

OPENING ACT



Bringin' New Orleans to New York

Ana Popovic

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Hill Country BBQ
New York, NY

Hill Country BBQ serves Texas-style cooking on wax paper and cafeteria trays and hosts concerts in a basement filled with overlong picnic tables. At the far end of the basement sits a low stage on which Ana Popovic and her band spent the better part of two hours entertaining a small audience. While the venue may be better suited to a bar band, Popovic played like a headliner.

The show opened with an extensive edition of "Slideshow," which is essentially five minutes of hooky slide guitar. The rest of the show followed a similar pattern. Live, Popovic is more about music than vocals, and several of her songs

went on for over ten minutes as each band member took a solo.

In general, Popovic prefers large venues over small ones, and particularly enjoys festivals. Recently, she played with Buddy Guy and B.B. King at the Russian River Blues Festival in California. At one point, she even got up and jammed with Buddy Guy.

Her most recent album, *Unconditional*, is an exploration of traditional roots and blues. Songs like "Count Me In" and "Work Song" hit all the marks of classic blues, but mix in some modern stylings. In an interview with *Elmore*, Popovic mentioned the difficulty in getting the feel of classic blues and said that some songs took her months to write.

Unconditional was recorded in New Orleans during the opening months of 2011. It was Popovic's first time in the city, but in our interview she spoke of its influence on

her album: "I think New Orleans as a city influenced the record much more than just musically, and I was really in awe as I experienced the city and its people."

The most obvious result of this influence on *Unconditional* is a cover of Koko Taylor's "Voodoo Woman." With a bouncy bass line and funky slide guitar, the song feels like something out of the Louisiana bayou. Otherwise, the album is back-to-basics blues, exactly what Popovic was going for.

Near the end of her set, Popovic covered Jimi Hendrix's "House Burning Down." In many ways, it was the perfect encapsulation of her new album and tour. Hendrix's song already features a heavy blues influence and, as performed by Popovic, this aspect only becomes more pronounced. Her band played it fast and loud, bringing the blues back to New York.

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