

Arts/Entertainment

Rock's Dionysus, Apollo thrill crowds

by Thor Decko
Staff Writer

Last week provided quite a thrill for rock and roll aficionados in Southern California, with shows by both Lou Reed and David Bowie, the Dionysus and Apollo of the rock tribe. It was particularly interesting for me to observe the similarities and differences in their stage shows.

Lou Reed has, throughout his career thus far, been a most enigmatic rock performer, hiding his thoughts behind a barrage of street rhetoric when interviewed, generally revealing nothing of "the man behind the music"; and what a disparity of songs he has written. His themes run the gamut from homosexuality to macho survival anthems,

hopeless love of heroin to disgust with "stupid faggot junkies", profound hate of urban life to sentimental affection for its electricity. Reed has proved the master of such contradictions, a poet who depicts the helpless rage of the street, the transitory ecstasies of drugs and their effects on a hopeless romantic against the background of psychic derangement induced by technology, primarily television — witness Satellite of Love.

Bowie, on the other hand, is alternately visionary, prophet of doom and, most importantly, the archetypal Rock Star. His poetic talent lies largely in brilliant use of solecistic images to depict such things as adolescence, parties, the perfect Sensuous Woman,

revolutionaries and the Nietzschean superman, to name a few. Both poets have found in rock and roll a vehicle by which to capture the imaginations of a generation. They were and are, in the words of William Wordsworth, "ready to follow the steps of the man of science...carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of science itself."

Having never seen Lou Reed before, I was extremely unsure of what to expect; would he be whacked out on smack, too loaded to care what he was saying (and in that sense capturing the spirit of the crowd), or would he be an aging rock star, maudering over his lost youth? When Lou and his band took the stage at the Roxly last Monday, I found him to be neither a jaded, bestudded rock and roll animal nor a dandy, prissy Coney Island baby but Lou Reed, a person much like you and me, who has dropped most of his pretension in order to communicate with his audience. It was in this aspect of the Reed and Bowie shows that I found their greatest similarities. Though he still dresses outrageously, Bowie has quit dressing as a symbol, Ziggy Stardust or whatever, in favor of a more accessible David Bowie.

Presentationally the shows were quite different: Reed played guitar and was in constant communication with his band members cueing breaks and song beginnings and endings, while Bowie preferred to let his tremendously competent band hold up the musical end, as he has on previous occasions. They both played a good mixture of old and new material, Bowie giving as much of the definitive Ziggy Stardust and Reed rocking through most of the infamous Rock and Roll Animal for the old stuff, with generous helpings of Bowie's Heroes,

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by Ted Burke
Don Juan's Reckless Daughter — Joni Mitchell (Asylum)

Listeners have taken joy in Joni Mitchell's continual insistence on changing her musical approach, so it wasn't unusual that the release of *Hissing of Summer Lawns* was hailed, for the most part, as a bold step towards personal and artistic growth. But while *Hissing*, and her subsequent and less successful *Hejira*, did indeed show Mitchell expanding herself to more adventurous motifs — broader song structures, an increasingly impressionistic lyric scan, jazz textures — the trend toward a more personalized voice has virtually walled her off from the majority of her fans. *Don Juan's Reckless*, her now double record effort, takes the ground gained from the last two albums and converts it into a meandering, amorphous culmination of half-formed concepts. The primary emphasis, musically, is towards jazz modernism, with a number of songs exceeding ten minutes in length as they ramble over Mitchell's vaguely comprehensible piano chords. She reveals a tendency to hit a strident chord and to let the notes resonate and fade as she vocally ruminates over the lyrics — while her side hen, Jaco Pastorius and Wayne Shorter from Weather Report, and guitarist John Guerin, do their best to add definition. The lyrics, following suit, are an impressionistic hodgepodge, a string of images, indecipherable references, and gutless epiphanies that should have been edited with a blue pencil.

Album Reviews

While the more hard nosed defenders may defend latest with the excuse that a poet may express his or her self in anyway they see fit, one still has to question the worth of any effort to dissect *Reckless Daughter* the way one used to mull over Dylan albums. Though any number of matters that Mitchell choses to deal with may have value to her audience — spiritual lassitude, the responsibilities of freedom, sexuality into middle ages — she doesn't supply anything resembling hooks, catch phrases or accessible points of reference for them to latch onto. Instead, she gives them art, whether they like it or not. The paradox in Mitchell's stance is that she has thrown craft well outside the window while trying to measure up to "Art" in the upper case. She has gone from being an artful songwriter to being merely arty, which is a state of mind that takes hold of many of public personalities who think they know it all and who conceive themselves as no longer being bound by conformity. In her own way, Mitchell has joined the ranks of John Lennon. Yes and other bright talents who've OD'd on their own importance. D.



JONI MITCHELL

One Eyed Jack — Garland Jeffreys (A&M)

In their haste to discover new rock auteurs to supply grist for their mills, some of the better known rock critics (though not the armies of college paper record reviewers) have latched onto Garland Jeffreys, an unknown quantity to most people's ears. As praised by the Village Voice's Robert Christgau, Garland brings to the singer, songwriter craft a persona and perspective that's been missing since Chuck Berry. Jeffreys, you see, is a mulatto born and raised in the streets of New York, and his multi-racial identity (black and white, with rumoured traces of Hispanic blood) enables him to straddle a number of pop musical styles that most other performers have trouble coping with, as well as allowing him to express a profound ambivalence towards life in the United States. Like Berry, Jeffreys is able to mix third world musical motifs with American Dream thematics. But where Berry was more than willing to be bought off and incorporated into the capitalist money machine (as Marxist pop culture critics would have it, though I suspect that Berry could enlighten them about matters of self-determination), Jeffreys posits himself on the outside of the System and views it from a skeptical distance.

