

Dylan's latest thunder definitely on the level

A spokesman for Pace Management Co., the Houston public relations firm that is promoting "The Night Of the Hurricane" Sunday at the Astrodome said Tuesday Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and "60 superstars" will definitely appear.

There had been some skepticism about the legitimacy of the program because:

1. Dylan himself said he was disbanding the Rolling Thunder Review after its Madison Square Garden benefit show for imprisoned boxer Ruben Hurricane Carter.

2. The initial announcements for the show billed it as "The Night of the Hurricane" featuring Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Review," and it was not specifically stated Dylan would appear.

3. Nowhere on the tickets being peddled for the show is Dylan's name mentioned.

4. Motorcycle races were scheduled for that weekend in the Astrodome, and

5. Houston, frankly, seemed an unlikely place to stage the first Rolling Thunder show outside of the northeastern United States. San Francisco or Los Angeles seemed more plausible.

But Louis Messina, the Pace Management executive who handled much of the arrangements for the show along with Clyde Carson, the show's promoter, said the program is definitely on the level.

"Bob Dylan, Joan Baez—all of them are going to be there," Pace said. "Dylan will be coming here Saturday in a DC9 jet painted "Night of the Hurricane" and he is bringing 60 genuine superstars with him. He's got a whole entourage, every superstar you can imagine."

The advertisements aired on Dallas radio stations said Stevie Wonder, Isaac Hayes, Shawn Phillips and Dr. John will appear on the program. Joel Hoffner, a spokesman for LP Goodbuy record stores, one of the local ticket outlets for the show, said he received a written notice indicating Ringo Starr would also appear.

Messina said the benefit was originally scheduled for the Superdome in New Orleans "but the Superdome wouldn't cooperate. So they (the promoters) started making inquiries about renting the Astrodome and through special arrangements it became available."

The special arrangements, Messina said, included eliminating one day of the motorcycle races and hiring extra personnel to convert the Astrodome from a race arena to a concert facility. Another conversion process will take place immediately after Sunday's show because "a machine show is coming into the Astrodome Monday morning," Messina said.

"It will be a 6-hour show," Messina said. "The doors will open at 2 p.m. and the show begins at 4. It should be over around 10."

Hoffner said the Dallas area was allotted 8,000 tickets and only a little over 400 remain. But sources in Houston indicate tickets are not selling as well as expected down there.

"There's this natural hostility about holding shows in the Astrodome," the source said. "People just don't like to see music shows there because the acoustics are so bad."

Joni Mitchell, who canceled a number of her scheduled appearances late last year to appear with Dylan during the latter stages of Rolling Thunder's swing through the Northeast, will be in the vicinity this weekend, but it is doubtful she will appear at the Astrodome.

A spokesman for Concerts West, the promoter for Miss Mitchell's show Thursday night in Houston and her Monday appearance in Dallas, said Tuesday Joni was scheduled to perform Sunday night in Oklahoma City.

But sources both here and in Houston said since Miss Mitchell did agree to appear with Dylan earlier a remote possibility existed that Dylan could reciprocate with an appearance during Joni's concert here Monday night.—PETE OPPEL