

ENTERTAINMENT

Folk singer returns to the stage

Garnet Rogers
Feb. 11
Provincial Museum

review by Christine Koch

Fans of Stan Rogers will remember the late folk singer's affectionate introduction of his younger brother at concerts as "my partner in crime and my best friend." Playing fiddle and providing back-up vocals, Garnet Rogers was part of a band escalating in popularity, until the tragic death of Stan last summer. Fortunately for us, Garnet did not abide by his resolution made at that time "to pack in the music and smash his guitar into ploughshares." Instead, in response to the public, he agreed to fulfill the band's touring engagements himself, and will continue to perform across the continent: "this is what I know best, and it's what I love doing the most. And I'll be out there doing it for as long as I can. I can't see stopping now."

Saturday evening marked Garnet Rogers' solo debut in Edmonton. The burden of Stan's immense popularity is weighty, and almost apologetically Garnet thanked the audience for coming out to hear him, "a demonstration of faith" that he promised to try to live up to. Yet it is a mistake to judge the one by the memory of the other. The audience turned out to hear him for his own sake, and they were not disappointed.

With a deep baritone voice, affecting because so familiar and arresting because so strong and resonant and yet so sweet, Garnet delivered a performance which ranged from quiet meditative love songs "of Thoreau-esque ambience" to the spirited "Lucifer Blues." Singing only three

of Stan's works (which he admits still to be very difficult), "Louisa's Song", "The Sailor's Rest", and "Lies", Garnet drew from a repertoire of other mostly Canadian songs, including Archie Fisher's "Find the Troll", Lloyd Arntzen's "The Cohos Flash-Silver all Over the Bay", Doug McArthur's

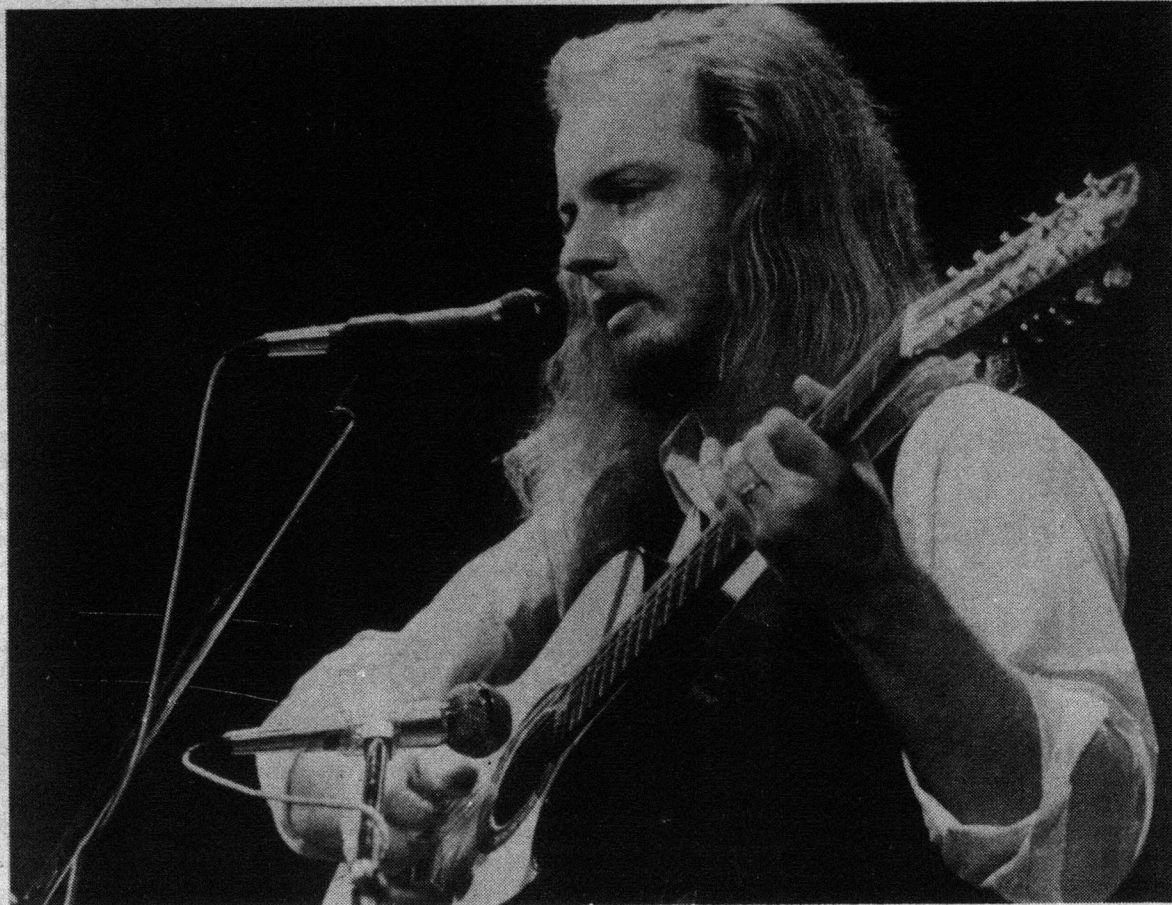
"Break the Law (Before the Law Breaks You)", and Connie Kaldor's "Bird on the Wing."

