

MUSICAL THEATRE *Review*

ON STAGE ★ BACKSTAGE ★ WORLDWIDE

Chante! – Isabelle Georges – Theatre Dejazet, Paris

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Isabelle Georges in Chante! at the Theatre Dejazet, Paris. Picture: Victor Tonelli

Chante! is performed by Isabelle Georges at the Theatre Dejazet, Paris until 12 October.

After touring extensively all around France, as well as at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, with her previous shows *Une étoile et moi* (a Judy Garland tribute), *Padam Padam* and *Broadway en chanté*, Isabelle Georges is back in Paris at the Dejazet, the very theatre where she started as a tap dancer in Victor Cuno's show 15 years ago, with her brand new show *Chante! (Sing!)*.

Singing has always been the answer to everything for Georges since her very childhood, and her love for American musical theatre the guiding light of her career. Still quite young, she played the leading lady roles in *Barnum* and *Singin' in the Rain* in Paris, followed by *Titanic* in Belgium during which

she met her long-time partner, multi-talented crooner, pianist and actor Frederik Steenbrink. She also formed a special relationship with composer Maury Yeston and later performed his piece *December Songs* in Paris.

This new show, cleverly directed by Anne Bourgeois, perfectly illustrates Georges' versatility: ranging from a Yiddish version of Brel's 'Ne me quitte pas' to Charles Aznavour's 'Mon Emouvant Amour', as well as some original songs such as 'Les barytons', with lyrics by Stéphane Laporte, the librettist, and music by Thierry Boulanger, the show's brilliant arranger and musical director.

Broadway is still close to the heart of Georges and the highlights of this new class act are her own translations of show tunes such as Kander and Ebb's *Liza With a Z* opener 'Yes' and 'I'm the Greatest Star' from *Funny Girl* which fits her like a glove. Later in the show Georges shows off her tap dancing ability in 'Rhythm is my Business', delivers a funny and risqué version of Cole Porter's 'Si Vous Aimez Les Poitrines', and turns Jerry Herman's 'I Am What I Am' into her own declaration of freedom and individuality. 'Bei mir bist du schon' showcases the brilliant four-piece band, but the show ends with a melancholic note, a moving duet from Georges and Steenbrink to a Dutch song, 'Plus Tard' ('Later') which like Aznavour's 'Le Temps' reflects upon the passage of time.

Patrick Honoré