

A night with Jane Bunnett and Maqueque



By Sara Gottardi

On the subtle summers evening of Saturday, June 27 at the Village Playhouse Theatre, Jane Bunnett and Maqueque (recent Juno Award winners for Best Jazz Album group) fulfilled a longtime dream of Bunnett's: playing at the historic Village Playhouse Theatre. All proceeds being collected are directly put back into the theatres long holding longevity. Having major repairs to be done and in certain areas of the building, having to be rebuilt, like the top floor balcony that is rotten and in earlier years not have having had enough care which is now reason to its lacking in stability now. Money will be put towards rebuilding and repairing crucial parts such as the balcony and other sections of the theatre in need of direct attention. The theatres needs will be done in order of importance and the changes will help to ultimately sustain the historic building for years to come.

?We've invited Jane Bunnett to the Playhouse for this fundraiser. To help completely repair the front of the building along with painting it and everything,? Heather Brough, Hospice coordinator mentioned.

Since many people have been following Bunnett all over during her career, especially in her visits back in through town; a place she's felt definitely close ties to as her cottage in Lake St. Peter has been prominent in her life for a good 20 some odd years. Her attendance with close friends and band members of Maqueque met in Cuba on one of her many excursions with husband Larry Cramer. She'd begun the group first when upon seeing and later meeting vocalist Dayme Arocena, a powerful singer with emotive gestures as an actress. But Bunnett soon was introduced to percussionist Magdelys Savigne, drummer Yissy Garcia, bassist and tres guitarist Yusa, pianist Danae Olano and bassist Celia Jimenez, all having distinct talent alone as professional performers themselves that enveloped their characters they bring into the group.

Together they made the group Maqueque, which translates roughly to, ?the spirit of a young girl,? Bunnett said as regardless language barriers, they are a truly united and are a force to hear live. Each member having written a song they'd performed which cultivated a mass of applause as each one of them also had extremely long stamina-testing solos in their songs which connected back into a collaborative perspective.

?She was nice enough to say yes, that she's always wanted to play here and that she would gladly do it as a fundraiser,? Brough said about the event and in return, it'd showed inevitably as the amount of energy the playhouse omitted without even being inside was ostentatious in an intimately intriguing manner.

Within a span of hopefully two years holding to everybody's hard work and fundraisers such as these, Brough explained, they'd eventually be able to fully repair and aid the historic building back to a close original replica but with more advantages and staying power. Brough stated there will be, ?repairs in some places, but in other places we have to rip off and start again,? as in the case with the balcony.

?It wasn't being used to its potential [the Village Playhouse],? Brough said, ?more to its detriment.?

Maqueque played songs such as: Papineau, Tormenta, Guagira and Ain't No Sunshine when She's Gone and had their Juno winning CD for sale in the lobby. Bunnett having said to think that the sound in the playhouse was absolutely amazing and being so proud to finally be playing in the theatre of her dreams.

Brough said permission from the town to extend the balconies out to the sidewalk was granted to the Playhouse. This will lend itself

to becoming a far more inviting and open place to host multiple other little events on the balconies themselves. Being able to have a nice night out for drinks and chatter with friends and family is something the playhouse practices to extend out towards.

Bunnett was more than thrilled to become involved in the massive ongoing fundraiser to help ultimately save the vital part of the small towns origin, charm and charisma. Being such an artistic community it is important that the theatre is kept well and equally so is open to the public to allow expression and enjoyment of and among varying different genres and kinds of artistic backgrounds all around the town and from acts even out of town as Brough said, 'lets try and bring a little bit of everything in for everybody and see what works and if we're not making a certain amount of numbers then we wouldn't do that [act] maybe a year from now.'

Creating options for people coming out for a night on the town, it is important that if interested in a certain show that you come out and support that genre as it will more likely be featured often afterwards if it sees many people intrigued, whereas, the opposite will be valid if people lack in taking notice. Having booked shows all the way into October and now filling in all the way into late December, there will be something for everybody.

Always open to new ideas and points of view for the playhouse, anything to more so invigorate people into coming out to the theatre instead of solely having one set theme and time of operation, an accepting of all walks of artisans to come out and make the Village Playhouse a place you want and have to be as well is being taken seriously through new management.

For more information on Jane Bunnett and Maqueque visit her at: janebunnett.com. To learn more about the Village Playhouse Theatre visit: bancroftvillageplayhouse.ca.