



Review: MOIPEI at Birdland



The Moipei Triplets Triumphant Return To Birdland!

[by Peter Danish](#) Jul. 31, 2022

Mary, Maggy and Marta Moipei at Birdland.

Let me preface by saying I am not the world's biggest fan of Cabaret. Actually, it's bad cabaret that I have a problem with. But truth be told, for the most part, the vast majority of the cabaret performances I've sat through in the last few years (decades) have not been really bad - but not really good either - merely mediocre. Sometimes wonderful singers with no personality - or all personality and no voice - or no connection with the material - or connection with the audience. Because, really great cabaret requires ALL of the aforementioned qualities, and that precious cocktail has been seriously in short supply.

That is what makes this review so exciting and frankly joyful! Last Monday night, Birdland hosted a performance by dynamic, Kenyan-born, Moipei triplets and their performance single-handedly restored my faith in cabaret as an artform. It has been ages since I've seen such a remarkable combination of world-class singing, bracingly original arrangements (done by the sisters themselves!) of such an eclectic set of material.

Mary, Maggy and Marta Moipei (that's a lot of alliteration!) performed a set that ran the gauntlet from jazz to blues, to rock, pop, Broadway and just about every other genre you can think of - and most impressive of all, not a clunker in the entire set! Including two ravishing, heart-stirring ballads in their native Kenyan.

Extremely original arrangements of Berlin, Bernstein, the Beatles and Beyonce (and that's just the B's!) were all delivered with razor sharp accuracy, operatic-level breath control and positively stunning harmonies - and their superb three-piece backing band was totally on point throughout.

The ladies shared stories of their journey "from the land of the lion to the great white way." Their anecdotes were heartfelt and often hilarious as they detailed their lives from going to high school across the street from a jungle park, replete with visits by the occasional lion or elephant, to living as young single ladies in New York (cue the Beyonce!) They even delivered a red-hot take on Hamilton's "Not Giving Away My Shot!" with a three-part harmony arrangement that would make Alex Lacamore proud (Lin Manuel Miranda are you listening?)

Even the most seasoned cabaret performers struggle to overcome the inherent divide between artist and audience in order for the chemistry to work - the art form relies on it. These ladies, while relative newcomers to the scene, completely disarmed and charmed the pants off the capacity crowd with just the right level of intimacy and lighthearted informality to make the whole evening feel like a gleeful dinner party conversation.

The structure of the show, the arc of their story-telling, and their complete communion with the audience was really exquisite. I gazed around the audience numerous times over the course of the 75-minute set and each time I saw nothing but a sea of joyful, smiling, cheerful faces. THAT is great cabaret. That is what Moipei delivered. To put it succinctly, it was simply the most entertaining cabaret performance I've ever seen. Full stop. MOIPEI -- Put them on your radar, guys. They are very, very special indeed.

-Peter Danish

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