

# FESTIVAL 68 MIAMI



ELLEN SANDER

Some freaks who had come early sat in the snaggles of an enormous Banyan tree, beads, fringes and bell bottomed colors hanging like Christmas ornaments from the labyrinth of leaves and limbs. Country Joe was taking a sound check, Chip Monck was testing the lights, Hanley Sound was making last minute audio adjustments and a gigantic flower was being erected near the Flower Stage in the grandstand area. Stray licks piped up all over Gulf Stream Park as musicians arrived and diddled, waiting for their turn to check the sound system. The Florida Saturday morning was clear-bright and balmy, the hysteria in the festival offices was mounting to a high pitch as housing, transportation and equipment fuck-ups threatened to bring the coming event to a grinding bummer.

It never happened. The first annual Miami Pop Festival held in Gulf Stream Park, Hallandale, Florida, from Saturday December 28th through Monday December 30th came off beautifully. It was three days full of music, arts & crafts, celebrations, magic and movement. The attendance was posted 99,000 (an inflated figure in my estimation) somewhat short of the 120,000 capacity and I rather think it was not a tremendous financial success (in any event it was not announced). Artistically, it was monumental.

The program included Sweetwater, Marvin Gaye, The James Cotton Blues Band, Hugh Masekela, Procol Harum, Steppenwolf, Pacific Gas & Electric, Three Dog Night, Richie Havens, The Grateful Dead, The Boxtops, Flatt & Scruggs, Joni Mitchell, Ian & Sylvia, The Turtles, Jr. Walker & The All Stars, GrassRoots, Sweet Inspirations, Canned Heat, Iron Butterfly, The Joe Tex Revue, The Cosmic Drum, Fish Ray, Charles Lloyd Quintet, Jose Feliciano, Terry Reid, The McCoy's, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Fleetwood Mac, Country Joe and the Fish, Chuck Berry and the Blues Image. The scope of performances included R&B, rock, gospel, jazz, folk, contemporary composers, top 40 pop, hillbilly and blues, making this festival the only event of its kind to successfully showcase pop with a conscious sense of range, history and roots.

There was a gratefully appreciated conscious sense of comfort evident in the layout of the grounds. Music was scheduled on two stages several acres apart. Enroute was a display of gigantic pop art sculptures and please-climb-on-me structures. There was a 20 foot monument to tits and ass, a Yellow Submarine beastie suspended from a tree, a Yellow Submarine and real live blue meanies who prowled the area. A huge hollow replica of a half-pint milk carton was turned on its side and people crawled into its depths to commune, meditate, smoke or get it together in any number of ways. The area was ringed with crafts and food concessions staffed by the friendliest people I've encountered in any event of this kind. By the Flying Stage in the meadow, two Indian elephants painted in dayglo and paisley watched the spectacle in politely amused preponderance and nearby an immense undulating slide was set up, free to anyone who'd make the climb to the top. In the grandstand area where the Flower Stage was set up, a display of paintings, life-sculptures and photographs was assembled. It was a total showcase, creatively arranged to keep the crowd dispersed, moving and amused. Concerts were staggered with a 15-minute overlap so that it was possible to see everything or stay in one area for those portions of the program which seemed most attractive. The net effect was that each act had its own audience, people were constantly entertained or diverted and the three days had a continuous organic flow of amusements from one to ten PM each day.

