



UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

T.S. Monk: “Monk on Monk”

Review by Claire Rudder

The “T.S. Monk: Monk on Monk” show was definitely something wonderfully unique and interesting; unlike any concert I have ever attended. As a true novice in the jazz music world, I had no idea what to expect.

From the opening remarks by T.S. Monk, son of the jazz great Thelonious Monk, I could already sense the energy and spirit that never relented throughout the entire performance. He spoke about the creativity and genius of his father, and how he was often underappreciated by his contemporaries at the time when his compositions were written. The audience responded with cheers of agreement, creating a sort of electric feeling throughout the hall that remained for the rest of the night.

The musicians performed in one of two arrangements- the sextet, with six musicians, and the more unique “tentet”, Thelonious’s favorite arrangement. Each of these two different groupings created its own unique sounds. The sextet provided a more fluid and collected sound more like the traditional jazz that I was more accustomed to. The pieces were played together for the most part, with only one or two unique solos breaking up the rhythm. However, when the band switched over to the tentet, they were able to create a new sort of sound that both counteracted each other, and pieced all the individual parts into a more complicated whole. There were many more solos in these pieces, and the element of unison, and collective fluidity of the pieces were gone. However, the pieces did not just sound like ten musicians independently playing on one stage, but instead created a sort of organized chaos of music unlike anything I have ever seen. Despite all of the different parts, the comprehensive whole that made its way from the audience was still electric, and the listeners loved every second of it.

Personally, what I found most striking were the solos that took place in each of the songs in some form or another. Each one sounded so well incorporated into the piece that it had to have been written explicitly to sound the way it did. So, when I found out after the show that a good amount of the solos are either completely or partially improvised, I was extremely surprised. Each of the musicians at some point throughout the performance had one of the solos, and each was as amazing as the last.

Despite the fact that I entered the show knowing nothing about jazz or what to expect, I still was able to enjoy it. The music was phenomenal, and the energy throughout the hall for the entire concert was amazing. Each of the musicians is extremely talented and loves what they do, and it was easy to see that in their performance. The “Monk on Monk” show was truly a once in a lifetime experience, and I enjoyed it very much.