



Hundreds and hundreds of people turned up for the Rainier Beer Sunbust at Skinner's Butte last Saturday.

Photo by Steve Tweed

Rainier Sunbust good, but too long

Albert Collins, Charlie Musselwhite and the Felix Omar Band, and for free, that's not bad. And it wasn't. The first Rainier Beer Sunbust of the summer was Saturday at Skinner's Butte Park and, although it didn't run as smoothly as one could expect, it was a nice afternoon for those who wanted to lie on the grass, relax, and enjoy some mighty fine music.

Since sometimes you have a tendency to remember the bad things first, we might as well get them out of the way. The biggest problem occurred with the lack of promptness of the musicians. KASH radio, who co-sponsored the event with Rainier, had advertised the show to begin at 1 p.m., but the producers weren't scheduled to go on until 2 p.m. So it was almost 3 p.m. before Charlie Musselwhite ambled on stage. With the late start and the frequent power outages that were caused by a lack of power in the park, what was originally scheduled to be a three hour show ended up lasting longer than anyone ever expected. The sound system also caused some difficulties.

Even with all the problems that were apparent, I don't think that they should overshadow what was, indeed, a fine afternoon in the park.

More than anything I think you have to remember that the whole show was free and brought to you for your pleasure and enjoyment. Rainier Beer was, for sure, trying to sell a few more bottles of beer, but how many companies do you know that would shell out the kind of money for a free concert? I think they deserve to sell some more beer, and, without trying to sound like I have been bought off, they are giving you a break, so why not pick up a six-pack of Rainier next time and give them a break, too?

All breaks aside, it was sure good to hear the fine harp work of Charlie Musselwhite. Musselwhite has been blowing harp for a long, long time, and there just aren't many people around who can even come close to his expertise as a blues harpist. I had never seen Charlie Musselwhite before, so I had nothing to compare him to, but I sure thought he played a fantastic set. That's more than I can say for Felix Omar.

After getting into the blues with Charlie Musselwhite, it was hard to get behind the driving, screaming sounds of hard rock. I think under different circumstances I might have enjoyed the Omar Band a little more, but as it was, I could hardly wait for Albert Collins.

The wait for Albert Collins dragged on and on. Power failures and a long set kept Omar on stage for almost three hours. By this time many of the people who had sat quietly through the entire afternoon began to give up and head for home. Unfortunately I am one of the ones who just got too tired to stay any longer. I had been at the park for nearly seven hours and I just burned out. I really wanted to hear Albert Collins and I knew I was going to write this damned thing but seven hours was just more than I could handle.

I had a nice afternoon, met some fine people, got pretty bombed, and listened to some good music, and you just can't beat the price.

The next Rainier Sunbust is August 4 with Stoneground. Hopefully, things will run a little more smoothly but even if they don't I'm sure it will be just as nice an afternoon.

Before closing, I think I should comment on the fine staging of the concert which was done by the Thunder Circus People from Portland. Mike Neeley and his boys did an outstanding job with the set-up and the staging. They will

handle the next Sunbust too, so we are almost guaranteed another successful concert.

Another plus for the afternoon was the warm-up performance by Eugenean Ron Lyodd who got things off with a little folk guitar and some spirited vocals.

Bruce Micklus

music

The Rolling Stones and the age of 'decay-dence'

I'm going to call this "Ya Don't Want to See Me Trousers Fall Down," or, "The Rolling Stones and the Decline of Western Culture."

First of all, if you think that the title of this article is too pompous, perhaps you are right. I am still locked up in the culture where things have to be given names, and distinctions are to be made about the relative merits of any supposed work of art. Forgive me. If you don't want to read any further because of the second part of the title, skip the second part and pretend you are reading something called "Ya Don't Want To See Me Trousers Fall Down."

Good — now we should all be comfortable.

My contention is not that Mick Jagger and company are in some kind of insidious, communist flouridation-type plot to upset the future of "The Free World," by sexually arousing the youth of America to a state of uncontrollable frenzy. That would malign the Stones too greatly, and give them credit for a situation that they inherited rather than created. The Stones phenomenon is only symptomatic of our culture.

Why are the Rolling Stones the acknowledged "Greatest Rock Band in the World?" Perhaps their music is better than any other band, although fans of the Grateful Dead would gladly take issue. The key figure in Stones' success is undoubtedly Mick Jagger, the pouting, shouting lead singer and songwriter. Jagger is the bad boy of rock. Even back in 1964, the Beatles were the cute, funny guys from England, while the Stones were the brooding, potentially dangerous crew. Their hair was longer, their manners were never quite right, and their songs were more blatant. It did not matter that you knew that John and Paul wanted to do more than just hold your hand, because it was all in the name of good, clean fun. Jagger screaming for "Satisfaction" always left rape as a possible solution to his problem.

