

concert
preview

Tom Rush:

Making music in Toronto

Tom Rush is making music in Toronto again. He will be at The Riverboat on Yorkville near Avenue Road tonight through Sunday. All things are relative, especially taste in music, but I humbly submit that the man is a joy to watch and listen to.

There is a line running around in my head, and it feels like Dylan by way of Baez but I may be wrong as I am so often. It is a couplet that goes at least approximately like this: "This gentleness now, which you can't help but show..."

In a world in which a great many people insist on using music as a battering ram, Rush is using another tactic entirely.

There exists a small hardy band of people producing what might be called "Head Blues," or perhaps "Mind Blues" would be better considering the connotations that head is developing.

Joni Mitchell, (and if you haven't gotten her second album yet you are only cheating yourself), Fred Nell, Eric Anderson's early style, which he may now drift back to, some of Tom Paxton's quiet things, and such relative unknowns as James Taylor are names which come to mind that are responsible for a cerebral, but in no ways less powerful emotionally for that reason, form of music.

It tends to be relatively quiet but extremely powerful. Miss Mitchell's Circle Game, Urge for Going, and Shadow Dream Song, Paxton's Morning Again, Taylors' Sunshine, Sunshine, and Rush's own No Regrets, may point out to some of you the kind of song I am trying to talk of.

Mind music

It is music which gets you into the gut through the mind, and stays with you in both places.

This essentially has become Rush's great strength. He does the up-tempo numbers still, and a delight they are. But they are fun things, a necessary release, to keep an audience from feeling that this is more than great entertainment.

People get uptight about profound emotional experiences in public, and I would strongly suspect that if Rush ever strung together a quiet set, made up of only mind blues, he would scare a hell of a lot of his audience out of their alleged minds.

There is an album called "Grey Life" by Val Stoecklein which fails because that singer falls off the edge of pathos into self pity. Rush never does this. He sings from his strength.

Like all of us, he is bemused, confused, and somewhat hassled. But he knows who he is, or at least in what direction he thinks he can find this out, and he seems to be happy as he goes on his way.

It is no surprise that he does Joni Mitchell's songs so well. He has fought the fight her songs talk about, the struggle to accept yourself and life, and won. Like few others that I know of, he seems to have retained his humanity while doing so, and he manages to project this.

Joni's grin

The only thing in my limited experience that even comes close to turning on an audience the way he does is a certain grin which Joni Mitchell used to have, and I hope still does, that exposes what, from her album covers, she considers an inordinate amount of teeth. That grin turns her from a pretty girl into a beautiful person.

Rush doesn't have such a specific attribute. He is just there. You should be too, because he can take you with him and bring you back a little more alive.

What you really should do is sit through all nine sets or so this weekend and rush (sorry! couldn't help it) out and buy the album. (Any album of his is good but "Circle Game," his last, is a fine, fine thing, as previously noted in these pages.)

Live a little, and maybe find out a little more about what life is all about.

Steese



theater
review

Courtyard Theatre:

Now Rosemary is the baby

Hidden on a backstreet on the west side is a real live acting troupe, made up of people who really want to act. And they can.

Director Guy Griffis has launched the group in the little (80 seat) Courtyard Theater with two one act plays by Molly Kazan, "Rosemary," and "The Alligators."

"Rosemary," the story of a husband and wife vaudeville team adjusting their formerly footloose showbiz life to accommodate their first born, begins slowly but rolls home a winner. (No, Rosemary is a baby, and she bears little resemblance to Mia Farrow.)

Stewart Roth is amusing and convincing in his role as the ermanently infantile husband. Eleanor Eastman is acceptable in the comedy parts of her role as his wife, although her emotional schizophrenia is often unconvincing.

Klatch and overacts

Georgia Hester, who seems to be the most promising thespian in this theater, plays her role of the unemancipated wife in search of a coffee-klatch extremely well. Scott Edmonds is amusing as her immigrant husband, but he overacts the part.

"The Alligators" is a sort of behind-the-scenes at "Bonnie and Clyde." Stewart Roth if the director trying to lace his proposed biographical gangster flick with psychological insight and sociological causation by interviewing the late hood's wife

(Georgia Hester.) She, however, would rather castrate a personal enemy than castigate society.

Gum-snapping flapper

Miss Hester is the standout of the play. Kathy Herkelmann is good as the gum-snapping Hollywood starlet, but Roth underacts in his role and Scott Edmonds is stiffly inept as a butler who is supposed to be more than a dumbwaiter.

Both plays are fun. The unique atmosphere of both the open-backed Courtyard Theater at 30 Essex St. and the low box office charge are refreshing.

Mr. Griffis has done a commendable job with his troupe in the last year; in the future his work for the Ashford Hollow Foundation (sponsors) of the theater) will hopefully expand into a 400 acre sculpture park at Ashford Hollow.

30 strong and spirited

There are about thirty men and women in his acting school now, and they all double as stage crew, promotion staff and production crew.

The two plays will continue running Wednesday through Sunday nights at 8:30, for an indefinite period, probably through July.

The group has terrific spirit and excellent potential. Their biggest problem right now is publicity, so everybody spread the word; the theater is alive and hiding out on the west side.

Mark Siegel

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