

Jack's Mannequin – First Avenue – Minneapolis, MN

by Nathan M. Schilz

There's nothing quite like a rock concert at the First Avenue for getting the blood pumping.

Indie rock veteran Andrew McMahon (on hiatus from his band Something Corporate) made another pass through Minneapolis with his solo project Jack's Mannequin this past Saturday, rounding out a string of tours to support their sophomore album, *The Glass Passenger*.

After about two hours of patiently waiting through two other bands and set changes, the screen finally pulled up and the entire club was screaming for McMahon and his motley crew of fellow musicians. McMahon traded in his graffiti-covered upright from his Something Corporate days for a baby grand and a [shiny, red Nord](#).

Throughout the night Andrew worked the crowd like a star. Whether it was through his animated facial expressions, sharing his presence with the different sides of the stage, or jumping off the piano, the 27 year-old McMahon knew exactly how to get his fans to that feverish pitch that felt as if it could bring down the whole building.

The crowd seemed to be a fairly even mix of female and male, while the ages probably were in the 16-24 year age group. Something Corporate created quite a cult following, so it makes sense that he has some older fans as well—those who may have been in college or high school when *Leaving through the Open Window* came out in 2002.

Unfortunately, the ubiquitous use of cellular devices hindered the concert, as many captive fans held their phones up to capture their favorite song as proof to their friends that they were there.

Some of the other kids, however, employed a new bonding ritual at concerts: spraying water from a water bottle and throwing it into the masses. Now, under normal conditions, I would find this similarly obnoxious, but if their purpose is to break the cell phone being held high above the 4'10" girl in front of me, I herald this new activity.

The intimate setting of Minneapolis' First Avenue provided a perfect venue for the piano rocker and his crew. The waiting, the phones, the water, the tired feet, the loss of personal space—all of this contributes to the rock concert experience, and Jack's Mannequin sure knows how to make it all worth it.

Opening for Jack's Mannequin were Kansas City quartet [Vedera](#). The female-fronted group left much to be desired. The vast majority of the audience had obviously never heard of the group, so segues were easy, since participation was minimal and most of their songs sounded pretty much the same anyway.

Next on the bill was the New York based trio simply called [fun](#). Made up of Nate Ruess from The Format and a couple of his friends, fun. lived up to their name with innovative instrumentation and catchy hooks. More of the audience sang along with the front man, helping to reciprocate the energy that Nate and the rest of Fun were pumping out. While their fur-lined parkas may have made us Minnesotans think that perhaps these guys had never seen snow, their electro-bubble gum pop was both pleasing and satisfying.

[Official Jack's Mannequin Website](#)

Nathan M. Schilz is a film composer and musician from Minneapolis, MN. You can listen to some of his music on his website at www.nmscomposer.com.