

Music

Dizzy sizzles, Moe fizzles

Moe Koffman/Dizzy Gillespie
Jubilee Auditorium

review by Mike Spindloe

Dizzy Gillespie and Moe Koffman served up a strange mixture of real fireworks and lounge lizard style jazz at the Jubilee last Friday night before an almost full house of what appeared to be symphony devotees. The evening alternately sizzled and fizzled over the two-hour-plus show, although the crowd's polite reaction hardly varied.

Moe Koffman led off with a set with his quintet which mainly stuck to material from his last two albums, a fact that we were painfully reminded of at every opportunity, culminating in a plug at the end of the set for us to go out and buy 'em in the lobby. While Koffman and his band played a varied and well-paced set, the whole thing was marred by his awkward attempts at between-song patter and direct marketing.

The highlight of Moe's set was the aptly titled "Moe-mentum", featuring the smooth guitar work of Ed Bickert (who, as usual, remained sitting cross-legged on his stool all evening). Bernie Senensky on keyboards and fiery alto work from Koffman. The requisite reading of "Swinging Shepherd Blues" was included, with Koffman's comment that "half the audience will think, 'oh

no, is he still doing that turkey and the other half will want their money back if we don't play it."

The second half of the night belonged to Dizzy Gillespie. In marked contrast to Koffman, Gillespie disarmed the audience with a few shakes of his ancient hips and seemed genuinely moved by the applause that greeted his entrance and first number. His well-known cheeks still expand as wide as ever, making his face look twice its normal size while he plays, and he carried his trademark horn with the bell angled upwards.

Gillespie's playing may not be quite as incendiary as it once was, but he still has plenty to offer the concert stage and the intensity of his playing makes up for any lack of volume. He ran through a relatively short set of his own numbers and a cover of Don Ridman's "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You." Then Moe Koffman joined him onstage for what turned out to be the high point of the entire evening, a spirited rendition of "A Night In Tunisia."

The performance ended on a high note with an appearance by local bluesman Big Miller, who joined in for a final number. He also provided an interesting visual spectacle, being about three times Dizzy's size sporting a grey afro which was practically a twin to Dizzy's. Then the crowd went home happy, and the legend remained intact.



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