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James Sudakow

The Mint
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The Players: James Sudakow, electric violin; Andy Zacharias, bass; David Gaziel, drums.

Material: James Sudakow's songs have no words. They don't need them. His electric violin provides all the voice and passion needed to convey his art. The material has a classical structure, fugue-like with repeating counterpoints, causing his compositions to sound like rock symphonies. Because of this approach, his tunes tend to be lengthy. But, most work fine, while others could use a bit of editing. Nonetheless, even when one of his songs seems to go on too long, Sudakow's playing sustains interest.

Musicianship: These three players have their work cut out for them. The multiple movements within each piece keep everyone on their toes. Zacharias holds down the fort with incredible bass lines. Gaziel is a human metronome with precise timing and subtle finesse. As good as those players are, however, Sudakow is the star. He plays with the intensity of a madman, using distortion like a lead guitarist. With his Marshall amp and red-hot riffs, this artist appears ready to take on rock arenas.

Performance: The music was undeniably exciting. The performance, however, left a lot to be desired. An image consultant would do wonders for this group. For such dramatic music, this trio's look was disheveled and haphazard. Additionally, there was hardly any connection with the audience. Simply put, their stage presence needed work. Playing, even as well as they did, was unfortunately not enough to overcome these shortcomings.

Summary: James Sudakow is a unique and electrifying artist. His material is so affecting it's spellbinding. But, his live show takes a measure of excitement from the music, starting with appearance and ending with performance. To truly present his extraordinary talent in the light it should have, Sudakow and his band mates have to work on their stage skills. If they can get it together, this artist has the potential to blow away just about any audience in the world.

Bernard Baur



Photo By: Bernard Baur

James Sudakow: Electrifying and un-ique violin instrumentalist.