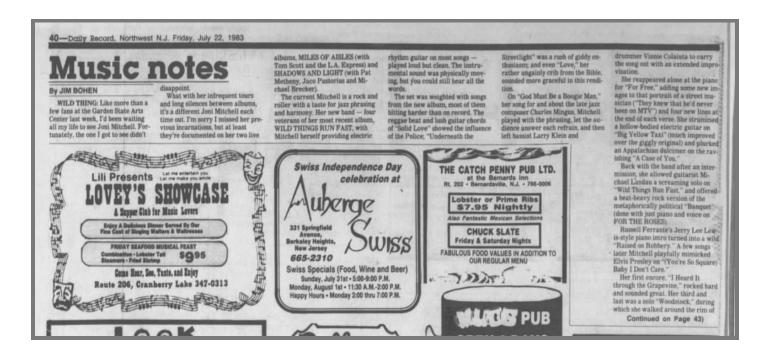
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Newspapers

by ancestry.

usic Notes

Continued from Page 40) the stage, then drifted into the wings, still playing her electric guitar.

HOW SWEET IT IS: Marvin Gaye has a reputation for on-stage eccentricity, and the mood before his show at the Meadowlands Arena last week was one of uneasy anticipation. As it turned out, the show was a little eccentric, but still worthy of one of our very greatest singers.

The sound of Gaye's 23-member orchestra - including seven horn players, three keyboardists and four percussionists - was wasted in the echoing expanses of the half-filled arena. The louder dance numbers, even "I Heard It through the Grapevine" and "Let's Get It On," came across more on the strength of Gaye's bump-and-grind dancing than on their musical values.

The ballads sounded much better.

beginning with "God Is Love," which Gaye sang at the piano in gospel falsetto to introduce a couple of tunes from his classic 1971 album WHAT'S GOING ON. He seemed to warm up during these songs, even venturing a lengthy jazz piano solo during "Inner City Blues.

But the show's highlight was a long segment devoted to songs he'd sung as duets with female singers like Mary Wells and the late Tammi Terrell. On "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" Gaye took the song through several presumably improvised changes of mood, tempo and phrasing.

He used the same technique to il-Iuminate "Once Upon a Time." By the time he brought one of his backup singers forward for a more conventional duet on "If I Could Build My Whole World Around You," it was anticlimatic.

During a penultimate instrumental, Gaye ducked backstage, returning in robe and pajamas for "Sexual Healing," a song so gloriously percussive it might have gone on forever. He made it the occasion for a brief strip tease, then capped it with a disclaimer about how despite his preoccupation with sex, "I do love Jesus and I love God." By that point no apologies were necessary.

BITS AND PIECES: Marshall Crenshaw, whose album FIELD DAY has been roundly criticized for its echo-laden production by Steve Lillywhite, says that's exactly the sound he wanted. "If anyone thinks I was led down the path by Lillywhite, they're wrong," he said. "If they don't like it, don't buy it." ... Recent non-album B sides of note (with the A sides in parentheses): The Police's "Murder by Numbers" ("Every Breath You Take"), Stevie Nicks's "Garbo" ("Stand Back"), U2's "End-

less Deep" ("Two Hearts Beat as One"), Eddy Grant's "Time Warp" ("Electric Avenue"), the Kinks' "Noise" ("Come Dancing"), Men at Work's "Till the Money Runs Out" ("Overkill"), Prince's "How Come U Don't Call Me Anymore" ("1999") and the Hollies' "Musical Pictures" ("Stop in the Name of Love"). ... New albums on the way or already here: Neil Young's 50s-influenced EV-ERYBODY'S ROCKIN', Elvis Costello's PUNCH THE CLOCK Graham Parker's THE REAL MA-CAW, Jackson Browne's LAWYERS IN LOVE, Asia's ALPHA (the cassette version includes an extra song, "Daylight," also the B side of the first single, "Don't Cry"), Billy Joel's AN INNOCENT MAN, the Motels' LITTLE ROBBERS, Robert Plant's THE PRINCIPLE OF MOMENTS. the Tom Tom Club's CLOSE TO THE BONE, and a solo disc from Kinks guitarist Dave Davies, CHOSEN PEOPLE

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