

Talent

Excitement MC5 Keynote — Stooges Make N.Y. Debut

NEW YORK — While much of the interest in the Pavilion's show of Sept. 5 centered on the New York debut of the Stooges, it was the driving MC5 who showed they rated their headline billing.

The erotic performance of Elektra's Stooges was coolly re-

Mann Gives Out Giant Playing In a Short Set

NEW YORK — Atlantic's Herbie Mann, returning from an outdoor stint playing youth festivals, went indoors to a higher priced audience at the Plaza 9, Sept. 9. His material remained uncompromising and even swung table talkers 'round to bandstand attention. It was a short (four-tune) set but each composition was given extended treatment from Mann's quintet, contrasting neat swinging with excursions into exotica.

Naturally the leader's flute playing received applause and so did vibraphone player Roy Ayers (also an Atlantic artist) particularly on "Look To The Sky." Probably the best received was the closing number, "Hold on I'm Coming."

IAN DOVE

ceived by most of the over 2,000 in attendance. The group also had the difficulty of following a surprisingly entertaining set by Elektra's David Peel and the Lower East Side, who are little more than a sometimes musical street gang.

The Stooges, led by Iggy Stouge (That's his billing!), have an act that is geared to appeal to all sexes. At times Iggy appeared like an extension of Mick Jagger and, at times, like a burlesque parody of Jagger. Iggy, clad only in cut-away blue jeans, swayed and girated, caressed and licked his mike stand, flung in into the audience, twice leaped into the audience, scratched his bare chest to the point of bleeding, rolled on the floor with lead guitarist Ron Asheton, among other things.

In the long finale, "1969," Asjeton and bass guitarist Dave Alexander joined in the erotic display. The stage activity took precedence over the quartet's music, which may be good. With drummer Scott Asheton's solid support, the set did move. The act probably goes over better in the more intimate surroundings of a small club.

The MC5, also a Detroit group, were strong in volume and performance. Most of the material was hard rock and this group can really pour it on. Ron Tyner is a strong, exciting vocalist, well supported by guitarists Wayne Kramer and Fred (Sonic) Smith. Excitement is the MC5 keynote, whether singing material such as "Rocket Reducer No. 62 (Rama Lama Fa Fa Fa)" and their big hit "Kick Out the Jams" from their Elektra album or "Teen-Age Love" and "Tonight" from their pending album on Atlantic, their new label.

Tyner also showed he could handle the blues with a straightforward version of James Brown's "It's a Man's World." The group's encore of "Louie, Louie" was a lesson in how this rock warhorse should be performed. "The Human Being Lawnmower (Chop Chop

Chop)" again was an inventive gem. Drummer Dennis Thompson and bass guitarist Michael Davis also made valuable contributions to the group's big sound.

David Peel and the Lower East Side, often hampered by an evident lack of professionalism, not only were together, but fun as Peel screamed his banter and his lyrics to such familiar street numbers as "Mother Where Is My Father?," "Up Against the Wall" and "I Like Marijuana (Have a Marijuana)."

The program opened with the New York debut of Moloch, a Memphis blues quintet, whose first album will be on Enterprise, a subsidiary of Stax. Their set included the Spencer Davis Group's "I'm a Man" and the Bee Gees' "To Love Somebody," but, although the ingredients of success came through, the group still lacks an individual style.

FRED KIRBY

Kings (Albert, B.B.) Reign; Bland Bland

NEW YORK—Fillmore East, that sullen auditorium where rock gladiators wrestle with the animal in their music, opened its fall season, Sept. 15, demured by the cozy, confidential blues of Bobby (Blue) Bland, Albert King, and B.B. King. Big Albert, a pipe sawing on his lip, and B.B. King, who was recording "live" at the Fillmore, quickly relaxed into their familiar grooves, leaving the opening night anxieties to Bland, a lumbering blues balladeer from Houston.

Looming like a landmark over his back-up band, the hulking Bland squeezed and purred at the tiny microphone like Bluto cooing at Olive Oil. His lispy, restrained voice skirted the real sorrow in his songs, except for an occasional soul gag from the corner of his mouth. At his best Bland was a gentle, sympathetic weaver of moods, touching on the sad ironies in "Chains of Love," a Joe Turner original,

"Gotta Get to Know You," and "Stormy Monday Blues."

But Bland, unfortunately, lived up—and down—to his name, preferring not to soil his slow, studied cool for the dirt buried in the blues. He occupied the stage like a buoy in still water, clinging to his composure although it reflected no more warmth or commitment than a jukebox. The only tell-tale signs of his labors were dew-like glimmers of sweat. In the end, Bobby (Blue) Bland, a giant stone statue modestly doubled over with the pain of the blues, is better left to the more patient soul circuit or the disk, and smaller clubs where his stinky, but silky voice can be heard. Bland records for Duke Records.

