

Talent In Action

**WILLIE NELSON
DELBERT McCLINTON**

Brendan Byrne Arena
Meadowlands, N.J.
Tickets: \$15, \$13

In the annals of country music, Willie Nelson will undoubtedly go down as one of the greatest stylists and songwriters. However, he's still too youthful and earthy to be called anything as stuffy as an elder statesman of the genre. Judging from the adulation he received from a sell-out crowd here Sept. 10, perhaps "the guru of country music" would be an appropriate moniker.

Nelson kicked off his two-hour-plus set with a spirited version of "Whiskey River." Vocally, he was in top form, reeling off hit after hit. He reached back for vintage tunes like "Nightlife" and "Will The Circle Be Unbroken," then pulled out more current classics like "Always On My Mind" and "On The Road Again." Several tunes from his "Red Headed Stranger" concept LP were done, including "Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain."

Although he is a prolific songwriter, Nelson has also covered a number of other people's tunes. Among those highlighted here were a trio of Kris Kristofferson numbers—"Help Me Make It Through The Night," "Me And Bobby McGee" and "Lovin' Her Was Easier (Than Anything I'll Ever Do Again)."

But what makes Nelson's reading of other people's songs special is his unique style of country rhythms infused with jazz and blues, which makes each tune sound original.

Opener Delbert McClinton's set was tight and vibrant. He can meld the blues with rock for high energy tunes like "Givin' It Up For Your Love," then drop his voice to a sultry purr for songs like "The Jealous Kind." But he shines best on old blues classics like Willie Dixon's "Little Red Rooster."

ROBYN WELLS

**JOHN COUGAR
HEART**

Municipal Auditorium, Nashville
Tickets: \$9, \$8

It's a good thing no one's bothered to tell John Cougar that he isn't a superstar yet. Otherwise, he might not be content to continue touring as the opening act for Heart. Judging from the reception that he and his group got here Sept. 11 from a sellout crowd of 9,900 frenzied fans, Cougar is ready for headliner status.

Obviously, the packaging of these two acts was done before "American Fool" hit platinum, before "Hurts So Good" went No. 1 and completed what years of work (and a lot of video help through MTV) had set in motion. The crowd was clearly Cougar's, from the first power drumbeats of "30 Days In The Hole," as each member of the Zone danced out across the stage to his instrument. In a concert market where other opening acts with hit records on the chart have been confronted with stony-faced audiences determined to sit on their hands until the headliner appeared, Cougar and his compadres made it look easy.

But rock'n'roll as shattering as Cougar's is tough to resist. His group grooves on Cougar's primal use of Jaggeresque sexual showmanship, and they have no trouble generating the raw, hot, thrilling dynamics of '60s-edged rock. The Zone rivals the Stones as a rhythm section for a gritty, back-alley approach to suburban street rock.

Though he's said to dislike his stage name, Cougar resembles it: prowling, padding, leaping, using his body like a tautly-strung instrument. With Kenny Aronoff on drums (sounding a bit like a star truant from the school of Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels); guitarists Larry Crane and Michael Wanchic; bassist Toby Meyers (formerly with Roadmaster); and singers Gloria Scott and Lisa Mordente, Cougar made short order of the set.

"Ain't Even Done With The Night," "Thundering Hearts," "Danger List," "Hurts So Good," "Jack & Diane," "This Time I Think I'm Really In Love," "I Need A Lover That Won't Drive Me Crazy," an encore of "You Can't Always Get What You Want," two reprises of "Hurts So Good," and the group was gone.

Gone, but leaving behind a revved-up crowd and a near-impossible energy level that Heart, for all its proficiency, simply couldn't equal. Despite new band members and the Wilson sisters' own polish, Heart was no match for Cougar's impassioned rock'n'roll. In the end, some of the audience began to drift away, while others sat attentive but detached, caught by a concert in which the real headliner opened the show.

KIP KIRBY



Billboard photo by Chuck Pulin
WILLIE'S DATE—Willie Nelson appears at the Brendan Byrne Arena outside New York.

LITTLE RIVER BAND

Castle Hill RSL Club, Sydney
Admission: \$10

Stung by homeground criticism labeling it slick and predictable, the Little River Band has hit the grueling Australian pub/club circuit in an attempt to restore its reputation as a powerful rock'n'roll unit.

The tour is also part of the "settling in" program for new lead singer John Farnham, an Englishman who emerged out of Adelaide in the mid '60s and is a revered figure in Australian music.

Such credentials rendered him perfect for the LRB lead role, and although the spectre of his predecessor Glenn Shorrock still enshrouds the band, Farnham dazzled the audience on his own terms.

The band, hitherto known for its serious demeanor, was infected by the singer's boyish enthusiasm and was obviously excited by the uninhibited response from the 1,500-strong audience.

Much of the new energy level was generated by guitarist Steve Housden who, although a member for over a year, has yet to record an album with the band. His brash and inventive solos would not have been out of place in a hard-rock outfit.

