

Mariposa was a carnival of musical delights

By JIM BEEBE
Star staff writer

Aside from the distraction of gatecrashers, the thoughtless tendency of the audience to demand "more" even after a second encore, and the usual lines for the ferries, this has probably been the most pleasant Mariposa festival weekend ever.

The weather on Olympic Island was warm and dry all three days (in contrast to last year's heavy rains); the afternoon workshops were informal and engaging; and the evening concerts eccentric and undemanding (in contrast to the adrenalin-charged climaxes of rock festivals).

For example, only at Mariposa would the penultimate act of the evening be Elizabeth Cotton, a 66-year-old Negro female guitarist (on Friday) or a motley collection of Indian singers and dancers (on Saturday).

OBSCURE SINGERS

And only at Mariposa would the program include so many obscure but authentic folksingers plus groups like the Pennywhistlers, six New York girls who sing heavily harmonized European folk songs, and the Olympia Brass Band, the last example of the once-thriving New Orleans funeral jazz bands.

But, as few of the concertgoers realize, Mariposa lives in the afternoon. The 40-odd workshops are a carnival of musical delights. They range from instrumental how-to's to mini-concerts, and the subjects this year included children's music, unusual instruments, blues development, magic and the supernatural in folk music, folk music of India, traditional Ontario songs, sea songs, Cajun and Acadian music and on and on.

And those are only among the "official" workshops. Dozens of others spring up spontaneously.

PICNIC TIME

Though individual workshops sometimes draw over 1,000 people, usually they are occasions for picnics on the grass while watching someone unknown with someone famous, like Joni Mitchell or Gordon Lightfoot—who played the early Mariposas but this year just dropped by, with two of his very expensive fingers in a cast.

Among the more memorable workshop sessions this weekend were:

—A sensitive musical discourse on the late Woody Guthrie by his friend and fellow folksinger Ramblin' Jack Elliott, the link between the generations of



—Star photo by Graham Bezant

INFORMALITY was the theme of the three-day Mariposa festival on Olympic Island over the weekend and these youths were typical of the crowd which took in

Guthrie and Bob Dylan (who, incidentally, also befriended Elliott).

—A musical theatre picnic by the Perth County Conspiracy, a Stratford-based communal group who passed out food and songs with equal generosity and facility. They were also the highlight of Friday night's concert with their exceptionally literate songs, effective use of lighting and a finale with everyone carrying sparklers among the audience. They were, in fact, probably the biggest discovery of his year's Mariposa.

Another unexpected bonus at the evening concerts was the back-to-back appearances Saturday of blues guitarists J. B. Hutto of Chica-

go and Mississippi Fred ("I don't play no rock-and-roll") MacDowell.

Last night's program was capped by the two biggest "name" performers at this year's Mariposa, an engagingly humble and enormously popular folk-rock singer named James Taylor and of course Joni Mitchell, the unofficial queen of Mariposa in exile in California.

Taylor is a gaunt, slightly long-haired young man with alternately haunted and delighted looks in his piercing blue eyes.

His good-natured songs, tasteful guitar-playing and self-deprecatory humor (satirically clapping when everyone applauded his first number, or introducing "A medley of my hit song")

the music and the heat as they cool off in the Island waters. The atmosphere was soothing despite gate-crashing incidents. Organizers let about 1,000 persons

soothed and won over an uncomfortable audience grating from the gatecrashing episode.

James Taylor's quietly marvellous songs—Fire and Rain, Country Road, Carolina on My Mind, Sweet Baby James and others—and his constant and seemingly unconscious humor provided the most enjoyable and en-

tertaining moments at Mariposa.

Only Joni Mitchell could follow him. She has come to be the sentimental favorite at Mariposa (this was her sixth consecutive appearance), and she chose this as her first concert this year after a prolonged retirement from performing.

Although admitting to

in free halfway through concert last night after 40 or more young freeloaders had swum lagoon from Centre Island and they were afraid someone would drown.

being "a little nervous, I haven't played in so long," she was in fine voice and her celebrated songs—Woodstock, Both Sides Now, Circle Game and Chesea Morning—ensured her acceptance. She also performed a few new songs, including an ode to California played with a dulcimer rather than guitar, a song she had de-

buted Saturday in an exchange with veteran folksinger Vera Johnson at one of the many scheduled concerts at Mariposa.

Though she projects more emotion in her voice now and looks almost sexy in a full-length yellow knit dress, Joni Mitchell singing her old songs is a reassurance that Mariposa hasn't changed that much.

Columnist stops chatter

Shellah Graham has quit after 34 years as a Hollywood columnist. "The Hollywood chatter column has had it," she said, announcing plans for a new column with a women's angle. . . With Paul McCartney at home, Ringo Starr recording in Nashville, Tenn., John and Yoko in the U.S. and George Harrison



Fiercely dedicated youths make music

By SUSAN COHEN
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Carrol McLaughlin stood outside the auditorium at Lawrence Park Collegiate

