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The & R Revival Roll



North America's first genuine rock 'n roll revival took place in Toronto's Varsity Stadium last Saturday and it was indeed an historical event in the development of pop music.

It marked the first time that so many of the stars of the fifties (Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard) performed on the same stage with groups such as Alice Cooper and the Doors. To top it all off, the Revival was highlighted by the first public appearance of John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Eric Clapton and the Plastic Ono Band.

For sheer entertainment value the Rock 'n Roll Revival easily surpassed the first venture by Brower Walker Enterprises, the Toronto Pop-Festival. Aside from two or three brief lapses, the calibre of the music and entertainment never let up.

The organization behind the Revival could hardly have been improved upon and in this respect promoters John and Ken Brower deserve a great deal of credit. In addition, the Toronto Police were few in numbers but very effective. The presence of marijuana was very tactfully ignored.

The Revival's big downer proved to be MC Kim Fowley. Hailed as being the ultimate superfreak and pop music genius, Fowley was boring in the afternoon irritating throughout the evening and thoroughly disliked by the end of the day.

He carried on like a kindergarten teacher leading an expedition to the zoo, constantly reminding everybody, the show would be stopped unless we were all good little boys and girls.

Bo Diddley was the first big act. He put on a fantastic show that kept the crowd of 20,000 screaming for more. Most of his songs are little more than variations of Bo Diddley, each incorporating the now legendary beat he invented over ten years ago.

On Saturday the 'King of the Beat' was just that, laying down some of the heaviest sounds I've ever heard in a live concert appearance. His performance was climaxed by the Bo Diddley Chant during which his overwhelming showmanship had the crowd on the verge of delirium. Throughout his set, Bo Diddley seemed to be able to manipulate his audience almost at will.

The music and stage presence of the Chicago Transit Authority were in complete contrast to that of Bo Diddley. Musically they were the most polished and sophisticated act at the Revival. At the same time, they lacked the spontaneous excitement that literally seemed to pour out of Bo Diddley.

Chicago sounded best on Questions, I'm a Man, and a great new song entitled 25 or 6 to 4. They received a well deserved standing ovation at the conclusion of their performance and encored with an excellent version of Beginnings.

Tony Joe White accompanied himself on harmonica and he was extraordinarily adept at most of those two instruments. He was backed by a band of drums.

His deep drawing voice was ideally suited to a cajun blues sound. He used a wawa pedal to give it an old-timey feel and it was often hard to believe that you were listening to just one guitar.

His set included the standard Baby Please and his hit Polk Salad Annie. Judging by the reaction of the audience was surprised and impressed by Tony Joe White's fine performance.

Jerry Lee Lewis has always been regarded as a sensational entertainer and on Saturday he almost sabotaged the entire revival. They're Memphis Beats and they looked, acted and sounded worse than their insipid name. They did it capped by an indescribably shit rendition of heavy, Only You.

Needless to say, by the time Jerry Lee Lewis was on stage, the mood of the audience was at best indifferent. It took about 30 seconds for Jerry Lee to turn it into ecstatic adulation.

For 40 minutes, he gave a masterful and convincing demonstration of what rock 'n roll is all about. His set included Hound Dog, Mean Woman Blues, Jailhouse Rock, and it to

