

Irish blues at the Gibson Showroom private concert Sarah Packiam light's up the crowd

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The new star of the night was Sarah Packiam, who is relatively new to California audiences but no stranger to top level rock stages, having played with Smashmouth and Jason Mraz at the Sunfest Festival, and with Carole King, Gloria Estefan, Queen Latifah, Ricky Martin Estefan's Charity event "The Power of Love Gala" in Las Vegas. She gave us four songs, two from her albums and two singles. Heads looked up from cell phones and conversations quieted when she stepped up to the microphone and without introduction began the rhythm strum of "Miss You", her urgent, breathy voice commanding attention. When she shifted to the mournful "Sparks in the Current" from her latest album *Again*, the room was focused on her.



And that focus stayed as she upped the ante and the insistence in "I Love You First" from her *Unplugged* album, and then blew us all away with the heart-stopping single "You Are Not Alone". Her voice, simultaneously husky and beautiful, soared to piercing highs and dropped down to pull the guts out of our hearts.