What made the Stones the world's greatest rock band was not the records, but the group's highly volatile live performances. A live appearance by the Stones could generate a crowd of a half-million at Hyde Park in London, sell out Madison Square Garden in New York for six shows in three days (although 132,000 did get to see Mick, nearly a million other fans sent in post cards for the privilege of

The text translations, however, are far from adequate and often misleading, evidently culled from some old English performance edition. The first three lines in the third verse of the chorale Jesu, meine Freude (fifth movement of the Motet) are a case in point where the music depicts the fiery breath of the old dragon and not the roar of the MGM lion.

Program Text

Fie, fie, thou roaring lion,
Fie, thou foe of Zion,
Fie, all fears, and cease.
German Text
Trotz dem alten Drachen,
Trotz dem Todesrachen,
Trotz der Furcht dazu.

Translation

Despite the old dragon,
Despite the jaws of death,
Despite the fear thereto.

Enough said: Jetzt, zur Sache!

The concert opened with Cantata 150 Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich (For You, Lord, I long). After a fine rendering of the short sinfonia by the instrumental ensemble, the choir entered singing the first of several magnificent choruses contained in this work. This first choral movement is characterized by a descending chromatic line heard periodically in all voice parts, and the choir tended to oversell this feature often destroying the continuity of the beautiful polyphonic writing.

If, however, one accepts the performers' adage that the first piece of a program is a throwaway, we received more than ample repayment in the short soprano aria immediately following and in the subsequent choruses. Soprano soloist Marie Seymour possesses a gorgeous focused instrument with which she wooed the audience with its luscious sonority. The rather frenzied and violent rendition of the alto-tenor-bass tertzett created a truly delightful picture of "tempests wildly blowing." The final chorus of the cantata, a chaconne, in addition to being well executed, afforded again the pleasure of hearing the four soloists. Special mention is due Virginia Hancock, alto soloist, who sang with beautiful rich tone and a graceful sense of melodic line.

God bless Neil Wilson! Cantata 82 Ich habe genug, freely translated "I've had enough," closed the first half of the Sunday evening program. A solo cantata, it is perhaps the most introspective and contemplative handed down to us by the great master. Bass soloist Neil Wilson expertly portrayed the joy of Simeon, who, having held the baby Jesus in his arms, is anxious to face death, his life then having been fulfilled. Superb tone, flawless diction, phenomenal breath control, a beautiful sense of line—what more can one say?

In the two outer movements, oboist James Matheson's liquid tone, facility, and fine musical taste added measurably to the sublime mood of the cantata. I should like to thank him, too, for volunteering some ornaments not found in the score, especially at the da capo repeats of these two arias.

The central aria Schlummert ein (Slumber now), a lullaby, proved to be a high point. Here, the ensemble of soloist Wilson, conductor Rilling, and orchestra, created a tranquility not attained

elsewhere during the evening. Through a fabric of lilting strings which, so to speak, rock the cradle, Wilson wove a melodic thread of peaceful reassurance to the tired soul weary of earthly endeavors and awaiting heavenly peace. A feature of this aria is Bach's unique handling of cadential formulas whereby the penultimate chord of the cadence closes a phrase and, following a pause (rest), the ultimate chord initiates the next. Rilling exploited the tension created at these cadence points with artful mastery—the release of tension coming always just at the right moment.

The Festival Choir of some 50-odd voices finally had its chance to shine in the Motet Jesu, meine Freude. With only instrumental doubling of the vocal lines by strings and occasional winds (notably in the ninth movement), the choir treated the audience to the glorious songistry of a large mixed vocal ensemble. Although employing no harpsichord continuo here, Rilling retained the violone doubling the bass line one octave lower than sung. Consisting of movements, the odd numbered being six verses of the chorale Jesu, meine Freude, the five even numbered ones taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans 8:1,2,9,10,11, the architecture of the work clearly manifested itself arriving at a natural climax in the central sixth movement and descending from there to the final movement, a chorale harmonization identical with that of the first movement. It is this type of large scale architecture that Rilling projects so well and few are his equal.

There were, to be sure, some strange moments—the clipped timing of rests in the second movement, the ugly grunting and shouting of the basses in the third and fifth movements; but the beautiful qualities of this performance greatly outweighed these few unfortunate shortcomings. The tenors shone radiantly with a small but robust transparent tone. It was as though I hadn't heard them earlier in the program because, I guess, the orchestra had tended to cover them. The ninth movement, Gute Nacht, o Wesen (Good night, o being), reached a level of grace and elegance unlike anything else heard that evening. For sopranos, altos, and tenors (the bass section and, thank goodness, the double bass were here absent), this fifth verse of the chorale bids farewell to the worldly life of sin, pride, and splendor; and the mood projected here was certainly one of humility and simplicity.

