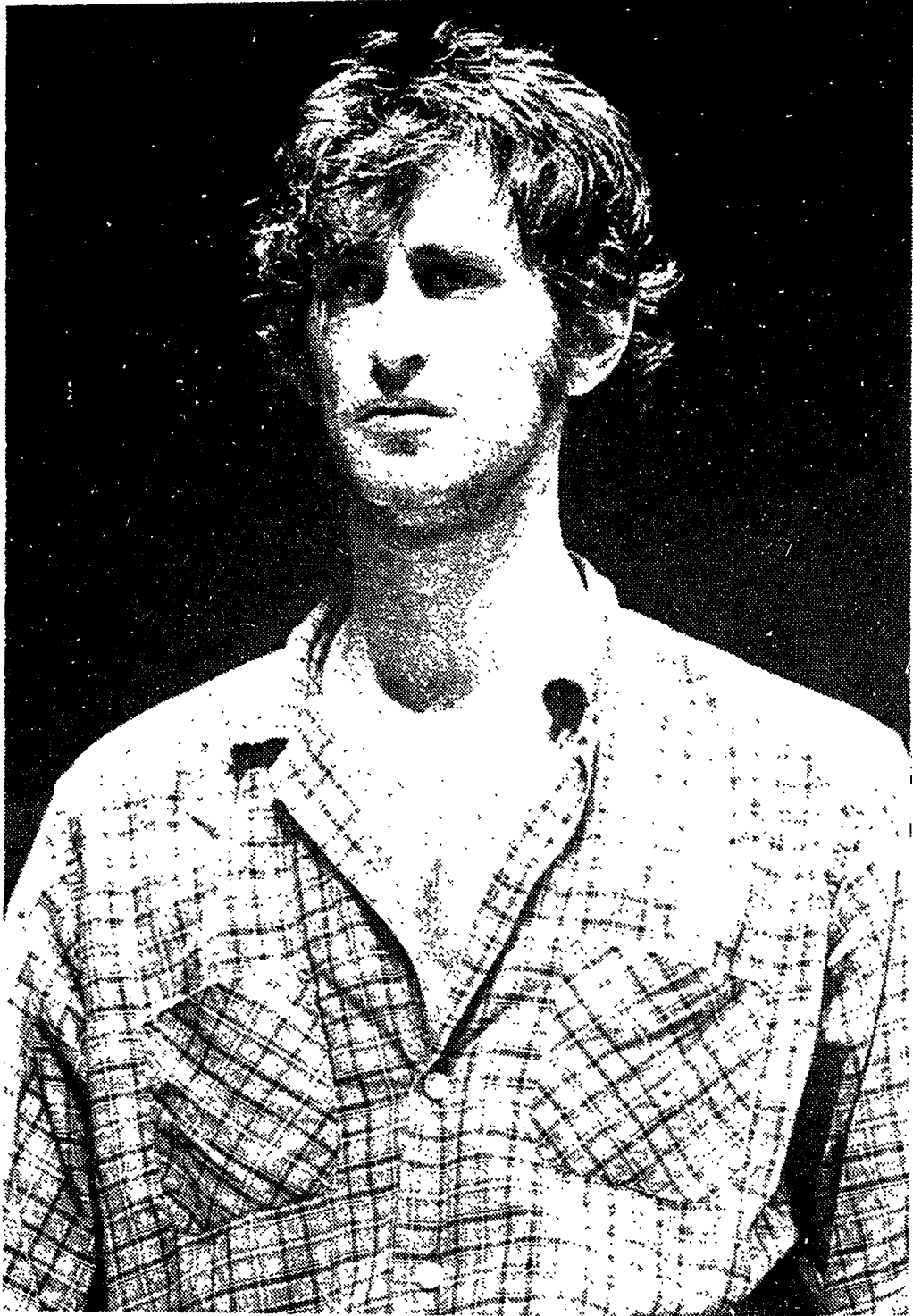


'Freedom Of The City' Debuts



Lenny Baker as Skinner in "Freedom of the City."

"Freedom of the City" at the Kennedy Center is a play concerning itself with the human aspect of Northern Ireland's troubles.

