



UAPRESENTS STUDENT CRITIC PROGRAM

T.S. Monk: “Monk on Monk”

Review by Holly Offenberger

The low sultry boom of the string bass, the smooth sounds of the saxophone, the constant melody of the piano, and the different compositions of the drum. These are the sounds of jazz music and the sounds that make you feel as if you are back in a club in the 1950's where jazz was the sound and Thelonious Monk was the king. This is impossible sitting in Centennial Hall in 2011, right? Not anymore. The show T.S Monk: Monk on Monk brings back all the old sounds straight from his home as Thelonious Monk's flesh and blood plays his songs with just as much heart as his father used to. This performance showcased many of Monk's classic jazz hits, using the sextet and tentet to display all the different elements of the music. There were three different saxophones, two trumpets, a piano, a drum set, a tuba, flute at times, and a string bass. All of these instruments were used throughout the performance, creating a beautiful, yet diverse, sound that electrified the audience.

The approximately two hour show, filled with memories and music, flies by and leaves the audience literally begging for more. T.S Monk engages the audience in between songs with humorous anecdotes about, not only his father's life, but his own. These engaging breaks between the beautiful melodies allow the audience to feel more connected than ever to the Monk family. One anecdote that really sticks in the audience member's minds is the story about his father writing songs for people he loved, which is why he had so many songs about himself. This humorous quip led to one of the most beautiful compositions of the night, in my opinion. The tentet of “Monk's Mood” was a slow yet engagingly beautiful piece. The reflective piece incorporates every instrument together and then separately as solos. The background lighting matched the tempo and mood of each song and was just a solid color, as to not distract from the musicians onstage. There were also spotlights moving around to further demonstrate to the audience which instrument was being played specifically and who was playing a solo.

The main reason this show was so successful was the atmosphere. While the audience is sitting in the magnificent Centennial Hall it feels as if T.S Monk is sharing his family tales with a small group of friends. He shares the memories with a large smile on his face and with such happiness the audience can't help but feel the contagious glow in the room. His stories are so personal and friendly the audience leaves feeling as if they personally knew Thelonious Monk. Then the jazz compositions are played and even someone who has never listened to jazz in their life can see the true brilliance in

the work and the true passion these musicians have for jazz music. To put it simply, these musicians and compositions just work well together. Everyone starts to feel the rhythm in their bodies, whether they are a dedicated jazz listener or new-comer to the movement.