

Cultural Daily

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Diana Krall Under The Stars

Evie Sullivan · Wednesday, August 16th, 2017



Shooting stars rarely fall from the smog polluted Los Angeles skies, meteor showers seldom grace the grey firmament. But every year, on the nights of August 10 and 11, Angelenos get the singular opportunity to catch a falling star or let a meteor wash dazzle their eyes. What better place to choose for such a spectacle than The Hollywood Bowl, everybody's favorite outdoor amphitheater in the heart of the city, where one can stargaze and enjoy a concert at the same time?

I had the good fortune to not only take pleasure in great food in a "box" – the good front seats where they serve fine dinners, deli sandwiches and way too much wine – while the popular Canadian-born jazz pianist, singer and songwriter, Diana Krall, made her return to the Bowl. Totally appropriate for an evening of celestial expression, she wore a high-necked, long-sleeved gold dress, her golden hair flew when she hammered out her piano solos, and golden light from the headlights cast a halo above her head.



As part of her "Turn Up the Quiet" tour (the album was released on May 5, 2017), she embraced her audience with her smoky and subdued renditions of American standards that most of the concertgoers knew by heart, but she made them uniquely her own with her original phrasing and musical virtuosity. Themes of love and hope she sometimes only whispered into the microphone, and sometimes belted out fully. Krall never once lost her artistic integrity for a cheap thunder of applause which she could have easily gotten with more crowd-pleasing versions of the material. In Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You," she intoned a few cords of the famous standard "Both Sides Now," but didn't carry it further. I was a bit disappointed in the teaser that didn't lead to a full song, but she made it up for me when she knocked one of my favorite standards, "Night and Day," out of the park. I had to pull a Millennial when I got home and add it to my YouTube playlist. I want to hear it over and over again.



Diana Krall couldn't do it alone. She mentioned her arrangers and the songwriters before every song and gave her highly accomplished band many opportunities to shine: fiddle player Stuart Duncan, Anthony Wilson on the guitar, Robert Hurst on the bass and Karriem Riggins on the drums were class acts in their own right.

At some point it would have helped the show if Diana Krall would have moved from her seat behind the piano and let her impressive appearance highlight the mood of a song. Being always behind the piano, even when she wasn't playing, slowed the pace of the evening. But the audience didn't seem to mind much. She got a decent ovation (although not a standing one) and thereafter threw in one encore.

A word about the acoustics in the Bowl: It's an outdoor venue and much of the intimacy of the performance got lost in the digital overkill of sound technology. A more intimate place would have enhanced her contact with her audience. Sometimes the lights were dimmed to create the illusion of closeness. Low lights and a red glow illuminated Krall's fine features and her graceful hands. That helped but wasn't enough for me to forget the discrepancy of material and venue.

Often during the show, I kept my gaze upwards to the twinkling stars while Diana's mezzo soothed me. I counted three shooting stars and saw one meteor tail. A pretty good harvest of celestial fruits from an overcast sky! Overall, it was a perfect Los Angeles summer night.

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