

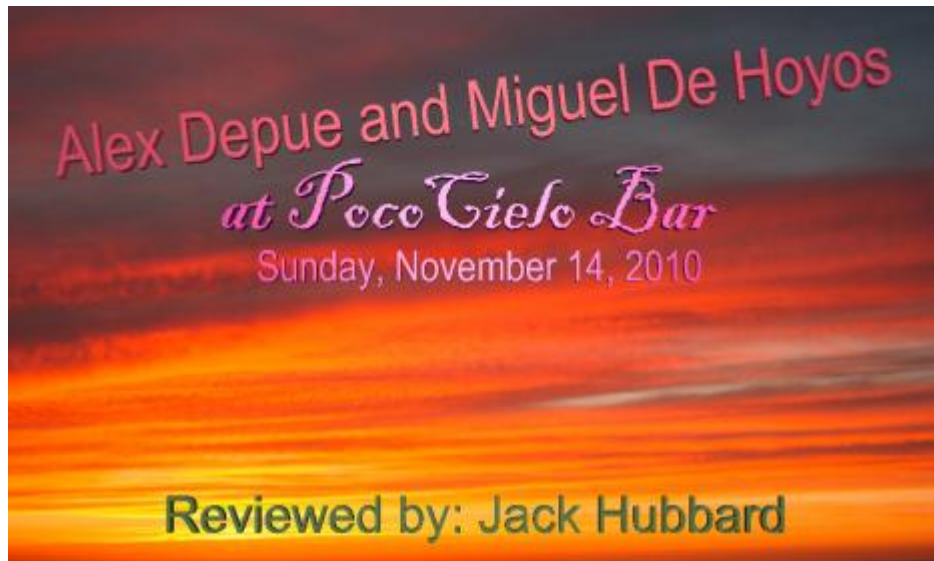


Alex Depue and Miguel De Hoyos

at Poco Cielo Bar

Sunday, November 14, 2010

Reviewed by: Jack Hubbard



All of us living along the La Mision-Ensenada corridor feel as if Miguel and Alex are our hometown boys and we cherish the opportunities to see them perform and even celebrate their successes, as well as share in the disappointment of the occasional setback. I try to catch these two virtuosos whenever they play, as I come away from their show inspired and ready to put in some serious practice time on my own guitar.

The eve of Sunday the 14th was pleasantly balmy, replete with marvelous sunset and a gentle Indian Summer breeze from the east. I arrived early and listened to the sound check, sipping a glass of Cabernet and watching the sunset turn from a melange of orange and violets to shades of gray from the patio of the Poco Cielo Bar.

It's worth a mention that the new Poco Cielo bar (located just north of the restaurant) is a very comfortable room to watch any performance, with tables just feet from the stage and even easy chairs and sofas for those who want to stretch out a bit. Despite its comfortable modernity, the room's design captures the rustic flavor of Mexico of old.

Just as the last vestiges of the sunset made way for dusk, the duo took to the stage and launched into the classic, Somewhere Over the Rainbow. Alex's brooding violin soared, dove, bobbed and weaved over the beautiful strains of Miguel's Spanish guitar chordings and arpeggios. The poignant melody was wonderfully expressed by Alex, seemingly making the classic song his own. I couldn't help but think

that Judy Garland would have been very happy with their rendition of her trademark tune.

During the course of the evening, the duo covered many songs of the classic rock genre including, House of the Rising Sun, Black Magic Woman, and the Stairway to Heaven/Dust in the Wind/Hotel California trilogy. Even when performing songs in the rock genre, the duo's musicianship and creative interpretations lend a certain elegance to the dusty rock standards, breathing new life into them. My personal favorite of the classic rock selections performed that night was Elanore Rigby, McCARTNEY's ballad of the plight of the lonely people of the world. Depue's haunting violin, at times soothing, other times filling the room with gut-wrenching, atonal riffs, captured the angst that McCARTNEY expressed in his lyrics written so many years ago.

The duo performed many favorites from a vast array of genres that were yelled out from the appreciative crowd, including Gershwin's 1935 classic, Summertime; Mason William's Classical Gas and the country standard, The Kentucky Waltz. In their performance of Classical Gas, the two leave the melodic confines of the pop-classical guitar piece and go off on wild musical tangents, particularly demonstrating the incredible musical chemistry that the two share.

One of the highlights of the evening, judging by the crowd's response, was Miguel's guitar and vocal performance of Spanish Eyes. As an aficionado of classical guitar I can tell you that it's almost unheard of that a guitarist of Miguel's caliber can also sing like an angel, but he can and often does, and his voice was in grand form.

The show closed with Alex performing solo, a rousing ten minute performance of JS Bach's Schaccone, clearly demonstrating why he is rated internationally. Miguel followed with an inspired rendition of the Spanish guitar classic, Malaguena. I caught myself, eyes closed for a few seconds, reminiscing of my own adventures in old Andalusia.

That ended the performance. The next morning would come early as the two were to catch an early flight to the east coast for some dates in the south and the midwest. We wished them well, bid our friends good night and departed for home, satisfied that we enjoyed a couple of well spent hours in the elegant Poco Cielo bar, entertained by our resident virtuosos. I couldn't imagine a more perfect way to spend a sultry, autumn, Sunday eve. Now, if you'll excuse me, my guitar beckons.