

# On Tour



DENNIS COPELAND

## Steve Martin, Lubbock, Texas

Ask comedian Steve Martin, and he'll tell you — it's lonely at the top. His picture was splashed on the cover of *Newsweek*, he was signed to do yet another hosting of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, and he's nearing the end of negotiations for a feature-length film he's written. On top of that, Martin had just begun his second tour in four months, the first netting him a cool million dollars.

Martin stands virtually unchallenged as the "hottest comedian in show business," yet now it appears his career is challenged by its own momentum. In concert, the old Martin gags are getting older, and Steve seems to have gotten his fill of saying, "Excuuuse me" while flashbulbs pop.

While Martin is clearly to blame for using outdated material, it is exactly what his audiences clamor for. They show up at the concert in full Martin-esque regalia, complete with arrows-through-the-head and rabbit ears. Inside, they yell out, "Do 'Foggy Mountain,'" or "Sing the 'Grandmother's Song,'" and sheepishly, Martin obeys.

That was the setting for Steve Martin's appearance in Lubbock. Running onstage after his film short, "The Absent-Minded Waiter," Martin stepped into the limelight, announcing, "I'm a Ramblin' Guy." He then watched with genuine concern as the audience sang the words.

Like anyone with a mass audience, Steve Martin has something for everyone. Balloon animals, juggling, songs, and magic — all are just facets of a multi-talented comedian. Once Martin can assure himself that it's all right to move on to new material, and granting that his fans will allow it, a Steve Martin concert will be a memorable experience, indeed.

Kevin Phinney

## Foghat/Eddie Money, The Forum, Los Angeles

"They came, they boogied, they conquered" is probably the motto found on the Foghat coat of arms. The veteran blues-rock quartet has reached its present position by virtue of years of constant touring and a musical policy of giving the audience exactly what it wants.

The show at the sold-out Forum was a typically workmanlike, crowd-pleasing performance. Compensating for its lack of onstage charisma with massive sound and lighting systems, Foghat blasted through staples like "Fool for the City," "Slow Ride" and "Home in My Hand" in a methodical, professional fashion.

A touch of mindless boogie never hurt anyone, but 90 minutes of the stuff has been known to induce severe brain damage. Still, Foghat has shown its willingness to put its reputation where its roots are, so I'm not about to begrudge 'em success.

With his debut album in the Top 50, Eddie Money is clearly an up-and-comer to be reckoned with. The New York cop-turned-San-Franisco-rocker served up a very well-received collection of well-crafted arrangements in a melodic hard rock vein, true-love-and-heartaches lyrics and Eddie's own Stewart-styled vocal rasp.

Most of the material was quite listenable — "Baby Hold On" and "Two Tickets to Paradise" are excellent songs — but overall the set suffered from a lackluster stage presentation. The chief liability was Money himself. He's a very awkward performer — imagine Herman Munster without the neck knobs trying to be Rod Stewart — but that might be one of his greatest assets as well. Money's appeal seems to be that of a rock and roll version of one of Kotter's Sweathogs — obviously flawed. But he wants to make it so badly that if enough people identify with his aspirations, Eddie might well realize them.

Don Snowden

## Grateful Dead, William and Mary Hall, Williamsburg, Va.

It has been written that there is nothing like a Grateful Dead concert. It would seem, however, that there's an essential corollary to this rather audacious assertion: there is nothing like a Grateful Dead audience. This particular Saturday's drove of Dead Heads was no exception; from the opening notes of "Half-step, Mississippi Uptown Toodle-oo," the faithful down front balanced upon treacherous folding chairs, singing along and rocking to and fro. It took a little longer for the renowned Dead ethos to drift high into the packed rafters, but by evening's end everyone was lit up for an encore. Few con-

cert crowds are more consistently blissed out of their skulls (!) than those who come to sway with Garcia, Weir and company; here even the air sports a lazy grin.

Given a crew so loyal it would be easy for the band to become just that — lazy; but the Grateful Dead display the class that separates the transient flashpots from the institutions in rock and roll. You simply don't amass audiences this huge, happy, or enduring by playing flaccid engagements. This is especially true in the case of a band whose studio efforts have all too often been anemic reflections of their on-stage abilities. Before their disciples (if you'll pardon the precious metaphor) the Dead come to life, infusing their intricate compositions with a snap and ring only rarely pressed into the vinyl versions.

