

We ain't your Rolling Stones

"We ain't your Rolling Stones
We ain't your T Rex
Matter of Fact
We're only here for the beer..."
("Hungarian Rhapsody")

The above quotation, from a recent Fairport album, is fairly indicative of the group's philosophy towards concerts. Fairport does indeed put on a show, but not in the sense that Alice Cooper or Elton John does; instead they concentrate on the musical aspects rather than the, shall we say, "visual" effects that are so popular today.

This live album, Fairport's tenth, (eleventh if you include their anthology), does a good job of showing us what a Fairport concert is like, an event that we in Edmonton have never had the opportunity of witnessing. On their previous albums, Fairport have indicated their ability to play stunning rock, but this live album is really the first time in their recording history that their rock abilities are in the fore.

Relatively new lead guitarist Jerry Donahue is indeed the star of this album, utilizing his previously unrevealed speed and preciseness to its greatest extent.

As with most Fairport albums, there is a personnel change on this one. Ex-vocalist Sandy Denny has returned to the fold after a prolonged, five-album absence. Her return is indeed the greatest change in the line-up since Dave Swarbrick joined the group way back then.

However, Sandy is not as prominent as I thought she would be. When once Sandy handled almost all of the lead vocals, on this album she takes on lead vocal for only three of the nine songs. During her absence, the rest of the group emerged as fine vocalists, and they aren't about to abandon

the chores completely, which is understandable. Despite this, Sandy's singing and piano play an important role in the Fairport scheme.

One fact that will probably make any Fairport fan a slight bit apprehensive upon his buying this album is the presence of three songs from the Golden Age of Fairport; "Matty Groves" from the "Liege and Lief" album and "Sloth" and "Dirty Linen", both from the "Fur House" album. These songs and their arrangements were masterminded by former guitarist Richard Thompson, whom I humbly consider to be the best guitarist in contemporary music. Those songs being on this album mean that Jerry Donahue must attempt if not to imitate, then at least fill in for Thompson. This situation is comparable to Edmonton Eskimo coach Ray Juch sending in Stuart Lang to replace George McGowan; both players are good, yet one is the best.

However, it is not fair to compare Donahue with Thompson, as he is not trying to out-do or exceed Richard Thompson's talents. Donahue does an excellent job in handling the three songs mentioned above; he treats them with the respect they deserve, (being classics) and at the same time he adds a new dimension to them, giving them a new life for the listener to explore. Donahue is especially proficient in "Dirty Linen", where he plays guitar faster than I ever thought possible.

The Fairport rhythm section, consisting of Dave Pegg (bass), Dave Mattacks, (drums) and Trevor Lucas, (guitars) is outstanding as usual, especially bass virtuoso Pegg, who shines once more. Violinist and part time mandolinist, vocalist, and leader Dave Swarbrick provides a strong presence at the concerts and certainly exemplifies the qualities that make him the best contemporary fiddle player around, (John Creach fans - forget it).

The album on the whole is a lot more rockier than any previous album, and indicates the new directions in which Fairport is heading. Fairport Convention is a musical institution and despite lineup changes and alterations in style, I have a hunch they will be around for a long time, delighting me and moving me forever and ever.

Gordon Turtle



Fourteen lead roles to Canadians

The Edmonton Opera Association embarks upon its 1974-75 season with fourteen out of seventeen lead roles being sung by Canadians. Lorin J. Moore, general manager for the Association, made this announcement and said the the Edmonton Opera feels that Canadians should be given the chance to sing lead roles in their own country whenever such roles are suitable for their talents.

The season opens on Saturday, October 12 with a Benefit Concert for the Opera Deficit Fund, which stars Robert

Merrill and Richard Tucker.

Bizet's *Carmen*, the first of three operas planned, stars Ann Howard of Covent Garden. It will be staged October 31, November 2 and 4. In the roles of Don Jose, Micaela and Escamillo will be Canadians Jean Bonhomme of Covent Garden, Barbara Shuttleworth of the New York City Opera, and Alan Monk of the Canadian Opera Company.

Following this will be the Western Canadian premiere of Franz Lehar's *Merry Widow*, to be sung in English and

containing spoken dialogue. The lead role, Valenciennes, Zeta and Brioche will be sung respectively by Canadians Heather Thomson, Judith Forst, Claude Corbeil and Alan Crofoot. Alan Titus and John Walker, both of the New York City Opera, will play the two lead male roles of Danilo and Camille. The *Merry Widow* will be staged January 16, 18 and 20, 1975.

The final opera of the season will be the early Puccini opera, *Manon Lescaut*, to take place March 13, 15, and 17, 1975. The all-Canadian cast consists of Maria Pelligrini of Covent Garden in the title role, Edmonton's own Ermanno Mauro singing the role of Des Grieux, Alan Monk as Lescaut,

and Napoleon Bisson an Geronte.

All three operas will take place in the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium, and will feature the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra as conducted by the Orchestra's resident Canadian conductor, Pierre Hetu. Once more under the direction of Alexandra Munn will be the Edmonton Opera Chorus. Irving Guttman, the Edmonton Opera Association's artistic director, will stage all three operas.

Season subscriptions are now available until September 30, at the Association's offices at 503: 10102 - 101 Street. After September 30, tickets will be on a casual basis and will be on sale at all Woodward's Stores.

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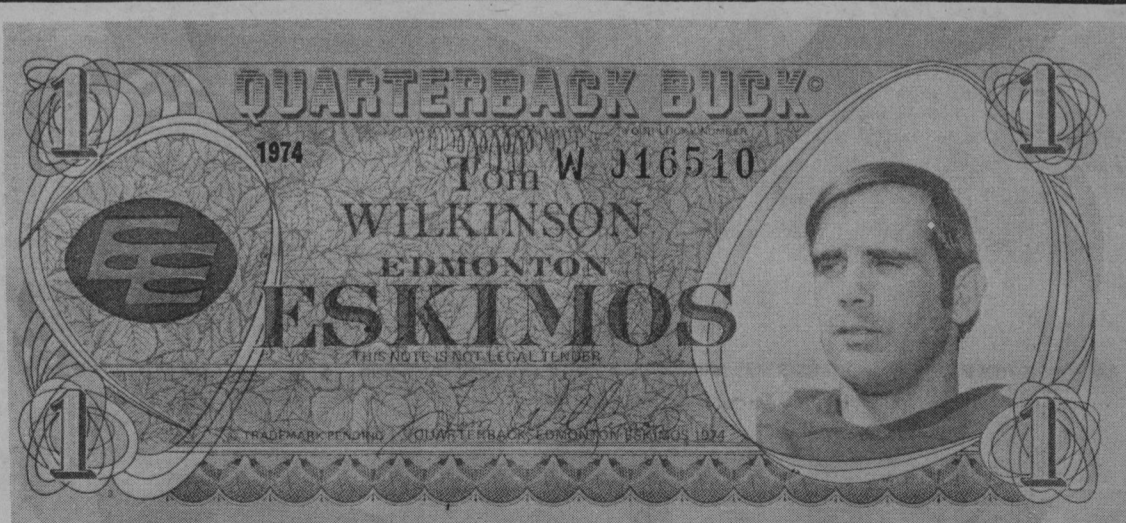
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