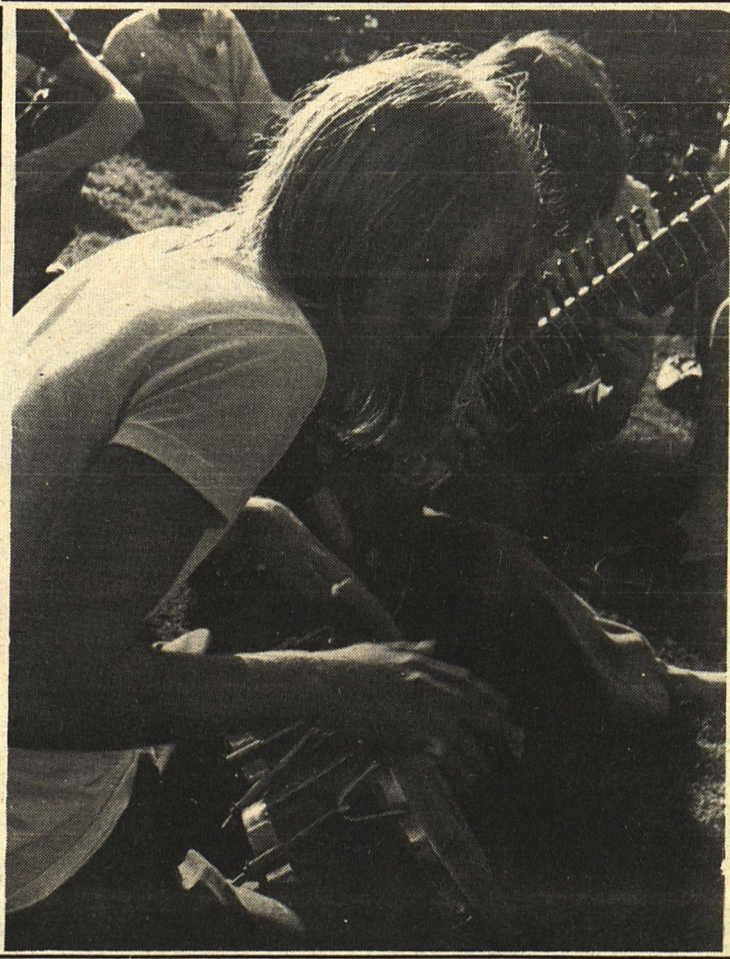
Music could be heard from all parts of the festival grounds, be it from the Flower Stage by the racetrack grandstand, the Flying Stage in the meadow or the performer's private area behind a hedge where incidental jams ignited spontaneously several times each day and evening. Buffy Sainte-Marie scatted with Jose Feliciano, Butterfield and Richie Havens musicians jazzed around (Butterfield played a beer can) and Joni Mitchell played a warm-up set by the pool table inside.

into its ashes, no more Byrds to hail with a downpour of flowers. Simon and Garfunkel were elsewhere rediscovering puberty (or senility—I forget which) and the Doors were probably off somewhere trying to find their heads. But even without the above or the Beatles or the Stones or the Who, pop was panoramically represented. Acts came from all geographical areas of popculture inlands, outlands and hinterlands. Flatt and Scruggs served finger-picking and grits and the Sweet

with the gypsy-injun-surbum-chicano freakware and long hair. The energy of the music was pervasive, its gotten through. Jingle jangle mornings were afoot in Miami.

I remembered Monterey, the anticipation, the total explosion of all that joy; the very first attempt at a major pop festival and the aura of confidence that prevailed. That was in the Summer of 1967 when our innocence was intact. Monterey will always be a monument to that innocence. The Miami Pop Festival was a monument unto itself, a model, a shift in perspective, an experiment in depth over sensation. It worked.

"Monterey Pop" had a beauty all its own, a beauty of another era somehow. That particular festival is irrevocably over. Its beauty was prophetic.



Their performances themselves were almost always tremendous and the audiences were ecstatic, dancing, cheerful and enthusiastic. Pacific Gas and Electric played four times in the three days to this national audience who, by the third day gave them howling ovations after every song. Lead singer Charlie Allen crooned and belted blues and gospel while a giggle of teenies chorused "get it on!" Jr. Walker was spectacular, Chuck Berry was cheered heartily by new fans and those of us who had been sweet little sixteen when that song was a hit: teenieboppers in fact as well as fancy. A smaller but no less enthusiastic audience heartily enjoyed the Charles Lloyd Quintet, demonstrating the hard core jazz audience rock embraces. Richie Havens and Graham Nash (the latter late of the Hollies) joined Joni Mitchell for her encore: an exquisite rendition of "Get Together." Three Dog Night, a brilliantly eclectic group suffering from chronic underexposure demonstrated the solution to the material crisis most groups who write their own material face. The group does incandescent recreations and improvisations of other writers' material. They brought the house down with Otis Redding's "Try A Little Tenderness."

Crowds swarmed around Richie Havens after his sets like disciples and Sweetwater inspired gentle astonishment among those who had seen them for the first time.

Many of the acts had not been seen before by this audience which is one of the most significant aspects of the festival. The program was a thoughtful mix of acts which relied heavily on quality and diversity rather than big names. There were few pampered superegos to distract from the scope and substance of the program, and virtually no powertrip pop politics. But then again, 1968 was not the year of the superstar in pop. Most of the big groups had disbanded, the rest of them were coasting. No more Mamas and Papas to California Dream, the Airplane seems to be descending

