

## Ronnie Taheny: Twenty years in the making

Saturday February 4, 2012.

Governor Hindmarsh Hotel. Adelaide, South Australia.

On a warm and rainy Saturday night in Adelaide, a decent-sized crowd fills the back room of the Governor Hindmarsh and waits for Ronnie Taheny to appear. She's back in town, for the first time since 2010, this time celebrating a 20-year solo career. There's generous applause when Taheny *does* appear, and takes her seat at the grand piano. She promises a performance that will follow a vague chronology. She's not wrong about the vagary because her first number is the opening track from her most recent album. *Letter to the Muses* is a beautiful song, and is an instant reminder of Taheny's songwriting and performing prowess. Two songs from 1996's *Valentine's Prey* album follow; *Montana*, an early composition, and the familial *Aida*.

Taheny switches between 12-string acoustic guitar, piano and keyboards to perform selections from a range of her albums. The tales she tells between the songs only add to the pointedness of some, like *Gold, Frankincense and Murder* and *Irish Girls Wake*, and the poignancy of others, like the aforementioned *Aida*. Taheny completes her first set with the brilliantly haunting *Trade*, and the spoken word *A Darcy Before I Die*, both from 2010's *Renaissance Point* double-album.

For the second half of the showcase Taheny is joined onstage by the multi-talented Jarrad Payne. Although seated behind a drum kit, he's also responsible for bass, backing vocals, keyboard and various other percussive instruments, generally managing to do (at least) two things at once.

Not to be outdone, Taheny also adds another instrument to her catalogue, strapping on a Telecaster for *That's Jesus*. After a couple of songs from *Decalogue* album, we return to the more recent *Renaissance Point*, for the slow-burning, anthemic *Wasting Away*, *Latitude Age*, and the well crafted and catchy *Surface*. This is followed by an impressive vocal performance in *The List*, and I get the feeling that we are reaching the climax of the show. The last three songs of the set see Taheny move from piano, to acoustic guitar, to Telecaster, for assured renditions of *Toyland*, *Glacial* and *Moving Door*.

Taheny returns for a very welcome encore and performs *Versailles* and the touching crowd favourite *Photograph* in solo mode, before inviting Payne to join her for the final song of the evening, and popular encore choice, *Guardian Angel*.

The versatility is there for all to see; the sizeable talent even more obvious. Taheny is a thoughtful, gifted and vibrant artist who more than deserves the applause and goodwill she receives from another satisfied Governor Hindmarsh crowd.

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