

Technical mastery plus soul to match equals stunning

Mimi Fox and Band, Woollaston Jazzfest 2009, Nelson School of Music, last night. Reviewed by Pete Rainey.

A singer with no voice! Last night, Mimi Fox gave a stunning performance as part of the 2009 Woollaston Jazzfest. In doing so, her guitar was her voice. A fabulous melodic performance – all done on guitar.

Fox is a true exponent of the West Coast sound. Influenced heavily by Joe Pass and Wes Montgomery, she relishes the tonal variety her guitar

Review

can produce.

In one of the truly international offerings from the Nelson Jazz Festival, last night's disappointingly small audience was treated to a world-class performance.

Supported by Auckland-based musicians Kevin Field on piano, Olivier Holland on bass and Ron Samson on drums, Fox kicked off the set with two self-penned compositions, *Blues for*

Two and *Perpetually Hip*. Her mastery of technique and hunger for creating a beautiful melodic line soon became apparent.

Lazybird, by John Coltrane, gave us an opportunity to experience the great skills of drummer Ron Samson.

Mimi then gave a great solo performance of *Lullaby of the Leaves* by Bernice Petkere, displaying great mastery of harmonics, her right hand taking over the role of the left with great ease, culminating in some superbly intense Bach-like passages.

Ellington's *Caravan* allowed some fabulously fiery band interplay, always supported by Kevin Field's intelligent playing. Again, Samson gave us some great moments on the kit, ably supported by Holland's solid bass.

The second half again allowed us to experience the intense honesty of Mimi Fox's performance.

She is the perfect example of brain engaged, technique sorted, look out here comes the effortless solo. It was definitely a concert that I wished could have gone on and on. This woman has

a big heart and tons of soul.

She fired on Wes Montgomery's *Four on Six* and gave us sublime solo moments on Paul McCartney's *She's Leaving Home*, her technique always backing her solid commitment to producing beautiful melody.

As she finished off with Van Heusen's *But Beautiful* and then *My Romance* as an encore, there was no doubt in my mind we were in the presence of a truly great player. Well done to the Jazz Festival for bringing us this opportunity. Please can we have more?