

reviews

Bishop gets down to some serious partying

"I can't remember a time that we came in second best," remarked Elvin Bishop prior to his Friday night shows at the Lane County Fairgrounds.

Bishop was referring to his group's ability to blow any other band appearing with them off the stage.

Few people at the concert could disagree with him.

The Elvin Bishop Group and Providence each did a 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. show before a total of around 2000 fans with the latter gig drawing the majority of that number.

Providence, who were supposed to be similar to the Moody Blues, somewhat disappointed me. Their music incorporated the sounds of violins, cello, harp, flute, glockenspiel, and the usual rock and roll band instruments.

For sure, they were good musicians, but for myself, I just don't get off on their mellow brand of music. Their last two numbers were by far their best. One of them is to be released as a single very soon, and should have fair success.

I think the two groups did each other a bit of injustice by appearing together but this is the type of program that the promoters "believe in."

Bishop says he likes to get his audience "receptive and relaxed" with his music and between numbers comments.

"First, I check out the feedback from the audience to see how long the set will be and how much I'll get into it."

When I asked him about his showmanship, he answered, "Not too much is calculated. I do just what feels good with a bit of showing off thrown in."

Bishop was a bit drained from the previous night's gig in San Francisco (and "a little too much partying") and was to play San Jose Saturday night.

but when he hit the stage he was his usual cocky and friendly self.

The mellow attitude that had prevailed earlier ended abruptly when Bishop's group took the stage. Tunes that were particularly well done included the opening number, "So Fine," "Rock Bottom," two new things, "Cadillac" and "Sure Feels Good," (which sounded great and is planned for their next single release). "Wings," "Rock My Soul," and various others that I should have written down but didn't because I was enjoying myself too much to screw around with it.

So tuff.

Most of them featured the dynamic voice of female vocalist Jo Baker, and outrageous guitar solos by Bishop.

A blues piano and organ was provided courtesy of the keyboard man, Steve Miller (not the guitarist), who just about got his hand shook off after the concert.

Newcomer Rick Kellog really got down to the nitty gritty of blues and rock and roll with his harmonica while accompanied by Bishop. This guy is a real character, just like a little kid onstage and he enjoys every minute of his antics, perceptibly so did the audience.

Also new faces in the group are vocalist Russ Hayashida, and bassist Mike Larscheid. Both of their voices blend perfectly with the group's sound. Larscheid sang the lead in "It Sure Feels Good."

Hidden away behind everybody else was drummer Bill Meeker, who should get a chance to show off once in a while himself, as he was pounding out a wild beat constantly.

Bishop and Kellog got together on the last tune and left everybody hollering for more.

They came back with Bishop exclaiming, "I think it's time for us to get down to some serious partying." And that they did when they rolled into "Party Till The Cows Come Home." Before that number, the concert was an eight (on a one to ten scale) but it went off the meter with this encore.

Everybody's trip was bummed out a bit (including the group's) when the power went out right at the end of the encore. The band stayed on stage not knowing what to do as they themselves were fired up. Twice they left the stage thinking the power outage had signaled an end to the concert, but they finally came back when a blown fuse was discovered.

Their second encore had the same frenzied pace that had preceded it and came to a conclusion with the end melody of "Party Till The Cows Come Home." Ah right!



Photo by Peter Grant

Bishop boogies

Everybody got loose and had a good time which is the kind of atmosphere that the Elvin Bishop Group likes to play in.

Until the untimely demise of the Fillmore West the Elvin Bishop Group was a regular there. They are now doing regular gigs at Winterland.

Concerning the Fillmore, Bishop said only that "it was a good place to play."

According to Bishop, the Fillmore's manager, Bill Graham, who has become controversial in the rock music scene, was, "An honest businessman who told the truth plainly. Sometimes the truth hurts," he stated flatly.

According to promoters Dave Lieken and Carl Pennington, of Double Tee Promotions, this concert was an experiment in having rock groups at the fairgrounds—an experiment with fair

board members looking on.

I wasn't able to get their verdict, but the outcome looks like it might be in our favor, which is nice considering that Double Tee is thinking about bringing in Tower of Power next.

I really didn't get off on the teenybopper scene, I wish more University-aged folks would have attended and I didn't appreciate the highly capitalistic attitude of the concessioners charging 25 cents for the smallest cup of Coke. But I guess they figure a hippie with a cotton mouth or a sweet tooth will pay anything to relieve it.

Anyway, I hope they have more, because after this last gig the fairgrounds are batting 1000 per cent in my book.

Jim Worlein

Hrisanide: exploiting all parts of the piano

Always in the forefront was the 20th Century schizophrenia—explosively violent outbursts broken by the softest pianissimos—as Alexandre Hrisanide presented contemporary Romanian piano music to a sizeable audience in the School of Music Recital Hall last week. Hrisanide, a well-known composer and performer of contemporary music in Europe, is a visiting professor of music at the University this year.

The pieces, a chronological selection of 20th Century Romanian composers, manifested much stylistic diversity, which Hrisanide helped to illuminate in his short introduction to each work.

Pieces by Georges Enesco and Paul Constantinescu opened the concert and provided the groundwork for what was to follow, for these two men are the "classical" contemporary composers of Romania. Enesco's Carillon Nocturne or Bells in the Night, was starkly impressionistic, pointing to the influence of Faure, his one-time teacher. Constantinescu's writing closely parallels Bela Bartok in that he has taken peasant folk songs and

set them in a harmonic scheme distinctly 20th century. (Interestingly, both Enesco and Bartok gave performances of their piano music in Eugene 30 years ago.)

A sharp departure from 20th century tonality followed, and subsequent pieces covered a wide variety of 20th century composition techniques. There were serial pieces by Doru Popovici, a composer who has expanded the 12-tone techniques of Schoenberg. A piece entitled Monosonata I by Adrian Ratiu consisted of a number of musical phrases or ideas which the performer puts together in any order and mode he or she pleases. This piece also used the 8-tone scale of Oliver Messiaen (instead of the more common 7-tone scale) making for an exotic tonality.

Other pieces exploited all parts of the piano—the keyboard and the inside strings as well as the outside of the piano on which surprising and jolting percussion sounds were obtained. A striking composition was the inevitable time by Myriam Marke where the Notre Dame was heard

inexorably and repeatedly under the texture of atonal and explosive figures where Hrisanide made use of paper, thimbles and glass.

Hrisanide's M.P. 5 or Musique Pour Cinq was heard on tape. The piece, a quintet for violin, viola, cello, saxophone and piano is a series of cadenzas making use of both static and moving tone clusters. The score was visually graphic where the performer gives his musical interpretation of a graphic form.

The final selection, Cadenza by Costin Mioreanu, consisted of 15 fragments again ordered by the performer, and making full use of the piano.

Hrisanide showed himself to be an excellent performer with the understanding of one who is deeply involved with 20th century trends. Because of the agility required of a performer who must play both on the key board and inside the piano, the performance was visually, as well as audibly exciting.

Jacque Helin