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Records



BLUE NOTE LIVE AT THE ROXY (Blue Note)

This album is a massive presentation of almost everyone on the L.A.-based Blue Note label. While well known for their re-releases of artists such as Wes Montgomery and Gerry Mulligan, the current crop of new-artist releases, as well as some catchy promotion work should establish them near the top of the field.

The Live at the Roxy album is a masterpiece, one of the genre that comes along all too rarely. While there are some forgettable moments on the two album set (a mouthy announcer, and a silly presentation of a Blue Note Day in L.A. proclamation), there is not a musical weak spot for all of the other 87 minutes.

Somehow, almost everybody on the label gets a shot at performing here: Donald Byrd, Earl Klugh, Ronnie Laws, their bands, and

about ten others who left their own band temporarily to form the powerhouse Blue Note All Stars.

The music is superb jazz-funk, some even dancable, but not disco. The production and sound is so good, there are a minimum of outside noises. In all, a must in any jazz library.

CALDERA (Capitol)

This band, composed mostly of artists of Latin American origins, gets its collective inspirations from such varied sources as BT Express, Gato Barbieri, and Shostakovich, keyboard a large dose of Latin rhythms highlights the music on the album, which seems to revolve around the talents of Eduardo Del Barrio (keyboards), and Steve Tavaglione (flute and sax). Unfortunately, the album tends to get a little tedious at times, because the band has extended themselves more than they can try to, on a first album. There just wasn't enough substance for only six cuts on the album. Relying too much on solos which tended to go on and on and on, the band spent too little time developing the themes of the pieces, and the solos lacked direction, and suffered because of it.

Caldera is extremely good playing their instruments, but it will be another album or two until they can tighten up enough to really show themselves off.

Evan Leibovitch

Indian music at Mac

By STUART SHEPHERD

Last Wednesday evening, the McLaughlin Junior Common Room was the setting for a concert of South Indian Carnatic Music performed by the distinguished vocalist Srimathi M.L. Vasanthakumari, and her touring troupe, which consisted of violin, mrdangam (drum), and tamboura (stringed drone in-

strument). The concert lasted slightly over two hours, very short by the standards of South India, and included many forms of the traditional repertoire.

