

Batucada Sound Machine @ Beck's Music Box, Perth International Arts Festival (15/02/09)

Gig Reviews by raciroo, 17th February, 2009



When a band causes the audience to stamp their feet for an encore...after they just played the encore, it's pretty obvious their performance was shit-hot. **Batucada Sound Machine** haven't even released an album in Australia but managed to fill the seats in the Beck's Music Box of the Perth International Arts Festival before they started to play, then managed to seduce everyone to fill the dance-floor (leaving the perfect amount of individual dance space to swing your hips dangerously wide).

From start to finish the band were there to entertain. But first, a note on all the players, all exceptional in their own right:

James Hughes is the confident band leader who also contributed percussion (repinique, drums and whistle) and some vocals. If band leader means he's responsible for keeping the group tight and together then he did a damn fine job.

Janie Sheridan was on percussion up the back bringing the Surdo (big drum) and other bits and pieces alive. The token lady onstage she had a smile on her face the entire time and kept the beat going with her booming bass

Darryn Sigley is also a percussionist focusing more on the bongos and other drums. He brought charisma and banged his instruments with much vigour.

Rota Barrington was on the drum kit and did many an impressive solo. Not a drum solo where he just went off in his own rhythm and purely showed off; it was always in keeping with the song at hand and allowed the audience to continue to dance throughout.

Vuk Tomic was a talented keyboardist using effects to give different sounds for the many different genres the band covered. He was often responsible for starting or keeping the cha cha or samba rhythms throughout letting other members veer off without losing the base style.

MC Hazudaz won the best dancer on stage prize with his hip shaking, shimmying latino dance moves inspiring everyone watching to mimic his elasticity. Bringing the hip hop twinge to the group with his rapping, he also did some singing to show his husky soulful tones. There were many times that he

successfully amped up the crowd by hollering call and response cheers and instigating mass choreographed dance breaks.

Richard Setford was the guitarist and another vocalist. His guitar effects added another level to the band's sound and his gravelly vocal was of a roots-bluesy ilk.

Henrique Morales, a new addition to the band fresh from Brazil, was obviously delighted to be in Perth. The singer/guitarist was taking pictures of the crowd, exclaiming how beautiful we were and stating that he'd take us with him in the pictures in his heart. Morales had a beautiful singing voice with a pure tone and just enough vibrato to add some depth of tone.

Alex Ulrich on bass was having a hell of a time and was a vital addition with his funk bass a focal point of many songs. He tried his darnedest to match MC Hazudaz' dancing expertise but in the dance break we could see that dance-wise he might be representing the uncoordinated section of the band, but it sure wasn't stopping him from having fun and it only encouraged those in the audience a bit shy to show their lack of dance skill and the rest of us have a giggle.

Now for **The Traxedos**, the brass section with 2 sets of matching swish tracksuits (in fact having a costume change mid-way) and coordinated dance moves. **Wairere Iiti** on saxophone was having an awesome time and seemed the leader of their dance breaks. **Andrew McDowall** on trumpet was acting like he was the star of the show, by showing off throughout the set his flutter tonguing and higher than high notes. No wonder the trombonist looked familiar, as **Tilman Robinson** from Perth was filling in on this day. Apparently the go-to -trombonist in Perth he looked a bit lost in some of their dance moves but musically was on the ball doing many a solo with other members turning and looking suitably impressed.

Phew. All of them brought a positive energy and were pumped up ready for a party. From start to finish the energy onstage and off was as high as could be. Hughes began their set as a lone drummer before each member was added in. The crowd surged forward and should have known to stretch before Batucada Sound Machine started because they were in for the most fun workout of their lives. And the sound? Batucada is a genre in itself – like a “percussive samba jam”. Covering many of the Latin American genres, including cha cha, samba, bossa nova, they moved from Brazil to Africa with a Cumbia, *Cumbia del Cambio*. Add in funk, dub, reggae, hip hop. It was amazing to see how well they could fuse so many different sounds both within and between songs.

The crowd appreciated it and the band appreciated our enthusiasm, apparently we were the only place in Australia that asked them for an encore (something very hard to believe). Absolutely everyone was involved. When they asked us to jump, we jumped; when they asked us to cheer we cheered (and then some).