

Talent in Action

CONWAY TWITTY

Palomino, Los Angeles

After so many years as one of the superstars of country music, it seems strange that Conway Twitty's recent appearance here was his Palomino debut, but that's what it was and the local fans turned out in force to see and hear one of country's major powers.

Twitty manages to blend rock and country perfectly in his show, with the aid of a fine backup band that is adaptable to both musical genres. Opening with "Proud Mary" Twitty moved through a number of rock and country hits such as "Memphis" and "I Walk the Line" before settling into a closing medley of his own biggest numbers, including "There's a Honky-Tonk Angel," the excellently written and brilliantly sung "You've Never Been This Far Before" and his biggest rock hit, "It's Only Make Believe" which gave him a chance to show off his exceptionally powerful voice.

The show did seem to lag at times, but Twitty also appeared to have a slight cold which may have explained why he didn't make more use of the usual power in his voice. Yet even sounding a little hoarse, Twitty is a fine performer with a personal repertoire of hits that would make any artist proud. He still crosses into pop once in awhile, but his basic strength remains in country. More than anything else, however, Twitty is a fine singer who should appeal to one and all.

BOB KIRSCH

LYNN ANDERSON
DAVID BROMBERG
DOUG KERSHAW

Felt Forum, N.Y.C.

In staging any show where more than one act is involved, it is always ill-advised to put the main attraction on first. When this happens, the show invariably has no place to go but downhill. The Lynn Anderson show at the Felt Forum, March 16, was no exception.

Caught in the crunch of the energy crisis, and the resultant irregular airline schedules, Ms. Anderson, who had to be on the West Coast the following day, opened the show, leaving her supporting acts to carry on the concert following intermission.

Naturally it did not work. The hardcore country audience that packed the auditorium, having seen their star, quickly showed signs of boredom and restlessness. David Bromberg, Columbia Records, who opened

the second half of the show, did little to help alleviate this situation. Bromberg, who is a fine performer with multi-faceted talents, just could not cut the ice with the audience.

However, there were a few occasions when, with some good fiddling and harmonica works by his supporting musicians, he sparkled, and even received some mild support by the crowd: unfortunately, his choice of an encore, "Nobody," a blues ballad written about a Greenwich Village bar, left the audience cold.

Doug Kershaw, Warner Bros. Records, is a wild fiddler and a flamboyant showman. He combines these talents to produce a show that is always highly entertaining. He exploited these talents to their fullest in an effort to recapture and sustain some of the show's lost momentum.

Ms. Anderson, a Columbia Records act, utilized a mix of professionalism, charisma and old "down home, ya all come" camaraderie to have the audience eating out of her hands.

Her selection of tunes included "On Top of the World," "Let Me Be There," "My Man," "Go on and Cry," "The Auctioneer," complete with mini-auction, "If I Kiss You," dedicated to a member of the audience who gave her a flower, and "Daddy Sang Bass," with back-up singers selected from the audience.

Who/Where/When

Continued from page 18

MARSHALL TUCKER BAND (Capricorn): Spectrum, Philadelphia, April 5; Henry Memorial Gym, Washington, Pa. (6).

TANYA TUCKER (Columbia): New York, April 3; Union High, Reimersburg, Pa. (6); Pierre Hotel, N.Y. (24).

BOBBY WOMACK & PEACE (United Artists): The Spectrum, Philadelphia, April 6.

WEST

BRIAN AUGER (RCA): Ebbets Field, Denver, Colo., April 3-6.

HOYT AXTON (A&M): Troubadour, Los Angeles, April 23-28.

ROY AYERS (Polydor): Gallery, Seattle, Wash., April 1-6; Orphanage, San Francisco (7-9); Lion's Share, Sausalito, Calif. (10-13); Univ. of Colorado, Greeley (18); Ebbets Field, Denver, Colo. (19-21); Whiskey A Go Go (24-28); Memory Lane, Los Angeles (29).

BROWNSVILLE STATION (Bell): Portland, Oregon, April 3; Seattle, Wash. (4).

JOHNNY CASH (Columbia): Las Vegas, Nevada, April 30-May 6.

THE CRUSADERS (Blue Thumb): Univ. of Hawaii, April 5; Paramount Theater, (26); Paramount Theater, Seattle, Wash. (27).

DEEP PURPLE (Warner Bros.): Municipal Auditorium, Denver, Colo., April 3-4; Ontario Motor Speedway, Calif. (6); Big Surf, Phoenix, Ariz. (7); San Diego Sports Arena, Calif. (9); Community Center, Tucson, Ariz. (10).

EARTH, WIND & FIRE (Columbia): Ontario Motor Speedway, Calif., April 6.

EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER (Manticore): Ontario Motor Speedway, Calif., April 6.

BARBARA FAIRCHILD (Columbia): Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif., April 7; Auditorium, Kenosha, Wisc. (21).

FOGHAT (Bearsville): Green Bay, Wisc., April 8; Riverside Theater, Milwaukee, Wisc. (9).

