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# James Taylor does a warm, sensible show

By STEVE MOORE  
Advertiser Special Writer

Definitely the man of the musical hour, James Taylor — with his friends Jo Mama and Carole King — put on one of the best and warmest concerts in the last couple of years Sunday night at Honolulu International Center.

Probably the fact that it was the last stop of a 30-day-plus tour didn't hurt. No more planes for a while, no more two or three shows a day — just some swimming and sittin' still.

THIS JO MAMA BAND has gotten good. They were here once before and sounded "promising," but bands like that have a way of breaking up. Jo Mama has gotten tight, has come together instead.

Danny Kootch may or may not be the reason — but, in any case, he plays good, fast, clean guitar. I have an idea that Kootch has had a big hand in their arrangements, which are some of the more interesting and original ones I have ever heard in a band that no one has heard of yet.

As I said, everything they did was good, but "Sailing" was the best of the lot. I haven't heard their album, but it would be reason enough to buy it.

Essentially, they are a good-time rock 'n' roll band. They play happy music, and they have a good time doing it.

There are too few positive bands. This is one.

NEXT UP WAS CAROLE KING — a writer and piano player, mostly.

Apparently the performing came last because her songs have been around a long time, and her first album is just out. One song goes way back and is one of the all-time classic rock 'n' roll songs: "Up on the Roof." They just don't come any better than that. Laura Nyro has included a version on her new album, which is natural enough. It is a real city song and one of the few to make any kind of hopeful statement about life there.

King and Nyro have a similar style of performance, and what Carole may lack in vocal quality is made up for by knowing she wrote what she sings.

She comes across as very modest and friendly and one hell of a writer in the bargain. Her melodies are rich, gossypily and fluid. Her lyrics, while they mainly deal with love and the blues, seem special, as is Carole herself: A Koh-I-Noor of a musical talent, and I hope she sells another million.

JAMES TAYLOR is the only baggy-pants rock star I have seen. It comes off okay, even though the suspend-off-the-shoulder is a little studied. He is, basically, jes' folks.

He has a nice, deflated manner for a lad with his picture on Time and all of that. It comes as a nice surprise to see one dude and an acoustic guitar hold 8,000-plus people in their seats. It's a compliment to his work and the sensibilities of the audience: They obviously are listening to what he says.

The first part of his show was solo, and then he brought out various members of Jo Mama to play this and that until everyone was on stage — including his old lady, Joni Mitchell — for The Big Finish.

Kootch and Taylor had a group a few years ago called The Flying Machine (it appears in pieces on the ground

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in "Fire and Rain") which didn't make it. It must be satisfying for them to be making this tour. Turns out that Kootch and King also had a group and it didn't make it either. So it's coming back home for the whole show.

Anyway, their live version of "Country Road" was much, much better than the recorded one. It had great

punch and was still lyrical and footloose, properly. In fact, a live album might not be a bad idea for him for the next time out.

James is a very personable fellow, and he had contact with the audience every minute. It was a sensible, down-home show, and he seems to enjoy being a star. You can't fault a guy with an attitude like that even if his pants fall down. Whether from lack of support or amount of gold therein.

In all, a fine, tight show from Tom Moffatt and that bunch.

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