

'All by himself on stage'

# Preston steals show at Harrison's non-event



Jeffrey Morgan photo

By JEFFREY MORGAN

Too bad really — it had all the makings of a real event. Everything that was needed to make it work was there: the vast banks of speakers, the lighting towers, the huge Krishna and Dark Horse symbols — even promoter Bill Graham making a short preconcert speech about people with cameras not needing to use flashbulbs. "You can eat 'em for all I care," was his closing comment to the audience as he turned and headed backstage.

What then, could possibly have gone wrong?

It was certainly nothing that you could really put your finger on. True, the sound system acted up a bit — in fact, during the Indian music segment of the show the amount of feedback coming over the speakers was so painfully loud that at one point Harrison stopped playing and

everybody present. During a small step and jump dance routine with Harrison centre stage, Preston urged the crowd further and further to the brink of hysteria. Following Preston's lead, Harrison further sustained the mood with an equally scathing What is Life. The encore, of course, was My Sweet Lord.

Exactly ten years since his first Gardens appearance with The Beatles, George Harrison once again returned to Toronto to put the finishing touches on a concert year which started off with a double dose of Dylan, hit a middle peak with a double dose of Bowie, and roared to a fulfilling climax with single shots

from Clapton, Wakeman, Reed, Elton and Kiki Dee.

Somehow though while watching the show, one couldn't help but wonder if the combined myth was, indeed, greater than the man himself. After singing In My Life, Harrison took the mike to say, "God bless John, Paul, George and Ringo — and all of their ex's."

A fitting epitaph to be sure, but at the same time not quite as fitting as the words of Jobriath who says, "You don't have to be a hit to be a miss."

The only trouble is that when you are a hit, it only makes it all more painful — and obvious — when and if you do happen to blow it.

turned to give his off stage sound crew a sarcastic 'thumbs up' sign.

And, yes, Harrison's voice did start to fail him for a while during the second half of the show; but, by and by, the remainder of the show was musically flawless as Harrison ripped off ringing guitar licks that conjured up visions of Eric Clapton's comeback concert of several months before.

Such as things were though, it was Billy Preston who finally managed to get the crowd on their feet during the second last song of the set with a blistering version of Outta Space. Taking his by now famous walk, Preston shed his jacket and jive-stepped his way across the Garden's stage and into the hearts of

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