

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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Dave Hepler Duo ? Review

Written by David on March, 23 2010

Jazz duo shine in virtuoso performance

Every now and again strange things happen to reinvigorate one's soul, refresh your spirit or generally rekindle the joy of life. Just such a strange anomaly occurred Sunday afternoon at the Strand Theatre via the inspired music of keyboardist Dave Hepler and bassist Frank Smith.

In an afternoon show which highlighted many of the countless facets of jazz, including choreographed, syncopated improvisation, dexterous finger work and passionate play, this duo of two talented dudes with instruments took audience members on an emotional ride into the tones, textures and tempos of pure music and musicianship.

It was an enjoyable, educational and enlightening romp through both the dance of music and emotions conjured up and tugged from the brain and body by mere sound alone.

From funkified, smoky sounds of the opening tune through several variations on themes, some moody introspective pieces and one or two sheer maestro performances by Smith on bass, this was a concert that left you wanting more: more sounds, more moods and more music written, composed and passionately played by Hepler.

Hepler's emotional and melodic interpretations, especially "Beauty and the Beast" and more poignantly "Imagine," by John Lennon were merely tasty appetizers for a show filled with sonorous peaks and valleys of impassioned riffs of syncopated bliss.

One such pinnacle of musical fortissimo occurred early on in Hepler's original tune "Major Hollin's Rumpus" as his keyboard work drove and inspired Smith into a rather extended, frenetic romp of skill, precision and furious play on stand-up bass that seemed to catch fire, burn and smoke under his deft fingers.

Another furious musical gallop, driven by these two talented dudes, occurred later on with "St. Louis Boogie," which evoked the wide-ranging varieties of jazz, especially its finger-snapping, toe-tapping and swinging-dance energy.

Further exploring the expansive limits of jazz style, Hepler and Smith shined on a different type of tune that significantly showcased the ability of mere instruments to induce emotion through sound alone. Musically, this original composition by Hepler, based upon classical guitar styles, passionately fulfilled the promise of its title: "Beautiful Sad Song."

In each and every song performed this duo created and constructed an all-encompassing tonal masterpiece of a concert to spotlight a fusion of styles, tempos and musical genres all filtered through the rhetoric of jazz. In short, it was concert that smoothly swung between polarities: sometimes into moody reflective rivers of music and at other times a raucous romp, or rather a rumpus, through the vistas of rhapsody, rhythm and syncopation.

As mentioned above it was music which reached deep into your soul and made one forget everything but the emotions evoked through sound, an amazing thing for even two dudes as committed, passionate and talented as Hepler and Smith.

Images on this post:



SUBMITTED BY: TERRANCE ALDRIDGE

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