

# PRODIGAL SUN

the opposite end of THE SPECTRUM



## Joni, Records, BG's, Weber

**Bee Gees, Buffalo Memorial Auditorium, September 14, 1979**

After five glittering nights on Broadway, or thereabouts, the Bee Gees lit up the Aud Friday with a vibrant, almost two hour long set.

Barry Gibb's ventilated moans brought the high school girls to vocal orgasm while the rest of the well mixed crowd delighted in a fluid medley of Bee Gees classics. Dressed in their customary silver and white skin-tights, which mirrored their dazzling rainbow light show, the Bee Gees opened with "Tragedy," their latest hit from *Spirits Having Flown*.

In a night filled with creative special effects, "Tragedy" featured two thunderous explosions and the striking colors of the 2001 dance floor turned stage.

For their second song, the group jumped back in time and out into space with "Edge Of The Universe," a number made more vivid by a sparkling disco ball that cast a starry field on the huge crowd.

Alternating between soft stuff and disco, they continued with "Night Fever," one of three number one songs from their record setting album *Saturday Night Fever*. It was then that the group's weakness in a live concert emerged. Though the light show impressed, the lack of movement on stage weakened the upbeat numbers.

Without John Travolta's athletic gyrations, the disco floor looked empty, and the beat failed to excite me. Robin Gibb's rigid attempts at animation were a poor substitute.

The moving ballad "Love So Right" restored the mellow mood, only to be jarred again by the disco blockbuster "Staying Alive." Then it was medley time.

The Bee Gees touched on 11 songs in their time trip back to 1967, highlighted by "Massachusetts," "How Can You Mend A Broken Heart," "I Started A Joke" and "Nights On Broadway" comprising the backdrop of soft pastels.

The disco image has followed Barry, Robin and Maurice since 1976, but the group's strength lies more in its flawless harmony than its disco sound.

While Barry and Robin handled the vocals on "Holiday," Maurice hammed it up for an appreciative audience. Acting left out, he paced across stage, checked his watch and fixed his hair to kill time.

While the balding Maurice supplied the comic moments, Barry was clearly the sex symbol. His rapport with the crowd was the strongest, although his soft solo "Words" got the poorest reaction from the audience, which must have expected more.

Though Robin's singing was faultless, he was totally colorless on stage. He doesn't speak during the act or move well, and he is neither funny nor good looking.

Personality seemed less important on the later numbers, as attention focused on skillful drummer Dennis Bryon.

Suprisingly among the missing was "How Deep Is Your Love," perhaps the Bee Gees' best song. It was a mainstay on the current tour which began in June and will run to the beginning of October, but apparently they got tired of it.

—Mark Meltzer

**Eberhard Weber, Tralfamadore Cafe, September 16, 1979**

Last Sunday was the first time I had ever heard bassist Eberhard Weber live, and the experience was quite pleasant. His music was as wispy and mystical as ever. Here, however, the floating otherworldliness was underscored by an earthy insistency which brought a shining,

intense balance to his song far greater than anything heard on his acclaimed ECM recordings.

Besides Weber's stunning command as a bassist (disciplined fire), the Music's grit came from the bright siftings of renowned Soft Machine drummer John Marshall, and Charles Mariano (remembered for his fine work with Mingus & one-time wife Toshiko Akiyoshi) summoning spirited quiet on curved soprano saxophone & wood flute. Weber's keyboardist was a fellow German whose approach was delightfully simple, displaying how constructively electronics can be made to sing. His equally simple verbosity on the acoustic piano could range at times into deceptively complex stormfronts.

The combined result was a glowing impressionism full of lyrical force, easily among the finest of Weber's performances. The capacity audience at the Tralfamadore Cafe roared a tumultuous approval, and the Tralfamadore/Jazz Report series is—obviously—on.

—Michael F. Hopkins

**The Records, Stage 1, August 27, 1979**

My idea of the Records' performance is that they are striving to be a pop group when they don't have the vocal range to give harmonies a well-rounded sound. The Rubinoos, ABBA, even Pink Lady have the ability to harmonize using every note in the scale and the result is true melody.

Conceptually, the Records have the fashion of New Wave but think only pop, much like their company mates, Sniff 'n the Tears. The set was very cohesive, not

so that it was tedious or, more positively, exceptionally professional. Yet the tightness and the vocals in "Starry Eyes" has been heard before with the Byrds. The lead vocalist John Wicks does not compromise the sweetness of "Teenarama" for ninny-ness and the bassist keeps a rhythm which exudes easy fun combined with wonderful adolescent sorrow.

Lackawanna rockers and Alyn Syms Group, began the evening with a blend of Zeppelin and Jeff Beck type white blues and R&B. The performance was only fair-to-good because the influences of Zeppelin and Beck were becoming emulation. And emulation leads to copying which will get them nowhere.

Somehow though, with Symn solos that weren't particularly innovative but intricate, with drums that weren't always in synch, and one or two mistakes in Galus' vocals, they still managed to rock. Songs like "I Remember" have great listenability and I'm willing to believe the band had an off night since I've seen them really cook in practice sessions. If they intertwine the jazzy demos they compiled last year with the harder rock, don't fuse it but keep it eclectic, and if they realize the value of identity, they'll be a supergroup deserving of a national audience. If not, they'll be another Molly Hatchet, as one local critic told me. But I hold high hopes for the Alyn Syms Group.

—Harold Goldberg

**Joni Mitchell, Blossom Music Center, August 16, 1979**

Joni Mitchell is more than just a

dream—she's versatile and that makes her more real than all singer/songwriters. I mean, maybe if Laura Nyro didn't turn her back on it all, and maybe if Ricki Lee Jones will be more than a fluke, and if Carly Simon wasn't so elite, I'd be saying the same thing about them.

In Cleveland's Blossom Music Center, Mitchell exuded an egotism which never bordered on borrowed hype from her male influences. I thought that onstage, she was basically asexual, or only wanted to have sex with her audience. This wasn't so much a power trip as it was a shared daydream.

She smiled at the dozens of roses thrown to her after "Big Yellow Taxi" which was played on an electric guitar. She was the marvel, the genius and her band just a backdrop—however good they were. Pat Metheny picked his guitar like he wanted to make the deaf hear and Weather Report bassist Jaco Pastorius pulled a Hendrix parody/tribute which included throwing his bass to the stage and jumping off an amp. Mitchell needed no football rock theatrics, which are interesting as cross-cultural digs only. Mitchell's stunning three-octave voice gave us a movie with "Coyote," a trip to the past with "Why Do Fools Fall In Love" sung with the Persuasions, and jazz with her Mingus stuff. Mitchell displayed the legacy of the century's popular music in the space of an hour and a half. A jazzy version of "Woodstock" topped it off. We were speechless, without sex but with sensual thoughts, sugar plums tap dancing in our heads.

—Harold Goldberg



**BLONDIE:** She's more than just a dream. She's real. Joni Mitchell has survived a decade of rock by changing and remaining true to what she plays. From her debut album, "Clouds," she's progressed to "Mingus" and displayed a versatility unique to this 'marvel.' A poet, a musician, a star without the hype or pretense.

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JONI MITCHELL HEJIRA

