

ARTS

Hammond's blues keep crowd happy

by Jack Vermece

For the past couple of years the Edmonton Folk Festival people have been quietly bringing top-notch folk and blues performers to our fair burgh. Following on the hot heels of Taj Mahal came acoustic bluesman John Hammond who stomped and blew his way through a two and a quarter hour show at the Provincial Museum last Thursday.

Hammond, acknowledged as one of the best purveyors of acoustic blues in North America, kept a near-capacity partisan crowd spellbound for most of the evening with his alternately driving/haunting combination of guitar, pounding foot, harp, facial contortions, and voice.

Playing the traditional ("Spoonful", "Groundhog", "I Can't be Satisfied") and the not-so-traditional (Chuck Berry's "No Money Down") Hammond took his audience on a musical tour of blues stylings that encompassed Mississippi delta blues, rolling Chicago blues and every other kind of blues you'd care to name. Indeed, Hammond's show would be the perfect

reply to the musical neophyte's statement, "Duh... blues music is boring; it all sounds the same."

Whether howling out a driving number like "No Money Down" or quietly agonizing through the likes of "See that My Grave is Kept Clean" Hammond's voice was up to the task. His harp playing managed to produce just the right piercing sounds to accent or counter his voice and guitar. Still, the night was not without its problems.

An overheating P.A. amp caused the sound to cut-out frequently during the show. Luckily, the venue was small enough for us to hear Hammond without amplification but it was obvious that the problems affected both the audience and Hammond. The effect was most notable on the classic "Spoonful" which was given a lacklustre treatment and received a lacklustre response. It is a tribute to Hammond that he endured this annoyance with poise and professionalism; he just kept playing.

Let's hope he keeps playing all the way back to Edmonton next year. (He should be at next year's Folk Festival).



These are the Spoons, who will bring their "fresh electro-beat dance sound" to Lucifer's November 22-24. There will be a review of their new album *Arias and Symphonies* and an interview with the band next issue.

Talk about: Pop music

by Dave Cox

One of the earliest and greatest cult figures of the punk movement appeared here last Friday night.

Iggy Pop proved to the denizens of this cultural backwater that professional anger can be great entertainment.

Iggy came on in a burst of venom, and got the hardcore crowd at the front of Dinwoodie slam-dancing in minutes with such classics as "Kill City", "Raw Power", and "Street Crazy".

The man's stage presence is truly amazing — this fearsome visage covered with fluorescent warpaint makeup; a face that just sneers its disdain for convention, propriety, civilization; in short, everything.

Iggy Pop leapt about, leaning toward the audience, and kept up an electroshock frenzy of movement on stage. His show displayed the professionalism of many years of playing in smoky clubs and halls, a decade and more of touring.

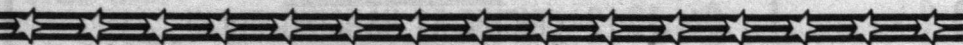
From reports, this quality was even more apparent Saturday, where after spraining his ankle twenty minutes into the show, he nonetheless managed to complete his hour-long set, and then immediately left for the hospital.

Iggy was the hero of the heroin subculture throughout the Seventies, ranking alongside such great decadents as Lou Reed and Keith Richard. Like those two, his massive drug use over the years seems merely to have whetted the edge of his creative blade.

Right through to the encore "Fun Times", the Dinwoodie crowd leaped and thrashed joyfully and in riotous abandon. They were stoked by the usual copious quantities of brew, about which two parenthetical complaints: why is only beer served? Surely something more could be provided to slake the thirst of us frenetic dancers. And why was there predominantly Labatt's Blue on Friday? Wugh!

Nash the Slash, Iggy's warmup act, was about as exciting this time as last time I saw him. His music is rather like Phil Spector to the fifth power — a virtual "room of sound" compared to Phil's "wall". The only highlight was "Dead Man's Curve", and one might as well have stayed home and listened to the album.

By way of upcoming events, New Music fans might take note of the Billy Idol concert appearing at SUB Theatre Thursday, November 25th. Billy used to be the lead singer for Generation X, who split up in the '81. The smiling skinhead recommends this show highly.



The feature review of The Who's new album *It's Hard* that appeared in Tuesday's paper was by one of our regulars, the amazing Nate LaRoi.



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