



feedback

JOSE GONZALEZ

Beck's Music Box, Perth

14/02/09

On a pleasantly balmy Saturday night, the conditions were sterling for the opening of 2009's Beck's Music Box as part of Perth Festival. Armed with only an acoustic guitar – and with the city as a splendid backdrop – Sweden's José González literally took his seat at 8:40. Appearing as confidently relaxed as if he were sitting on the edge of his bed in his hometown of Göteborg, the lanky Argentinean-Swedish musician immediately induced goose bumps with opener *Deadweight On Velvet*.

Succeeding an unforgettable rendition of *Hints* – no extra trimmings necessary here – his 'band' joined him for a wide range of numbers. Vocalist, girlfriend and multi-instrumentalist Yukimi Nagano added stunning, yet reserved embellishments, as did percussionist Eric Bodin. At times a moderately strange Valentine's Day performance (simply type the lyrics to songs such as *Time To Send Someone Away* and *Lovestain* into Google), González and company evoked emotions galore. *Down The Line* was extraordinary, with seamless backing vocals and serene percussion, as was *Cycling Trivialities*. *Crosses* had the crowd so fixedly spellbound that the sound of a feather falling from the birds overhead could have been heard, and *Broken Arrows* would have had Nick Drake singing his praises in more ways than one. While the debate

about the song of the night could be ever-ranging, his cover of Massive Attack's *Teardrop* would have to be up there. Daring and emotional, a lump remained in this reviewer's throat throughout.

Walking offstage, feet started pounding and screams wailed from all directions. Coaxed back, González, Nagano and Bodin played *Heartbeats* like all had envisioned, only to soon segue into closer *Hand On Your Heart*. Remaining transfixed, eyes still glued to the stage and hoping for a miraculous second encore, the time had finally – and unfortunately – come to necessarily input this one into the memory bank.

TED SCHLECHTE

