

POP MUSIC REVIEW

A little oo-la-la at the Bowl

Lively commentary and sparkling performances ignite a program of French and French-inspired pieces.

By **DON HECKMAN**
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"A Night at the Moulin Rouge" was the final event of the summer's fireworks shows, and the performance offered plenty of musical pyrotechnics of its own before the climactic explosion of flaming lights and sound.

The opening half of the evening featured the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, conducted by John Mauceri, in a program of French and French-inspired works — including Frederick Loewe's score for "Gigi," George Gershwin's "An American in

Paris," and orchestrated renderings of Debussy's "Clair de Lune" and Miklós Rózsa's waltz from the film "Madame Bovary." Appropriately atmospheric music, all of it, performed with stylish grace, although one might have hoped for at least a smidgen of Ravel, perhaps instead of the less-than-intriguing Rózsa piece.

But there was no faulting Mauceri's between-numbers commentary, which offered a witty (even sardonic at times) roll call of the long history of U.S.-French relations.

The real highlights of the evening, however, were provided by a pair of uniquely French entries.

First, there was the marvelously eclectic Paris Combo, romping through jazz-tinged selections energized by the quirky vocals of Belle du Berry and the Gypsy rhythms of the Django Reinhardt-influenced guitarist

Potzi.

Performing numbers mostly from its entertaining second album, "Living Room," the combo moved easily across North African sounds, Eastern European rhythms and improvisatory jazz, imbuing them with the nightlife textures of Parisian cabaret.

Adding contrast to the group's eclectic interpretations, pianist David Lewis occasionally picked up a trumpet to invest the music with Miles Davis soul, and bassist Mano Ranzanajato added brisk scat singing to his solid rhythmic interaction with drummer Francois-Francois.

Then, just before the fireworks, there was the colorful, athletic presentation of the Dancers From the Moulin Rouge, high-kicking, leaping and spinning, entertainingly displaying exactly what it was about the cancan that so excited Toulouse-Lautrec.