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Election Helpers

The ASUCSD Elections Committee needs interested persons who wish to help with the upcoming ASUCSD Elections (May 2 and 3). Anyone with a few hours to spare, either on the election days or before that should contact the AS Elections Committee at their office in the Student Center or call x4450 from 9 am to 4 pm daily.

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Arts/Entertainment

"Lion in Winter" misplayed as tragedy

by Jill Louise Bazeley
Arts Writer

The Old Globe Theatre's current production of "The Lion in Winter" suffered two major setbacks while it was being mounted: first of all, as everyone probably knows, the theatre meant to house the show burnt down in a tragic reenactment of the Aerospace Museum fiasco; and secondly, the leading lady, guest equity artist Virginia Baker, injured herself four days before opening night and had to be replaced. Ironically (and I do not mean to disparage Ms. Baker) the second mishap works to the advantage of this "The Lion in Winter", for Helen Marquardt, the Eleanor of four days rehearsal, proves to be one of the best features of the show. I was especially impressed by Ms. Marquardt's regal posturing — cheating out towards the audience as if it were one of Eleanor's looking-glasses, or perhaps, the eyes of the world — always conscious of her Eleanor as being herself an actress unabashedly concerned with her image and her next one-liner. Along with Martin Gerrish, who plays Henry II (the lion in winter), Ms. Marquardt exhibits a perceptive understanding of the comedy of "The Lion in Winter" that most of the other actors, intent on developing the supposed tragic undertones and deep psychological implications of the play, miss. Though the historical facts are indeed sad — Henry II im-

prisoned Eleanor of Aquitaine for sixteen years — the Henry and Eleanor of this play are the wittiest, nastiest snipers that ever aimed a tongue at each other.

But unfortunately, the caustic spirit that is cultivated



in the interplay of King Henry and Queen Eleanor is not carried on in the whiny portrayals of the other characters, and this misunderstanding of the play does much to make the Globe's "The Lion in Winter" a sniveling sob of a production: director Ken Ruta

has allowed comic moments to be thrown away all over the place, and piercingly funny lines are moaned or belted so low they just sink into the lower regions of mediocrity. One important exception is Sean Sullivan's amusing monkey-

Theatre is, needless to say, an exuberant expression of "the show must go on" on the part of both the Globe and the Spreckels producers, but for me, and I'm sure for many other Old Globe regulars, it was a bit of a culture shock to be in a strange theatre, and to see a show at a distance that might otherwise have been seen much closer up. The Old Globe Theatre—that was designed without regard to fire and handicap regulations and consequently a lot of people could be crammed into a very small space. It was intimate to say the least. The Spreckels, on the other hand, though not an enormous theater, has a feeling of expansiveness. For me, it was more like desolation — there was no one breathing down my neck but the air conditioners. And the Globe actors strain to have Spreckels voices — the bigness of vocal production not being at all unusual in a large house, but an anomaly in the misplaced mind of a Globeite, and a difficulty for Globe-acustomed actors who are suddenly faced with more space to fill up than they have voices with which to do so. This process of shouting to the back wall, which is actually much further back than the last row of the audience, probably accounts for some of the loss of sprightliness in the dialogue, but the rest of the loss, and it is indeed a loss, comes from trying to turn a quipping comedy into a monumental, woe-is-me tragedy.

The removal of the Globe operations to the Spreckels

Mexican artist's "tortured visions" here

An exhibition of paintings by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, whose tortured visions proclaimed her "own reality", will be on display today through May 17 in the Mandeville Art Gallery.

The first retrospective showing since 1938 of Kahlo's works will be seen in only six cities in the United States and the Mandeville Gallery is the only gallery in California selected for the tour.

Kahlo has been categorized as a Surrealist and as a primitive artist. She is neither. The persistence and strength of her images amid the physical and emotional torment of her life have inspired contemporary feminists though her very personal chronicle defies those who think they can define her.

What has been called the "essence of her reality" was determined swiftly and brutally one September day in 1925 when, as a 15-year-old returning from school, she was injured in a bus crash in Mexico City. Her life thereafter, until her death in 1954, was a relentless repetition of pain, hospitalization and invalidism, much of it due to her dogged determination to become a mother. She could not because of her injuries and suffered a series of miscarriages and therapeutic abortions.

She herself, however, was far from a melancholy invalid. According to Hayden Herrera, writing in the Kahlo exhibition publication, "Much of the time (the artist) led a normal, active

life. She loved fiestas, excursions and political demonstrations... Kahlo's friends even now recall her marvelous "alegría", her passion for life."

As for her style, says Herrera, "(The artist) is no simple and unpretentious that many people have termed her a primitive. But they are mistaken. She is a mock-primitive. Her naive style and fantasy were chosen for sophisticated reasons. And her imagery, though straightforward, is so hallucinatory that the Surrealists claimed her as one of their own. And they were wrong, too. Although Kahlo's art after 1937 does reflect a knowledge of Surrealism, her fantasy comes straight from her own experience and from her absorption in Mexican culture — what she called 'my own reality'."

"While Kahlo's subject matter was almost preeminently her own life — herself as daughter, mother, wife, lover, invalid — she drew richly and generously upon traditional Mexican themes, symbols, images and stories both religious and secular. Kahlo the artist was also Kahlo the troubled though romanticized mate of muralist Diego Rivera with whom she maintained a relationship fraught with upheaval, separation, divorce, reconciliation, scandal and public exposition of private passions. (Please turn to page 15)

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