

# cash box/talent on stage

## Yes

ACADEMY OF MUSIC, NYC — The problem with most rock bands today is that they insist on playing music of the late 60's when the calendar reads 1972. Many rely on their original interpretations of unoriginal rock 'n roll songs to get them by. Others never even bother to become original at all. But, in a time when more than ever, rock music must make substantial gains and progress to stay alive, there has emerged a handful of groups who have paved the way. Groups who have blazed a trail all their own. Amongst them are Jethro Tull, Deep Purple Mountain, Emerson, Lake & Palmer and now, Yes.

Not too many months ago, I sat listening to "The Yes Album" for the very first time. When it was over, I smiled. It was obvious to me. They played music of the 1970's. And they played it like it's never been played before. Yes could do it all! Then came "Fragile," and apart from it being representative of the markings on their equipment, it describes the sensitivity of their music. For Yes music is fragile!

From their opening selection, "Roundabout," through their encore, "Yours Is No Disgrace," Yes com-

pletely captivated their audience by blending their brilliant vocal harmony with an equally brilliant display of thoroughly precise musicianship. While each performed solos on his particular instrument, the group worked basically as a total unit.

Individually, the group consists of lead vocalist, Jon Anderson; drummer Bill Bruford; guitarist, Steve Howe; bassist Chris Squire; and Rick Wakeman on all keyboard instruments including organ, piano, harpsichord, mellotron and moog synthesizer. Even more interesting is the fact that three of the five Yes members sing, and all contribute in the songwriting department.

Apart from "Roundabout" and "Yours Is No Disgrace," Yes performed "I've Seen All Good People," "Your Move," and "Perpetual Change" from their Yes album, and "Heart Of The Sunrise" from their current bestselling "Fragile" offering.

Somehow, Yes is what I've been waiting for. And they have arrived in a big way. If you've been wondering whether or not rock music can survive in a time when more and more acts are going acoustic—the answer is YES! **k.k.**

## Alex Taylor Malo

WHISKY A GO GO, L.A. — Alex Taylor resembles everybody's college roommate—slightly drowsy manner, a paunch that comes only with thorough knowledge of the inner workings of a six pack, good-natured and giving an impression of being someone who'd do anything to help a friend.

As such, Taylor also fulfills Everyman's wish to sing songs he likes accompanied by a truly top-flight band. Songs like "From a Buick Six," Charlie Rich's "Who Will the Next Fool Be" and Steve Stills' "Four Days Gone."

Taylor's virtues as a singer appear to come chiefly from an easy familiarity with the material, rather than any great technical prowess. Likewise, his untutored manner onstage contributes to the character he portrays.

Not that he puts on a sloppy show—Taylor's set is a lot tighter than most to play this club, with a minimum of fooling around between songs. It's just that, it's all pulled off with an air of informality and charm.

The band, of Taylor's "Friends and Neighbors," is as good a group of back-up people as you're likely to find anywhere, with the keyboard player particularly noteworthy. All got into a particularly swinging groove on "Southbound," a tune from Taylor's first Capricorn album.

People who think of Malo as being Santana's brother group just because Carlos Santana's brother is in it seem to be listening with one ear or fewer. Malo, as it turns out, is Latin-rock, but there the similarity ends.

For Malo's both a tougher band than Santana and one that's closer to the traditional Latin dance band, Santana being blues-oriented and Malo being rhythm and blues. That's a generalization to be sure, but so's "Latin-rock." A lot of the r&b feeling is generated by the super horn section, playing what sounds like quite "arranged" charts over a very tight rhythm section. Perhaps the weakest aspect of the group's performance reviewed was the vocal work which was, fortunately, kept to a minimum in favor of the hard-driving rhythms.

No, Malo has in reality little more in common with Santana than—oh—Alex Taylor has with James. The sibling rivalry keeps them both strong. **t.e.**

## Dennis Coffey

MAVERICK'S FLAT, L.A. — Dennis Coffey's group, the Detroit Guitar Band, consists of congas, a drummer, keyboard player and bassist. What? The Detroit Guitar Band with only one guitar? How does he get away with it?

Simply by playing rhythm and lead simultaneously, thus sounding like several guitarists all at once!

For most numbers, he'll take a rhythm riff, repeating it and adding various filligree until the result is something really big and really funky. His prowess with a ballad was demonstrated on his version of "Never Could Say Goodbye," from an upcoming Sussex album. Well, the guy's got to be versatile—session work is his business.

Attempt at any sort of a stage presence was minimal; the group counts on their music to carry the weight. And for the most part it does, although it would be considerably better-utilized in a situation where dancing is possible: theirs are among the all-time great discotheque records, and the live sound is just as movement-provoking. A special mention should be made of Coffey's bassist, a big bear of a man with a big bear of a sound. **t.e.**

## Eric Andersen

CASTAWAYS, NYC — Eric Andersen, prototypical singer/songwriter and his own sharpest critic. He was first to note that his early tunes were chiefly about only two things: highways and girls. Well, highway programs are not as big as mass-transit systems and "girls" is just plain sexist these days. But Eric's still the prototypical singer/songwriter.

There is no other voice so beautifully sculpted in the upper ranges, so up-from-the-earth mellow in the low. While "Violets Of Dawn" has not wilted for all the intervening years, new tunes like "Is It Really Love?" and "Blue River" display a growing sense of strength and self-confidence. And his version of "Daddy Frank (The Guitar Man)" succeeded in turning this upper eastside club into a country setting quicker than you can say Merle Haggard.

We eagerly await his upcoming Columbia LP and all the renewed interest it should bring him and his music. **r.a.**

## Don McLean

CARNEGIE HALL, NYC — He has created himself a monster. It bothers him. "Just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean they're not out to get you," he mused during a concert that received press coverage as though it were a news event. In a way, it was, for what Don has wrought is a lot more than a #1 song.

