

JOSHUA REDMAN QUARTET PLAYS NEW MUSIC FROM 13TH ALBUM AT THE BPC (SHOW REVIEW)

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“Boston: it’s the only place left in the United States that I can get a gig,” quipped a grinning Joshua Redman, speaking before a nearly sold-out crowd at the Berklee Performance Center. “You know, things aren’t what they used to be...”

You certainly wouldn’t know it from the way Joshua Redman and his accomplices played last Friday night, as they tore their way through a short-but-sweet set of tunes from Redman’s new record, *Walking Shadows*. Redman describes his thirteenth release as a bandleader as “a collection of ballads and ballad-like music.” It is certainly his most sublime and delicate work to date. On the recording, Redman collaborated with longtime friend Brad Mehldau, as well as Dan Coleman, who conducted the lush string orchestra that gives the record its vivacity. *Walking Shadows* is sweeping and cinematic: Redman’s saxophone deftly swoops and darts between each swell of strings and beat of drums. An elegant outing that never bores, this album is the work of a mature Redman—more sensitive and refined, but not shying away from adventure.

On tour, the Joshua Redman Quartet is comprised of Redman on tenor saxophone, Aaron Goldberg on piano, Berklee alum Reuben Rogers on bass, and Gregory Hutchinson on drumset. The night began low and smoldering with “Final Hour.” Redman’s saxophone rose and fell, dancing in Goldberg’s ominous fog of piano, soaring higher with each run only to fade back into the mist. The piano, relentless, arpeggiated the audience toward some looming precipice, and just as the alluded void appeared, yawning and dark, the entire quartet surged forward, Hutchinson and Rogers spiriting you away to an exuberant rendition of “Leap of Faith,” a tune written specifically for the group.

It was kind of like that all night: not necessarily dramatic, but performed with the essence of storytellers. The push and pull of the bass and the urgency of the piano wove a backdrop for Redman’s saxophone to sing over while Hutchinson’s drumming danced and bobbed atop the beat. The whole group pulsed with intention and momentum. As an audience member, it was quite a ride: once the band began, I was caught up in the rise and fall of their narrative. The music was mysterious and impending, at once immediate and tangible but with implications of something massive swirling in the air above. Some of the highlights of the night were the insistent “E.G.A.F.” and an encore-ready gospel cover of The Beatles’ “Let It Be,” perfectly capping off the night with unpretentiously familiar soul.

Things are certainly not be what they used to be, but if Mr. Redman and his contemporaries are any indication of where we are going, maybe that isn’t such a bad thing after all.

Source: <http://www.berkleegroove.com/2013/12/02/joshua-redman-quartet-plays-new-music-13th-album-bpc-show-review/>