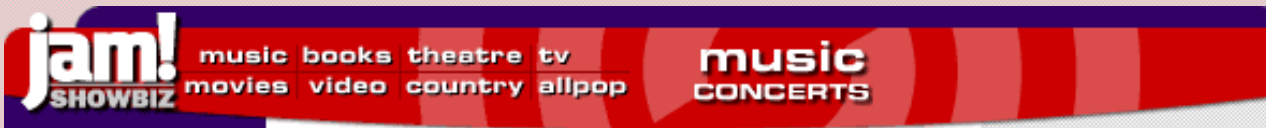




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Monday, May 26, 2003

# Glittering Nana comes to rescue

By [ANN MARIE McQUEEN](#) -- Ottawa Sun

**NANA MOUSKOURI**  
NAC's Southam Hall, Ottawa  
Sunday, May 25, 2003

■ OTTAWA - During an intermission in Nana Mouskouri's afternoon concert yesterday, a man leaving the NAC's Southam Hall wondered if maybe the crowd hadn't ended up getting a better deal.

After all, no one was more disappointed at Harry Belafonte's abrupt withdrawal from what had been billed as a legendary reunion tour than the Greek songstress herself.

But the show must go on, and as more than one person could be overheard noting, Roch Voisine and Irish tenor John McDermott were pretty solid substitutes.

The 2,300-seat theatre was about three-quarters full for the first of two shows yesterday. While some patrons returned their tickets after finding out Belafonte would be a no-show, others found the new lineup compelling enough.

Taking the stage wearing first a white, then a black glittering outfit, and her trademark glasses, the 66-year-old Mouskouri sang a selection of her best-loved songs, many of them in French or veering between French and English.

She talked about her love of jazz, which got her kicked out of a music conservatory, dashed her hopes of becoming an opera singer and spurred her to start performing in Greek nightclubs, before launching in to Les Feuilles Mortes.



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jam! SHOWBIZ

Earlier, she spoke of her girlhood fantasy of becoming a leading lady like Judy Garland or Lucille Ball -- before launching in to Wind Beneath My Wings -- and her work as a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF.

With 340 records, the key to Mouskouri's appeal has been her ability to sing in so many languages.

There were lots of medleys, beautiful, stirring renditions of Love Changes Everything, Fille du Soleil and the awesome Come and Sing, augmented by a band playing everything from the bouzouki to flute, clarinet and violin.

If Over the Rainbow and Turn on the Sun sounded a bit lazy, or Mouskouri's tendency of excessive vibrato started to grate around hour two, no one seemed to mind.

At nearly three hours with intermission, Mouskouri may have been trying to give everyone a little more bang for their buck. With three performers, any less might have felt rushed.

### STANDING OVATION


Still, the crowd may have felt the show was too long.

After giving Mouskouri, her band, Voisine and McDermott a standing ovation, the 50-plus-aged group failed to clap long enough to elicit the planned encore, a medley which included Ave Maria and Amazing Grace.

Mouskouri took the stage with McDermott for his standard Danny Boy, and Voisine for Waiting.

The show was nicely complemented by Voisine's mellow acoustic set, with hits like I'll Always Be There.

McDermott, who is working on an album of Frank Sinatra tunes, generated an appreciative hush with his gentle crooning. ■

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