

Talent On Stage

CREAM—DEEP PURPLE

FORUM, INGLEWOOD, CALIF.—The funeral of Cream was a bizarre, nostalgic, and inspiring experience for the record-breaking crowd. Jack Bruce, Eric Clapton, and Ginger Baker in their California farewell appearance, drove the blazing fire of their hard-rock music to the ecstatic open-hearted audience that attended the Saturday night (19) sell-out.

Ginger Baker, a 29-year-old seraphic wildman, beat the drums with maniacal passion and unequalled fervor. His 35-minute drum solo on "The Toad," made the already excited audience stand in tearful ovation. Shouts of "We love you Ginger!" rang throughout the Forum, bouncing off the towering ceiling and returning to hover among us as final memories of Cream, together.

Jack Bruce, master of the mouth harp and guitar, is a man with kind eyes and agile fingers. His harmonica solo, "Take It Back," was followed by shouts of approval, and several minutes of applause. The audience loved Bruce, and he glowed in the spotlight of love.

Eric Clapton is a singularly unique talent on the guitar. To Clapton, it is no longer just a musical instrument

with strings; it's his life, love, passion, satisfaction—all concentrated in ability to relate his talent through the materialistic image.

"I Feel Free," "Sunshine of your Love," "World of Pain," "Take It Back," and their current chart hit, "White Room," were the songs that exhilarated the people. By the end of the performance, masses of people were dancing, crying, and singing their way toward the stage.

What a lovely way to leave an indelible memory in the music world; what a place to start a new evolution.

Also appearing with Cream was a new group from England, Deep Purple. Besides singing their chart song "Hush," they also performed "Mandrake Root," and "One More Rainy Day."

Rod Evans, the beautiful voice, is a vision of purple velvet, legs and leather. The organist, in the uncommon tradition of The Phantom of the Opera, waved his sleeves and fantastically long fingers over the keyboard. Lead guitarist, Ritchie Blackmore, played gross games with his guitar, while bass guitarist, Nicky Simper, and Ian Paice on drums, kept quietly in the background.

ED AMES

EMPIRE ROOM, WALDORF, N.Y.—Ed Ames needs not much more than his persuasive voice to enchant an audience, whether in-person or on disks. His opening night performance at the Empire Room last Monday (21) glowed with a number of such stanzas, including "Try to Remember," "Scarborough Fair" and "Kiss Her Now." The former numbers are done with a minimum of orchestral backing; "Kiss Her Now," the great ballad from the new Jerry Herman musical, "Dear World," is an example of a stirring big-ballad performance—replete with muscular orchestra support—that more than works—it renews one's faith in show music's melodic and lyric superiority. Ames had achieved this

high-standard of pop singing unfailingly at his Persian Room engagement last spring. Yet, this time around there was too much of a tendency to dazzle, to let overripe orchestrations and a superfluous six-member chorus call the shots. Also, Ames' almost apologetic narrative on how great the contemporary sound is was ill-advised and simply out-of-date. And he didn't always feel at home when singing some examples ("Cherish," "Monday Monday"). The pinnacle of pop artistry is easily within reach of Ed Ames. His current RCA single of "Kiss Her Now" is proof. We hope his in-person appearances get back on the right track.

DON RICKLES

COPACABANA, NEW YORK—Don Rickles makes it plain—often by invoking the name of God—that he is not adding injury to insult. Be that as it may, Rickles is adding a new hilarity to the New York nitery scene. It's a one-joke concept, of course, but it's executed with such skill and swiftness that one hasn't got time to care. Rickles, who employs some material heard on his debut album for Warner Bros./Seven Arts, is not one of those comics who gives himself five or 10 minutes to warm up. Insults fly right

from the start, although sometimes they do crash down to too earthy—even for Rickles. His foils—those poor ringsiders—do take him good-naturedly. His two-week engagement is sold-out—so a lot of New Yorkers and visitors will get a chance to see the man who makes Jack E. Leonard sound like Norman Vincent Peale. More than rounding out the bill is Checkmate Ltd., the A&M rocksters who continue to be the most engaging rock & comedy format team ever to hit the scene.

