

Chinua Hawk

More of what they're saying...



FIRST SOUL ACT OF THE YEAR

By Alex Lehning

Java Jive got its first taste of soul this semester with the vocal stylings of the talented Chinua Hawk. Together with acoustic guitarist Michel Kunz, the duo delivered a short, but pleasant and entertaining set. "Can't Move On," a song about the fear associated with getting over love and lost dreams, was the opener. It showcased Hawk's deep vocal range. He shifted smoothly from soft and quiet to loud and passionate. "Missing You" was more fast paced with an urgent tone. The show had an informal but not unprofessional vibe. Hawk was able to pull it off smoothly, bantering and joking with the crowd between songs. The audience responded well, and everyone seemed to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. However, Hawk was the first to admit that his jokes were not good. "I'm corny ... just laugh for me ... raise my self esteem," he said. "Old people listen to old songs," Hawk said, laughing, before delivering an excellent cover of the Bill Withers acoustic blues lament "Ain't No Sunshine." "Something Beautiful," a song Hawk said was about being dumped for someone else, and then having that person realize that her new guy wasn't so great, was beautiful. He poured emotion and heart into every note he sang. Throughout the night, Kunz delivered amazing backup, playing the guitar as a perfect accent to Hawk's vocals, adding to the feeling of the songs. His playing echoed of the rock and jazz greats he grew up listening to. "Loved You That Way" was an emotional tune about having a secret crush. "The Unity Song" was almost an anthem, with Hawk's lyrics crying for the need of all people to love one another. A cover of the Temptations hit "My Girl" again showed off Hawk's vocal talents. His rendition of India Arie's "Ready for Love" was stellar and a favorite of the crowd. "New Orleans" and "Anything," a song about unconditional love, came next. "Raven Wings" was the closer, and possibly the best song of the night. It moved gracefully from slow and soft to uptempo and loud. It was Hawk at his best. And it was typical of his lyrics; while they often dealt with heartbreak and down times in love, they were always full of hope. "On the wings of a Raven/I would fly, so high.../When the mountains start to fall/I will try one more time.../I'll never give up on my life," he sang. Hawk has been performing since he was a "little lad singing in church." He said he admires Whitney Houston, Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin - all artists with powerful and emotional voices. Writing each song is a unique experience with Hawk and is always different. Usually he comes up with a vocal, or Kunz has a guitar piece and they work on developing it together. "We will go a month without writing anything, then do four or five songs in one day," said Kunz. Hawk, a New Jersey native, and Kunz, who hails from Sweden, are currently on a 65-date tour that started in January. Hawk released his CD at a Christmas show in 2001. Not expecting to sell any, a fan bought 20 as gifts for friends and family. He is most proud of the fact that people wanted to take home something that is so personal to him. Why does Hawk take the stage night after night? "The energy from the people is great," he said. "When a song has an effect on them you can see it...they tell you without them telling you."

Disc Makers

Disc Makers Announces Northeast IMWS Winner

By Mix Editors

Chinua Hawk, an R&B singer/songwriter from Pemberton, NJ won the Disc Makers Independent Music World Series (IMWS) Northeast showcase held in late October at The Lion's Den in New York City. As the grand prize winner, Chinua Hawk takes home over \$35,000 in prizes, including recording gear, instruments, CD manufacturing services, DJ equipment and more. "This is unbelievable," says Hawk. "Being the last act to perform, we had an opportunity to watch five great acts ahead of us. Our goal was to simply go out and give the crowd one last great performance. Winning the whole thing was totally unexpected. Thank you to Disc Makers and all of the sponsors for this amazing evening of music"

Hawk was one of six finalists competing before a panel of 12 judges that included representatives from Atlantic Records, J Records, Octone Records, Billboard Magazine and Guitar Center. Over 1,000 unsigned bands and independent artists submitted entries for the Northeast region of the IMWS. The other finalists included Mark Geary (NY), Melissa Bathory (Toronto, Ontario, Canada), The Defog (Collingdale, PA), The Last Hotel (Columbus, OH) and The Oggs (NY).

Produced by Disc Makers, a CD manufacturer for independent musicians, the IMWS gives musicians a unique opportunity to showcase their talents, make valuable industry contacts and compete. The showcase is judged by music industry executives, media and celebrities, and features live performances from six finalists.

"Disc Makers prides itself on helping indie artists succeed, and the IMWS is just one of the great things we do to help these artists get to the next level," says Tony van Veen, vice president of sales and marketing at Disc Makers. "We love coming to New York, and thank each of our sponsors and The Lion's Den for their continued support."

IMWS showcases are held in each of four regions throughout the country (Northeast, West, Midwest and Southeast). The regional focus of IMWS helps independent musicians make an impact in their own backyard and make connections that can help advance their careers. The competition is open to musicians of all genres not currently signed to a major record label.