BOBBY GOLDSBORO (United Artists): The Nugget, Sparks, Nev., April 11-24.

GRAND FUNK (Capitol): Dane County Coliseum, Madison, Wisc., April 28.

JACK GREENE/JEANNIE SEELY (RCA): Municipal Auditorium, Sheboygan, Wisc., April 27.

DOYLE HOLLY (Barnaby): Colorado Springs, Colo., April 8-21.

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK (London): The Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev., April 3-23.

ISLEY BROTHERS (Epic): Civic Plaza, Phoenix, Ariz., April 12; Sports Arena, Los Angeles (13); Oakland College, Calif. (14); Fresno, Calif. (19); Seattle, Wash. (20); Portland, Oregon (21).

THE JACKSON FIVE (Motown): MGM Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, April 10-23.

DOUG KERSHAW (Warner Bros.): Ft. Lewis College, Durango, Colo., April 9.

GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS (Bud-dah): Las Vegas, Nev., April 25-May 8.

O.B. McCLINTON (Stax): Memorial High School, Eau Claire, Wisc., April 5; Waupun High School, Wisc. (6).

ANNE MURRAY (Capitol): Oscar Awards, Los Angeles, April 2.

TOMMY OVERSTREET (Dot): Mr. Lucky's, Phoenix, Ariz., April 18; Civic

Creative Trends

Steppenwolf Is Reunited!

By NAT FREEDLAND

LOS ANGELES—Steppenwolf may well be the biggest-selling rock group yet to get back together with its original membership intact after breaking up for several years.

On ABC/Dunhill, during their four years together Steppenwolf sold \$42 million of records worldwide. Eight of their nine albums were gold and they had three gold singles. In concert, they appeared before two million people and grossed \$7 million.

After splitting in 1971, Steppenwolf is now back together and far along the basic tracks for a new album they are independently producing at the well-equipped eight-track studio in lead singer John Kay's home. They are planning to sell the LP as an independent master

to kick off a new recording contract, now that their ABC contract period has run out.

Now managing Steppenwolf is Bobby Roberts of Landers-Roberts and Mums Records, who formerly managed the Mamas & the Papas. According to Steppenwolf, they already have a firm offer for their new LP on the basis of the first rough tracks—from the label that was their first choice. But now that Roberts has entered the picture, he is shopping around for the most advantageous deal for the group.

"We've seen a lot of groups stay on top as long as possible while they fight back the inner conflicts and tensions," said Kay. "Then they have a giant explosion and break up, hating each other too much to get back together for a long time, if ever again."

According to Steppenwolf's view, they decided to go into "temporary retirement" early enough to stop while still on good terms between themselves.

As Kay puts it, "The main problem was that we'd gotten into a comfortably boring routine at the time, and we were probably getting desperate to try other things. It was supposed to make it easy for us to work on our own songs and music, because we were in the pattern of only going out to work weekends. We'd play two or three concerts and fly back home. But unfortunately, by the time we unwound enough from each trip to start some writing, it was time for the next weekend flights."

Steppenwolf plans to vary their routine a lot more this time. Mostly, though, they will spend several consecutive weeks on the road and then remain home for extended periods of writing and recording.

They also hope that with their image softened by a lengthy hiatus, the public will accept more versatility in their music. Another irritation leading to the Steppenwolf split was

that because their first gold single was the smash "Born To Be Wild," neither radio programmers nor concert audiences would allow them to do anything but heavy-metalish rock blues with Kay stalking the stage in black leather and the sinister shades, he must wear because of his extremely poor vision. Kay, who didn't leave his native Germany till the age of 14, is generally acknowledged as one of rock's most articulate and musically aware stars in person. The rest of the group seems relaxed and mature in interview: They are guitarist Bobby Cochran, drummer Jerry Edmonton and Goldy McJohn on keyboards.

Only newcomer is bassist George Biondo. Steppenwolf's original bass player exited the group some months before the breakup and there had been no permanent replacement till now.

After the layoff, McJohn and Edmonton assembled a new group called Manbeast but never went beyond the rehearsal stage. McJohn gives as the reason that several of their new recruits turned out to be "loonies."

As for Kay, he turned out two ABC solo albums that were nicely reviewed but sold only 100,000 for "Forgotten Songs & Unsung Heroes" and half that on his "Sporting Life" follow-up. These albums were laid-back and acoustic and Kay says that by doing them he got his long-pent desires to perform this kind of music out of his system.

Several months after Steppenwolf's official breakup, they toured Europe for some previously committed concerts. Kay's new folkie group was the opening act. "The Steppenwolf portions of the concert got such tumultuous audience response and made us feel so good, that we all knew it was only a matter of time till we started playing together again," said Kay.

—Billboard photos by Bonnie Tiegel



A regrouped Steppenwolf rehearses at leader John Kay's studio. Top row shows Kay and drummer Jerry Edmonton, while from the left on the lower row are bassist George Biondo, guitarist Bobby Cochran and keyboard man Goldy McJohn.

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