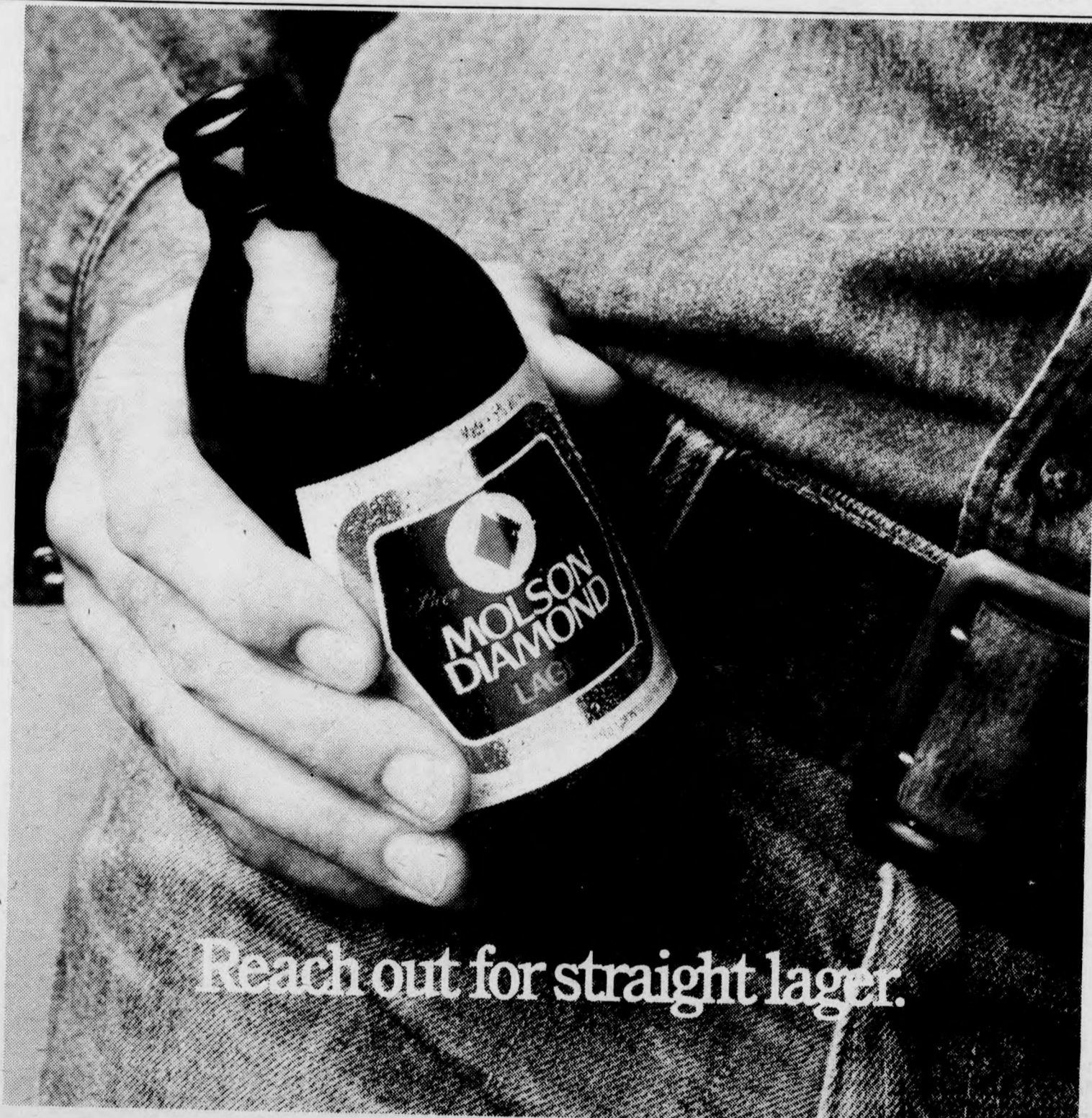
The McLaughlin J.C.R. tended to absorb and distort sound rather severely. This fact, and the difficulties in becoming accustomed to a strange P.A. system, seemed to inhibit the flow of Vasanthakumari's vocalizing during the first few numbers of the evening. These pieces were very cleanly and accurately performed nonetheless, displaying total command of the South Indian vocal style.

It was in the fourth number of the concert, however, that exciting things really began to happen. This piece, another of Tyagaraja's kritis in raga Pushpalathika, was preceded by an unaccompanied vocal improvisation on the raga's scalar resources. The McLaughlin J.C.R. is one of the few large halls in the York lunar complex which is capable of conveying a sense of environmental warmth to the human beings inside it; when Vasanthakumari began her alpana, now relaxed and accustomed to her surroundings, the room and its inhabitants were elevated to a warm and peaceful world.

A charged but comfortable atmosphere was maintained throughout the kriti by Vasanthakumari's expressive vocal dexterity and the skill of her accompanists.

The ensuing Ragam, Thanam, and Pallavi, an extended South Indian form containing much improvisation, constituted the high point of the evening's performance. At the conclusion of the piece, the group's drummer, Sri Kraikudi Drishnamurthy, executed a clean and competent, though understated solo on the rhythmic basis of the tala, Truputa with kanda jati.

The concert concluded with a few short light classical compositions, including one by a contemporary South Indian composer, which returned the audience to more functionally normal conditions in preparation for the journey home through the autumn cold. These numbers, while winding down from the energy level of the previous more extended compositions, left one considerably more refreshed for ten-thirty in the evening than a similar Western cultural event.



Reach out for straight lager.