"Freedom" is the Kennedy Center's first opening of the year. Written by Irish playwright Brian Friel the production comes to Kennedy after its American premier in Chicago last fall. Strangely apolitical, the play refuses to condemn anyone save the British.

The play opens with three participants of a Catholic Protest march in Londonderry wafted into the Lord-Mayor's office on a cloud of tear-gas, quietly, inadvertently. The three are as unlikely a combination as possible: scrubwoman (Kate Reid) and mother of 11 children, Skinner (Lenny Baker), a rather shiftless, but witty, bum and finally Michael (Allen Carlsen), the civil rights activist student.

Playwright Friel constantly shifts the audience's viewpoint from the three occupants of the mayor's office to the military and police forces who soon barricade them inside--thinking that a band of 50 terrorists have taken the office.

Their fate is predetermined. Early on in the first act a priest delivers a eulogy for the three. Scenes of the official inquiry into the incident are shown, complete with post-mortems on all three.

Inside the three carry on, for the most part oblivious to their fate.

The student, arguing for the righteousness of his cause and the gravity of the Catholic civil rights movement.

Skinner, not giving too much of a damn for any organized activity or movement, constantly retreats into defensive flippancy, occasionally lashing out at the naivete of Michael, the student.

Lily, for her part, utilizes the peasant logic and gut feelings she was born with to make the best of the situation, swilling Port wine out of the mayor's liquor cabinet.

For a powerful, very human and sometimes funny drama, one could hardly do worse than "Freedom of the City", at the Kennedy Center through February 9th.



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Joni Mitchell in concert

Joni Mitchell Sings

While Joni Mitchell was energetically closing her January 29 concert at Constitution Hall with an upbeat version of her current hit, "Raised on Robbery," it became strikingly clear that Mitchell is capable of more versatile talents than even her long-time fans have seen.

Mitchell's music, largely autobiographical in nature, is taking a long-awaited upward swing. Most of her music is folkie and somewhat melancholy. One of her most common themes is love; ranging from romances past (and not quite forgotten) to ones she is hopeful of finding in the future.

She opened her 21-song show with "This Flight Tonight" from her "Blue" album. The audience welcomed her anxiously when she came on to join her excellent jazzy back-up band and opening act, Tom Scott and the L.A. Express. The vocals were as clear and harmonious as they've been on all six of her studio recorded LPs.

Mitchell's second tune (You Turn Me on I'm a Radio) perfectly portrays the haunting yet happy way she looks for her fleeting romances:

"If you're driving into town
With a Dark Cloud Above you

Dial in the number
Who's bound to love you
Oh Honey you turn me on
I'm a radio
I'm a country station
I'm a little bit corny"

Mitchell puts into poetic rhythm the emotions and situations of many women as she continues the song with:

"I know you don't like weak women
You get bored so quick
And you don't like strong women
'Cause they're hip to your tricks
But you know I come when you whistle
When you're loving and kind"

The audience applauded in spurts throughout "I'm a Radio" and Mitchell was laughing as if the attraction between she and the audience was mutual. After the intermission, Mitchell was prompted to comment, "You are a beautiful warm audience. You're feeding us a lot of energy up here and we sure appreciate it."

Mitchell, who wore two long beaded and backless evening gowns, looked very happy to be playing with a band. "Woodstock" was performed with more than adequate back-up by Tom Scott (on saxophone) and his band. The tune sounded much jazzier than as recorded on the "Ladies of the Canyon" LP. The band, especially piano, made the song come much more alive than it usually sounds.

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THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE



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Jazz...The Barometer for American Society

Dave Brubeck

Dave Brubeck doesn't think jazz enthusiasts should harbor a superior attitude, he knows they should.

Contrary to the elitist image which Monty Alexander tried to dispel in last week's article, Brubeck feels that the jazz cult in America has the right to feel proud.

"What is this jazz image," he asked... "it's the image of people who have contributed more to this culture and to our (the United States) good name than most other Americans. Can you name me one president or one general who was as well loved as Louie Armstrong? I don't think there's anyone. Now the most important man in the world, culturally, is Duke Ellington. We have a great image."

