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Blowing in the wind

> concert

LADY DOO-BOP SASKIA LAROO BAND

Esplanade Theatre Studio/Last Saturday

Audrey Perera

THIS was one cracking concert from the first note. Saskia Laroo and her international band hit the stage running, offering a dizzying repertoire of jazz, rap, hip-hop, salsa, drum-and-bass and soul.

Tight arrangements, seamless flows from one genre to another and an energy as mellow as it was driving worked like a charm on the audience, some of whom were fairly bouncing off the walls of the Esplanade Theatre Studio from the musical high.

One of the few women trumpet stylists in the world, Laroo from the Netherlands has created her own edgy combination of jazz with rap and hip-hop, sometimes called doo-bop, and it's guaranteed to get people on the floor.

Her band was truly fine. Most noteworthy were keyboardist Warren Byrd and Zoran Jager on guitar. Her two rap vocalists, MC Firestorm and MC Stewlocks, wove rapid-fire rap and beat-boxing into a jazz backdrop with ease and conviction.

Through it all ran the



PHOTO: ESPLANADE

TRUMP-CARD: Saskia Laroo with her edgy combination of jazz with rap and hip-hop gets people on the floor.

sounds of Laroo's trumpet, often muted. By turns sultry, tender and yearning, and angsty and full of attitude, it was the main voice in an amazing musical conversation.

Clad in clingy black and glitter, the musician who has been dubbed the Lady Miles Davis of Europe for her expert improvisation looked like a rocker chick with serious attitude.

Taking the stage for an impromptu moment were inspira-

tional founder of the Montreux Jazz Festival Claude Nobs, who plays a mean blue harmonica, and jazz guitar virtuoso Lee Ritenour, who had just finished performing at the Concert Hall.

This was one of the best parts of the Esplanade's Mosaic Music Festival. It was a setting where magic happens because everyone – the musicians on stage, the audience and the musicians among the audience – was united in a passion for great music.