

# The Maritime Man



Stan Rogers enthralled the audience at the South Side Folk Club. Stan will be playing later this week at the Hot Box.

**Concert review by John Lawrence**

Stan Rogers played an excellent concert to a full house at the Orange Hall Saturday night. It was a brilliant opening performance for this South Side Folk Club Season. Stan moaned, raved and roared his way through a mostly original array of sea songs, ballads, love songs, and the occasional comical ditty. The audience loved it.

Stan Rogers' first appearance in Edmonton follows a wild week at a festival in the North-West Territories, where they couldn't get enough of him. His maritimes music arouses fascination in people who rarely ever see the ocean. Perhaps songs of the heart transcend all regional differences. His east coast songs are rich with stories of peoples' struggles with themselves and their environment. No matter what the lyrics, almost all of them have that haunting, bittersweet quality that touches people intimately. This may explain his growing attraction to audiences on the western side of North America.

The audience reacted immediately to whatever mood he set. I heard one woman say that he is androgynous; he appeals to male and female. He could drive out loud powerful songs about men and the sea, then drift gently into romantic melodies like the one that was number three in England last year, *Forty Five Years From Now*. His music has the power to start

people rocking and stomping, to bring them to rapt misty eyed silence, and to tickle them with the comedy of our weaknesses.

Stan, his brother Garnett, who plays the fiddle and the flute, and their bass player, David Eddy, will be playing in Calgary, Jasper and Edmonton for the next two weeks before returning east via Winnipeg. Anyone who came late Saturday or would like another chance to hear him, can catch him at the Hot Box this Thursday, Friday and Saturday. You could also pick up his last album, *Between the Breaks*.

The South Side Folk Club has done a great job over the last three years of consistently filling their schedule with first class entertainment. This year is the best yet. Since they follow the policy that small is good, one may assume that all the concerts at the Orange Hall will be rapidly sold out. The club provides a small friendly cafe setting. Tickets for Stan Rogers cost \$4, beer 50¢, liquor 75¢.

You can find out what is coming up this fifteen concert season by asking to be on the mailing list. Phone the Club at 475-1042, or write to them at 15026-62 St. It only costs a dollar to be a South Side supporter and receive newsletters. By glancing at the schedule I can see they have lined up an incredible variety of superior international and local performers.

## Young never rusts

Neil Young

*Rust Never Sleeps*

Record review by Neil Macdonald

The basic dilemma facing any rock'n'roller is the danger of becoming impotent and irrelevant as he gets older. Many rockers have burst on the music scene in their youth, brash and irreverent, only to turn into boring old farts as their careers drag on. Elvis is the perfect example.

Fortunately for Neil Young, and his fans, this won't happen to him. While he plays his folksy music well, as befits a man approaching middle age, he is still receptive to fresh influences. In the case of Young's latest album, *Rust Never Sleeps*, the influences were New Wave. In fact, it was Devo, one of the New Wave's fringe groups that gave Young the name and influence for this album.

The New Wave, in its many shapes, is a reaction against the complacency in rock and roll. New Wave attempts to put back into rock and roll the energy and sense of urgency that has always been central to it. For people too old and dissipated to hack the pace, New Wave is a menace.

Neil Young is perfectly aware of all this. He makes it clear that while he is approaching middle age, he is still a rocker who won't "go gently into that good night." He is not going to fall prey to the lethargy that overtook Rod Stewart and other disco boys.

There are two different sides to *Rust Never Sleeps*: a folksy, acoustic first side followed by a side of electric rock and roll. Arranging the album in this fashion illustrates the irony, or paradox of an aging rocker playing the music he does. Rock and roll is a young man's music. This is why so many mega-stars sound insipid as they creep towards middle age.

Rust never sleeps. This concept is re-inforced by the album's opening and closing song. It is done twice, first acoustically, and then with electricity.

The acoustic rendition is subdued, even morose. It's as though Young is feeling too old to rock and roll, as though he feels overtaken by it. However, the electric version is a lot livelier. It's as if Young is trying to stave off the fate that has taken so many of his contemporaries. In this song Young tell us:

*The King is gone but he's not forgotten*

*Is this the story of Johnny Rotten?*

*It's better to burn out 'cause rust never sleeps ...*

If you're going to play rock and roll do it right. Better Johnny Rotten's fate than to rust away like the King.

