

PHENOMENAL NATALIE TORO BRINGS *BROKEN ROAD* TO THE MAGIC CASTLE'S INNER CIRCLE



by Don Grigware

Brave, gutsy, passionate to volcanic proportions, singer/actress extraordinaire **Natalie Toro** brought her new cabaret show *The Broken Road* to the Inner Circle of the Magic Castle on Monday July 12 for one night only. She captured the focus of the wall-to-wall audience with her opening number "Life of the Party" from **Andrew Lippa's** "The Wild Party" and never lost control. Fiercely funny and fearless in her entire approach, Toro covered her career on the road - cruel and lonely - with an infectious sense of humor. Any actress who can share her negative reviews - actually read them aloud - has my respect and adoration. That takes courage with a capital C and Toro has it in spades.

The almost 2-hour show went by in a flash with 18 songs and much banter in between tunes about the people she met in various locales while performing *Evita*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *West Side Story* & *Cats*, among others. Favorite anecdotes include her crush on **Donny Osmond**, who was performing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* simultaneously to one of her tours, working with the incredible **Carl Anderson** in *JC Superstar*, who taught her how to really accept compliments, playing Mary to **Sebastian Bach's** Jesus, doing *Evita* with Raul Esparza, overhearing a husband arguing with and lying to his wife on the telephone in an adjoining hotel room and a freakish date in Japan which nearly turned disastrous.

Song highlights include: "Everybody Says Don't", "On My Own" (en espanol - que bonita!), a hilarious interp of Googie Gomez (Toro's original take on the Puerto Rican character from *The Ritz*) singing "What Ever Happened to My Part" and one super hilarious duet with **David Baida** (Piragua Guy from *In the Heights*) playing **Meat Loaf** in a mockup audition Toro had for his tour with "Paradise By the Dashboard Light". Toro knows how to pull out all the stops vocally and at the same time can beautifully interpret such ballads as "Unusual Way" from *Nine*, "If I Could", dedicated to all parents, "Anyone Who Had a Heart" , "Here's That Rainy Day", "Gypsy in My Soul" and Streisand's "This Is One of Those Moments" from *Yentl*. Toro possesses a magnificent vocal range.

The lady was backed up by great musicians **Justin Mendoza** on piano (musical director), Josh Weinstein (guitar), Lynn A. Keller (bass) and Loraine Faina (drums) who brought down the house more than once. Aside from Baida as **Meat Loaf**, there was also a special appearance from Yvette Gonzalez Nacer on violin.

Produced by Dawn Makay *The Broken Road* is a wild, crazy, totally engaging evening of cabaret from one of the greatest contemporary artists of our time Miss **Natalie Toro**. Like a Latina **Patti LuPone**, Toro has an act that ranks right up there with *the best of the best* and I will drop what I'm doing in a split second to catch it once more, wherever it plays. In the meantime, don't miss her at the Pantages in *In the Heights* until July 25 before *the road continues!*

To purchase her new CD **Natalie Toro**, visit:

www.natalietoro.com