

MUSIC

Maria Muldaur Interviewed

by Jackie Berry

Maria Muldaur looked tired after her Saturday night show at the Community Center for the Performing Arts (CCPA). "Wouldn't you be," she quipped.

"It's the traveling," she stated. Maria and her band, the Maria Muldaur Band, will celebrate one year on the road on Valentine's Day.

Maria began her musical career in high school. Now, at 41, she has a resume that lists the Even Dozen and Jim Kreskin Jug Bands, stage roles in *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, a list of recordings a yard long and a taste of mainstream success from the early seventies with the gold record *Midnight at the Oasis*.

When *Midnight at the Oasis* and other sultry favorites such as *It Ain't the Meat and Don't You Feel My Leg* seduced the American music buyer in 1973, Maria was a single woman with an eight-year-old daughter (Jenny). She opted for motherhood over lengthy tours and speaks with happiness about the good relationship she has with Jenny, now 19.

Well, Jenny is on her own and Maria is trying to climb back on the heap. She works harder than she would probably like to and hawks her newest recording, *Sweet and Slow*, at the road stops.

Maria is touring with a quartet of fine musicians with the exception of the drummer who is stiff and doesn't lend an individual sound quality like the others do. The other players—Nick Milo on piano, Archie Williams, Jr. on guitar, and Mike Eje on bass—are exceptional, building layers of sound with a very personal but creative message.

Maria's long, black hair is now layered and she has bangs—giving her a more contemporary look than her press photos indicate. But she still has a rich, alto voice that sings lyrics from gospel to light-duty rock.

Saturday's show included Maria's classics like *Midnight at the Oasis* and *I'm a Woman*, as well as many old jazz classics from Fats Waller and Fanny Brice. Songs were borrowed from Sippie Wallace and contemporary per-

formers Bob Dylan and Bonnie Raitt. The program contained almost too many kinds of music, some of it pretty darn good but the variety weakened the strengths of the show, making it less powerful than a group of musicians of apparently high skill would be expected to perform.

One of the more pleasing aspects of the evening was the sound quality of the building. The



200-odd seating capacity at the CCPA granted accessibility to the persona of Maria and her band and the sound mixed well throughout this space.

Maria asked that photographs not be taken of the Saturday night show. She cited past experiences where uncomplimentary photos of her "caterwauling away" were used by promoters on subsequent engagements.

At any rate, Maria is lining up a long list of projects in the studio, on the road, and on different types of stages. "For years I curtailed my career activities," she says. "Now I'm taking whatever activities come along."

[Jackie Berry is a Mass Communications major at Lane Community College and editor of *The Torch*, a student newspaper.]

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Joey and the Allnighterz

by David Koteen

Above the bank the lights flash—8:33—33 degrees. Notebook in hand I started along 13th, down High, through the 5th St. Market parking lot to Jo Federigo's. Took about 20 minutes; fingers and ears were cold but I was wide awake. Joey & The Allnighterz were scheduled to play at 9:30 and I wanted to chat with Barbara Healy and Joe Pepper before they started. They were seated in the corner over a bowl—each had a bowl—of steaming minestrone.

"Sit down, man. All right. Howya doin'?"

They had just come from the hot tub; her youngest child was running 104 temp., and Barbara had contracted a bit of whatever-it-was. Barbara is about as real as they come. Mother of four with a determined desire to sing. She goes the limit on every number.

"I love to sing; we all have fun up there together. Playing and singing, sending it out to the audience, whether it's in a bar or a dance scene. We're gonna go for it and have a good time."

"Which songs do you prefer?" I asked.

"Well, I like them all; that's why we do them. But if I had to choose, I'd say it was the gospel numbers. I grew up with jazz for lullabys, and you know, the Temple is full of Minor Blues. It comes straight out of your heart. Sometimes people ask me who I stylize myself after? But I don't. I like all the greats—Billie Holiday, Bessie, Ella, Aretha—but I'm only me. I don't practice like anyone; I practice like me. When I perform, I sing like me."

Joel Foy walked in, took off his coat, and began tuning his guitars. Then Jeff Homan, the sax man; a

few minutes later Butch Cousins, the drummer, in high top sneakers. One by one they go up to the bar, obtain a glass, a cup, a bottle of what they need.

The first set begins. "It's gotta be light and soft," says Joe, "while the dinner crowd finishes upstairs. Don't wanna give them in-di-gestion, do we?"

Barbara is the continual focus of the band; and she is sensitive to each—reaching out to Butch with one hand, leaning towards Jeff, cueing in Joel's guitar breaks, a special glance towards Joe.

The place is filling up. A guy slides in next to me and whispers (he sees I'm jotting notes), "I would love to steal this horn player; he's the best. Hot! Oh so hot!"

Butch, toothpick between lips, exchanges a smile with Joe while Joel Foy slides, slips, trips along the frets. He barely moves his body, but works his guitar hard, mixing up leads like a bartender mixing drinks—seeking just the right blend. He is competent and confident—no need to be flashy.

A couple across the room stand up, dance a few steps, kiss, and sit back down.

Jeff and Barbara have a running dialogue. His horn has a sweet voice even in the extremes. She told me that he is always supportive and careful to keep his range right where her voice is at. Playfully she leans over and sticks an elbow in the sax. He feigns surprise. She pulls notes out the sax's mouth "Give me them notes."

Applause. Then silence as she snaps the lead-in. One, two, three four . . . and sings:

Take me to heart and I'll always love
you.

And nobody can make me do wrong.
Take me for granted leaving love
unshown
Makes willpower weak and temptation
strong

If you want a do-right all day woman
You got to be a do-right all night man.

The drumming is both tight and mellow. Between songs Butch is relaxed, joking and gesturing with his sticks. But from the first beat to last he is totally attentive, head swinging back and forth in time. He keeps it clean and simple.

One man starts clapping and stamping his feet, inadvertently tipping over a chair which falls towards the band. Joe, without loosing a beat, takes a couple of steps forward and catches it on his purple sneaker.

As Barbara reaches for a higher range, her hand oscillates like a sound level indicator, registering each nuance of feeling. "My real teacher was my mother. As far back as I remember we would be in the kitchen, harmonizing to Woody Guthrie songs."

Joe Pepper is a bass player's bass player. Appropriately the pulse of the group. When he occasionally sings lead, it's almost like a bass duet. His hand arches over the strings, his fingers and thumb never falter, even though his eyes wander often to light on the lead singer.

Joey & The Allnighterz is a scintillating band. Tight and dynamic. For music that's nice to the ear and sets your body in motion catch them on Jan. 31 at Jo Federigo's.

As the set was coming to a close, a song from the late, great Otis Redding, a man calls to the waitress, "Send those people a round of drinks. That's real, honest-to-God music. I'd give a lot for real music."

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