

Katie Campbell at Boston Court, 7/30/11  
CD Release Party – *End of the Beginning*

Katie Campbell is a freshly uncorked bottle of champagne. The excitement of the initial pop, the giggly bubble as it pours into a glass, the raised eyebrows when you lift the potion to your lips, and the fizzy delight of the taste.

As she took the stage for her CD release show at Boston Court (as part of the Jazz Bakery's "movable feast" of concerts), Katie's barely-containable effervescence melted into the mature grooves that infected her set (and that color her CD). This chick can funk it up big time, spot on and in the pocket. And she's not one to rein in her enthusiasm - her unabashed joy in making music inhabits her whole body, down to her kaleidoscope red pumps.

The 19-tune set mainly featured tunes from her debut album, *End of the Beginning* – a fitting title. Peppered with funk, bebop, jazz, pop, vocaleses, a re-grooved show tune or two and a Dvorak theme with lyrics (a stunning, sublime and slow duet with bass player Dave Keif), Katie's choices are consistently interesting. When a killer band - Keif, Tommy Reeves on keys, piano and judiciously chosen backing vocals, Travis Newlon shredding on guitar and Drew Megna laying down serious grooves on drums - throws themselves into the set sporting huge grins, it's both a treat and a testament to the person who chose the music, and to the talent of the vocalist – and in this case that's the same woman.

It's hard to cite standouts since almost everything showcased Katie's spot-on and inspired vocals, but I'll go with that Dvorak piece ("Goin' Home") for its steady, sustained and gorgeous tension and release, a smokin' hot cover of Nikka Costa's "Till I Get to You," the jazz waltzy "Into the Light" (great solo by Reeves), and the shuffle-funked "Boy From New York City" with a screaming solo by Newlon. Several arrangements for Katie's album were penned by L.A. session wunderkind Fletcher Sheridan, whose re-imaginings and re-groovings, particularly of Bonnie Raitt's "Love Letter," were stunning, often evoking the best of Donald Fagen.

In many ways, experiencing Katie's 90-minute set was like being at her birthday party – but it was the guests who got the gifts.

- Amy Engelhardt