

Rolling Thunder Revue Review

by Raffi Hallisan and Scott Shurr

The Rolling Thunder Revue rolled into Worcester Auditorium, Nov. 19, after tickets had been sold out within hours of its announcement. The show started out with the introduction of Dylan's backup band. Bobby Neuwirth acted as Master of Ceremonies, introducing Mick Ronson (last seen playing guitar for the Spiders from Mars), T-Bone Burnette, Bob Stoner on bass, and Steve Soles on backup vocals. Anne Blakley also appeared for a few songs before the band moved onto Janis Joplin's "Mercedes Benz." The crowd, by this time getting impatient for Dylan, was ecstatic as a special guest, Joni Mitchell, walked onto the stage. She displayed her distinctive voice in two songs from her new album, "The Hissing of Summer Lawns." When rumblin' Jack Elliot one of Dylan's proteges from his old New York City Days, came on to do several songs, one of which captured his distinctive yodeling style. By this time the crowd was getting rest-

less, and received Dylan, white faced and wearing his Pat Garrett hat, with a standing ovation. He started out with "When I paint my masterpiece."

Dylan's voice was as raspy and spirited as ever, but the band's unique interpretations made the music seem new and different. Dylan finished off the first set with some of his popular songs such as "It ain't me babe", and "It takes a lot to laugh, it takes a train to cry." The ornately inscribed curtain fell, as the audience waited for the second half to begin.

The remainder of the concert began with the voices of Dylan and Joan Baez singing "Blowin' In the Wind" as the curtain rose. They did several songs together, including "I shall be released", until Dylan turned the stage over to Baez. She started off with "Diamonds and Rust" a song many people remembered as the highlight of the show. She also sang on a capella rendition of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", and "Joe Hill", another flashback to the protest

days. Baez then introduced Roger McGuinn, who played 12 string for most of the concert. His first number, "Chestnut Mare" was so well received that he launched into a solid rendition of "8 Miles High", a classic Byrds song.

Dylan then reappeared with his new band featuring Scarlet Rivera on violin, after soloing with "Tangled Up In Blue." That portion of the show featured Dylan's newer material such as "Hurricane" and "Knockin' On Heaven's Door." The audience also heard two more songs for the first time, "One More Cup of Coffee", a mournful blues tune, and "Sara", written for his wife. For the Grand Finale, all the performers came out to do Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land" which had the audience on its feet as the lights came on.

The Worcester tour was part of a tour that had begun about two weeks before, picking up more performers as the show went along. The only real surprise of the

Worcester date was the appearance of Joni Mitchell. As the tour moved into Boston rumors were circulating that Bruce Springsteen, Arlo Guthrie, John Lennon, and who knows who else would also appear. There's no doubt that the Worcester audience enjoyed the quality and variety of the Rolling Thunder Revue's stay in Worcester. Although Dylan was, is and always will be the poet and musician of an era, we have to say that Ms. Baez totally stole the show.

Kate Millett

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