Each individual song stands up very well. The best track on the album is *Pocohontas*, a gentle, thoughtful ballad about the destruction of the Indian people by the white man. It's an evocative, haunting song, that is not maudlin or sentimental. Another good song is *Thrasher* which describes one man's flight from our dehumanizing, technological society. The album's funniest song is *Welfare Mothers*, an electric parable about the permissive society in which:

*... love is free now*

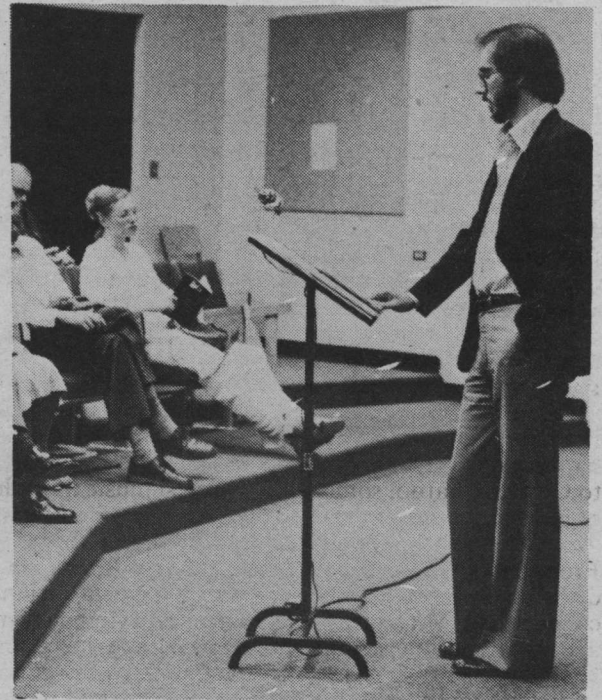
*Welfare Mothers make better lovers*

*Out on the street with the whole family now.*

Each verse ends with a rousing chorus of DEE-VORR-CEE!

Throughout the second side, Young's eccentric guitar licks and deranged vocals give each song an edge of dementia. Meanwhile, Crazy Horse, Young's favorite back-up band, pulses steadily behind.

This is a very consistent, even album: every song is well written and well played. There are no weak spots. It's good to know that Neil Young is able to stay abreast of the times with his music. Even if you don't agree with this reviewer's analysis, this is an album guaranteed to make everyone happy.



Pier Giorgio di Cicco addressing delegates during the weekend's conference on ethnicity and the writer in Canada.

## Curr barks at Abba

**Concert review by Larry Curr**

Thursday night at the Coliseum the Swedish pop group Abba demonstrated why they have been billed as the biggest selling group in record history.

Unfortunately, this does not mean their concert was a total artistic success.

Their show opened with *Voulez-vous*, a recent hit, and the combination of lighting, costumes and the three-dimensional pyramid backdrop provided an auspicious beginning. The band did not take advantage of this however, and performers and audience became isolated from each other. This was partly because of the muted sound system, and partly because of the band themselves.

The performance was slick and clearly well rehearsed, to the point of being cold and mechanical. Admittedly, some of this can be attributed to Abba's long absence from the concert circuit. Abba took few risks early in the show, sticking closely to the recorded versions of their songs, instead of punching them up with any improvisation. Little or no audience empathy was developed.

The sound system also seemed to create problems for the group. Levels were uneven, and solos by the two women, Agnetha and Anni-Frid, were remote, lost in the sound shuffle. The only extended guitar solo of the evening was also a disappointment; the loss of the upper frequencies, and a lack of clarity made it, frankly, boring.

Abba's harmonies were excellent though, and things did improve as the show progressed. The turning point came when Edmonton's Columbian choir joined Abba to sing *I Had a Dream*, a slow ballad. The arrival of the children forced the group to abandon for a moment their tightly paced set, and the enthusiastic audience response loosened up the group considerably.

Abba then launched into two of their old hits, *SOS* and *Fernando*. This was precisely what many of the older fans in the audience wanted to hear.

From this point on the show became a classic rock

concert, with energy, movement and spontaneity. It was too late to save the entire show, but it certainly proved the potential was there. It will be interesting to see if Abba can successfully complete their tour, learning from their mistakes, and perhaps proving machine rock can live on stage, not just on records.

## ESO cheap

by Tom Pickering

The Army and Navy's bargain basement prices have invaded the Edmonton Symphony.

This year, students and senior citizens can obtain season subscriptions at half price. There are still seats available on the main floor, and in the first and second balconies.

For those who like to buy their tickets just before the concert (rush tickets), the \$4.00 section of the second balcony is available to students and senior citizens for \$2.00.

This year the ESO is offering four series at the Jubilee Auditorium. A Master series which features guest performers and conductors begins September 14. A Mozart series of three concerts starts September 20. This series will present three world renowned Mozart performers.

Beginning on February 3, Canadian guest artists are featured in series called Musically Speaking.

A Pop Series will also be included. The Shumka Dancers, The Alberta Ballet, a classical guitar quartet, and Richard Hayman, the long time arranger for the Boston Pops are to appear.

The ESO will also include a pair of Beethoven concerts on October 20 and 26 and two special Christmas concerts. Last year's Christmas concert, a sell-out, starred Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn of the National Ballet of Canada.

For subscriptions or information call the Edmonton Symphony Society at 439-2091.

