

STU HAMSTRA'S  
**Cabaret Hotline**  
ONLINE

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**HERE & THERE** – October 27, 2008

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I traveled downtown to catch Russ Lorenson's show at THE METROPOLITAN ROOM at 9:45 pm (the actual start was delayed a bit because of the storm and some consequentially late arrivals. The show, titled "Standard Time," is Russ' take on the concept held by some (fortunately few) that no great new songs are currently being written. Included on the song list were compositions by composers the likes of Harry Connick, Jr., John Pizzarelli, Michael Feinstein, Kelly Park, Ray Jessel, Bob Levy, Andrew Lipa, Peter Cincotti - and even Russ Lorenson himself. The song list included 20 numbers, and the show might have been a little shorter if it wasn't for the many instrumental sections they included. At times one got the impression that the show should have been called The Kelly Park Trio with vocalist Russ Lorenson!

As often happens with jazz musicians, a lot of "showboating" took place during the performance, distracting from both the theme and pace of the show and at times pulling the spotlight away from the performer. Personally, I would not for one instant miss another drum solo! (What's the point? If I wanted a drum solo I would hang out in the concourse of the Union Square subway platform where someone with several overturned white plastic buckets plays for the crowd daily as I rush past holding my ears).

Mr. Lorenson has terrific vocals and had chosen some terrific songs – best from my point of view being Tony DeSare's "How I Will Say I Love You" and Harry Connick Jr.'s "I'll Dream of You Again." Russ' technique has roots in "crooning" but he is far above the quality of the self-described crooners we are accustomed to in cabaret lately. His voice has a creamy, dreamy quality that shows up best in the ballads (especially when the band lets him do his thing without horning in). Not all of the songs are "destined to be standards" but there were several unknown numbers that should have more exposure - and cabaret is the perfect place to present them.

Russ has one more performance of this show at THE METROPOLITAN ROOM tomorrow night, Tuesday the 28th of October at 9:30 pm. Great vocals, some great songs, and a very entertaining show await you if you go.

- [Stu Hamstra](#)

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