

September 3, 2008

Hi guys. The Stomps are pretty cool. Perri sez check 'em out.  
Talk soon, keep cool. P-

Stomp  
Lycabettus Theater, September 2, 2008  
Perri Pagonis  
[perripagonis@yahoo.com](mailto:perripagonis@yahoo.com)

The travelling Stomp show bashed its way into Athens this week for a five night, over-the-top percussion-fest at Lycabettus Theater. The eight-member troupe of performers use a wide variety of mostly mass-produced metallic and plastic objects to create rhythmic dance pieces which are simultaneously ear-catching and monstrously impressive to watch in their musical ingenuity. If it is true that a successful piece of visual art is one that keeps your eye moving and a successful piece of music keeps your ears moving, then the Stomps have hit a homerun of a performance piece. On stage, their kintetic movements range from frenetic sprinting to Zen heartbeat stillness and solitude. Musically, their percussive rhythms and equally engaging counter-rhythms are completely infectious, wild in their time-signature variations, and fun as a day at the Post-modern rodeo to listen to.

The two protagonists have a Laurel and Hardy-esque, straight-guy and foil, comedy schtick that introduce each piece of work. Every segment features the use of a specific, yet assymetrical, percussion object. Their set begins with the troupe doing a tap dance routine with kitchen brooms as their chosen instrument. They deftly and skilluffly use their feet for lower-register beats and stability, like a kick-drum used in a standard drum set. The brooms swish and tap against the stage hardboards and provide the high-end counterpoints.

The show then progresses to include the use of aluminum dust pans, folding chairs, car radiator hoses, PVC tubing, stainless-steel kitchen sinks, newspapers, Zippo lighters, water cooler replacement bottles and Galvanized trashcan lids in the proferred pieces. The evening's centerpiece attraction features the performers swinging, trapeze artist like, from high stage-scaffolding while pounding-out a toe-tapping shuffle from mounted objects such as stray automobile hubcaps, synthetic polymer washbins, and discarded highway signs.

Featurette pieces are also a blast to watch and hear. The short ambient piece where all the troupe use only short snips of air-vent accordian tubing for instruments is as Krishna-groove out-there and temporal-lobe tweaking as anything that David Bryne or Brian Eno ever threw to the masses to consume. Samurai fighting-stick skits with bamboo poles and trash can tops are choreographed to the nanosecond tick and jaw dropping to watch in their complexities.

And, like attending a good rock show, audience participation is eagerly encouraged by the performers. The crowd is active on several pieces, and brought into the presented works with clapping, snapping fingers and stamping of feet with the stage group. It's all done with great esprit-de-corps, and never feels obligatory or imposed on the attendees.

The finale features a smash-em'-up crescendo of all the evening's instruments used in a magnum opus piece of urban jungle street rhythm. Several performers march like mega-sized, Transformer-car robots on 55-gallon industrial waste drums. Dancers literally fly through the air like darts: kicking, clanging and banging their assymetrical instruments with joyous fury, never missing a beat, and looking cool for the audience to boot.

The Stomp show runs about 90 minutes. It is great for any age and holds your attention like an electro-magnet. Try not to be late as once the festivities begin, your eyes are riveted to the stage and time passes by without you being conscious of it.