



The star indulges in some quadrupedal activity. The audience eats it up.

Billy Joel pleases

Billy Joel
Coliseum

review by Brent Jeffery

Thank God that there are people like Billy Joel around who still believe in the fundamental institution of rock and roll. Sunday night over 17,000 people (the highest number ever for a concert at the Coliseum) witnessed an entertaining, "sit back and listen" type concert with an element of fun that is so noticeably lacking in other performers.

Joel opened the show with "You May Be Right" from his "Glass Houses" album. From the first note his non-stop antics had the crowd's approval. He moved to all points of the stage; sometimes at a leisurely gait and sometimes with reckless abandon. To facilitate his seemingly constant movement, there were four sets of keyboards available to him. This setup allowed Joel to play to the crowd at all areas, front and back, to the delight of everyone.

The concert itself progressed smoothly with a song selection from all of

his albums but mainly from his last three. There was a good balance of rockers and ballads and one could never become bored with either, as there was visual stimulation during the rockers and quiet emotion - a salient aspect that can only be captured live - during the ballads.

The show did, however, drag at times, most noticeably in the middle when a series of slow and relatively dull songs from earlier albums were played. The lull that was created was quickly dispelled when Billy Joel launched into a rousing rendition of "Alberta Bound", to a deafening roar from the crowd. At this, Joel observed "You see, boys, I told you that song would come in handy some day."

To top it all off, the sound was excellent. There was total clarity from all the instruments, and vocals, and the sound level was tolerable.

Two hours and two encores later, Billy Joel bid Edmonton goodbye. With performances like this one, we can only hope that he will return soon.

THE CHOPPING BLOCK

Soul-searching

What little time I have left over after writing balderdash, editing balderdash, making it up, laying it out, and dodging spitballs from the Managing Editor, I spend in contemplation of *What the Arts Page Should Be*.

The exercise is largely theoretical since the contests of the page are mostly determined by contributors to it. Thus I can fret that one-shot concerts get more coverage than more durable art like books and records, or that general events predominate over university happenings, but if my hard-working, unpaid, volunteer staffers prefer to cover one-shot concerts or general events, I can't do much except sigh, utter heart-rending appeals for other stuff, and write a compensatory article or two when I get the time.

Quality, however, is controllable, and to improve what we review (in our haphazard, scattershot way) I will be writing a critic's guide over the summer. Look for it in September.

Farewell

The Arts page stops as of today, but of course Art stops for no one. On top of what appears in the Up and Coming listings today, oodles of things will be happening during the spring and summer: SUB Theatre will be hosting performances of Indian actors, dancers, musicians, storytellers and models April 21 (in conjunction with a native showcase in the gallery), the "new wave" mime group Omnibus (May 1, 2), classical guitarist Liona Boyd (May 15) and other delights too numerous to mention.

The Princess Theatre has some good selections (as usual) in its eclectic repertoire: A Hitchcock series, *Life of Brian*, *THX-1138*, and the excellent *Gimme Shelter*, among others.

The Dept. of Music's numerous events continue unabated to the end of April (and probably further). Theatre Network will be presenting a rocked-up update of *Rumpelstiltskin* starting April 28, the Edmonton Symphony and the Alberta Ballet Company will be at the Jubilee, as well as Jesse Winchester and Leo Kottke (a must see), the McDougall Ensemble will be presenting Copeland's *Appalachian*.

Spring April 15 at the McDougall United Church, and a half million other things will happen that you will have to look in the *Summer Times* to find.

Miscellaneous items:

• In the last issue Michael wrote "Having Smokey Robinson back is terrific. Now if we could only get him to do an..." The line that fell off the page was, "an album of nothing but his own material."

• The press release which we got a long distance phone call for last week is pushing an upcoming film called *Outland*. The press release is the slickest thing that has crossed the desk during my tenure, and the film looks like its going to be pretty slick, too, with a bar scene pornographic enough to curl your eyebrows. Whether the show is any good is another question.

• See you all in September. It's been a pressure.

MUSIC

Barde; April 13, 8 p.m.; Provincial Museum Theatre; Tickets: Mike's, HUB. The Winnipeg Free Press, the Edmonton Sun, the Ottawa Citizen, and Deacon Greese all recommend this one.

FILM

Man Jaiye, or the Eternal Search for Happiness; April 12, 12 and 3 p.m.; April 18, 3 and 6 p.m.; SUB Theatre, Tickets: Woodwards, Mike's, and HUB.

Women Want, Patricia's Moving Picture; April 12, 7:30 p.m.; Paul Kane House 10220-121 St.; \$3:00 (\$2:00 if you are poor).

GALLERIES

MVA Exhibition; April 9-26; 11-5 weekdays, 1-5 weekends; SUB Art Gallery; Free. The MVA is for Masters of Visual Arts, and one would therefore expect this exhibit to be even better than the bachelor's exhibits which just finished.

RADIO

A Canticle for Leibowitz; April 12, 9:05 p.m.; CBC radio. This novel deserves a Nobel Prize, although it will probably be another 20 years before the professors, who have barely discovered Joseph Conrad, latch onto it. It will be interesting to see how well it adapts to audio.

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by Michael Skeet

The Who
Face Dances
(Warner XHS 3516)

While I wouldn't go so far as to call *Face Dances* a dud (take that, Graham!), a disappointment it certainly is. It's disappointing in the sense that a higher standard of work is expected by fans of what is essentially the Last of the Great Rock 'n' Pop Bands. (The use of the word Pop is deliberate: The Who are as much the band of *Boris the Spider* and *The Who Sell Out* as the creators of *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*.)

