

Ferron, audience mesh at Museum Theatre show

Ferron
Provincial Museum Theatre
Tuesday, March 7

review by Marg Ackerman

Ferron walks onstage smiling hello as though entering a friend's livingroom. The comfortability is mutual; her audience and she are genuinely glad to be here.

As a performer, Ferron has allowed her audience to be a part of the performance. In fact, she insists on it, jokingly alluding to psychotherapeutic techniques wherein one "commits" to following through with

or recognize something which may also belong to you.

What Ferron gives to her music is a kind of wholeness that can only come from a person willing to take great risks. Perhaps it is her own rocky childhood and subsequent struggle for freedom from her pain that enhances this woman's tremendous gift for personal and poetic expression. These kinds of things are never easy to describe since their essence usually transcends that which can be expressed in only words. You should have gone to the concert.

Ferron was accompanied on most numbers by Kevin Zoernig, who is also her piano teacher. Having moved to Santa Fe about a year ago, Ferron says it's time she learned music — after all, she says, "I'm almost 40!"

The added instrumentation allowed for changes in some of the familiar arrangements. Longer lead breaks left room for Zoernig to display his adeptness on the baby grand. A synthesizer, though periodically seeming to hear a rhythm of its own, enabled the duo to contour the mood of songs like "Shadows on a Dime" or the jolly "Belly-Bowl."

Lyrically, Ferron's songs are complex and moving. At the end of the second set, the music stopped and she drew the audience into an a capella chorus of one of her best, "Testimony":

"By my life be I spirit
By my heart be I woman
By my eyes be I open
By my hands be I whole."

Ferron is a very special performer. A concert with her is much more than an evening's entertainment. For those two

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an activity. In this context, we are speaking of hand-clapping throughout an *entire* song or emitting a primal yelp after a particular phrase. This is not a seat-potato concert. We listen, yes, but also take action.

The warmth her audiences feel for Ferron has been only partially established through her good humour and onstage anecdotes, though. She shares herself with her audience, opening doors that reveal rooms filled with love, loss, pain, and hope for life. It's difficult to look in and not feel



Tuesday evening was the occasion for a love-in between Ferron and a full house of fans at a concert presented by the South Side Folk Club. The west coast singer/songwriter has moved south to the U.S.A. recently.

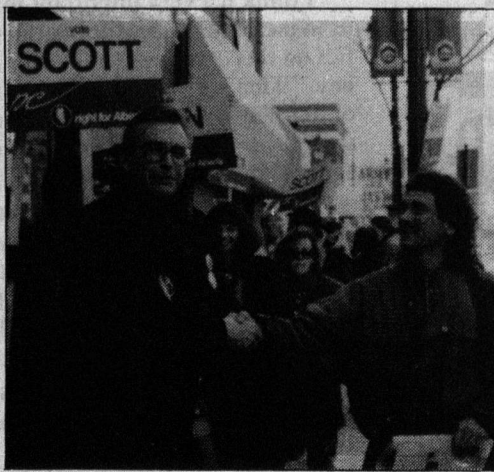
hours there is a sharing of laughter, of emotion, of humanity. "What's the matter with harmless love?" the audience sings along. "I don't know," says Ferron as she finally leaves the stage.

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