The Cultural Desert

Dave Brubeck is deeply concerned about the "cultural desert" he believes most Americans are living in. He feels that "this country is in serious trouble because we don't know how to educate ourselves. The average person isn't into anything deeper than the country club or the golf club or going swimming."

"I'm saying things to you now, that I don't usually say, you know, giving a negative response because you people (college students) are at the center of the problem. The kids at your school and at other colleges are our only hope. Some of our best audiences we've played to have been college audiences."

Ignorance of jazz and its role in our culture, Brubeck feels, is only symptomatic of the general ignorance of our society. "Americans' education has been seriously limited," he believes. "It's fine as far as it goes, but there's too much that's being ignored. We have ignored

classical music, the ballet, theatre, poetry... anything that's important is slipping right past us. I'm saying that we've been given a slick, superficial education and that's not enough."

Frustration

During the interview, Brubeck apologized several times for "lecturing." Brubeck was concerned that what he had to say might serve to further alienate young people from jazz and other art forms. "The only thing I'm trying to get across to people," he said, "is that people shouldn't waste their lives and live in such a small box, thinking that they're so hip. I see so much great artistic achievement in this world and most of it is being completely ignored by the vast majority of society. Jazz is only one element that's being ignored."

"My first impression of people who won't take the time to appreciate jazz music is that they're stupid. It's hard to be more objective than that. But I don't really mean that," he said, "what I do mean is that jazz doesn't reflect a mood of society, it predicts it. It's always been ahead of its time."

Brubeck uses as an example his earlier years in San Francisco, where he was a member of a culturally revolutionary group of artists. "San Francisco was a spawning ground for a lot of brand new ideas in the fifties. In comedy, there was Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce. The Kingston Trio was just getting started. In the pop field, Johnny Mathis was the newest thing. And we (Dave Brubeck's group) were the newest thing in jazz."

"You had the feeling that you were living in a place which was breeding a lot of new ideas. And that's what I love about the city, when it's so full of new ideas."



Dave Brubeck in concert at Georgetown University with "Two Generations of Brubeck."

Jazz and Rock

Brubeck believes jazz has a lot to do with today's rock and blues sound. "Everybody knows that there wouldn't have been rock if it hadn't been for blues... I wish the kids would take some time to trace the roots, to understand where their rock music comes from. Kids today don't know why they like what they do. But if they analyzed it, they'd realize that they dig a certain rock guitarist because he has a lot of jazz influence."

The situation is not hopeless, according to Brubeck. "All people have to do is to expose themselves to as many different things as they can." He feels that people can educate themselves in jazz by looking back.

"What would I listen to? Well, I'd start out with Jelly Roll Morton, Scott Joplin and perhaps the greatest American musical genius, Art Tatum." We (jazz musicians) may not be raking in the money like some of the rock stars today, but we've been the spearhead of music for years."

Brubeck may sound like every kid's father, with his lecturing and retrospection. But beneath it all lies a solid foundation of ex-

perience, expertise and genuine concern. Brubeck speaks harshly of the apathy because his own philosophy is that one must continually learn, experience and reach new plateaus in order to survive. "Man is the sum total of his experience," he believes. If Dave Brubeck's music is proof of his theorem, he might just be on the right track.

Meredith Sykes

Joni Mitchell

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After a half hour intermission Mitchell was greeted and thanked with a vase of flowers and some roses, one of which she tucked behind her ear.

Audience reception peaked when Mitchell sang and clowned on stage to "Big Yellow Taxi", a song about the commercialization of life.

After rounds of applause and lit matches Mitchell did her first encore, "Blonde in the Bleachers", the true-sounding tale of how hard it is to hold the hand of a Rock 'N' Roll man very long. Or count on your plans with a Rock 'N' Roll man. Compete with the fans for your Rock 'N' Roll man for very long."

The back-up provided by Scott and his band was perfect. They never overpowered her; but were there to give added strength to previously recorded material. The band is relatively new as a unit, but its members have played with musicians like Frank Zappa and Roger McGuinn. The six-man band, which sounds like what Chicago should have been, play with Mitchell on her latest release, "Court and Spark."

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