Interviews with Pete Townsend over the past six months suggest The Who are going through changes; I suspect that Townsend is re-evaluating his musical direction, and that this may be responsible for the surprisingly lacklustre material presented to us on *Face Dances*. Townsend, as always, has the best of the songwriting - I've never been comfortable with John Entwistle's music anyway - but there are more weak tunes than strong ones here, and none of those full-ahead, kick-out-the-jams rockers.

The opening tune, and the best on the album, is *You Better You Bet*. This one could have come straight from *Empty Glass*, Townsend's great solo album from last year. The wistful reference to *Who's Next* could be interpreted as suggesting that maybe Keith Moon's death spelled the end to a considerable aspect of the band's persona. *Don't Let Go the Coat*, a smooth pop tune that bears the unmistakable stamp of producer Bill Szymczyk, may be an indication of the direction Townsend is leaning toward. Personally, I see nothing against this. I'd much rather see Townsend mellow gracefully, or get out of music altogether, for that matter, than to continue as Mick Jagger is doing, shouting fatuous sexual polemics at the age of 40 and making a

fool of himself.

After the first two numbers, *Face Dances* slides pretty steadily; *Cache Cache*, with its disturbing, impenetrable lyrics, is passable, but from that point on nothing is memorable until the final number, *Another Tricky Day*, and even that tune isn't good enough to redeem the album.

You can't write 'em off, though. "In *You Better You Bet*, Roger Daltrey sings, "But my body feels so good and I stil sing a razor line everytime." This is The Who's first album with Kenny Jones; Townsend is working horns into the band's stage act for the first time, and they're by no means dead yet. If Townsend still wants to (and I suspect he does, there'll be another Who album - and a better one for the experience, I hope - in a couple of years.

Phil Collins
Face Value
(Atlantic XSD 16029)

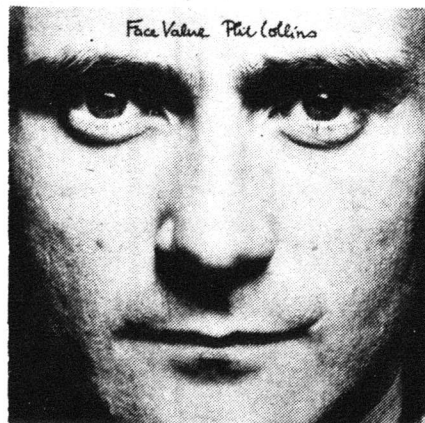
The cycle is now complete: the various members of Genesis have all followed erstwhile lead singer Peter Gabriel in recording solo projects. Drummer and current lead vocalist Phil Collins is the last to do so, and I think *Face Value* is the most intriguing of the non-Gabriel albums. Where Mike Rutherford's *Smallcreep's Day*, for example, is intense, thickly layered, and slightly pretentious, I find *Face Value* cheerful, slightly nutty, and deliciously schizophrenic.

The latter characteristic is the result of Collins' extensive use of the horn section from Earth, Wind and Fire. The result of this unusual pairing is a little hard to describe; Collins and EWF each have such a distinctive, identifiable sound that several of their collaborations end up sounding like one of the bands attempting to imitate the other (Collins even

picks up some of Maurice White's vocal idiosyncracies).

There are some very enjoyable tunes on this album; the horns are what make numbers like *Behind the Lines*, and especially *Thunder and Lightning* so much fun. This isn't to suggest that *Face Value* is just a white-face EWF ripoff, of course. Collins puts percussion very obviously and abruptly into the forefront on a couple of numbers (the drums' entrance on *In the Air Tonight* is particularly effective.) And the undefinable *Hand in Hand* is, by virtue of its originality, the most effective tune on the album.

We probably could have done without



Tomorrow Never Knows, on the other hand; Collins' version doesn't add anything significant to the Beatles original, and that's an unnecessarily-weak ending to an otherwise impressive album.

That's really the only complaint I can muster about the album (and yes, I'm seeing a doctor about it tomorrow). Collins is listed as producer, by the way, and three-cheers-for-him, he's done quite a job.

The Boomtown Rats
Mondo Bongo
(Vertigo VOG1-3301)

I've always had a weakness for a clever lyricist. From Noel Coward and Cole Porter to Godley-Creme-Gouldman-Stewart of 10cc (all English but Porter), my favorite songwriters are almost all members of that select fraternity, able in a few words to puncture any hypocrisy, crack through the most emotionless exterior. One of the best of the clever boys active today is Bob Geldof - I can see Noel Coward nodding in (reluctant) agreement while reading *Another Piece of Red*, just one of the great songs on *Mondo Bongo*, the latest album from the Boomtown Rats.

I Don't Like Mondays may have brought Geldof to the notice of the populace at large, but that ditty represents but one facet of his talent. For instance, on this album he neatly turns the Jagger-Richards song *Under My Thumb* around; from an anthem of sexual dominance it turns into an anthem for the oppressed - women, blacks, the whole bloody *This World*, and the song goes by at such breakneck speed you know they aren't going to stay oppressed for very long.

I may just be an old fart whose brain has been ravaged by inhaling Disc-Washer Fluid fumes, but I'm sure I detect more than just a hint of 10 cc's influence in something like *Banana Republic* - don't get me wrong, I think this is terrific. And *Banana Republic* is the best song on an album with lots of good songs on it.

Jens is telling me it's time to go, and who am I to argue when he's holding the gun? I'll simply finish by saying that this album is terrific enough to make me forget about Bob Geldof's voice, and that's saying a lot.