

Moves at Midnight - Aggie Theatre, Sat., November 25, 2017

Denver-based dance band Moves at Midnight wove elements of trance and funk into an engaging, dance-inducing set at the Aggie Theatre Saturday night.

The keyboard of Mike Windham catalyzed the electronic textures of the sound, while bassist David Frediani contributed thick, dense lines that settled under the syncopated rhythm parts of guitarist Nick Ierisi to form classic funk pockets. Windham occasionally traded his keys for a saxophone, from which he elicited tasteful phrases that completed the irresistible funk groove. Trumpeter Jon Gray joined the band for several pieces, rounding out the horn section.

Though most of the setlist consisted of upbeat dance numbers, the arguable highlight was a jazzy ballad anchored by sparse, sustained piano chords from Windham and tender, sleepy trumpet phrases that evoked the likes of Miles Davis. Partway through, Frediani quickened the pace with brisk quarter notes before slowing things down again and settling into a dark, thick pocket. Windham unleashed a trance part over the top, which Gray echoed as the piece crescendoed on the strength of quick cymbals from drummer Matt Schooley.

On other numbers, Schooley laid down deep, tribal percussion parts that both grounded and intensified Frediani's bass, which often bore a thick, spacey quality similar to that Phish's Mike Gordon employs on tunes like Stevie Wonder's "Boogie On Reggae Woman."

Rhythm guitarist Evan Daldegan carried the bulk of the vocal duties with his soulful tenor. Frediani occasionally added harmonies.

Other standout numbers included a bright, uptempo piece (Daldegan called it "cheers-y," and invited the crowd to raise their glasses with him) built around a staccato rhythm part from Windham. Ierisi periodically disrupted the festive vibe with short bursts of dissonant distortion. Later, a sax solo paved the way for a drum breakdown, and changes in time and key signature took the piece well beyond the comfortable confines in which it had begun.

Many of Ierisi's solos centered around bluesy phrases infused with healthy doses of gain. His rhythm parts were mostly funky, but sometimes contained loud, distorted power chords more akin to Jimmy Page than Jeff Beck.

Make no mistake about it: Moves at Midnight is a funk band, and they put on a formidable dance party. But Windham's keys bring undertones of electronica, while his sax, along with Gray's trumpet, brings a welcome jazz influence.

Moves at Midnight plans to release its debut album next Spring.