Because Garnet has been known primarily for his fiddle-playing, it was a treat to hear his virtuosity on the guitar, both twelve-string and acoustic. He produced the violin only for his encore, for which he played a hauntingly beautiful 300-year old Irish melody called appropriately, "Farewell to Music".

The concert was punctuated by Garnet's sardonic wit and stories, as well as by a good-natured taunting of the audience: "If you don't pick up on this (chorus) you're really stupid." But, despite his ease on stage, his roguish smile, his flowing long blonde hair and physical stature, there is in Garnet Rogers an element of self-

depreciation and shyness. One felt a trace of confession in his repeated reference (albeit jokingly) to his performance as "abuse" of the audience. And after his encore, his recognition of the standing ovation was to bolt offstage, to reappear no more.

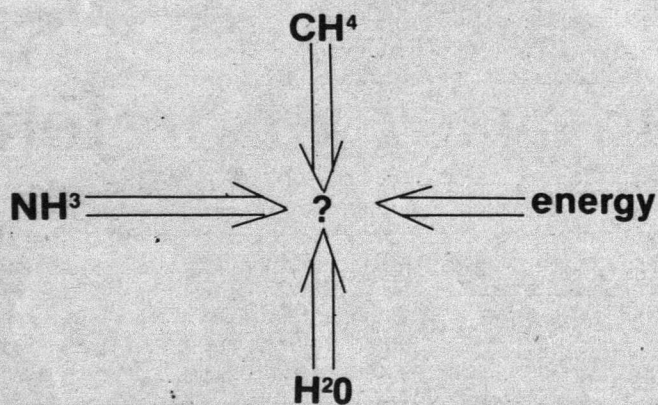
The tenor of the entire concert, in fact, was one of melancholy, partly because of the choice of songs, partly because of memories. It was without a doubt very difficult for Garnet to perform solo in front of an audience who had known him previously only as Stan's younger brother and band member. But it is to be hoped that he becomes more comfortable in his new position and fulfills the great promise that he shows as a folk performer in his own right and a musician to be reckoned with.



Garnet Rogers

photo Bill Ingles

How Did Life Begin?



Geologist
challenges
Evolution

Steve Austin Ph.D.
Tory Lecture TL-2
Thurs. Feb. 16 12:30 pm.
(also in Jubilee Auditorium 8 pm.
Catastrophes and Earth History)

...but dancers delight

Dull choreography detracts

Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal
Feb. 7-11
SUB Theatre

review by Patrice Struyk

The repertoire performed by Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal during their engagement here was like cotton candy - light, pretty, sweet while you taste it, and then it's gone.

Eminently saleable, the pieces pleased sell-out crowds. However, while appealing commercially, the choreography was restricted in vision and scope. Indeed, Les Ballets Jazz' offerings were not to be analyzed for messages or obscure symbolism. They were, rather, imagery in motion. Those works that were not brief portrayals or stories were abstractions designed to evoke (good) feelings or laughter. (Have these dancers studied mime or what?)

The opening dance, "Hors D'Oeuvre", choreographed by Judith Marcuse was playful. The red-clad dancers cavorted like rubber-band men, liquidly sliding in and out of each others' arms. The audience was already delighted.

"La Faim" ("The Hunger"), with its ritualistic drumbeat music by Michel Seguin and Miroslav Vitous, portrayed a primitive tribal chase and ultimate capture of its prey. As the excitement of the chase mounted, the hunter's breaths became louder and louder, but the expected (hoped for) frenzy of elation never developed. However, a definite tone of

eroticism in this number was unmistakable. Lynn Sheppard (the priestess) and Hans Vancol (the young man) carried it superbly to the work's end.

"Jailhouse Jam" was amusing but trite. Prisoners escaping, police keeping watch... choreographer Daryl Gray took no chances with this piece. My attention threatened to wander.

The finale "Five New Waves" by Rael Lamb had its high and low points. What did stand out was the last section, in which the company became monkeys, leaping and screeching and walking on hands and legs. The troupe seemed to finally burst with vitality. They obviously greatly enjoyed performing this, and those dancers can sure leap and grin when they want to.

Ultimately, the impeccable technique and the personality of the dancers is what made Les Ballets Jazz' show a good one. Critics of some of the slower-tempo choreography (who view the dancing as too much like marking steps) will have to admit that those works displayed the dancers' total body control.

All of Les Ballets Jazz' members have strong classical ballet training, and it shows. Each movement is precise, everyone is synchronized. Their costumes, often minimal, accentuate sleek, powerful, young muscles. At the top of those bodies are faces that smile and connect with the audience. Les Ballet Jazz de Montreal are professional to the core. Now if only they could find choreographers who could really exploit and test and stretch the dancers to their limits.