

Rolling with the Stones

by Anthony Baylis

The last few years have been difficult for this Rolling Stones fan. Their most recent albums (which I thought were great) have been criticized to the point where there were those who felt the band was washed up. Many rumours about band members wanting out, for instance Bill Wyman spinning off on a single career, further suggested that the Stones were finished. However, the most difficult thing for me to accept was that I would never have a chance to hear and see the band at what they do best, perform live. Well, my fortunes changed when I learned that a friend of mine purchased tickets for us to the Sunday, September 27, 1981 concert in Buffalo, New York, which was a scheduled stop in the current Stones '81 tour.

The tour has caught the attention of the rock world and the excitement is so great that a majority of the performances are sold out, and the Buffalo concert was no exception. I sat and stood with approximately 80,000 other fans to rock with George Thorogood and the Destroyers, Journey, and the Rolling Stones. Thorogood had the place hopping with his hard core blues-rock. The fact that the rain clouds parted during a high-crankin' version of "Moving On Over" put the band and its leader into the good graces of the crowd, who demanded and

received two rollickin' encores. This fan, as did many others, truly enjoyed the act.

After a break of approximately 45 minutes, San Francisco's Journey hit the stage. They did so with such force that during their 60 minute performance they seemed to forget a stadium full of people was on hand. They lacked any touch with the audience, so consequently most of us got bored. Perhaps they were in awe of the crowd, who knows; in any event, their exit was met with a short round of applause and no encore was encouraged.

To describe the atmosphere during the set change for the Stones is difficult. However, you could feel this immense crowd of people milling about in anticipation of the entrance of one of the most successful and talked about musical groups in history and wondering, as I was, just exactly what these living legends were about to offer. At any rate, an elaborate set of large cloth drawings had to be dismantled because the brisk winds, which Thorogood couldn't drive out, were almost blowing the stage away. A 20 man stage crew was preparing the stage which included, among other things, laying a special carpet for the band. I wondered if the Stones required this much attention when they first performed live over 20 years ago.

Anyway, at perhaps 4:00 p.m. the band was announced and what followed for the next two hours and 15 minutes was quite amazing. They played a skillful blend of their old and new music which left the entire audience in hysteria. Beginning with a tight "Under My Thumb" and ending with an encore featuring "Street Fightin' Man" the band clearly was hot. Some of the other numbers included "Honky Tonk Woman", "Tumblin' Dice", "Shattered", "You Can't Always Get What You Want", "Miss You", "Let's Spend The Night Together", "Brown Sugar", a fitting "Time Is On My Side" and many, many more. Their current hit "Start Me Up" was so high powered that everyone in the stadium did start up, and they never stopped.

To say that Mick Jagger is a great performer is to put it mildly. How one man can control so many people is scary. His sometimes erotic, always energetic prancing around the stage was followed loyally by everyone. The magic of Jagger was revealed when he could lean out towards the crowd and thousands of people would reach back and while not actually touching, audience and performer were sharing a musical moment together. Perhaps the legions of people were all die-hard Stones fans, heaven knows there are enough of us, but this man can still entertain after 20

years and do so with so much energy and drive that the excitement he personally creates leaves one with a feeling never to be forgotten. I suppose that is what makes The Rolling Stones the world's greatest rock n' roll band: they touch their audience in such a way that one is left with a permanent impression of their musical flavour and sheer presence.

The high point of the concert was a belting version of "Jumpin' Jack Flash". Two days afterward, I was still hoarse from singing along, as I am sure many others were. Jagger, bare chested, barked out those now famous lyrics, Keith Richard pumped out those memorable chords, and Ronny Wood, Billy Wyman and Charlie Watt laid down that unforgettable beat. 80,000 people enthusiastically sang along and to those who have never done it, folks, it's a

gas, gas, gas.

I thoroughly enjoyed the concert and after listening to Stones music for so long, I must confess that their material is even more exciting live. If they do break up after the current tour, this Rolling Stones fan has gotten his satisfaction. As long as I continue to enjoy rock n' roll the boys from London with their controversial history will be number one, and their exit, complete with fireworks after a dynamite performance on Sunday, September 27, 1981 in Buffalo, New York has guaranteed that. It's only rock n' roll but I like it.

Note: This review was a special contribution by Anthony Baylis, a graduate of Dalhousie University (B.Comm. 1980)



John S. Gray back in town!

John Gray, well known Haligonian purveyor of synthesizer music is back from the fleshpots of Toronto and Hastings Ontario to tickle the ears of local residents. John will be previewing his latest tape of original compositions at the Centre for Arts Tapes on Argyle Street, above the Unicorn this Friday evening at 8:30 p.m.

The first selection on Gray's new tape is entitled 'Glory Be' and would be the perfect opening to a galactic epic. Gray's music is a combination of rock and an almost Gothic sensibility, in which brooding cathedral chords alternate with tight and often whimsical solos on various synthesized instruments. One of the cuts, 'Riveaux', was recorded live at the Dunn with New Music group "Murphy's Law", and Gray has also done a piece that played at the Gathering of the Clans, audited by the Queen Mother. He is also known for his work with local filmmaker Floyd Gillis, whose film 'Perspectives' received an honourable mention at the Chicago Film Festival, and for his lead-in logo for Dal's own CKDU Radio.

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