

Getting into the act



Musician Iliana Rose works on a number during a performance at the Left Coast Wine Bar on Friday. (Roger Wilson/News-Press)



Audience participation is a big part of musician Iliana Rose's performances, with people using simple musical instruments she provides. (Roger Wilson/News-Press)

Latin jazz pianist and singer welcomes audience participation at her Left Coast Wine Bar performances.

By Alison Kjeldgaard

The quiet upstairs nook of Left Coast Wine Bar transforms into a vibrant space filled with the sounds of Cuban jazz on Friday nights. Singer and pianist Iliana Rose performs with her band while audience members sip wine and sample some of the dinner menu items. Others sing along with Rose or shake the percussive instruments on their table to Cuban classics like "Guantanamera."

Rose tries to make her performances an interactive experience, offering tambourines, shakers and bongos to the audience to give them an opportunity to contribute to the music.

"I like to connect with [the audience]," Rose said.

Rose was raised in Miami by her Cuban parents and grandparents. She brought the musical influence of her Cuban roots with her to Los Angeles after graduating from the University of Miami.

Today, Rose plays at a variety of venues in Los Angeles. However, she especially enjoys her performances at Left Coast.

"I love this place," Rose said. "The owners and manager are doing an unbelievable thing."

Glendale residents Emmie Yapez and Beatriz Perez have been regularly attending Rose's performances at Left Coast for the past six months. On Friday night, Yapez and Perez danced to renditions of songs by the Cuban band Buena Vista Social Club and traditional Cuban ballads.

Yapez comes from Cuban descent and appreciates the cultural addition to Glendale.

"[Rose] is wonderful," Yapez said. "She's an asset to the city. Because it's Cuban jazz, it breaks the routine of the environment here." Perez agreed.

Indeed, Left Coast did not seem to be hurting from lack of business Friday night. The platform was filled with people dancing, singing, and having a good time.

"That's the whole point of music," Rose said. "To have fun."

Some of the musical instruments pianist Iliana Rose has her audiences play during her performances. (Roger Wilson/News-Press)

