

Photos by Robert F. Gabella

Thursday, October 8, 1998
Double Door
1572 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago

With its spacious floor, ample seating, generous bar staff (thank you Sandy and Randy), excellent house sounds and two levels of prime viewing, the Double Door was the perfect venue to host the release of *I Wanna Be Kate*: the songs of Kate Bush on Brown Star Records.

Each of the 14 acts performed not only their song from the new disc, but two other tunes of their choice. This made for an eventful, music-filled evening. Surprisingly, set changes between acts were handled quickly and efficiently, and the house tunes in-between kept the place rocking.

Thomas Dunning, master of ceremonies and the album's producer, wasted no time in introducing the first act, The J Davis Trio. Actually a quartet, lead singer Stuart led the group through an incredible performance of classy, jazzy, street-wise hip-hop which culminated in "There Goes A Tenner" from the new album. Though the band doesn't have its own full-length disc out as of yet, it gets my pick as the one to watch for '99. Visually impressive, musically innovative (check out the plucky chime things in the big glass box...either its something new or I live in a cave!), and just plain out of this world -- they kicked the evening off in a great big way.

Trinkets of Joy gave it their all on "Love and Anger," and before I could catch my breath, the noticeably stunning Plunging Necklines strummed and warbled their way

I WANNA BE KATE CD Release Party



Thomas Dunning



Preston Kilk

through "Babushka" as well as Joe Jackson's "Fools In Love." Without a doubt, the Necklines' Meg Guttman and Jacqueline Krupka brought the two-ladies-and-a-guitar thing to brand new heights!

Victoria Storm's solo piano and vocal version of "The Kick Inside" couldn't have been more gentle, and was paired nicely with Justin Roberts version of "You're the One." Less flowing than Kate's original, it was nonetheless compelling with Roberts' revamped treatment. He guarded the microphone like a prized possession, and lost none of the archetypal intent or feeling.

In the absence of Syd Straw, Catherine Smilko sang Straw's "The Man With The Child In His Eyes" with resonance, and passion. Afterwards, she joked about getting back down into her "baritone" range, which she did for the very next tune. And Nora O'Connor was right there with "The Saxophone Song." Just prior, O'Connor had whooped it up with some insurgent country stomp from one of her Bloodshot recordings -- it was amazing to see the transition.

Tom Dunning, Thomas Negovan, and Susan Voelz all turned in excellent performances, as did My Scarlet Life, whose version of "Suspended In Gaffa" was even more intense and mysterious than the one they recorded for the disc.

The Aluminum Group was particularly compelling, and though Dunning joked a bit about them being Chicago's new "It" group, you could easily see why. Seasoned musicians in every sense, they made elegant work out of "L'Amour Looks Something Like You."

The performances over all were outstanding, and the crowd was hanging on every note. All the more reason to pick up your own copy of *I Wanna Be Kate*. And since most of these acts are in heavy circulation locally (and nationally), why not just make a point to check out their live shows? There's a lot of talent here -- you won't be disappointed!. **ITM**



J Davis Trio