The "King think," already recorded with endless praise via reviews, interviews and personal appearances, capped Fillmore's fall opener like doubles of dessert. Albert King, who records for Stax, was at his jovial best, cleaning up applause with a beautiful, vulnerable "The Sky Is Falling" and Funky "Crosscut Saw." B.B. King, the other half of the phenomenon, is by far the slickest and most creative master of the blues guitar touring today. He has taught his guitar, Lucille, how to articulate his intelligent ideas on blues and jazz like nobody's dummy, creating through his guitar a popular mentality which has modernized his blues for the masses. Adding their measure of respect for the Bluesway artist were jazzmen Dizzy Gillespie, Pharoah Saunders and bass Ron Carter, who jammed with King and his fine backup band, Sonny Freeman and the Casuals.

ED OCHS

Shankar Honors Ghandi in A Memorable Performance

NEW YORK — Sitar virtuoso Ravi Shankar, accompanied by Alla Rakha on tabla, played the Fillmore East on Sept. 7 and paid a moving musical tribute to Mahatma Ghandi in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the leader's birth.

The tribute was a Sitar solo since the tabla is not used in solemn music. It was the highlight of an unusually long concert by the master. The performance was the last concert of Shankar's American tour and he seemed to give it special significance. The sitar solo was only one of many pieces offered. There were a couple of evening ragas and a tabla solo by Rakha, always a favorite.

Shankar is evidently tired of giving his well known introductory course in Indian music, with which he frequently preceded his concerts. Saying that he would not bother to explain how the sitar is made because "there is no use to it at this point," he showed a new respect for the Western audience.

Turley Richards' Debut Disappoints in Village

NEW YORK — It might have been microphone problems as some people claimed it was. It might have been opening night jitters. Whatever the real reason, Turley Richards' first night appearance at The Bitter End left much to be desired.

The listener got the impression that this Warner Bros.-Seven Arts, recording artist had included songs into his repertoire which were not designed for his vocal range and stylings.

The flat, unnatural, almost straining tonal effect was most apparent in his attempts to deliver folk-rock numbers like, "You Gonna Make It On Your Own." On the other hand, however, one could detect a note of real talent in his rendition of more subdued tunes like "Hey Jude," "Eleanor Rigby," and "Just Like A Woman."

Richards cannot be written off as being just another one of a mushrooming bunch of

folk-rock-blues singers. The artist has something going for him. He needs, at this point of his career, to clinically assess himself, decide finally on the exact media of expression in which he wishes to involve himself and stick with his craft.

On the other hand, Poppy Records recording artist Townes Van Zandt, who shared the stage with Richards, proved himself a master of his craft. He conveys the impression of being more at home on stage, under lights than he would probably be in his own bedroom. Van Zandt is a woman's singer. He wrings romance out of every word, every syllable, every octave. He caresses his audience with his voice, and one could denote visible shivers of ecstasy from the females in the crowd as they cuddled closer to their escorts.

Van Zandt sings folk ballads in the great old tradition of this fine musical form. He takes tunes like "Snake Mountain Blues," "The Name She Gave," "The Ballad of Ira Hayes," and his own composition from his new album, "My Mother the Mountain," and adds feeling and imagery to them in a way so emotionally disturbing that you are forced to relive the incidents they project.

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Mike Difficulties Hurt, But Jimi Comes Through

NEW YORK—Microphone difficulties hampered Jimi Hendrix's first set at Salvation on Sept. 10, but the Reprise artist's guitar flair shown through.

Hendrix, with a capable backup quintet, opened with a series of instrumentals before the packed Greenwich Village club. Some of his guitar display in these was on its usual high level, but other sections seemed conventional with such standard bits as having the rhythm guitarist take lead and having the inevitable drum solo.

The mike was restored for Hendrix's last two numbers and these numbers sounded more like the Hendrix of old. The amplification and excitement seemed to go up and the blues rock artist was in his top form, using his voice as another instrument even to the point of vocalese. In short order, he should be back at the peak he reached with the now disbanded Jimi Hendrix Experience.

FRED KIRBY

Campus Dates

Columbia's Johnny Mathis plays Morehead (Ky.) State University, Oct. 10; Ball State University, Oct. 11; and Illinois Normal University, Oct. 12.

Reprise's Kenny Rogers & the First Edition perform at East Texas State University on Friday (19).

Atco's New York Rock & Roll Ensemble appears at Harpur College, Vestal, N.Y., on Friday (19). Liberty's Gary Lewis & the Playboys play Idaho State University, Oct. 11, and Northern Montana College, Oct. 17.

The Vogues, Warner Bros.-Seven Arts artists, give a Texas Christian University concert on Friday (19).

Elektra's Rhinoceros plays the University of Hartford on Friday (19), Haverford (Pa.) College, Friday (26), and Wagner College, Staten Island, N.Y., Saturday (27). Poison Ring's Pulse performs

at the University of Bridgeport on Saturday (20).

Polydor's Ten Wheel Drive appears at Seton Hall University, Wednesday (17); State University of New York at New Paltz, Thursday (25); Alfred University, Oct. 5; Atlantic Community College, Mays Landing, N.J., Oct. 10; St. John's University, Oct. 12; and Suffolk County Community College, Selden, N.Y., Oct. 25.