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The Life >

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Learning about The Teaching

By RACHEL DOVEY

Tuesday, January 6th, 2009 @ 9:03 AM



Seattle jazz trio The Teaching was like the mass you attend once a year with your grandma. You sit on the hard pew in your Sunday best, dusty bible in hand, feeling like an outsider. You see the congregation entering into something you don't understand, because you're not part of it.

But you want to be.

Two years ago, Josh Rawlings, Evan Flory-Barnes, and Jeremy Jones started jamming together at "The Hang," Thursday nights at Lo-Fi, based on what they called the "wisdom teachings". The Teaching was meant to be, not just another band, but an exploration of how music could evoke and incorporate the spiritual lives of the participants.

Sounds sappy, right? Or at least too intellectual to be genuine. At least that's what you'd cynically think, sitting on that uncomfortable pew.

But the trio guards against both extremes by nonchalant joy, which flows between them and their audience. At least, as much as joy can flow in the formal confines of Triple Door.

It started with "The Teaching," driven by the magnetic pull between Rawlings' keys and Jones' furious drums. The duo pounded and stroked out an elastic tempo that meandered through solos then suddenly melted into scorching, danceable beats.

It grew with "The Joy Within," as the three jingled and rapped along to tambourines and bells.

It busted into humor with "Cold Cats" as Rawlings led the chant; "Cold Cats, I know where they hang, at the Triple Door," as their smooth jazz intro blew up into frantic bebop.

Something this genuine has the power to crack even the hardest of cynics. But you'll have to be catechized over time, and baptized in the low-lit confines of a Lo-Fi alive with dancing. If this was your first taste of The Teaching, you need to go back, and be a part of it, not just watch it. Otherwise you'll just sit on that pew, like this poor critic, scratching your head.

And they want you to speak in tongues.

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Earshot Jazz Festival

By RACHEL DOVEY

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Trombone Cake

@ Tractor Tavern

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