JOHNNY CASH REVUE

CARNEGIE HALL, N. Y.—Country music came to the city last week (23) in the form of America's most pop-admired C&W artist, Johnny Cash, along with a highly polished show. A sell-out crowd enjoyed the action.

Carl Perkins is still rocking, albeit in a country vein, and we arrived in time to catch his closing numbers, "I Got A Woman" and, of course, "Blue Suede Shoes."

The Carter Family, composed of Mother Maybelle and daughters June (Mrs. Cash), Anita & Helen, turned in a more old-fashioned country set, accompanying themselves on guitar and autoharp. The girls took turns singing lead on such tunes as "The Last Thing On My Mind," "Wildwood Flower" and "To Be A Child Again" (Anita's current U.A. single.)

The Statler Bros. put their strong vocal harmony to good use on a well-rounded set which included their "Flowers On The Wall" hit and "Shen-

andoah."

After a longish intermission, Cash came on to the strains of "I Walk The Line" and an extended burst of applause. Perhaps we should take this time to mention the fine instrumental support provided throughout the show by the Tennessee Three, Cash's long-time backup group (with the noticed absence of Luther Perkins, who died recently). Cash opened the show with a 20-minute medley of hits, including "Big River," "I Still Miss Someone" and several tunes from the "Ride This Train" album, such as "Five Feet High And Rising" and "Picking Time."

The heavy part of the show followed, with several full tunes ("Folsom Prison," "I Walk The Line" etc.) from Cash, followed by a batch of numbers featuring the entire cast, including "Ring Of Fire" and "I Guess Things Happen That Way." Cash is a pro: you expect the best and you get it.

JEFF BECK GROUP

ALBERT KING—TIM BUCKLEY

FILLMORE EAST, N. Y.—Epic's Jeff Beck Group returned to the Fillmore East last weekend (18,19), but this time they came as headliners and stars, riding the crest of their best-selling "Truth" LP.

Although Becks quartet was very well received on his first U.S. tour, the former Yardbird, not content with less than the best, recruited English session pianist Nicky Hopkins to fill out the group. The difference is noticeable, and the group is better than ever. The outfit's repertoire is basically the same, including "Beck's Boogie," "Rock My Plimsol" and "Shape Of

Things." Hopkins was showcased on a good version of Aretha's "Natural Woman." Show closer was a real surprise, with Beck inviting a young (14?) Fillmore hanger-on to jam with the group. Don't be surprised if you read of this youngster signing with a label shortly.

Albert King demonstrated his own "Blues Power," but unlike Beck's group, his backup musicians are not strong soloists. King, however, is excellent. Tim Buckley, featuring a new, softer instrumental sound, was also well received by the audience.

JONI MITCHELL

BITTER END, N. Y.—On Wednesday evening, October 23, Joni Mitchell opened a one-week engagement at the Bitter End nitery in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. Miss Mitchell has been gaining quite a reputation here and on the West Coast for her singing

and songwriting. Her first Reprise album, titled simply "Joni Mitchell," made the charts, and one of her songs, "Both Sides Now," has just hit the Top 100 via Judy Collins' Elektra single.

Joni Mitchell has a beautiful voice, she plays guitar beautifully and she writes beautiful songs. These songs, which deal with various aspects of the human condition, are at once realistic and magical. The world she depicts is not a fairyland. Rather, it is the actual world seen through a stained glass window of colorful imagery. In the best artistic tradition, she has the power to write beautifully about ugly things.

Joni Mitchell's career is undoubtedly on the rise, and a year from now, she may well be a star. Good artists do not always become stars, but Miss Mitchell, like a Bob Dylan or a Joan Baez, has a quality that is both artistic and commercial. We hope she makes it to the top.



GENE BERTONCINI has signed with the new Stereo Dimension Records wing of Longines. Shown with the noted guitarist above is label president Loren Becker (left). Formerly a member of the Benny Goodman sextet, Bertoncini has more recently been featured on a number of the late night tv shows with Merv Griffin and Johnny Carson. He also guested on Tony Bennett's tv special and on Ed Sullivan Show. Both single and album product is planned for the artist, according to Stereo Dimension's A&R head Bobby Byrne. One LP date is already being prepared and others are to be conducted in November.

CONDELLO

IS COMING...

ON SCEPTER