Among the band's dutifully rendered hits were "It's A Long Way There," "Reminiscing," "Night Owls," "Happy Anniversary" and "Take It Easy On Me." Even those songs closely identified with writer Shorrock were given dazzling treatment, notably "Man On Your Mind" and "Cool Change."

Newer songs intended for next year's "The Net" album were generally inferior to the chestnuts surrounding them. Notably absent was the lush, expansive, hook-laden style of earlier LRB classics. In its desire to assert their hard-rocking attributes, the group may have temporarily lost sight of its greatest strength.

Held in reserve for a devastating encore was the Easybeats' 1969 hit "St. Louis," which brought the night's proceedings to a shuddering close.

GLENN A. BAKER

**ARETHA FRANKLIN
STEPHANIE MILLS
THE DAZZ BAND**

Admission: \$15, \$12.50
Madison Square Garden
New York

The last Budweiser Superfest concert of the summer was both successful and lengthy. According to Madison Square Garden officials, the Sept. 11 date was the largest grossing black concert in the venue's history, with every seat in the house sold. The evening began at 7:30 p.m. and didn't end until nearly 1:30 a.m., but union overtime costs were minimized due to the Garden's role as co-producer along with Budweiser and Michael Rosenberg.

Aretha Franklin, riding high with her Luther Vandross-produced "Jump To It" album, headlined with a rather spotty set. Backed by a large H.B. Barnum-conducted band, her energy level and concentration fluctuated. Only twice did she reach the emotional heights for which she has become legendary: when first Smokey Robinson and then Vandross came out to sing with her.

The contrast between her gospel shouts and

Robinson's crooning delivery on "I Want To Make It Up To You" was thrilling, as was the sight of these great vocalists on stage together. Vandross came out to sing a chorus of "Jump To It" with Franklin and show that he too could have had a hit with this bubbly dance tune.

Stephanie Mills' appearance was an unqualified triumph. Singing and commanding the stage with confidence, she ripped easily through pop dance hits like "Last Night" and "Sweet Sensation." Her version of "Feel The Fire" was wonderfully short on bombast; she interpreted Peabo Bryson's soul classic sweetly and with a fine sense of drama. Of the many times this reviewer has viewed Mills, this was definitely her most impressive performance.

Most of the Dazz Band's catalog is in the funk-rock mold of its top 10 single "Let It Whip," but as their brief opening set revealed, this Cleveland band overcomes monotony with fine harmonies and exciting choreography. The band's four vocalists, attired in stylish suits and trendy haircuts, recalled some of the dancing fire of the early Temptations.

Ashford & Simpson and Smokey Robinson, who also appeared on the bill, were reviewed here recently.

NELSON GEORGE

ROMEO VOID

Galactica 2000, Sacramento
Admission: \$8.50

Whenever San Francisco's Romeo Void was mentioned before, it was always as an opening act "with great potential," or words to that effect. Now, the innovative new wave/jazz/rock group, which records for 415/Columbia, is a headliner. Unlike 90% of your graduating class, these folks are living up to their potential.

On Aug. 26 they took the stage at Galactica 2000, fighting a sound system that obscured their potent lyrics and captivating the audience with their tightly woven sound. They concentrated rather too much on material from their new album, "Benefactor" (which had only been out a matter of days and was totally unfamiliar to the crowd), but even the new songs were strong enough to work on first hearing. The more familiar material—"Never Say Never," "White Sweater," "Myself To Myself," "Present Tense"—has been honed in live performance to a dynamism so great the songs take on a life of their own.

Lead singer Deborah Iyall was less active than she has been in other shows, actually standing still as she delivered the "no love, no hope, and yet..." lyrics of her songs; her voice blended in and out of Peter Woods' guitar solos and Benjamin Bossi's sax lines as if they were three parts of the same instrument.

Romeo Void will need to vary their pace a bit as they begin to perform for less dedicated audiences; the songs can sound too much alike. And it was irksome to see them do the same one-hour-to-the-minute set that every band seems to be doing this summer (is this the influence of television, or what?). But their performance still confirmed the feeling that this is a band able to bridge the gap from exotic new music to exciting rock'n'roll.

ETHLIE ANN VARE

**BENNY GOODMAN
RED NORVO-TAL FARLOW
TRIO**

Jones Beach Theater
Tickets: \$20, \$15, \$10

There was a cold wind blowing across the Long Island ocean front Aug. 26, but Benny Goodman, despite his 73 years, managed to warm things up while asserting that he is still the King of Swing.

But the two-and-a-half-hour concert was generally in a mellow mood, first set by the Norvo-Farlow trio, which featured intricate and gentle counterpoint played by vibist Norvo and guitarist Farlow.

They played for an hour in a program of nine selections that also included some swingers, from Sonny Rollins' "St. Thomas" to Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz."

Goodman started off slowly with a quartet that included John Bunch on piano on a run-through of "Avalon." Things picked up as a trumpet, tenor sax and trombone were added. Trumpeter Spanky Davis wowed the crowd with a powerful "I Can't Get Started," and Goodman found his stride with searing clarinet solos on his old standard "Don't Be That Way" and a Dixieland excursion into "That's A Plenty."

