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The Anderson Twins Play the Fabulous Dorseys!

nytheatre.com review by Amber Gallery
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The Dorsey Brothers were and still are as famous for their (very different) talents as musicians and bandleaders as they were for their volatile relationship. Who better to capture this dynamic in a tribute to them than two young brothers, who are masters on multiple instruments well beyond their years?

The Andersons Twins, positively adorable and extraordinarily talented, (I am now officially a fan) lead a sextet of fantastic musicians in this two parts cabaret, one part history lesson dedicated to the Dorsey brothers. Weaved in and out of the exceptionally executed song list (everything from *I've Got Rhythm* to *Dusk in Upper Sandusky*) are clips from the 1947 biographical pic, *The Fabulous Dorsey Brothers* (starring the Dorseys themselves). Both the Andersons switch, sometimes at an impressive speed, between clarinet, several kinds of saxophones and flute.

Theater C has been beautifully transformed into an intimate cabaret space with table seating, candlelight and that obligatory red curtain backdrop that makes the saxes shinier and the suits sharper. Combined with the talented musicians (including Jon-Erik Kellso on Trumpet, Ehud Asherie on Piano, Kevin Dorn on Drums and Clovis Nicolas on Bass) and our brother bandleaders we're back in the 1930's.

My only issue with this otherwise enjoyable evening of music is the mostly failed attempt to pass it off as a piece of theater instead of simply allowing it to be an exceptional cabaret tribute piece. The Andersons chose to write in a fictional conflict between them to illustrate the types of fights that often occurred with the Dorseys, as opposed to letting the movie clips of their frequent fistfights and arguments speak for themselves.

Musical geniuses that they are, neither of the Andersons are actors, and their verbal/scripted interactions wound up feeling stilted and awkward. I am sure these bits served a few purposes – like creating a reason for the otherwise unnecessary intermission. There were also issues with some of the technical elements of the show. To make this a piece of theater was at best an interesting idea that was not fully realized. To fully realize it, a proper director would have been a helpful addition to the team to tie all these elements together.

This evening would have been completely enjoyable, and in many ways better, without these interjections of conversation and argument as they were. I was actually very drawn in by the Andersons' non-verbal communications and "twin chemistry" during the songs than I was with any scripted bit that came after. The musicians' dynamic in the context of the awesome magic they make together speaks for itself.

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