

Bruce Cockburn dazzles audience

By ALEX VARTY

Bruce Cockburn, one of Canada's most renowned folk artists, paid his annual visit to Fredericton last Sunday night, and gave a short but pleasing concert at the Playhouse. Cockburn, an immensely capable musician, dazzled his audience with his virtuoso instrumental work, but fell short of expectations by unveiling several new songs with heavily religious lyrics. Cockburn seems to be at his best as an instrumentalist and as a diarist - that is, as a sensitive musician who excels in capturing moments of his life in song. When he applies himself to more general topics; American imperialism ("Burn, Baby, Burn") or the virtues of the Christian life; he seems naive and out of synch with effective reality.

Probably because of this, his visionary songs, and his state-of-consciousness tunes are his most pleasing pieces; intelligent, harmonious and in definite contrast to the political and theological preaching of his lesser works.

All criticism of content aside, Cockburn's musical forms are well-suited to his approach. Employing a unique, percussive style on dulcimer and a jazz-inflected guitar technique, he is a rare and individual stylist. His music is distinctively Canadian, rustic yet crystal-clear, and is the perfect complement to his somewhat melancholy voice. Although I don't agree with Cockburn's new-found piety, the only element which really detracted from an almost perfect evening was the behaviour of a small number of people in the audience. Though subdued in comparison to the disgusting performance at last year's Cockburn concert, Fredericton's collection of inconsiderate boors (including the cops who talked loudly throughout the first set) did their best to disrupt the event. Let's see if the musician-baiters, the drunks and the police can't be kept away from concerts in the future, so that music-lovers can enjoy themselves in peace.

Red Rock Hotel displays new comps

By ALEX VARTY

Red Rock Hotel's return to Fredericton for a one-night stand at the Playhouse was marked by a good group performance and a monstrous performance by some members of the audience. The band (formerly three-fifths of A Joint Effort) concentrated on playing acoustically-oriented original material, but the audience relied upon unoriginal, amplified vocalisms. Fredericton is infamous across the nation for the uncouth receptions accorded visiting performers, but it was quite disheartening to see the same shoddy treatment given to people who have done so much for community spirit in this city.

Red Rock won out, fortunately, although the battle started badly. The first set dragged in places, and it was evident that the band members were suffering from the drive down from Ottawa, and even a little nervous about unveiling their new act before so many friends (not to mention the small army of hecklers). Although all the new compositions displayed were well-written, at first the band seemed to miss the energy which was a trademark of A Joint Effort. Brian Bourne provided most of the set's high points - his bass playing has always been good, but the acquisition of a new Fender has obviously inspired him, and I was reminded of Phil Tesh or Jack Casady more than once.

During the break the band consolidated their resources, and during the second set all three seemed tuned in to a very ebullient group chemistry. Although they've largely given up on "electric" music, Red Rock's energy level during the latter part of the concert was high enough to satisfy all but the most obnoxious devotee's of "rock 'n' scream" music.

Since the boys should have an album out soon, I'll refrain from commenting on the individual songs until I've heard the finished versions. Some of their compositions are as strong as any others that I've heard in that field, and they certainly are a band with a future.

Tribute to Hank Williams airs

A tribute to Hank Williams, Sr., a legendary figure in the annals of country music, will be broadcast on CBC Radio's Country Road, Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 10:30 p.m. EST.

Hank Williams: His Life and Legend, is written by Herschel Fenik, a dedicated Williams fan who has an immense library of just about everything written about or

recorded by the famous artist.

From a poor childhood in Alabama, Hank rose to stardom in the late forties when he had his first big hit on the MGM label, Move It On Over. After joining the Grand Ole Opry in 1949, with his group, The Drifting Cowboys, he dominated the country field (winning four gold records along

the way) until his untimely death in 1953 at the age of 29.

In 1961, the first three bronze plaques were dedicated for the new Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville in the names of Jimmie Rodgers, Fred Rose and Hank Williams.

The program, first broadcast Jan. 1, 1975 was produced for CBC Radio by Keith Duncan.

Workshop Productions to perform

Robert Frost's "A Masque of Reason" and Al Pittman's "Rope Against the Sun" will be presented Jan. 28 and 29 in Fredericton by UNB drama students.

The two one-act plays will be performed at 8 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Admission is free of charge and open to the public.

Named Workshop Productions, the drama group is made up of students in English 3150 and is led by Edward J. Mullaly, UNB assistant professor of English.

"Masque of Reason" is a short comic fantasy which concentrates on the thousandth anniversary of Job's disaster. Frost attempts to "explore the humanity of God and the divinity of Man."

The second play, "Rope Against the Sun" by Al Pittman, examines the lives of villagers in a Newfoundland outpost probing their beliefs, dreams and frailties.

Al Pittman now edits Breakwater Books out of Portugal Cove, Nfld.

Coffee house termed success

By LORNE MCINTOSH

RIDDLE: What may be heard but not seen, speaks without language, has soul but no body and comes in a green bag of tricks?

ANSWER: Music.

More specifically, it is the music of Mark Lulham and friends, the COLLEGE HILL FOLK COLLECTIVE, a group of interested people who have formed an organization dedicated to "a simpler form of leisure". Their stated purpose is;

"... to promote fellowship amongst campus folk with regards to music, drama, and the other forms of artistic expression, within the general body of those interested in performing or enjoying within an easy and simple setting. One extensively used medium shall be the 'coffee house'. Down-to-earth forms of music such as blues, jazz, bluegrass and folk, along with short plays, mimes, poetry and visual arts, etc., shall be emphasized. This will, at times, require the hiring of outside artists and performers. The sum of these will, in sorts,

constitute a form of education for the folk of College Hill."

Last Friday evening I enjoyed that simpler form of leisure in the Mackenzie House lounge at the first official coffee house of the CHFC. It was simply a success. We who were there enjoyed the music, the atmosphere, and each other's company.

Among the performers were Kevin Thompson and Dawn Macdonald, singing some of their own songs, "Bo" Geary, Jim Murray, David Erdely (with his own songs), Brian Harvey, Mark Lulham and Art Budnick, and Brandy Buck, a three man group. Altogether about twenty artists made the sounds and over ninety listened. The low key M.C., Paul Meyer, besides maintaining the easy flow of sets, asked the audience to help if they were interested in similar future events. Help may be in the form of donations of money, effort or talent.

As a first sample, I like the taste of it. It is good medicine. In these days of bottled elixir it might be considered a natural remedy. Guaranteed no colouring or preservatives added; with the right ingredients you can make it yourself.



Photo by Steve Patriquen

Ritual Sculptures from Black Africa are on display in the Beaverbrook Art Gallery. Above is a mask depicting the maiden spirit, worn by men of the Mmo society during festivals.

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