

Mariposa hopes magic name will attract 25,000 persons

By BILL DAMPIER

Remember what a hoot-nenny is? The amateur promoters at the Mariposa Folk Festival, Incorporated hope you do, because they're counting on nostalgia and the magic name Mariposa to attract more than 25,000 people to Centre Island next weekend. Counting on it to the tune of a \$65,000 investment.

"We have two things going for us," says Dick Flohll, a music magazine editor who is doing the publicity for the festival.

"There's the site, on Olympic Island, a beautiful place for a festival. And the name Mariposa will attract a lot of people.

"We've established a reputation; people figure that if a performer is appearing at Mariposa, he's got to be good. We set high standards."

300 PERFORMERS

Maybe it will work. But of the 53 acts and 300 performers and craftsmen appearing this year, only two—Odetta headlining the Friday night concert, and Joni

Mitchell, making her first appearance in 1970 on Sunday night, after a long vacation in Greece—have any kind of broad appeal for the public at large.

That doesn't mean they aren't good; people like Owen McBride and David Rea and Michael Cooney may be competent and entertaining artists, but those names on the program don't sell many seats.

\$75 A DAY

Most of the big names in folk music will not be coming. This may be partly the result of Mariposa's policy of paying all of the performers a flat \$75 per day, plus expenses, a rate that amounts to little more than cold charity for most entertainers.

But partly it's the result of a deliberate policy of promoting new and unknown performers, and trying to educate an audience to the intricacies and esoterica of folk music.

Educating the audience is a classic way for promoters to commit suicide, but it's been working—more or less

—for Mariposa. Last year the festival, a non-profit organization run by housewives, schoolteachers and engineers, made a handsome profit of \$26,000. (They used the money to pay off back debts, establish a folk-lore centre on Avenue Rd., and organize this year's festival. They also bought a typewriter, the first the organization has owned.)

Mariposa used to be a rowdy affair, a three-day beer bust on the shores of Lake Couchiching, complete with thundering editorials in the *Orillia Packet and Times*, complaints from the neighbors, motorcycle gangs, and boys and girls spending the weekend rolled up in the same sleeping bag.

It isn't that way anymore. Now it's respectable, approved by the Department of Parks and Recreation, filled with families with toddlers having a picnic on the island, and maybe humming along to the music a little—discreetly, of course.

There hasn't been an ar-

rest at Mariposa since the Festival public relations man was arrested in 1967 for disorderly conduct.

In fact, Mariposa, the oldest major folk festival in North America, has slipped into middle age and grown sleek with prosperity. It's 10 years old next Friday.

RUNS FOR 3 DAYS

The format this year is essentially unchanged from last. The festival runs for three days, starting Friday morning and ending Sunday night.

There are workshops and panel discussions and mini-concerts during the day, starting at 10.30 in the morning, and lasting until 5.30 in the afternoon. They're usually the best bargains at Mariposa—no heavy crowds, and interesting material, if you like folk arts.

This year the day-time sessions will feature a number of folk-dance troupes, a mini-market for arts and crafts, and a large contingent of Indians and Eskimos at the First Arts Festival of the Native Peoples of North America.

THERE ARE CHAIRS

The evening concerts start at 7.30 and usually run about four hours; and they have chairs—"you can get more people closer to the stage if they're all sitting down," says one of the organizers—a pleasant change for anyone who has suffered a bruised backside sitting on concrete at pop festivals, and an indication of how sedate Mariposa has become.

Tickets are \$2 for the day-time activities, and \$4 for the evening concerts, and you can get them a little cheaper in advance. You can also buy a ticket for the entire weekend for \$12.50.

The evening concerts are limited to 8,000 seats—and sometimes they're sold out before the performance, as they were last year for the Joan Baez concert.

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MARIPOSA FESTIVAL'S TWO BIG NAMES

Joni Mitchell (left) and Odetta are starring here next weekend