

LIVING

A cool Latin evening was enjoyed at the Oddfellows Hall

By DAN DAVIDSON
Star Correspondent

DAWSON CITY – Brazilian singer Fernanda Cunha has been touring in Canada once a year since her initial visit in 2005, but her three-community Yukon tour marks her first time in the North.

"I have played in a lot of Canadian cities," she said in an interview.

"Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Fernie (B.C.), but I have not had the opportunity to be here in Yukon, and I'm really glad to be here to sing for you, to share my music with you."

Many of the tunes on the program at her concert in the Oddfellows Hall last Friday were drawn from her most recent album, *Brasil-Canada* recorded in 2009.

That album features a mixture of tunes from both countries, including compositions by Sueli Costa, Noel Rosa, Marcio Hallack, Joni Mitchell, Bruce Cockburn, Shelton Brooks, and Mike Lent (lyrics written by Cunha), among others.

Cunha (pronounced as if the "h" were a "y") comes from a musical background.

Her uncle is Brazilian composer Sueli Costa, and her mother is the singer Telma Costa.

She began her performing career in Brazil in 1997 and has since found an international audience in France, Austria, Denmark, Spain, Malaysia,



Star Photo by DAN DAVIDSON

KLONDIKE PREMIERE – Brazilian Jazz singer Fernanda Cunha and her trio (Michael Creber, Doug Stephenson and Phil Belanger, left to right, perform at the Oddfellows Hall in Dawson City.

Argentina and North America performing at prestigious international jazz festivals.

Samples of her work can be heard on her own website www.fernandacunha.com, and on www.myspace.com.br/fernandacunha.

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As Scott Wilson, past president of Jazz Yukon, noted in his introduction, the evening in Dawson was slightly cooler than Fernanda would have been used to in Sao Paulo, but it was also

cool in a number of very pleasant ways.

Cunha toured the Yukon with a trio of Vancouver-based musicians she has worked with before, and the ease with which the quartet approached their two

sets was evident throughout the evening.

Cunha's voice is a mid-range instrument, a mezzo-soprano that can both soar and reach smoky depths. She is most comfortable in her own language and musical idiom, but is a pleasure to listen to in any setting.

Michael Creber led the trio on keyboards in soulful Latin and blues stylings. Hard to imagine him as once having played with both the Irish Rovers and k.d. lang's Reclines earlier in his career, but that just proves the versatility of the man. His flying fingers produced some amazing solo runs.

Phil Belanger has played with a number of rock, R&B and funk bands in his time, but has a fondness for Latin and Brazilian rhythms and proved it throughout the evening.

There can be a distressing sameness to Latin drumming, but not with this drummer. His solos received enthusiastic applause.

It's hard for an upright bass player to shine when surrounded by such talent, but Doug Stephenson had no trouble doing so, providing a solid bottom to the trio and soloing with considerable skill when it was his turn.

The evening proved to be an enjoyable one for the capacity crowd.

The tour included a concert at the St. Elias Convention Centre in Haines Junction last Thursday and a final date at the Yukon Convention Centre as part of Jazz on the Wing last Sunday.