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« Jazz Fest 2015, Day 3: Dana Leong Tessa Souter

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Jazz Fest 2015, Day 3: Ron reviews Dana Leong, Tessa Souter, Nils Berg Cinemascope, and Raul Midon

POSTED BY RON NETSKY ON MON, JUN 22, 201



I rarely go back for a second show, but Tessa Souter is one of my favorite singers, so why not indulge? Souter has been at the festival four times before at three different venues. She finally made it to Kilbourn Hall.

One of the things that made Souter's sound unique was her band: Adam Platt, piano; Keita Ogawa, percussion; and Dana Leong on cello.

While Platt played a pretty conventional role at the piano, Ogawa used hand percussion as much as he used his drum set. And Leong got sounds out of his cello I've never heard before. The result was a unique textural soundscape, far from the usual jazz combo experience.

Platt warmed up as the night went on. His finest solo came toward the end of the second set on "Yesterdays." Ogawa's all-hand (no sticks) solo on the final song, "Pure Imagination" was his best. **As for Leong, he stole the show on almost every solo.** Aside from **playing excellent classical-style cello**, he had a way of sliding over the strings without pressing down, transforming the cello into a Theremin.

The most touching part of the show was a heart-felt tribute to trumpeter Lew Soloff, the Eastman School of Music graduate and early member of Blood, Sweat & Tears who worked with Souter and was here with her at last year's XRIJF. Singing a cappella for much of the song, with only Leong backing her on cello in parts, she sang a touching rendition of "Here's To Life."

Rochester International Jazz Fest
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