

Friday night show misses

Tait concert attacked by echo monsters

By JOHN OUGHTON

Last Friday night's concert in the Tait Mackenzie gym sacrificed some pretty good music to the echo monsters. Doctor Music, Crowbar, and Mike Quatro's Jam Band all tried hard to bring the relatively small crowd alive, but they were defeated by the fact that the audience was asked to sit in the bleachers rather than near the stage so the piano tuner could work, and that guards seemed to stop people dancing as soon as they started. The master of ceremonies, Quatro's road manager, had apparently not been informed of the above policies since he repeatedly urged everyone to "get off your asses and move!"

Doctor Music opened the concert with some driving, gospel-flavoured pieces. The feminine half of the eight vocalists was by far the most impressive and audible, led by Dianne Brooks' powerful singing. The musicians were generally impressive individually, but seemed to have some trouble in getting right on the beat. This may have been because Doug Riley, the pianist and leader, had to conduct while playing in the dimmest-lit area of the state. The lead guitarist, however, was noticeably off several times, even with the fine bass work of Don Thompson as a guide.

Doctor Music performed all its numbers with great gusto, but their repertoire seemed limited to either fast, Motown-gospel pieces or slow, semi-spiritual songs which were quite reminiscent of some songs from Hair, and similarly embarrassing in their lyrics ("hands

that touch the wings of a dove.") With imagination and much rehearsal, Doctor Music could conceivably explore new idioms in rock and or jazz using contrapuntal singing and less orthodox rhythms. At the moment, unfortunately, they need more rehearsal time just to do a first-class job on their present material.

Mike Quatro's Jam Band was well received by the crowd. Quatro played electric and grand piano proficiently, and added effects on the mini-Moog intelligently. His drummer, however, seemed to concentrate too much on playing for show, lifting his sticks high when he might have been varying the beat. Quatro's main problem as an act involves refining his sound system; the electric piano tends to lose tone at high volume, and the unamplified grand needs a good microphone to come across at all. Like Doctor Music, Quatro could increase his repertoire, and probably will.

This reviewer must confess to having been too tired and soreassed to stay for all of Crowbar's set. They sounded tight and enthusiastic, however. The discomfort induced in much of the crowd by the gym surroundings left Crowbar with a smaller audience than they deserved. MacLaughlin might have been better advised to hold the concert in a dining hall but then the conveners really couldn't know how many people would show up. The organizers should be commended for putting together a good and varied bill of entertaining music.



Crowbar performed at York last Friday along with Dr. Music and Mike Quatro. The concert was a semi-success weighted down by performing conditions.

Quatro reaching for the very ultimate in music

By JOHN OUGHTON

Mike Quatro is a small, voluble man who has recently switched from a career of promoting rock music to the slightly more hazardous life of performing it. Quatro the performer is greatly assisted by Quatro the promoter: he speaks as though phrasing his answers for snappy quotes in a press release; and terms like "break the Golden 100" and "top 20" fall readily from his lips. His business acumen is also illustrated by the facts that it was apparently part of his contract that one could not interview Crowbar without also covering Quatro, and that the MC at the concert who called him back for a second encore was his road manager. Quatro's press release describes him as a superstar and that is obviously his aim.

However, Quatro professes to be in it for more than the money. He has played his electric piano with the Detroit Symphony for a basically over-30 crowd and feels that "music is the way to close the generation gap — the best way in the world."

Quatro said that the way to handle such an audience is to "start with a classical number played straight ... and the old fogies will be out there going great, great, they'll be loving that shit and then from there we'll go on into a rock tune OK Aunt Fanny out there now git on up and I betcha we'll git them."

It would be amusing to arrange a meeting between Quatro, who raps at about the speed of a Detroit assembly line, and that arch-fogey Mackenzie Porter. In a column in last Wednesday's Telegram, Porter publicly exposed his ignorance of rock as follows: "I do not think that comparisons can be drawn between young men aspiring to careers in either jazz or classical music and young men who hope to stand on platforms in rock groups, twanging amplified ukeleles and shrieking dirty little ditties about petting. Prolonged ob-

servations of typical rock groups convinces me that few of the performers can read a score or play a pianoforte."

One of Quatro's dreams is to play "Carnegie Hall one night and then the Fillmore East the next." Quatro will have to conquer some of the Porters in the media before he achieves that ambition.

Quatro has had training as a classical pianist under Mischa Elman. A rock version of a Rachmaninoff Prelude and an ingenious adaptation of a classical finger exercise figure in his repertoire. The Jam Band (Quatro and his drummer) also enjoy performing In the Court of the Crimson King. When asked about his view of Keith Emerson, Quatro stated that since Emerson was regarded as "the leading keyboard man in rock," he would have to regard himself as "catching up to him." In regard to possible musical influence on him, he admitted to liking "one or two things from each of the name stars with the exception of maybe 20 per cent of them" such as the Grand Funk Railroad.

The Cincinnati Symphony has asked Quatro for a rock opera. He is planning to do a trilogy with lyrics by his sister (who played for six years in an all-girl band) on the theme of "a young boy from birth to death, creation, first love etc." He also has offers from two record companies and hopes to make an album in the fall.

All in all, Quatro comes across as an ambitious performer with a number of goals. I was not really able to determine whether becoming a better musician is one of his aims or not. His simultaneous use of electric piano, Moog and concert grand proves his imagination. If Quatro can apply his energy and efficiency to musicianship instead of promotion, he could become an excellent refutation of opinions such as Porter's which fail to allow rock a place in the universe of music.



Take a Look at me
I'm not what I seem to be