Ali Harper in
LEGENDARY DIVAS

“Loud applause for this generously gifted actress, with an all-enveloping voice that can take us with her no matter what she sings, is a further extension of the celebration of song that Ali offers”. Lindsay Clark, Theatre review 2015

Shirley, Dusty, Barbra, Judy, Vera, Doris, Peggy, Dolly, Edith and many more...

Clarence St Theatre
Friday, 16th October 7:30pm
Saturday, 17th October 2pm & 7:30pm

For more details visit: www.aliharper.com
www.hamiltonoperaticsociety.co.nz
Quiet please there's a lady on the stage...

Ali Harper celebrates the Legendary Divas.

The star of 'Mamma Mia,' 'Bombshells' and 'Blood Brothers' will honour these women and their songs, up close and personal.

"Ms Harper leaves with a truly knockout performance... she has the audience at her feet and many rightly rise to their feet cheering at the end."
—Theatreview, 2013.

Join the Divas with an equally legendary band led by Ali's Musical Director, David Sidwell.

"Ali Harper lights up every room she enters, owns every stage she steps upon and steals every heart that hears her sing," New York 2013.

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Performance perfect

Divas Review

WHAT: All Harper in Legendary Divas
WHERE: Clarence Street Theatre, Hamilton
WHEN: October 16-17
REVIEWER: Steve Scott

Singer and entertainer All Harper is a very vulnerable woman, and he also possesses a very powerful and controlled vocal. Along with local musical director-pianist David Schaeffer and his crackling eight-piece band, last Friday's opening night of Legendary Divas proved All Harper as the consummate and professional artist. Indeed it could have been an easy win for Harper to just sing a host of memorable tunes from legendary divas including Marlene Dietrich, Peggy Lee and Doris Day. However, she engaged the audience with interesting reflections and anecdotes on her chosen singers — with humour thrown in — to balance out her act and it flowed wonderfully.

Beginning with a medley of Baby Love, At No Bulletin, High Enough and Stand By Me in a close of Celine, it wasn't kept below her powerful, rich tone followed by the top rendition of The主旨 Michael's There's No Business Like Show Business. She then gleamed beautifully atop of Lidia's delicate reading of Don't Do Magic. For a sultry number, Judy Collins' A Little Bit of Rain in the Blues connected to the theme of love and all.

And moving there's floss to be had, her 90s hit —陀螺终镀漱玉 Surgery & Then The Heart — had Harper a little behind a bit of cheer and while a little last-sounding another man to help her on stage, she and he brought the house down.

From her dramatic, James Bond theme hits (Goldfinger and Live and Let Die) and a healing Edith Piaf declamation to rewriting Cordell King's Rascal (You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Woman), All Harper received a standing ovation and proved why she is so well respected, talented and professional.

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A VOICE AND STAMINA TO BE MARVELLED AT

LEGENDARY DIVAS
Ali Harper
Musical directors: Richard Marrett (Christchurch); David Sidwell (Hamilton+)

at Clarence Street Theatre, Hamilton
From 16 Oct 2015 to 17 Oct 2015

Reviewed by Gail Pittaway, 17 Oct 2015

What great women they were and still are: Dianna Ross, Judy Garland, Dusty Springfield, Peggy Lee, Barbara Streisand. Like the old party game where we have to remember objects after they are flashed in front of us on a tray, Ali Harper’s ebullient switch between these legends of the stage and disc is mind boggling.

Her energy is phenomenal, while her warmth and ability to work with the band and to the audience is delectable. She is unafraid to break down the wall and come out into the audience or invite a male victim up to join with her in a fast-paced dance medley game of ‘Guess the Divas’. She is so glamorous in her slinky gowns and golden hair that the men certainly aren’t complaining and, sign of the true Diva, even the women think she’s gorgeous!

Harper opens the show with a medley of Motown numbers which leaves the audience fully informed of her powerful voice. But this is tempered with later softer numbers: Judy Garland in swing mode, Edith Piaf mourning her lover Marcel Cerdan in the spine tingling ‘Hymn to Love’ and the song which made divas of Elaine Paige and even Madonna, ‘Don’t Cry For Me Argentina’.

With an ability to capture but not parody Streisand’s slightly nasal tone, Julie Andrews’ immaculate diction, Merman’s hint of metal, and Janis Joplin’s or Carole King’s bluesy edge, virtually every song is a show stopper. But, gloriously, the show goes on!

By half-time we are marvelling at her voice and stamina. But the second half is even gutsier, opening with a belting, melting tribute to Shirley Bassey.

Harper’s speaking voice is soft and gentle, also easy on the ear, and she intersperses brackets of numbers with snatches of information, gossip and myth; after all, no evening celebrating Legendary Divas should go without some of the legends.

It’s great to learn new stories – the name changes, the desperation to be loved and recognised, or about who beat whom to which role (My Fair Lady: the film role of Eliza Doolittle being played by Audrey Hepburn, chosen over Julie Andrews who played it on Broadway, only to have Hepburn’s voice, carefully coached for the movie, dubbed by Marni Nixon).

And some of the old stories: Maria Callas’ legendary tapeworm, the need for affirmation and the all-too-often decline into booze and drugs; here the list of names too numerous to mention.
Harper is supported on stage by an eight-man band led by the show’s musical director, David Sidwell. Relaxed and in his element, he parries and parties on stage with the leading lady from behind the grand piano, whose ivories are well and truly tickled, stroked and given a jolly good hiding. It’s a joy to see such mutual pleasure in the music; the ladies and their legends shared between singer and musicians.

Some of the business of the show business atmosphere is made by intricate and interesting lighting; roving spots, back lights, solo spots and drifts of blue or red haze colouring the words so often sung in dark cabarets. It’s a memorable night of great music and song from a New Zealand legend, Ali Harper.

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