

The arts

Bee Gees don't live up

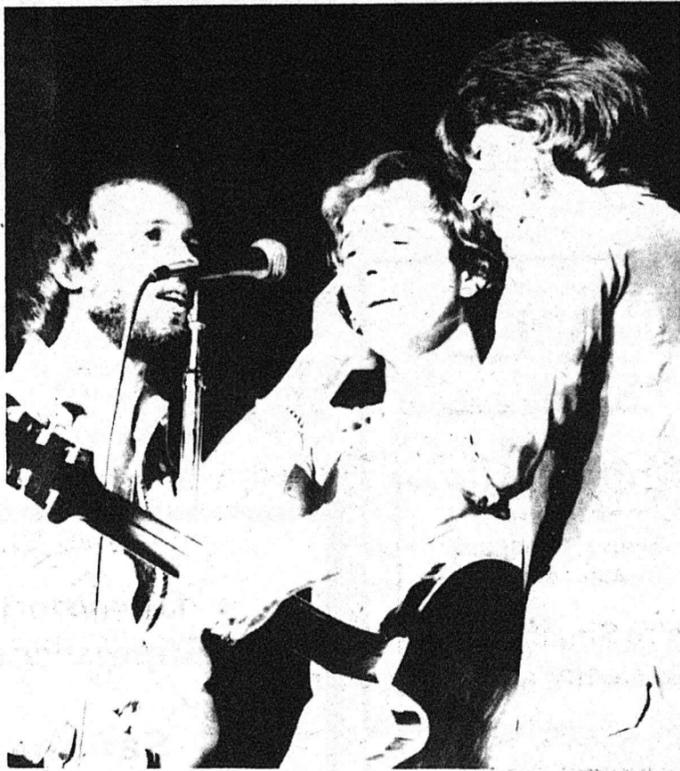
Make no mistake about it - the Bee Gees' early show last Thursday was a fine concert. In a very professional and refined musical style, the three Gibb brothers provided ninety minutes of top-class entertainment. And yet, Thursday's concert at the Jubilee Auditorium did not quite live up to last year's performance.

Similar to last year, the Gibb Brothers pleased their fans by performing most of their big hits, from "New York Mining Disaster 1941" to "Jive Talkin'". Three-quarters of the way through the show they combined several of their hits into a medley, a policy which, in my opinion, detracted from their musical value. Many Bee Gees ballads are made by their musical build-up climaxing in the last chorus, something which can not be as well achieved in medley form. I would have preferred to miss a couple of the oldies if I could have enjoyed the full treatment of some others.

Especially obvious during the oldies was the absence of the string section of the Edmonton symphony. Although the synthesized strings of the Bee Gees' band fulfilled the purpose, it just wasn't the real thing. The Manhattan Horns added to the music on a few occasions (as in "Lonely Days") but I'd rather have seen the money spent on some symphony musician.

Unfortunately Robin Gibb's voice was frequently drowned out. A propos Robin! Throughout the concert he tried to look so cool on stage that it was difficult to decide whether he wanted to look cool or whether he was just terribly bored. Barry and Maurice, on the other hand, performed extremely well as did the Bee Gees' back-up band including ex-Strawb Blue Weaver.

In between their oldies, the Bee Gees presented material from their new album, "Main Course", most of which is musically excellent and enjoyable. But since most of these numbers were slightly up-tempo, the group never managed to create the beautiful,



The Bee Gees: top-class entertainment but not up to previous standards.

almost "cosy" atmosphere that made last year's concert so special. Sure, there was more variety and funkier music in between those heartbreakers like "Words", or "To Love Somebody", but somehow the atmosphere of the concert suffered.

Last year they had been wise in getting the up-tempo numbers out of the way and then proceeding at a slower pace. Maybe this year, they should have started slow and then moved to the funkier music, climaxing with "Jive Talkin'".

The material from "Main Course", which is definitely moving away from traditional Bee Gees territory, raises one question concerning the current musical policy of the band. While I think that it is great that "Jive Talkin'" brought the Bee Gees back to the top of the charts, I still can't understand why they have to imitate Stevie Wonder. The group has

always been best at writing their own brand of ballads - "schmaltzy", but sometimes great.

On some of their early albums ("Bee Gees 1st", "Horizontal"), the Bee Gees tried to imitate the Beatles. It is significant that of the early material only the ballads like "To Love Somebody", "Holiday" or "Massachusetts" still stand out. Thus if the Beatles' imitations did not succeed, why should the "Bee Gees - play - Wonder" version fare better?

I don't object to versatility but there are many groups who can come up with a song like "Jive Talkin'" and very few who can write ballads like "Holiday".

Summing up, I'd like to emphasize once more that, despite its flaws, Thursday's show was one of the best to hit Edmonton this year. It could have been better still, but perhaps I had expected too much, or I am just too old-fashioned.

H. Kuckertz

The Jazz Concert of the year? Perhaps.

The U of A Students' Union Special Presentations offered a fair-sized audience a special presentation indeed at the Jubilee Auditorium Saturday.

The Bill Evans Trio and the Jack DeJohnette quartet appeared in what as billed as "the jazz concert of the year." Unfortunately, a poor sound system and an unusual environment for jazz detracted from the concert's potential.

