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LIVE REVIEW: MANDA MOSHER AT THE MAUI SUGAR MILL SALOON IN TARZANA, CA
[ANDREA BEENHAM](#)

Material: In a room full of friends and longtime fans, multi-instrumentalist and Americana songstress Manda Mosher rocked the house at Tarzana’s Maui Sugar Mill Saloon. With an edgy blend of rock and traditional country, Mosher’s strong vocals and warm vibrato created a unique, yet somehow familiar sound. Her opening number, “Lay Me Down,” felt reminiscent of Sheryl Crow and Alannah Myles, and new tracks—“Fast As I Can” (featuring Dan Wistrom on pedal steel guitar) and “Back On Track”—both

gave a definitive nod to Tom Petty and brought a relaxed atmosphere to the evening, quite a feat in a small, loud venue.

Musicianship: From the moment Mosher and her band stepped onstage, it was clear that this group of polished, seasoned musicians enjoy playing together. From the Supertramp-inflected “Roll Away The Stone,” to a cover of Bruce Springsteen’s “State Trooper,” which had hints of The Doors and Led Zeppelin, Mosher displayed a gentle confidence in her powerful and sometimes haunting sound.

Performance: Mosher’s stellar band projected an organic onstage chemistry and created a friendly unity among the crowd throughout the show. The entire show felt like an open, natural, unforced chat between friends, and each of the musicians had a lot to add to the conversation. Even the banter between songs felt relaxed, and Mosher’s refreshing approach to her performance offered an invitation rather than an announcement.

Summary: As a somewhat rare combination of female Americana sass vocals married to a tight-knit traditional rock band, Manda Mosher and her comrades represent all that is good in today’s music. While the majority of her selections are originals, Mosher makes her influences very clear. If nostalgia had a soundtrack, this would be it.

Contact: kwalsh@sopr.com

Web: mandamosher.com/home

Players: Manda Mosher, lead vocals, guitar, harmonica; Eric Craig, guitar, vocals; Dan Wistrom, pedal steel, guitar, vocals; Aron Stern, bass; Jesper Nørskov Kristensen, drums; Special Guest: Mark Christian, guitar