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"Karrin Allyson and Luciana Souza: Divergent Sounds From 2 Currents in the Mainstream."

"As far apart as their styles are, Karrin Allyson and Luciana Souza both exemplify mainstream jazz singing at this moment; they're separate points along the spectrum. Ms. Allyson's roots are in the Midwest, and in a nonchalant vision of jazz that allows it to share space with folk and blues and pop; Ms. Souza's roots are in Brazil, and her kind of jazz song is a specialized form with delicate harmonies and arrangements. Their double bill at Zankel Hall on Wednesday night looked awkward on paper but worked neatly in practice.

Ms. Souza started off, performing in a quartet that included the pianist Bruce Barth, the bassist Scott Colley and the drummer Jeff Ballard; her first tune was Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Chega de Saudade," and immediately this was musicians' music. The whole band played for the four-bar introduction, and then bass and drums abruptly dropped out for the verse, leaving only the melody and Mr. Barth's elegant ornamentation. Everyone re-entered for the chorus, but the message was plain: this is music under strict control, and the point was reconfirmed by the song's slow progression along a slow upward grade of intensity until the last note.

Ms. Souza seems detail-oriented enough to think deeply about sequencing her set, as well as about interacting with the band while maintaining the delicate space around her that her voice naturally projects.

That middle-register voice stayed centered and sanguine; with the smallest pinch of vibrato, she built up a concentrated heat within a phrase, sounding at moments like a less imposing Nina Simone. And her repertory, which now includes poems by Pablo Neruda and Elizabeth Bishop set to her own music, reflects this seriousness about form...

...At the end, both singers took on "Inoetil Paisagem," a slow, sorrowful piece from Jobim's repertory, and lifted it delicately into a groove; Ms. Souza sang the Portuguese words and Ms. Allyson scatted around them until they were both improvising and feeding off each other's phrases. Their differences didn't matter; all you could hear was their ambitious intelligence."