

Stranger in a strange hall

Concert review by Bob Fedun

I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that last Monday night Bruce Cockburn (long deserving of such recognition) filled the Jubilee Auditorium to capacity. The bad news is that his performance means he will probably not be playing smaller halls for his next engagement.

Apart from four solo pieces, Cockburn was aided and abetted by three back-up musicians. On bass was Dennis Pendrith, long-time Cockburn associate who most recently was a member of Murray MacLachlan's Silver Tractors. Pendrith is a precise musician who prefers the role of a rhythm instrument plucker to that of being a major melodic contributor. On some pieces he left me missing the clarity of Bob Boucher's bass, especially on songs such as "Starwheel."

Drowning out Pendrith for most of the evening was Bob DiSalle on a standard drum kit, and on violin there was a gentleman by the name of Hugh Marsh.

The metal frame supporting the lights gave one the impression of a stage-within-a-stage. This illusion best exemplified the feeling of distance between artist and audience. This was, after all, Cockburn's debut in a large auditorium in Edmonton (he has previously played in SUB Theatre). The "light show" merely served to turn distance into dismay. Are folk singers supposed to start emulating the rock stars of the local bars? Can we expect laser lights on the next tour? I wouldn't come down so hard on this trivial point if the lights had, in some way, underlined the music. They didn't.

There were none of the characteristic long talks by Cockburn. In the interests of expediency also, there were very few changes of tuning, although the audience was attentive enough that I don't see what the rush was all about. I can't help feeling all these factors were Cockburn's response to an audience attitude of "show me something I haven't seen before." I'm convinced that he *must* get tired of playing the more commercially-acceptable songs from his repertoire. "Barrelhouse" (which received a loud bellow for the line "some fool tried to set this town on fire"), "Silver Wheels" and "Lord of the Starfields" are three that he has performed on the last three tours.

Some songs, on the other hand, were conspicuous by their absence. For example, none of the more obvious songs of praise were played, and a very great loss was the exclusion of Cockburn's dulcimer compositions.

The songs that received instant recognition were (naturally) "Tokyo" and "Wondering Where The

Lions Are." Thanks to crashing chords and smashing cymbals, Cockburn got as close to being a rock star as he could possibly want to get. Or so I thought ...

An excellent drum line heralded the latest version of "Joy Will Find A Way." As the song was apparently ending, Cockburn slung on the electric guitar(!). After a beautiful counter-play of violin and guitar we were treated to a lesson in jazz. What started out as an interesting diversion, however, ended up looking like an artist trying too hard for variety. Creativity took a break and Cockburn never looked comfortable with the electric, except for when he sat on the edge of the drum stand and comped out some chords. The band was *very* tight but communication appeared unnecessary — the jam was well rehearsed.

Of the five new compositions, one was less than what one would expect ("Grim Travellers In Dawn Skies"), and another was interesting mostly for its subject matter ("... a loner's point of view..." on Iran). Back to the good news ...

"How I Spent My Fall Vacation" was possibly the outstanding lyrical piece of the evening. Cockburn wove his imagery on a familiar loom, and one could not fail to be touched by the result. Two instrumental variations were my personal highlights. Cockburn has developed a true sense of jazz, abandoning the folk-jazz fusion music of previous years. In both numbers the chord progression provided adequate room for improvisation — as was best illustrated by Hugh Marsh. They also provided an excellent forum for the display of Mr. DiSalle's talents. The only fault I could find with the jazz composition was that they were too short. It seems perfunctory to mention that Bruce's guitar technique was nothing short of magnificent. The man proves his mastery of the instrument each time he steps on stage.

After an evening of highs and lows such as this it is almost impossible to make a definitive statement regarding "the state of his art." I hope the creativity and introspection of albums such as *Salt, Sun and Time* are not abandoned. By the same token, marketable does not necessarily have to mean the product is less than what the artist intended.

I used to feel that Cockburn somehow left an impression on this city when the informality of small audiences permitted him to communicate in ways that songs won't allow. The big halls prohibit performers to be other than "polished and precise," as was evident on Monday night. Bruce Cockburn came and went and left no footprints.



Photo Russ Sambson

Bruce Cockburn or Che Guevara?

Music to the people

The Alberta Baroque Ensemble, under the auspices of St. Andrew's United Church, 9915-148 Street, will present its first concert on Sunday, March 16, at 3:00 p.m.

The Alberta Baroque Ensemble is a newly formed group of young professional musicians whose aim is to bring good classical music to communities where there is little if none at all.

The works to be played in the first concert are: "Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 6, No. 7"; "Torelli Trumpet Concerto in D," William Dimmer - Trumpet; "Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 4," Jonathan Bayley and Shelly Younge - flutes, Stephen Bryant - violin; "Hammerschmidt Cantata, Holy is the Lord," with the Choir of St. Andrew's United Church.

There is no admission charge.



College Pro Painters

WE NEED PHYSICALLY CO-ORDINATED STUDENTS

We are a QUALITY PROFESSIONAL PAINTING COMPANY. If you are looking for a job where you get paid for what you do and a job where you can take pride in your finished product - then we are interested in you. What we want are eager people willing to Learn and Do a Good Job! We turn students into Craftsmen (or part company) within 1 week.

IF YOU ARE NOT SO INCLINED-PLEASE DO NOT APPLY.

PIECEWORK: The actual earnings you will receive depend totally on your painting ability and willingness to accept responsibility.

MINIMUM: 36 hours/week expected from employees.

EARNINGS: Normally from \$200-\$300 per week

THE WORK: HARD, but outside in the sun and working with fellow students.

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

April 1, 1980

and ongoing during the summer

Fill in an application at Manpower - 4th Floor SUB. Apply Today!!

ATTENTION FACULTY OF ARTS STUDENTS

Nominations of student candidates for the 1980-81 Faculty of Arts Representative Council will be received from March 17 to 20 (noon), and the elections will be conducted during the period March 24 to 27 (noon).

Total number of vacancies: 34 (according to an established departmental representation formula), with provision for an equivalent number of alternates.

Eligible students: Any full-time undergraduate student registered in a degree program in the Faculty of Arts is eligible to stand for election from the department of his/her primary concentration. Please note that a student standing for election from a given department must have been nominated by at least two other students from that department, and that students will need their Students' Union Identification Card in order to vote.

Term of office: July 1, 1980 to June 30, 1981.

Meetings: Council normally meets once a month throughout the academic session.

For additional information re: nomination and election procedures consult the various departmental offices in Arts Faculty.