

Byrds show was Toronto's worst

By STEVE GELLER

The Byrds concert on Sunday at Massey Hall was an exhibition of crude behavior, disorganization and poor judgment making for the worst run show held in Toronto this year.

Maurey Haden, a 27-year-old comedian, instigated the chaos as she walked onto the stage clinging to a guitar which she placed on the floor. Seating herself at the piano she announced "I'm not a singer, I'm a comedian."

Rising to take her place behind the microphones at centre stage she pleaded with the Massey Hall staff to turn on the house lights so that she could see everyone. This was a mistake.

What followed was a disgusting waste of time for both Miss Haden and the more than usually childish, boorish audience.

As she nauseated the crowd with her sick Miss America and school girl routines, she was constantly tormented by the group of animals who filled the seats. The interruptions became so frequent that Miss Haden was forced to stop her comic routines and bicker with her audience.

After seating herself once more at the piano Maurey left the stage with tear-filled eyes proclaiming "I only tried to make you laugh. . . sometimes you smartass so much that you forget people's hearts."

Following Miss Haden's exit was an intermissionless interlude of setting up drums, adjusting a large organ and countless microphone decibel tests.

Teagarden and Van Winkle sauntered onto the stage and held their audience for 20 minutes with Chest Fever and Season of the Witch; that was before they started to prolong their already extensive tune introductions and drag out their music which became both repetitious and tedious.

Further boredom was incited as both members of the duet requested glasses of water which had to be brought from backstage one at a time!

As Teagarden and Van Winkle left the stage the audience was again subjected to uninterrupted confusion as the 20 minute equipment adjustment, performed in its entirety with the lights out,

was climaxed by the arrival of the Byrds who gradually arrived to face the crowd while still amid the movement of microphones and amplifiers.

Rodger McGuin disgustingly peered across the almost filled concert hall before exclaiming "Isn't there anyone to introduce us?" There wasn't. That is, there wasn't a scheduled formal in-

roduction, but the Byrds began after a fan hollered "...and now presenting the Byrds."

McGuin is the only original Byrd remaining in the group. The other Byrds performed in such a classless manner marked with a definite lack of stage presence, musical style and apathy, that it was evident they were extremely

poor substitutions for a once thriving musical entity. The constant movement by the technical arrangers took away whatever redeeming features of the concert that McGuin himself partially provided.

It appeared that McGuin did not really need Clarence White, the rhythm guitar player, or Skip Battin or bass. It was McGuin himself who accounted for the group's singing and the major portion of the guitar work.

In fact, McGuin could have been the stage's sole performer as his instrument was turned up so loud that only on a few occasions could the meagre efforts of the other so-called musicians be detected. The efforts of Gene Parsons (a mediocre drummer at best) to harmonize with McGuin were in vain.

The group attempted some of the original Byrds material (I'll Feel a Whole Lot Better, Eight Miles High) as well as displaying some of their now country rock (Jesus is Just Alright) which, like the previous delivery, was dependent upon McGuin's musical ability.

The high point of the concert, in this case referring to the low point of boredom, came when McGuin, accompanied by his 12-string acoustic guitar and Parson's harmonica, sang a medley of the songs he wrote for the movie Easy Rider.

The Byrds were excitedly hailed by only a few devoted fans while the silent majority remained disappointed at the Maurey Haden experience, the constant technical distractions on stage and the meek performance by the headliners which ended the three and three quarter hour restless sit-in.



KUMQUAT IS HERE

The musical revue Kumquat, directed by Lorne Frohman, opens at Burton Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 pm. Admission is one dollar.

Excalibur - Dave Cooper

In His Own Write, John Lennon is funny

By IVAN ZENDEL

In His Own Write, the play based on John Lennon's book of the same name, is a funny, enjoyable, hour-plus of skits and poetry. The play, set to run till Feb. 21 opened this week at the Theatre Passe Muraille, 11 Trinity Square.

The central theme of the whole thing is the images of childhood. We see and hear the world through the eyes and ears of a little boy who grows up during the play. But when he does, when he finishes school and goes to work it is over, the play, and maybe, Lennon implies, even his life.

The play itself has some precious

moments and is full of what can only be described as delicious phrases.

In church, one of the characters promises to be good and dedicated and to give up all his "wordy possessions". The sky becomes a "marmalady moon" and Surlock Clomes smiles to the doctor (Watson) with a "strange hook on his face".

I was continually reminded of Dylan Thomas (When I was young and green. . .) and James Joyce (. . . moocow. . .). The lines had the same kind of light, lilting and amusing quality and flavour.

Lennon has, no doubt, borrowed on their

style but this does not in any sense imply plagiarism of style or even imitation.

Rather, In His Own Write is an emulation of this style brought into a very contemporary setting. At least three of the skits in the play are what the little boy sees on TV.

One of the funniest lines is a portrayal of a TV show on racial problems. The host, a vicar with a very BBCish voice introduces an African beating on his drum, as Mr. Wambabom, and very seriously adds "or may I call you motherfucker."

Many of the lines would not work in

print. But the director, Martin Kinch, has done an imaginative job of making them work on the stage.

Although a few of the scenes fall flat, they are more than compensated by the scenes that do not. The play can and should be improved and tightened, but still Kinch has made a fairly good effort.

As far as the actors are concerned, they deserve no special mention, aside from the fact that none of them were good enough to steal the play and none were bad enough to spoil it. They worked well together and this is what the play essentially required.



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Ten Wheel Drive

New group is best of kind

Hidden under its commercial structure and teeny-bopper appeal and David Clayton Thomas' revolting egotistic attitude lies an inkling of jazz-rock.

Although the sounds of Blood, Sweat and Tears may be enough to deter anyone from digging pop music's newest sound, a new group entitled Ten Wheel Drive has been

born to firmly entrench the relatively young phenomenon of jazz-rock on the contemporary music scene.

Aram Schefrin, lyricist/arranger/guitarist (as well as being a lawyer, graduating from Columbia University and Harvard Law School); Mike Zager, composer/arranger/organist; and Genya Raven, lead vocalist, decided to form a group built around the jazz-rock style.

They found seven instrumentalists in New York and after performing all over the United States, including such places as The Scene, Ungango's The Bitter End, Cafe A-Go-Go and the Village Gate, entered a recording studio and left with their first album — Construction #1 (Polydor 543.112).

Ten Wheel Drive generate enough energy to capture a big band sound similar in physical impact to the big bands of the 40s. Instruments such as a piccolo, trumpet, flugel horn, trombone, flute, tenor and baritone sax, or clarinet merge with the sounds of a guitar, electric bass, organ,

harmonica, and tambourine to provide the jazz-rock fusion on a grand scale.

Although the instrumentation on Construction #1, with the musical breaks displaying some down to earth, honest, jazz solos, is unusually superb, the most striking feature of the album is the ability and wide range of the voice of lead singer Genya Raven.

Genya was born in Poland and previously had her own all-girl group before joining Schefrin and Zager in forming Ten Wheel Drive. She sets the pace and the mood for the rest of the group. With cuts such as House in Central Park and Hopidary, Genya evokes a soft mood with smooth even voice; but with cuts such as Tightrope she displays a tough, raspy Janis Joplin-like "I need you, I need ya. . ." which makes for a moving, filled-with-feeling, atmosphere.

Jazz-rock is becoming a popular field in the contemporary music world. This new group with their first album, a combination of electronics and brass, has risen quickly to become the best jazz-rock band of its kind. — S.G.

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