Inspirations grooved on chapel rock. Canned Heat's country blues were beautiful, Terry Reid, a 19 year old Welsh mite with a tremendous voice charmed them, Procol Harum flew in from London and dedicated "Whiter Shade of Pale" to the Stones, Jose Feliciano contributed Latin rock and a comment that the cops from this festival could serve as an example for the "gestapo of Chicago," that after his hit, "The Star Spangled Banner." (Several dope busts were made but no violence or brutality). Country Joe and the Fish picked their noses onstage and temporary Fish Jack Cassidy said fuck into the mike. They were the self-appointed original persecuted hippies from San Francisco, a little irrelevant by now, but still irresistible. Steppenwolf, in supergroup cute cop costumes and "we-get-to-close-the-Sunday-night-show" arrogance dumped all over the audience (again). It was the only ego maneuver there. Too bad about Steppenwolf, they really had a good thing going before it got to their heads. The Dead were in rare form. Buffy Sainte-Marie, who had been attacked in her hotel a day earlier gave a strange, icy performance. Ian and Sylvia, who apologized that this was their first pop festival, were strained. Marvin Gaye was spectacular, Wayne Cochran, a White freak with a Black complex and show-band back-up brass was hilariously absurd. A Moonfire contingent staged a friendly raid preaching love and veggies.

The Festival, produced by Tom Rounds, was, with its breadth, substance, superb staging and considerate arrangement of activities, the first major pop festival held on the East Coast and the first significant pop festival since Monterey. Kids came from all along the Eastern seaboard and the Midwest. There were small contingents from Canada and the West Coast. Campers slept on a nearby Indian reservation. Children of rich parents on vacation locally showed up in droves and the mixture of primpresed cotton resort wear blended curiously

## sweetwater

HANK ZEVALLOS

It's in a Los Angeles coffeehouse which no longer exists. Everyone, audience and musicians, everyone is moving to the excitement of a blazing jam session. Electric piano electrocutions, flute free-floating, conga percussion, and other wild sounds. It's been going on for quite a while now. An insanely happy instrumental which feels as if it'll go on forever. Sweeping past bumper-to-bumper traffic on an endless freeway of red lights, lifting freely away and into a coolly exciting free-winged heaven. High, oh so high!

fly away!

And in the audience a long-haired girl is bouncing about, uninhibitedly singing along to the many-songed music. Albert Moore, the tall, slender flutist,

notices her and motions for her to join them on the state. She does so and is soon belting out her interpretation of the folk traditional, "Motherless Child," knocking everybody out. Wow, what a beautiful surprise! When she's finished, she returns to her seat next to her male companion. And the musicians continue non-stop with this ever-evolving flow of musical excitement. When they finish some 15 minutes later, she is gone.

Alex Del Zoppo recalled that night nearly a year later when the group was beginning work on their debut album for Reprise at American Recording in North Hollywood last summer:

"Wow, it was really something! We were all involved in this long thing when Albert noticed her. Then she blew our minds with her singing and returned to her

## record rev

### CANNED HEAT

DAVID MARK DASHEV

There are a lot of ass-holes writing music reviews and it is a favorite ploy for the most simplistic amongst them to negate or revere a group for everything but the music it produces. Thus, we have the school of cretin criticism that maintains a White band cannot and should not play blues or R&B material. Naturally when a group like Canned Heat comes along they are victimized for attempting to play the only kind of music they know, love, and respect. Add to this the acidic damnation they inherit because of two chart singles and it is a small wonder that they have not been written off altogether. Their latest Liberty album, LIVING THE BLUES, provides a convenient point of departure for any assessment of their musical worth, for it is their most complete effort to date.

Unlike many presumptuous blues groups, Canned Heat doesn't attempt to "do" or sound like any primordial giant long-neglected by an insensate listening audience. Canned Heat has too much respect to engage in that fatuous artificiality. Their respect goes beyond individual personalities and is more a respect for the entire idiom. They know the blues better than any current group and that knowledge has made them aware of the organic nature of the music. You cannot manufacture and package the intensity from which the blues is born and any attempt to do so is doomed from the start. Listen to Bob Hite's "Sandy's Blues" and you will hear the highly internalized eruption of something you cannot learn, imitate or improvise.

Throughout the entire first side of the two disc package, guitarists Henry Vestine and Alan Wilson avoid inappropriate and cliched phrasing. The result is a series of bridges that evolve from the music itself rather than the tired licks many would-be players graft onto songs in order to deliver the pregnant pauses.

Bassist Larry Taylor establishes himself as a player not content to dawdle along the horizontal lines that are home to a legion of blues bassists. Instead he strikes out on a linear exploration that is at times lyrical, at times funky but always right and always there.

## JUDY

She is rainwater's daughter returned from the slaughter where we all have been/in the grays of calendar days.

"Why's" and surprise rusty tears on burlap... "tea?" "please."