Helmuth Rilling brings to Baroque music, and notably here to the works of J. S. Bach, a warmth and richness which we today often mistakenly refer to as romantic schmaltz. To be sure, he is no slave to Baroque performance practices (he often ignores them) which may irritate some (even me); but he is a slave to the score, that is, the text and the music, through which he attempts and, indeed, succeeds in creating a profound musical statement. After all, old Bach composed his cantatas and passions to be heard by the people—not by trained musicians, but by peasants, servants, and noblemen, as well—in order to strengthen and reaffirm their faith in God and Jesus Christ. What Rilling does may not be the last word in Baroque music, should we ever attain that goal; but he gives us music that is certainly more than a part of what Bach had in mind. I heard a friend term Sunday evening's performance a "religious experience." Right on!

Randolph Bourne

buying a ticket, and were disappointed), and get 350,000 to a racing stadium at Altamont in the Bay area. The Stones could create more pure frenetic response per decibel than any other band, and people were willing to do anything to participate in this experience.

The Mayslees brothers (Al and David) were turned on to the uniqueness of the Rolling Stones, and decided to shoot a documentary describing their 1970 concert in the Bay area. That concert turned out to be the disaster at Altamont, and the movie became "Gimme Shelter." The Mayslees allowed the audience to see the Stones apart from the myths that surround them. The camera removes us from the immediacy of the frenzied crowds, and permits us to view the performance objectively. The myth of Mick Jagger as the incarnation of evil is exploded. Jagger would have us believe that he is Lucifer himself when he sings "Sympathy for the Devil." But who is the devil at Altamont? Certainly not Mick. He is just a performer trying to do his gig in the face of true evil in the form of the Hell's Angels. The camera shows his Satan to be a pouting and posturing devil in drag.

When the events leading up to the murder are taking place, it becomes apparent to everyone that Jagger neither knows what is going on, nor how to handle it. Somehow he is responsible for the mood of the crowd, yet he has no intellectual understanding of his power. The camera zooms in on Mick's face, which reveals his total lack of comprehension. He is no longer the cavalier, fun-loving rogue pretending to be the devil. He is another confused human being, more than a little bit frightened by what he has wrought. In an extraordinary juxtaposition, we are shown Jagger performing, bringing the crowd to its feet, and Sonny Barger, leader of the Hell's Angels, staring at Mick with total contempt. Barger, more than any other person in the crowd, knows what Mick is all about. Barger knows where the real evil is and where the pretense is, and this fact is caught dramatically by the Mayslees' camera.

At Altamont, the flowers that Jagger tossed to the crowds turned into the garbage and beer cans the Angels hurled at the audience. This was perhaps inevitable—the Woodstock Spirit could not last forever, and it was fitting that its final note was sounded by the Stones.

Jean Luc Godard was clued in to the Stones in his film "2 + 2 — Sympathy For the Devil." In "2 + 2," there are scenes of the Stones

recording their song "Sympathy for the Devil," intercut with scenes of a pornography shop, and black revolutionaries who had their headquarters in a junk yard. It was a picture of Western civilization in decay. The language people used had been so twisted that it prevented them from acting. The condition of life is obscene, people indulging themselves in pornography but not experiencing life for themselves. The price of purchase: a slap in the face.

The Rolling Stones are part of that slap in the face. The vitality and abandon that they project on stage is a result of a long mechanical process, that, taken in any of its several parts, is absurd. What could be sillier than three grown men singing "Doo-Doo" over and over again, as they listen on headphones to the rest of the song which has previously been taped. Hardly a picture of spontaneity. They don't even get a vital beat to the song until a Black African drummer is added. The Stones are an excess, a frivolity in the Roman orgy of our civilization.

Mick Jagger is the highlight of the spectacle, the master orgiast, as it were. In an orgy there is only groping. Feeling that something might come of your actions would ruin the party. Consequently, there is nothing wrong with Jagger as an individual. At the pinnacle of achievement, he is, in effect, the "negative man." He defies every value of our culture. He cannot sing, yet he is a wildly successful singer. He cannot dance, yet he is considered a great dancer. He is not handsome or virile, yet he is a sex symbol. He is a card-carrying professional performer, yet, somehow, he is deemed to be the incarnation of evil.

This total reversal of values is indicative of a vast change in our society. The recent emergence of transvestite rock (Edgar Winter, David Bowie, Lou Reed, and the re-appearance of Little Richard) is just one more example of the decay-dance. Jagger was in the vanguard of this movement (Remember "Performance").

It's all pretty pornographic. A dirty little picture of a culture that only pretends to have values. Mick is a joke, but he isn't a very good comedian.

Howard New