



Jazzers' Journal

GTA Concert Reviews, July 2012

Heather Bambrick Trio – A Walk In The Plaza

[Richmond Hill's Centre For The Performing Arts](#) "Jazz In The Plaza" series is going very well – and [Heather Bambrick](#)'s group fit the format perfectly. This is the "jazzy standards" type of jazz, as opposed to one of the other types of jazz (like [Lewis Black](#) says "This is a bunch of comics – not a *Think Tank!*"), and it's totally right for an open-air summer evening concert on Main Street, Canada (or USA). Ms Bambrick has won National Jazz Awards for Vocalist of the Year and Broadcaster of the Year. She's everywhere in Toronto, including of course [Jazz-FM](#). She has sung with almost everybody and has a vast repertoire. In Richmond Hill, her choice was swing era tunes for a swing era audience – and Heather had them in the palm of her hand!

Honestly, there never seems to be anyone under 60 at these events – and Heather adjusted her repertoire to the occasion with complete ease. This showed a great feel for the crowd and they appreciated it. She also got them with her monologues, often about very little, but delivered with her usual panache. The Jazz-FM years have turned her into a polished emcee – a damned handy commodity in this situation. I've seen consummate musicians die a death in the Plaza setting because they have nothing to say beyond the names of the tunes. Heather establishes a wonderful rapport that makes the music part of a larger experience.

And let's face it: playing outside is always difficult. Granted, people are generally less critical – but think of Joni Mitchell at the Isle of Wight! When the magic isn't working, they'll eat you like corn on the cob – in fact, they may be eating corn on the cob at the same time – it's not a pretty sight! No such problem on this occasion. Ms Bambrick was masterful with the crowd, and did it all, including an extended whistling solo on "Sometimes I'm Happy" (how good was *that?*), a sing-along on "Side By Side" followed by a killer kazoo solo (you heard me!) and lots of other great devices and ideas. Did I mention that her twenty minute monologue on I'm-not-sure-what had them rolling in the aisles? It was a walk in the Plaza.