The band presented a broad cross-section of selections from their lengthy career, but conspicuously absent (save for an altered-tempo rendering of "Friend of the Devil") were the Dead's signature songs ("Truckin'," "Uncle John's Band," and so on). Instead, the band offered their interpretations

## Foghat blasts & boogies



DALE TRAVIS

## on disc

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**Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf.**  
David Bowie, narrator; Philadelphia Orchestra; Eugene Ormandy, conductor (RCA)

Plunging right into the record business' current wolf mania, David Bowie's latest release is a reading of this Russian musical children's classic. (Benjamin Britten's *Young People's Guide to the Orchestra* is heard, sans Bowie, on the other side). Though everyone from Peter Ustinov to Mia Farrow has read *Peter* on record, the choice of Bowie is ingenious as well as commercial. His reading holds the right amount of subdued drama without condescension to his young listeners — and he has that thriller for Americans of all ages, an English accent. A more appealing package design and more complete annotation could increase the album's appeal still further; the green vinyl is a nice touch, though.

B.S.E.

**Rachmaninoff: Concerto #3**  
Vladimir Horowitz; New York Philharmonic; Eugene Ormandy, conductor (RCA)

This is powerful proof that some giants still walk the land. Horowitz restores all of the drama and excitement bleached from this

romantic warhorse by too many performances by too many midgets.

E.C.

**Jean-Pierre Rampal, Lily Laskine:**  
Japanese Melodies for Flute and Harp (Columbia)

Rampal's silver flute substitutes for the traditional wooden instrument, and Laskine's harp Westernizes the sound of a koto in this delightful, off-the-wall collaboration recorded in France for — originally — Columbia's Japanese affiliate. The melodies date back, sometimes, hundreds of years. Perhaps the music's chief strength is the serenity it carries.

T.E.

**Shubert: Symphony #9**  
Columbia Symphony Orchestra; Bruno Walter, conductor (Columbia/Odyssey)

The late Bruno Walter was the quintessential interpreter of Viennese music. Shubert was the quintessential Viennese composer. The result is glorious music-making, at a bargain price.

E.C.

**Stonebolt: Stonebolt '78** (Parachute)

This chameleonic Canadian band echoes influences ranging from the Eagles to Foreigner in a generally winning collection of easygoing countryish rock. The singing and playing are for the most part fine, though one wonders how much lasting appeal the songs contain — no matter how attractive they may be to the ear the first time around. Stonebolt's best tune may be the Allman

of some old standards like "El Paso," lesser-known album material (Bob Weir's "Weather Report Suite" from *Wake of the Flood*), and a recent song or two from *Terrapin Station*. This approach afforded them the flexibility to explore improvisational possibilities. Only once did this jam format become tedious, when an otherwise smoothly-wrought medley of "Playing in the Band," "Not Fade Away," and "Morning Dew" was overblown by too much unfocused instrumental rambling.

By the close of the second set, however the adrenaline was on the way up again. Rhythm guitarist Bob Weir was starting to get excited on the rockier numbers anyway; when he began to leap about singing the lead vocals at the close of the set, the audience responded in kind. The single, long-awaited encore brought back Weir on voice with the rollicking "One More Saturday Night," a fast slice of rock and roll from the old school heightened by the singer's energetic delivery. It also brought a bit of a surprise: some of the crowd booed when the band failed to return with more music.

Robin McLeod

Bros.-like "Singing in the Street;" runner-up is "Sail On" — which is, I'm told, about the band Heart.

D.P.

**Jethro Tull: Heavy Horses** (Chrysalis)

It seems as though Ian Anderson is currently indulging himself by writing for his children about his own passion, the English countryside. The album package contributes strongly to creating a British atmosphere somewhat between those of *The Wind and the Willows* and *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, all of which is lovely, if irrelevant to current music. Most of the songs are about animals: a mouse, a cat, faithful dog Rover, work-horses, and a weathercock among them. "Moths" comes closest to what made Tull great in their pre-*Songs from the Wood* days. On this album, the lyrics read like poetry but the melodies don't sound like songs, and I hear no musical hooks on either side.

B.S.E.

**Wings: London Town** (Capitol)

Wings has done it again: a great-sounding record with adult production and grade-school lyrics. No matter what they say about Linda, no one could ever accuse Paul McCartney of not being able to sing. And many of his tunes are so full of melodic hooks that you just want to hear them again and again. Which is good, as they're on the radio constantly. If the McCartneys' music can render the juvenile quality of the words unnoticeable, more power to it.

B.S.E.