



Nightclubs
by
Peter
Harris

This time around John Lee Hooker's mellow, articulate

THE JOHN LEE HOOKER who opened last night at the Riverboat is not the John Lee Hooker I heard a couple of years ago during his last visit to Toronto.

Physically, it's the same man, of course, but musically there's a world of difference. The Riverboat's John Lee Hooker is a mellow, articulate performer who can conjure up a variety of moods and emotions as he moves through a cross-section of blues and "country soul" music. Last time out, some of the feeling was there, but there was a definite breakdown in communications as far as the words were concerned.

In the show I saw last night, Hooker ranged through such varied material as the slow, subdued and plaintive I'll Never Get Out of These Blues Alive, the hard-bitten talking blues, Al Capone, and the relatively light-hearted Dimples.

Despite some trouble with his amplifier last night, Hooker ably demonstrated his versatility as a guitarist, particularly on a song called Maudie. He knows when to let his guitar do the talking—Boom Boom is a good example—and it proves to be a musically articulate instrument.

Hooker's voice, moving as it does from a husky whisper to a deep bass, can be a mellow instrument or a sharp-edged weapon. It still retains the rough edges so necessary to authentic blues, but whatever the song, the message comes through loud and clear.

A TORONTO-BASED GROUP called Olivus, which appeared some months ago at the Riverboat under the name Flying Circus, has pulled the plug on its electronics equipment and gone acoustic.

Last night, the four-man group made a one-night appearance at the Night Owl coffee house to say farewell to the old sound and now faces two months of work before making its debut with its new sound at the Mariposa Folk Festival. Also on the books is a fall appearance at New York's Bitter End.

Since appearing at the Riverboat, where I found them to be one of the more subdued groups around even with electronics, Olivus has made a few appearances out of town, notably in Montreal and Ottawa, but none locally until last night.

Its members are Gord McBain, Martin Fisher, Dennis Pendrith and Bruce Cockburn and the reason they're switching to acoustical instruments, according to their co-managers Lee Jackson and Harvey Glatt, is that electronics equipment hasn't enabled them to do justice to the material written by Cockburn.

One of the group's biggest fans, according to Jackson, is folksinger **Joni Mitchell** who heard some of Cockburn's material during her recent visit to Toronto and took a couple of their tapes to pass on to Reprise records.