy mystery. The Quest will be held on Oct. 27th. Players should meet at 6:30pm in 510 Rudder. Ticket prices are \$5 per person, and will be available at the ComiCon Admissions Table. Hurry! Spaces are limited, and they're going fast!