Comments before the show ranged from: "But what else does he do besides 'American Pie?'" (a minority stance), to "Gee, I hope he does some things from his first album." A few people walked out—perhaps because they couldn't wait for the evening's close to hear the biggie. For the 99 9/10! who stayed riveted to their seats, McLean gave 'em their money's worth. And the crowd seemed to enjoy Seeger-influenced banjo oldies as much as the more familiar tunes from his #1 LP. By appearing unaccompanied, he became all the more focal point of all attention. And on his shoulders alone rest the success of the night's entertainment.

For those wondering what his next single will be, our applause meter would indicate "Vincent" as first choice, not too far ahead of "Winterwood." For those hoping for a new tune in the near future, we have only McLean's observation "Maybe there'll be no next!"

It was a weird picture—people jumping up and down, singing about "this will be the day that I die" with smiles on faces and admiration/love in hearts. Also unusual, the a capella round singing that actually came off inside the cake-like Carnegie Hall atmosphere. Whatever else he may be, Don McLean is not your ordinary singing bard. **r.a.**

## America Robert Klein Megan McDonough

BITTER END, NYC—The grass is always greener on the other side. The Beatles didn't make it in England until they left for Hamburg, Germany, and then returned to England billed as the top group in Germany. Jimi Hendrix went unnoticed in this country until Chas Chandler brought him to England so that when he returned to his naveland everyone thought he was English. And now three young Americans who moved to England have returned as the new sensation. Only this group is called America, which gives us a clue where they're from.

But the incredible quickness of America's American success is baffling everyone, especially the group! Their music is pleasant contemporary folk using acoustic guitars and occasional bass. Their original songs are simple and easy to remember, but there is nothing about either their music or personalities that craves attention. By just sitting there and quietly playing, they have become the object of more attention than they know what to do with. Perhaps their success is a lucky click of circumstance, or maybe its a subtle blend of talent, but either way, it's a magic dream come true for three kids.

There are few nightspots in which a comedian can address himself to a young audience and it would seem, fewer comics capable of succeeding at it. Robert Klein is one of those few, fewer, fewest and as always, his set was just the right blend of tested material and improvisation.

Megan McDonough reminds us a bit of Mary Hopkin and Marianne Faithfull in their early stages. The Wooden Nickel singer/songwriter (distributed by RCA) does have to learn a thing or two about between-tune patter, and while some of her compositions could stand some tightening, she does present herself as a pixie of a prospect for future praise from a wide audience. **m.p. & r.a.**

## Joni Mitchell Jackson Browne

CARNEGIE HALL, NYC—It's the best of both worlds. Flowing out onto a naked stage (save a piano, guitar and dulcimer), she is greeted to the cheers, screams and general euphoric euphonia of Mitchellmania. But you can hear a pin drop as she begins to perform and she can introduce many new tunes to the evening without fear. Joni Mitchell is adored and her talent is respected. Would we had a dollar for every "beautiful" that was laid upon her altar, for then we could buy enough albums to distribute to the unenlightened among us.

In all, she sang a total of six new tunes, ranging from the introspective "For The Roses" (not your ordinary "lonely singer in the limelight" tune) to the analogy-filled, socially-conscious "Banquet." While often referred to as one of the few "genuine feminists" on the male-dominated music scene, only one song ("Oh Honey, You Turn Me On, I'm A Radio") set out in the concrete any point about liberation. Even here, it was layered between multi-meaning passages and themes, one in particular tactfully chiding AM radio for neglecting the kind of music that can sell out a hall like Carnegie. Now to be recorded by Atlantic-distributed Asylum, she's in a position to continue on her own road whether the boss jocks care for her or not. Eventually, that "Big Yellow Taxi" 's gonna take them all away if they don't listen and fess up.

Although Joni was indubitably the headliner, there was a considerable amount of interest among the audience regarding the appearance of Jackson Browne, the young California-based songwriter/singer who also records for Asylum. Strumming effortlessly on his acoustic guitar, Browne was magnificent, creating whirls of lyrical images and letting his richly textured voice underline them in memorable fashion. "Song For Adam," a portrait of an acquaintance which grows more moving with each rendering, was joined by the gospel-tinged "Rock Me On The Water," "These Days" and "Take It Easy." On piano he did a splendid "Jamaica Say You Will." Browne is a spellcaster who should be a top-billed attraction before long. **r.a. & e.k.**

## Dawn

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL, LAS VEGAS — In this, their first Slot City booking, Bell's Dawn proved themselves to be of considerably more interest than the usual lounge act—enough so to be able to headline and totally justify the billing.

Tony, Telma and Joyce have put together with musical director Richard Delvy an act that gives each singer time to showcase his talent, with room left for the group's hits.

The 40-minute set opened with the theme from "Shaft," which comes off surprisingly well in hands other than Isaac Hayes'. After a couple of more tunes featuring the trio, Tony Orlando solos more than capably on "Ain't No Sunshine," the first less-than-frantic number in the set. The tempo shifts up again with "Don't Knock My Love" and "Joy to the World" (this is a Vegas lounge, after all). Orlando leaves the stage and the girls take over for a nicely-performed bacharach-David medley, with Joyce Vincent giving a light, delicate treatment to "Make It Easy on Yourself" and Telma Hopkins delivering "A House Is Not a Home" in a stronger, huskier manner. Then comes "Knock Three Times" and a finale of Mac Davis' "I Believe in Music" complete with audience participation.

Prior to his fairly recent touring with Dawn, Tony Orlando has been off the boards for several years, making his complete professionalism all the more noteworthy. And it's difficult to tell if the girls sing better than they look, or vice-versa. In either case, it's pretty damn good. **t.e.**