

1974 Local Rock Scene: Much Missed

By CHARLES ANDREWS

During 1974, the most notable thing about the Albuquerque popular concert scene was what wasn't seen. The biggest names passed us by.

For the previous three years, that wasn't so. We had been spoiled by landing a date on nearly every major concert tour, with the notable exception of the Who.

Over the past six years, we've had the opportunity to see just about anyone who is someone — the Rolling Stones, Three Dog Night (seven times), Jetho Tull (three times), Simon & Garfunkel (twice), Led Zeppelin (twice), Cream, Jimi Hendrix, Grand Funk Railroad, Janis Joplin, Elvin Bishop, Alice Cooper, Jefferson Airplane and many more. Few could resist playing the cavernous and profitable University Arena.

THIS PAST year, if you wanted to see Dylan and the Band, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Eric Clapton or George Harrison, you had to go to Denver or Phoenix. With ticket prices for these shows sky high, and adding in transportation and overnight room and board, you're talking about a \$30 concert minimum. Every concert you lay down money for is a gamble, but you'd have to see to see someone awfully bad to risk that much.

The only one I felt warranted that much expense and effort was Dylan. He had appeared only a handful of times, usually unannounced and badly timed since his near-fatal motorcycle accident in 1966. With the Band backing him up, the combination was too much to resist. Ecstatic reviews of the early tour shows went over many who were festering on the brink of indecision, and Row 1 of the floor of the Denver Coliseum was entirely filled with Albuquerque people, with many more familiar faces scattered throughout the huge arena.

The ecstatic reviewers were dead right. I could sympathize with their falling all over their knees in attempting to grope for the proper superlatives.

From reviews and firsthand reports I've heard of the other shows, the Dylan/Band concert seems to be the only one of the Big Four that missed as that was unsequentially worth the trip.

AT SOME POINT, there was a possibility of all of them hitting Albuquerque. For a Dylan date, it was mostly speculation in the early stages of setting up the tour. For Clapton and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young it was much more definite, with tentative plans being made up until a couple of weeks before they would be in this area.

The nearest miss was on George Harrison. It went as far as the Harrison people offering a date on which he would play in University Arena, but it conflicted with Lobo basketball practice. Lobo Coach Norm Ellenberger and UNM's Popular Entertainment Committee Chairman Steve Schroeber could not work out an agreement and the Harrison people would not offer another date, so Albuquerque lost its chance to see a real live Beatle.

The Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young date was nearly as close to happening, until someone set off one or more tear gas canisters at a five-band concert in University Stadium last May. That was the first concert held in that stadium in years, and others were planned. Crosby and friends among them if everything went smoothly. But after residents south of the stadium complained about the "noise"—not to mention



Joni Mitchell — Best Concert Of The Year, In Johnson Gym The Lady Was Charming, Talented And Just Plain Real

the 9000 unhappy people in the stadium who were in the thick of the gas — all other stadium concerts were cancelled.

IT'S MUCH more difficult to determine why other big and lesser-known performers did not appear here. The tangle of third- and fourth-hand information starts locally with promoters, ticket agents, and those who control the bookings of facilities like University Arena, Civic auditorium, Popkey Hall — and goes up the line to out-of-state promoters, record companies, agents, managers, and the artists themselves.

Another factor was the weakened market here. Formerly known as the town

of the future, Albuquerque's economy has a lot to do with it. With New Mexico one of the poorest of the 50 states, being hit very hard. Scheduling was often a factor. Joni Mitchell played only during a six-week period when there were 11 concerts scheduled — five for L.A. and shared for an area with 350,000 people to draw from. Many concerts drew well during the last half of the year, however, and Albuquerque is rebuilding the image, which was never critically damaged, of a city where the big acts can play and at least make expenses.

None of this is meant to imply that only the big shows are worth seeing, nor that no second-level stars made their way to this arid outpost in 1974. There were a lot of smaller concerts here, and over a dozen of them could be rated "very good." That's an average of better than one a month, a goal which seemed unobtainable for Albuquerque five years ago.

Most of the best, as it turned out, were the big-name attractions. My list of excellent concerts seen here in the past year includes: Santana; Emerson, Lake & Palmer; the Allman Brothers; Joni Mitchell; Legnos & Messina (both concerts); Van Morrison-Little Feat.; and Randy Newman-By Cowell.

Picking the two best among them was fairly easy, but deciding between those finally became impossible. So I'm co-awarding Best of the Year honors to Santana and Joni Mitchell, with separate categories that may better explain the dichotomy.

BEST PERFORMANCE

Santana—a rare, truly inspired performance, of such intensity and precision to its form, that the only comparison I could draw would be with the Dylan concert (though in most ways they were very different). Carlos Santana has been an intriguing figure in the music world recently, metamorphosing on several levels from a laid-back, Latin hard rock guitar player to a jazz-playing, short-cropped, follower of Sri Chinmoy.

He dropped his old, immemorially successful band, recruited with Malavino, John McLaughlin and Alice Coltrane along the way, and showed up here again with a large (eight-man) band, with a few of the old people. But the time he was the leader in a very different way, standing off to one side and grabbing no more of the spotlight than a one-third share. His playing retains its intensity, but is much more refined now.