Evans' trio, consisting of Eddie Gomez on bass and Elliot Zigmund on drums, fought a losing battle with the sound system and a seemingly alienated crowd. Evans' piano was distorted badly for the first half of the set.

But despite the adversity, his mastery of the piano shone through. One knew a genius was playing, even though the acoustics were bad. Evans glided through pieces of brilliant piano work, rambling

through complex chord clusters with deceptive ease. His work was sympathetically colored and shaded by Gomez and Zigmund. Gomez too, displayed much technical skill and elegance in his playing, taking many an impressive solo.

The Evans' Trio was well received. However, DeJohnette's Quartet evoked a more genuine response from the audience. By virtue of better sound, more powerful music, and an onstage presence that involved more showmanship and integration with the crowd, DeJohnette was better able to break down the atmospheric barriers of the space in which his band was playing.

His band was composed of Alex Foster (familiar to those who attended the last Edmonton DeJohnette appearance) on tenor and alto saxophones, John Abercrombie on guitar

and Mike Richmond on bass.

This group was able to affect a great change in the tone of the concert. Some fine, easy-to-hear playing followed.

Opening with John Abercrombie's melodic and spacey "Timeless" the band exploded in the next number, DeJohnette's "Cosmic Chicken". The group displayed great flexibility and innovation in their treatment of Steve Swallow's "Eiderdown," with DeJohnette approaching the theme on piano. He later moved to the drums with fine solo work by all of the band members as they worked together through patterns of varying time signatures and dynamics. In the Quartet's closing number, a McCoy Tyner composition called "Four by Five", Alex Foster was to contribute some excellent solo work.

At this point Elliot and

Them that has...

What sets Canada's rich apart from others?

It's the clubs they belong to. The food isn't the greatest, the service tends to be slow, the atmosphere can be chilly and forbidding, and the surroundings are usually sombre and quite uninspiring.

Yet despite these shortcomings the clubs play a vital role in the Canadian Establishment mainly due to the peculiarly hushed quality they possess - the hushed quality of privilege that belongs to the men who are, instead of the men who merely do.

The strange phenomenon of Canadian club life and clubmen - its mores, taboos, blackballing techniques - is discussed by Peter C. Newman in his forthcoming book, *The Canadian Establishment*.

"What I like about these places," a club regular confided to Peter Newman, "is their essentially egalitarian spirit. There's no distinction whatever made between a man with half a million dollars and another with \$50 million."

Probably the most peculiar aspect of club life is that belonging is as important as attending any club functions. The point of joining a club is not so much to get in as to see whether you can get in. Membership is seldom restricted by written rules, but each institution's admission committee acts as a fine-mesh screen against those who aren't wanted.

The clubs that really count, are the York (Toronto) and the National (Toronto), the Mount Royal and the St. James (Montreal), the Rideau (Ottawa), and the Vancouver Club. In Edmon-

ton it's the Edmonton Club.

The clublife of Canada's rich and influential is one of the many fascinating chapters in Peter C. Newman's forthcoming book, *The Canadian Establishment*, Volume 1. Until now, little has been heard or known about this country's most powerful men, but Peter Newman reveals in his new book the personalities and their lifestyles, and how they rose to their privileged positions in the world of business.

Art revival

The 1960's witnessed the revival of interest in a style of decoration which flourished first from about 1885-1915. The originators of the style, whose aim was to create decorative and functional objects which owed nothing to the historical past except craftsmanship, would have been amused to see art nouveau seized upon by the rebellious young in the 60's and called "psychedelic." Art nouveau, the "new art", in its day, had also been known as Jugendstil, the "youth style."

"What is Art Nouveau?" organized by the Edmonton Art Gallery begins September 18. It is drawn from collections in Edmonton and Calgary, and examines characteristic art nouveau motifs: stylized vegetation, rhythmic "whip lash" curves, languid maidens and iridescent glass.

As art nouveau was chiefly a movement of decorative arts, with only tenuous connections with painting and sculpture, the exhibition will concentrate on turn-of-the-century domestic items such as lampshades, vases, and paper knives.

Rural art revealed

The Edmonton Art Gallery has organized an exhibition of works by Calgary artist, J.D. Turner, to coincide with the "Canadian Painting in the Thirties", because of Mr. Turner's strong association with artists of that period. He was a close friend and painting companion of members of the Group of Seven, and also a founding member of the Edmonton Art Club and the Alberta Society of Artists. The exhibition, showing until September 26, will feature the artist's recent oil paintings and watercolor sketches of rural Alberta subjects.

It's child's play

Modern art seems to provoke fierce loyalty or equally fierce hostility. On a less violent note, it can inspire humor.

"A Child of Six Could Do It" is a collection of cartoons about modern art - from the impressionists to the present. Organized by the Tate Gallery in London, the cartoons are drawn from publications such as *Charivari*, *The Masses*, *Punch* and *The New Yorker*. The collection will appear at The Edmonton Art Gallery September 15 and will run for a month.

Eddie joined the DeJohnette band for a jam that proved to be most interesting. The two bassists were a major point of interest, playing off against one another, alternately bowing and plucking the strings.

The jazz concert of the year? Perhaps, but Edmonton jazz aficionados can still look forward to Woody Herman, Horace Silver and Anthony Braxton in the coming months.

Keith Layton



Bill Evans (on piano) with Eddie Gomez (on bass)