

Garden Resounds to Johnny Winter and Chicago

Johnny Winter and the jazz-rock group Chicago are comparative rarities on the New York rock scene. Chicago plays here only once a year, and Winter has not appeared in the city for several years. Madison Square Garden played host to both of them last week.

Winter, who appeared Saturday, remains, despite his absence, one of the more bizarre elements of rock in an industry not noted for visual rectitude. An albino guitarist-singer, he stalked onstage in a full-length black gown, Walt Disney's Wicked Witch come to play, guitar replacing broomstick. The audience welcomed him ecstatically, although he stopped the show at one time to chastise it for throwing some lethal love offerings at him.

His litany is rock 'n' roll—the phrase crops up in all his songs and his announcements. Again, audience response to this overkill of expression was baying enthusiasm.

Winter still works his blues-leaning guitar into sheets of sound, involving the smears and slurs that made the instrumental rock of the late nineteen-sixties so distinctive. That was also the time of Winter's arrival as a rock artist.

He now works with two drummers, a bass player (with whom he did much full frontal rubbing—a concession perhaps to the currently trendy theater-rock) and a woman tambourinist. In view of the World Trade Center-size amplification that Winter carries, the tambourine rattling was a little ineffectual, but maybe it gives him comfort.

Winter has lost none of his raunch-rock power or glamour. Perhaps his marathon guitar solos sound similar at the end of the evening but it was a sustained show and an impressive return. On the bill, Foghat maintained its promise and Rocky Hill's rock sounded very promising.

The crowd for Chicago on Thursday was much less raunchy in appreciation than Winter's audience. But then Chicago is much less raunchy in its approach, being among the more sophisticated of groups. It is a band conscious of presentation—everything is kept tight, controlled and arranged. Very professional. The program mixed old with new and all sounded familiar because Chicago is a band with definite identity, sound and style.

The obsessive chanting of "We can make it happen" in one composition recalled the innocence of yesteryear, the Woodstock Age. But maybe the very new "Feelin' Stronger Every Day" was more accurate.

Bruce Springsteen, a performer who is both Dylanesque and punk rock, opened the concert.

IAN DOVE

Bluegrass Club Offers Series at Seaport

After an unusually successful indoor season at the New York University Law School, the Bluegrass Club of New York has moved outdoors to the South Street Seaport Museum pier, where it will present bluegrass and, occasionally, old-timey music every Thursday evening.

The opening attraction for the series last Thursday was

Don Stover and the White Oak Mountain Boys, a group that is something of a mixed blessing. Mr. Stover is an excellent banjo player, a lusty, unabashed singer and a man of such infectious geniality that even his most atrocious "Hee-Haw" jokes can be forgiven.

He is such a good performer that his group, one of the lesser bluegrass ensembles, seems even less adequate than it might appear if it were not being contrasted with such a forceful personality. Despite this, however, Dave Dillon and Jack Tuttle gave Mr. Stover some good supportive singing and Mr. Dillon, an infrequent soloist on guitar, was good enough in his few appearances to make one wish for a bit more.

JOHN S. WILSON

Andy Pratt Is Heard At Max's Kansas City

Andy Pratt came in from New England to Max's Kansas City, Park Avenue South, on Wednesday with a strong reputation as singer-songwriter, based mainly on his recordings. The unknown-genius-of-the-week spot is always a rough one, but by the end of Pratt's first set that reputation of his had taken some bruising.

His onstage manner came over self-indulgent and disjointed, his falsetto a little reedy, and his large back-up group was flabby.

By contrast, the imagery of the country singer (and writer) Jimmy Buffett was clear and clean, rooted firmly in Buffett's own existence. Buffett, who was backed up by a good harmonica

player and a low-phosphate washboard scrubber, also dropped in some humor. Buffett looks outside and takes notes—Pratt takes the inner view and the long way around.

IAN DOVE

Joe Farrell Introduces A New Jazz Quartet

Joe Farrell, who has paid his dues in the familiar jazz tradition through his years as a sideman, most notably with Maynard Ferguson's band and with the Elvin Jones groups, introduced a new quartet this weekend that could give him the stature as a leader for which he has long seemed ready.

The quartet, which played at Boomer's, 340 Bleecker Street, consists of Mr. Farrell, playing tenor and soprano saxophones and flute; Joe Beck on guitar; Herb Bushler, bass, and Chip Lyles, drums. Mr. Farrell and Mr. Beck have been working together in various situations for some time and have developed an excellent rapport.

Mr. Beck brings a touch of rock to the group, primarily through his judicious use of his wah-wah pedal. But the overall style, established by Mr. Farrell's wide-ranging jazz skill, is not only definitely jazz but a particularly rousing and exultant form of jazz, even on a ballad like "Lover Man."

Mr. Farrell and Mr. Beck are individually and jointly responsible for much of this excitement, but the quartet as a whole has a tight, bright, urgent attack highlighted by Mr. Lyles's remarkably light and lively way of sustaining the underlying rhythms.

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