



"What Happened in Boston, Willie"

Reviews of Current Productions

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"COMING UP FOR AIR: AN AUTOJAZZOGRAPHY"

conceived and performed by Stan Strickland
written and directed by Jon Lipsky

Saxophonist Stan Strickland, a mainstay of Boston's jazz scene for more than 30 years, has brought his acclaimed one-man show COMING UP FOR AIR: AN AUTOJAZZOGRAPHY to the Boston Center for the Arts and said acclaim is justified within seconds --- Mr. Strickland, a handsome, playful presence with a Slinky for a skeleton and a jazz ensemble for vocal chords, spins his personal odyssey beginning in childhood and concluding with a life- and music-changing experience when he nearly drowned while body surfing in Hawaii (his two thoughts at the time: "Look for the light" and "What a shame not to have had a hit CD"; his first CD, entitled "Love & Beauty", has since been released). Jon Lipsky has captured Mr. Strickland's thoughts in a hypnotic tone-poem that allows Mr. Strickland to become Jazz incarnate with or without his various instruments, backed by Justin Grant's layered sound design --- eighty minutes later, performer and audience are old friends.

One the evening I attended (and it was a packed one), two women plopped down beside me moments before Mr. Strickland began and soon realized that they were not at MONSTERS: THE MUSICAL, still playing next door; unable to make a discrete escape without becoming part of the performance, they settled back, muttering, but were soon toe tapping, applauding and singing along with everyone else --- hopefully, they went home afterwards and recommended COMING UP FOR AIR to others as I recommend it to you, now (theatergoing should be such an adventure!). And how encouraging to see Mr. Strickland picking up where the recently departed PATIENCE OF NANTUCKET left off in terms of bringing good, satisfying black theatre to Boston audiences --- and, amazingly, in the same Black Box Theatre where BEE-LUTHER-HATCHEE was sadly ignored, three seasons ago.

"Coming Up for Air: An AutoJazzography" (27 September - 14 October)

ALLIGER ARTS

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