



Burton Cummings with back-up band in the Jubilee Auditorium.

photo Rod Allan

# Burton Cummings now stands tall

by Rod Allan

For a while it seemed that Burton Cummings would always be associated with the *Guess Who* musically, either in endless attempts to re-create the success of *American Woman* or through tired versions of that old band. But because of an entertaining show last Thursday night that combined obvious egotism, tight musicianship and professionalism, Cummings may yet outlive the shadow of the *Guess Who*.

The content of the concert itself, was a carefully planned mixture of old *Guess Who* hits and tunes from the new Burton Cummings album. The music emphasized rock and roll ("Hand Me Down," "Albert Flasher," "Hand on to Your Life") with few slow numbers (although among them was "Sour Suite," one of Burt's finest recorded ballads). Also featured were a few tunes from an unreleased movie soundtrack "Sona, Sona," and the encore, "A Fool, A Fool, I Met A Fool." Cummings also let the audience hear an unreleased song, "Charlemagne."

All of the music was performed with enthusiasm and the band, respecting Cummings' star status neither threatened his command of the stage nor was content in providing merely background. The band members were from various minor Canadian groups, including Mood Jga. A real surprise/treat was the presence of Jim Gordon on drums. Gordon, who has got to be the most powerful session drummer anywhere, has played with the best, including Derek and the Dominos, Traffic and the Southern, Hillman, Furry Band. Between Cummings' hopping, wincing, dancing and grimacing and the spontaneous activity of the two guitarists, the stage seemed constantly alive with motion. This was an obvious contrast to the last *Guess Who*, concert here, in that in spite of the undeniable talent of the Troiano there was a noticeable lack of enthusiasm on stage (except for Cummings).

I suppose one could com-

plain about the blatant egotism displayed by Cummings, but looking back, it seemed that it could have been self-parody which, when not done too seriously can be entertaining. The concert began with the band playing some harmless "get'em ready for Burt" music and the white backdrop was emblazoned with BURTON CUMMINGS. Right on cue, out strutted Burt looking stylish, but slightly overweight; a cross between TV game-show host, well-to-do exec and home coming politician. He kept this air about him through the entire show and the finale saw Burt waving and parading the whole stage (a mixture of Academy award winning smile and the Black Sheep Man). Again, it's not offensive as long as you don't take it seriously.

Complementing this display was a polished, professional act. The entire show as fast-paced with numerous devices that kept the audience alert and attentive. After an opening series of rockingsongs, Cummings introduced "My Own Way To Rock" a tribute to Presley and a song that makes you want to stand up and move. As it led right in "Blue Suede Shoes", Burt slicked back his hair

fresh suit and slowing everything down with a ballad, but as it ended the show continued to rock.

The "Best of the *Guess Who*" segment was tied together by the title song from the movie *The Way We Were* which was used last year on his final tour with the *Guess Who*. This time the theme was fitting, as it was a tribute done in retrospect to a fine Canadian band, whereas when done in the *Guess Who*'s set seemed sad and ironic. Abbreviated versions of "Laughing," "These Eyes," "American Woman" and "No Time" were faithful remembrances to the originals.

Throughout the concert it was plain that Cummings was out to please his audience. It all worked together: The well structured set that traced the music of Burton Cummings from Elvis through the *Guess Who*, to the present, Songs interspersed with well rehearsed stage banter (including positive reinforcement wherein he conditioned the responses of the audience with continual praise "it's good to be back in Edmonton" "Edmonton people are the best," etc. etc.) and a lively band thathe could play with or without. This kind of entertainment as well as help from his single "Stand Tall" could help Burton Cummings remain a big name in Canadian popular music.

## CLASSIC NOTES

by James Leslie

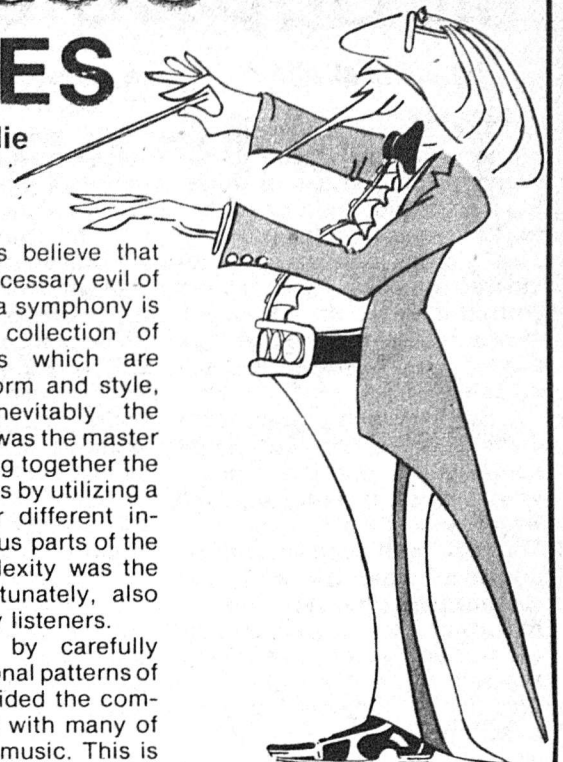
Many persons believe that complexity is a necessary evil of the symphony. If a symphony is structured as a collection of musical passages which are related only by form and style, complexity is inevitably the result. Beethoven was the master of this school, tying together the dissonant passages by utilizing a similar phrase for different instruments in various parts of the symphony. Complexity was the result, and unfortunately, also boredom for many listeners.

Tchaikovsky, by carefully constructing the tonal patterns of his work, has avoided the complexity associated with many of his predecessors' music. This is easily seen in the third movement, a *scherzo* (F major, 2/4), of the fourth symphony.

The movement opens with a statement of the first theme by the double bass. It is then restated by the bass, violincello and cello in unison. The voices of the violins mark the initial development of the first theme, which yields temporarily to the theme on violincello.

A short regression leads to the introduction of the second movement by piccolo. The theme is immediately developed by the wind section consisting of flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. The wind then pauses for a staccato statement by cello.

The re-emergence and latent development of the first theme heralds the statement of the third theme, on trumpet, accompanied



by a strong string phrase. The statement is not developed significantly and the movement fades to a close.


In true *scherzo* form, the movement describes a gay country celebration of song and dance. The first theme describes the lively mood, manner, and dance for the peasant folk. The woodwinds use their theme to describe the varied and amusing actions of the intoxicated participants. As the festivities reach their peak, the military band marches off in the third theme, bringing a close to the peasant activities, and also closing the movement.

Although Tchaikovsky's compositions lack the extreme complexity of other works, they are not lacking in sophistication. One has only to listen to find this.

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