## September 29 • 1995 The Brunswickan • 11 ERTAINMENTERTAINT Aglukark thrills sell-out Playhouse crowd



Susan Aglukark and her contageous sunny personality

The alternative headline for this piece was going to be "Student Union Sells Out" simply because they actually sold out a concert. Hard to believe really. But the concert in question was down at the Playhouse, and there wasn't a huge student turn-out either. Not that it really how spotlight used to show the ready for. There is still a phase that you mattered as it sold out. Anyway, enough performers rather than dazzle the

29 . 1995

S FOR

E:

TION

THE

**30PM** 

THIS

PRE-

EAD-

**REP-**

S SEE

**)**01

k

being performed live, but they were as we found out when a small technical hitch led to a short gap in the show which gave enough time to wonder why the drummer was protected by a perspex shield, and reminisce about of challenges that I wasn't sure I was

continues. "It can depend on my state ram that down their throats; it has to of mind, or the venue but things are be their choice. But my own children better now. Some times are better than will speak my language - they have no others."

The messages in the songs which are so important to Susan cover a wide variety of topics - her latest album, This Child, features songs that address the suicide of one of her cousins, and also sexual abuse of children. The messages in the songs are honest experiences from her life, but are not written about in a conscious way. "Every artist has something to say, and will present it in their own way. Mine is music, and music is a very passionate thing - I couldn't do this without having something that people could respond to. But the message I have right now may change on the next album, I really don't know." Despite the subjects addressed, This

Child is a very jubilant album for the most part. But Susan says that her previous album was no less jubilant -"Arctic Rose was just opening the can of worms and beginning to learn to deal with them. This Child is the next phase in dealing with those issues. It's growing, it's getting stronger but the next album may be three steps back again - that's what life is all about."

Susan has become a spokesperson for many causes during her brief career, something which she knew was inevitable once she signed to a major record label. That was one of the reasons that she was hesitant about signing to a major. "It presented a lot choice in that," she added jokingly.

She is very optimistic about the survival of her own culture. "I am 3/4 Native and 1/4 white, and my children will probably be even less. But it is all about passing down information, traditions and way of life." Susan was in Fredericton last week taking part in a conference on the survival of Native cultures, and the importance of choice for young adults in determining this. She now lives in Toronto and thinks that she will probably raise a family there, although she is sure that they will know where she is from. While there may not be an Inuk community in Toronto, there are fairly large ones in both Ottawa and Montreal. She doesn't like Toronto very much; "I'm not a city girl, and I like to go home as often as I can." And as for when the next album? She

really has no idea when that will come out, although she has been working on

There were even a couple of new songs at the concert, but they may be dropped before the new album finally sees the light of day. This Child has just been released in Japan, and so she'll be heading over there in November for a media tour with the possibility of a concert tour after that. And then the next step is to release the album in the US, but she just isn't ready for that yet. "I'm still getting used to touring in Canada, but I still need a bit of time. So the album will come out in the Spring." She is quick to acknowledge that her rise to fame has been very quick, and that it still makes her more than a little edgy. "I'm still unsure of myself, and I almost don't want to lose that. I don't want to be controlled by the glitter and the glamour. I have so much fun doing this." And for once you really do get the feeling that the fame will not control her - she'll still be the down-to-earth

material while they have been touring.

person that she has always been, and

that is really quite refreshing.

## **COMPETITION TIME!!!**

This week I have a rather nifty Supersuckers promo CD to give away (only one I am afraid). And the questions is: Which three Sub-Pop bands were in town in July as part of the Human Touch Tour? Answers by Tuesday, 5pm to Rm. 35 in the SUB. ners...winners...winners...winners...winners...winners...winners...winners...winners...winner

Last week's winners were: R. Michael Cormier, Jon Bartlett and Kelly MacGowan. Come into The Bruns office and pick up your prizes

on Friday at noon.

of that talk, and let's get to the show. The performer in question was Susan Aglukark, and she really did put on an impressive show.

The support for the show was provided by local man Brent Mason who left his band at home and turned up strumming a guitar and sucking on a harmonica. He did five innocuous songs before leaving us, a couple of which were really not too bad at all. And I always have been a sucker for an acoustic guitar, so the first part of the evening really was quite pleasant.

Susan Aglukark took to the stage backed by an incredibly talented fivepiece band who deserve an awful lot of credit for some fine instrumentation, and also providing the vocal harmonies that were the mainstay of many songs. But the most important person on the stage was Susan herself who possesses such a crystal-clear voice that it is very hard to resist; it really is quite beautiful. That was most evident on the unaccompanied encore of 'Amazing Grace', but I really am getting ahead of myself.

She started off rather nervously on stage with the between-song chat kept to a minimum, but as the evening went on that was far from the case. She was talking to members of the audience, joking with the members of the band and telling tales between songs. The songs sounded so polished that it was almost hard to believe that they were

audience.

Most of the songs came from her last two albums for EMI, with the biggest response from the crowd being

reserved for the past two singles which were obviously the most familiar songs to most of the audience. The concert did lag a little bit in the middle when there was a whole bunch of slow, rather sad songs, but things did pick up again when the livelier numbers returned. So it was a very enjoyable evening, and I am almost tempted to congratulate the Student Union for putting on a fine show. Almost.

Before the concert, I had the chance to chat with Susan about the tour, her career, being native and all kinds of other things too. The tour is going very well - the Maritime leg started in Moncton last Sunday and continues into October as she moves through Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador. This is her first major tour and Susan is having a wonderful time - "I love playing live more than anything else in the world. The more I perform, the more I learn about performing; I didn't know what to expect but the more time I spend doing it the more I am enjoying it. The best thing about playing live is the interaction you can have with the audience - with my type of music, it makes sure that the message gets out there." She is beginning to get over her nervousness on stage as the tour

the theatre is empty watching the guys set up, or going backstage to do my make-up before the show. It was difficult at first but I knew going into this that it would happen, and that was half the battle."

Susan's music has been embraced by many different audiences, but h. ever really been labelled as aboriginal - this can be seen by the numerous awards that she has collected in the past couple of years. "I never dwelled on the fact that I was Native - it was the last thing on my mind. I just loved music, loved writing so I put them together and thought I would do it." She sings some of her songs in her native language Inuktitut, something which she regards as being very important. "It all depends on the mood of the song, the emotion. Sometimes I feel that a different language will be more effective. It also makes the point to the youth back home who might be losing their language. This way we can show them that they have a choice to use language, and that is a very powerful thing. I would never