The Santana band was a musical machine seemingly incapable of being the slightest bit out of focus, a credit to Carlos' leadership as much as to the considerable individual abilities of the other seven. R.E.O. Speedwagon started the show with a surprisingly tasteful hard rock set, but not good enough to make the Santana R.E.O. concert as a whole the year's best.

BEST CONCERT: Joni Mitchell — she teamed with Tom Scott and the L.A. Express who backed up her performance but also opened the show on their own. That gave the concert

any year, in a theatrical sense. The British trio brought 30 tons of equipment, set up in quadruplicate, and blew even the most skeptical minds with a pyrotechnic display that far overshadowed their limited musical ideas. Great fun.

—Van Morrison-Little Feat — more interesting that to play passable. Little Feat, whose popular appeal lags way behind their critical acclaim, showed they are without question one of the best American bands today.

Van Morrison pulled surprises all night, from his physical appearance to his musical arrangements, climaxing his quixotic behavior by seeming to walk off stage because of hassles with the audience, only to return with a long, singing encore set that finished with "Gloria." I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

—Allman Brothers Band — long acclaimed "maybe the best" American band by critics, their appearance here, though somewhat restrained, displayed the elements that earned them such praise. Seeing and hearing guitarist Richard Dinklage was worth the whole show — his skill and immersion in his playing are reminiscent of the mellower Hendrix.

—Legnos & Messina — played twice, with Jesse Colton in January with Pop in December. You've got to respect anyone who travels so far to give a good show, especially when the musical talent so deserves to be heard. Their range of style is outstanding.

—Randy Newman-Ry — Randy Newman-Ry wanted was still infatuated, effortlessly leaping to those unexpected high notes, appearing for one half of the show in denim and beret and for the other half in an elegant, soft blue floor-length dress.

Johnson Gym was a horrible place to have such a concert, but the band rose above the frighteningly bad acoustics to deliver the best night of music seen here in 1974.

BEST OTHERS: —Emerson, Lake & Palmer — the show of the year, or

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL Thursday, January 2, 1975 B-11

most Newman delighted old fans and demoralized those less familiar with his benignly satirical songs and manner in reciting through a record-setting 23 songs in an hour. Cooder showed that his blues singing and audience control have improved amazingly since his last appearance here four years ago — considered with his fine instrumental ability, you had to give him equal billing for the evening with Newman.

OTHER CONCERTS missed the mark of audience but deserve mention: —Jackson Browne-Linda Ronstadt — later appearances tarnished the glam; Ronstadt came back twice more last year, and Browne was so bad the second time here with Bonnie Raitt, who was excellent) that it made the first concert seem like a fluke.

—J. Geils Band — the two groups preceding them, the Nashville Station and Stray Dog, were bad enough to imply that every-thing over it, but waiting for the Boston lounge man was worth it. R.A. 19/85. '75 style, as only they do it, led by one-stop frenetic Peter Wolf.

—Waylon Jennings et al. — an event. The first concert held in the Duke's ballroom in five years, the first in ages where beer was available, starring the punk of country music, set against a sunset and lightning background such as Fillmore parties never witnessed, with a crowd that seemed evenly split between ropers and dozers. Jeps acoustic outdoors, but a good time was had by it.



Carlos Santana — Best Performance Inspired Show With 8-Man Band



Emerson, Lake & Palmer — Show Of The Year, Or Any Year, In A Theatrical Sense Thirty Tons Of Quadraphonic Equipment In A UNM Arena Pyrotechnic Display

NEW YEARS SPECIAL

DOUBLE KNITS

BUTTERICK PATTERNS

1/2 OFF

H2O WOOLEN

288

Completely washable, blend of 70% wool, 30% nylon, 54" wide, fabric, checks with coordinated solid. Reg. \$5.99 a yard.

ASSORTED WALE CORDUROY

99¢

Reg. 1.99 to 2.49 45" wide, machine wash & dry. Big choice of fashion colors.

NOTIONS BLAST

19¢

Regularly 29¢ to 79¢. Seam ripper, tape measures & more.

133

SPECIAL CLEARANCE

DOUBLE KNITS

Reg. 2.19, 2.19 a yard! A big selection of new knit patterns, ready to use or make to order.

188

100% WOOL DAYTONA

Regularly \$4.99 100% wool polyester, 54" wide, Washable.

2 27

Regularly \$4.99 100% cotton, 45" wide. Sew easiest.

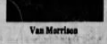
87¢

SPORT COTTONS

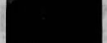
Reg. 1.59 to 2.99 100% cotton, 45" wide. Sew easiest.

fabric CENTERS

1231 W. 10th, Albuquerque, N.M. 87102
1231 W. 10th, Albuquerque, N.M. 87102
1231 W. 10th, Albuquerque, N.M. 87102
1231 W. 10th, Albuquerque, N.M. 87102



Van Morrison



Randy Newman



Kenny Loggins And Jim Messina Triumphed Twice Here In 1974