



jason shannon CD release, with the wars of 1812 and molly maher-january 9, 2009

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by embryos

in the course of following local musicians, you may find yourself in a moment when you just know that everything is going to be different. maybe watershed is the term, maybe that's an overstatement. there were a few moments like that friday night, and i'd like to share my observations as someone who remembers many similar moments from years past.

molly maher brought erik koskinen along for the ride, and he opened the show with a few choice bluesy country numbers before molly came out to front the same band with her fresh brand of americana. friday night she rocked the national resonator for most of her set, giving extra power (and some meaty slide) to her songs. she's been playing nye's every week for the past several months, and the band sounded fantastic.

enter the wars of 1812. their debut recently chosen one of the top 10 albums of 2008 by *city pages*, the wars are working in the studio on a new release, and clearly have been experimenting with their sound. with a set that stuck closely to songs from the amble down/afternoon records release, *staus quo ante bellum*, the wars road-tested, studio-rehearsed sound was finally on display for a packed house. songwriter, guitarist and lead singer peter pisano commanded the stage from the opening chord of the set, and relinquished it only once, as keyboard wizard peter rosewall provided outer space sounds during pisano's switch from fender telecaster to that beautiful 30's gibson (which provided some tasty feedback for the rest of the night). this set showed a lot of new fans what all the buzz has been about. 2009 just might belong to the wars of 1812.

i've been to cd release parties at the varsity before, and this is the first time i've seen a packed house for the entire night. so many times people seem to treat these shows like a buffet instead of a banquet. so after koskinen's appetizer and two courses from maher and the wars, the crowd was still hungry for more, and jason shannon delivered. the set showcased his new cd, naturally, and showed off his new band. of particular note was violinist wendy tangen-foster, who not only proved to be an incredible soloist, but also a perfect musical foil for jason shannon, and a surprisingly good saxophone substitute to blend with paul odegaard's trumpet. the band was tight, the performance was passionate, and through it all jason shannon owned the stage with his unique blend of authority and humility. he seemed genuinely amazed at the turnout and the response from the audience. not only was shannon the man of the hour, he proved to be a most gracious host. i hope all musicians in attendance were taking notes.

<http://www.jasonshannonmusic.com/>

<http://www.thewarsof1812.com/>

<http://www.mollymaher.com/>