

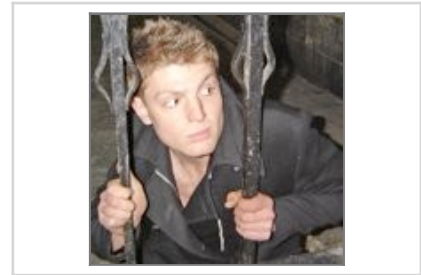
## News, Analysis and Comment

### REVIEW: Reuben Krum @ The Butterfly Club

by **Yuhan Lim**

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Reuben Krum is crass. Reuben Krum is rude. Reuben Krum is funny. That really seems to be the point. The crass, rudeness and crudity pique audience interest and Krum works his material to make people laugh.

The problem is sometimes I found myself laughing in the more I-can't-believe-you-just-said-that fashion as opposed to the that-was-hilarious fashion. To put it another way, while mostly fresh and in some instances reminiscent of Eric Idle and Tom Lehrer, Krum lacks the polish and the wit which make them so listenable.

I had high hopes for Krum, with his pianist and fellow performer Ben Kiley starting the night gladwrapping the front of the audience in what he called 'a large disposable condom'. It was a great visual gag, which unfortunately was never revisited or used in the rest of the show.

Similarly, Krum displayed incredible vocal control in his opening number, switching effortlessly between falsetto and full voice but as the show went on it became apparent that he had either pitched a lot of his music out of his falsetto range, or was going off key as the songs progressed, which tended to distract from the song being sung.

More jarring was his patter, which sometimes flowed smoothly and segued seamlessly into his musical numbers, and sometimes did not work at all. Certainly some entertainers do change topics in mid stride, but usually it is directly after a musical number, rather than before.

Roughness and rape-jokes aside, Krum's show had moments of sheer brilliance. His banter with Ben Kiley was perfect, the staging and lighting spot on, and when he struck the balance between crass and wit he did so brilliantly. When he did not, the show dragged, but overall there were more ups than downs. Interestingly, Krum himself raised the oft mentioned critique that he seems to be unable to be funny without being crass. He then proceeded to recite a poem to raise the calibre of the night – a poem about putting things up his arse.

In retrospect this poem was even less funny than it originally appeared on stage because of Krum's encore performance – a thought provoking song challenging people to experiment in life. This song was not particularly crass or crude, was very witty and challenged the audience while entertaining them.

In short, Krum proved he was very capable of being witty, engaging and funny without being crude – and I think if he left that particular crutch behind we'd see a body of work which would receive a lot more attention and a much wider audience.

Reuben Krum provided a good night's entertainment. With a bit of polish he could easily provide a great night's entertainment. With songs like *I Think You're A Nazi*, he's certainly proved he can adapt and freshen his material. There is a trade off between polishing existing work and creating new works, and it will be interesting to see whether Krum stays in his comfort zone or pushes past it.

Hopefully his next show will be equally as experimental as this one – and if it is we may have to excuse some roughness around the edges again. But given his talents, I'll take my chances on the rough and experimental. It'll be worth a watch.



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