

JAZZ

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reputation and history with music gave him a spotlight all his own that evening. His presence lingered over the rest of the show as he sat idly at the back of the Gallery.

BY PETER JOHNSON
GAMECOCK CRITIC

Composed of ex-members of the Lounge Lizards and Spanish Fly, the jazz quartet Sex Mob have received much acclaim for their style that transcends the boundaries of traditional jazz. By blending popular music with the art and essence of jazz, the Sex Mob have made quite a name for themselves. Who else would cover Nirvana's "About a Girl" and call themselves jazz musicians?

The Sex Mob had character, and it showed. Steven Bernstein, famous for conducting the motion picture soundtrack to *Kansas City*, claimed that he was a distant relative of Sen. Strom Thurmond. He called his fellow bandmates "bastard sons of the Confederacy." Bernstein conducted "bastards" as if they were their own separate and equal parts to the song. He would wave off one band member and point vehemently at another, flapping his hands in excitement, enticing them to go off on their own avenues of creativity. Sometimes he would even specify the note he wanted them to start with. This provided for some interesting duels between the artists.

Bernstein is the only trumpet player I have seen use a custom-made slide trumpet. He was an incredible musician, and you knew through his actions as a player and band leader that he had an ear for jazz.

Saxophone player Briggan Krauss, bassist Tony Scherr and drummer Kenny Wollensen provided near-perfect performances and some killer improvising. One of the evening's standouts was their rendition of the ABBA song "Fernando." It took a while for the crowd to realize what they were playing, but once the all-familiar chorus lurked about, the crowd cheered in approval. I didn't know whether to nod or shrug at the sound of the ABBA song. I mean, who admits that they like ABBA? Nevertheless, they made it into a beautiful jazz movement that anchored the rest of the show.

At the show's end, Bernstein told members of WUSC that this was his favorite stop of the tour. He said the mixed crowd seemed to truly appreciate what they were doing, and he liked that. It's refreshing for me (and apparently for Bernstein) to see devoted fans of good music. We knew we were getting a real treat when Sharp and Sex Mob darkened this city's doorstep.



Photos by ROBERT FLEMING



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