Friday

May202011

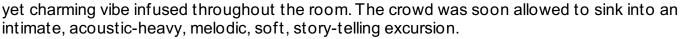
Musikanto

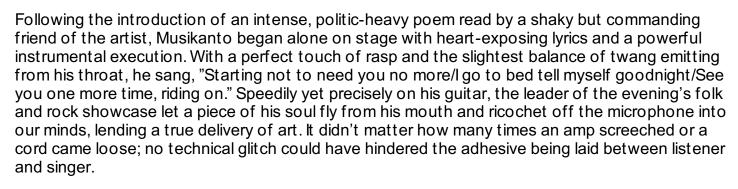
Where: Hideout When: May 7th, 2011

Grade: 5 out of 5 meatballs Reviewed by: Lindsey Shaw

Upon entering the Hideout (which is literally hidden and tucked away beyond the freeway, nestled behind industrial facades and offset by a trusty Home Depot), one might feel like they're in an affable V.F.W. hall or lakeside cabin, replete with plastic bass, carp, and the like hanging nearby. Inadvertently, this provides a prime space for irresistible musical acts, like Musikanto, to perform.

As the black and red checkered linoleum floor filled with various footwear, shades of plaid, and a range of ages, I teetered back and forth on the overused cushion of a spinning stool while we all anticipated a mesmerizing folk show ahead. Will Phalen, embodying and honoring "a man and his guitar" motif, did not disappoint upon commencement of the event. Once Phalen wrapped up his gripping set (complete with the cameo of a banjo), there was a solemn





"Try so hard not to say what I mean/Stay in between/So afraid I'm gonna be like this the rest of my life," he shared, with a hint of Johnny Cash in his delivery. He stood before us, emblazing his own piece of legend in a loose knitted cap, wool zip-up, and cowboy boots hidden by ankle-hugging jeans. At one point I noticed something very archaic and profound about his guitar playing, only to watch him change size and acoustic type, and then incorporate a harmonica fastened around his neck — juggling the varying tasks with ease. While Musikanto espoused the idea of a man's heart coming to life on stage in poem form, the show did not lack range, energy or brotherly love.

Joined by band members and best friends, the tattered Oriental rug-covered stage now featured an accordion and a properly represented kick drum. Musikanto removed his cap. With the tempo up



and electric guitar spots included, that soft "play this for your girlfriend to swoon" portion of the evening was rescinded a bit to usher in more ambient, muscle wrenching, high-energy beats. A chipper clip with the "Need to come undone/Shell shock body to find love" got knees bending and full bodies engaged for an all-inclusive heaviness interjected with a banjo, juxtaposed appropriately with an opposing spectrum of percussion. All the boys then sipped Miller High Life bullets coyly in unison, leaving impressions in musical time. After he featured yet another facet of talent on the piano and performed "Byzantine" complimented by heavy cymbal crashes, Musikanto led his mates on a trajectory back to something gentle and guiltless. Revamping again to a heightened exertion, with vocal chords stretching almost to a scream and drums shaking the air, a rowdy jam session ensued. Afterwords, the crowd chanted, "Take your shirt off!" He didn't. Instead, they played "Just A Shot Away," rounding out the set with pulse, strength, and intrigue — what the icon holds after playing in the vintage Chicago bar tucked away and hidden on Wabansia road.

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