Goodman did two encores, offering just what the crowd shouted for: "Sing, Sing, Sing" and his closing theme "Goodbye." **DOUGLAS E. HALL**

Survey For Week Ending 9/25/82

Boxscore

The following are among the top concert grosses nationwide reported through the survey week. Included are act(s), gross, attendance, capacity of facility, ticket prices, promoter, facility, city, number of shows, number of sellouts and dates(s).

- **FLEETWOOD MAC, LOVERBOY, JOHN COUGAR, JOHN WAITE**—\$732,770, 49,956, \$17.50 & \$15, Beach Club Concerts, Tangerine Bowl, Orlando, Fla., "Rock Superbowl XV," sellout, Sept. 4.
- **VAN HALEN, AFTER THE FIRE**—\$520,717, 43,212, \$12.50 & \$11.50, PMC Promotes, Forum, Los Angeles, three sellouts, Sept. 9-11.
- **FRANK SINATRA, CHARLIE CALLAS**—\$362,456, 13,435, \$50, \$20, & \$15, Frank J. Russo, Centrum, Worcester, Mass., house largest gross, house largest attendance, house fastest sellout, Sept. 2.
- **STEVIE WONDER**—\$332,043 (Canadian), 23,368, \$16, \$13, & \$10, Concert Prods. Int'l., Canadian Nat'l Exhibition Grandstand, Toronto, sellout, Sept. 2.
- **AL JARREAU, DAVID SANBORN**—\$308,912, 22,572 (25,000), \$15 & \$13.50, in-house promotion, Universal Amphitheatre, Universal City, Calif., four shows, Sept. 1, 3, 5.
- **RICK SPRINGFIELD, GREG KIHN BAND**—\$247,780 (Can.), 20,868, \$13, \$11, & \$9, Concert Prods. Int'l., Canadian Nat'l Exhibition Grandstand, Toronto, sellout, Aug. 31.
- **FLEETWOOD MAC, MEN AT WORK**—\$243,672, 18,079, \$15, \$12.50, & \$10, Electric Factory Concerts, Spectrum, Philadelphia, sellout, Sept. 11.
- **CLASH, BLACK UHURU**—\$235,125 (Can.), 19,914, \$13, \$11, & \$9, Concert Prods. Int'l., Canadian Nat'l Exhibition Grandstand, Toronto, sellout, Sept. 5.
- **BEACH BOYS, MINGLEWOOD BAND**—\$234,638 (Can.), 20,167, \$13, \$11, & \$9, Concert Prods. Int'l., Canadian Nat'l Exhibition Grandstand, Toronto, sellout, Sept. 3.
- **DIANA ROSS**—\$233,822, 16,139, \$15 & \$12.50, Cross Country Concerts, Hartford Civic Center, sellout, Aug. 26.
- **DOOBIE BROTHERS**—\$228,671, 17,000, \$15 & \$13.50, Bill Graham Presents, Univ. of Calif. Greek Theatre, Berkeley, two sellouts, Sept. 10-11.
- **FLEETWOOD MAC, ROCKETS**—\$209,780, 14,500 (15,000 capacity), \$15 & \$12.50, Brass Ring Prods./Beach Club Concerts, Omni, Atlanta, Sept. 2.
- **WILLIE NELSON, DELBERT McCLINTON**—\$208,950, 15,558 (17,000), \$13.75 & \$12.75, DiCesare Engler Prods./Main Stage Prods., Pittsburgh Civic Arena, Sept. 9.
- **NEIL DIAMOND**—\$205,457, 16,864, \$15, \$12.50 & \$10, Jerry Weintraub-Concerts West/in-house promotion, Ind. Univ. Assembly Hall, Bloomington, sellout, Sept. 9.
- **WILLIE NELSON, DELBERT McCLINTON**—\$182,385, 15,046, \$15, \$10 & \$5, Electric Factory Concerts, Spectrum, Philadelphia, sellout, Sept. 12.
- **BEACH BOYS, DEL SHANNON, JOHN COUGAR**—\$181,825 (Can.), 12,125 (14,000), \$15, Concert Prods. Int'l./Donald K. Donald/Don Jones, J.W. Little Stadium, London, Ont., Aug. 30.
- **REO SPEEDWAGON**, 707—\$178,958, 14,512, \$12.50, \$11.50 & \$10.50, Brass Ring Prods., Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, sellout, Sept. 8.
- **OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN, TOM SCOTT**—\$177,267, 12,494 (14,259), \$15-\$10, in-house promotion/produced by Pace Concerts, Univ. of Texas Frank C. Erwin Jr. Special Events Center, Austin, Sept. 4.
- **OAK RIDGE BOYS, RONNIE MILSAP**—\$175,577, 29,006 (35,644), \$8, \$6 & \$3, in-house promotion, Minn. State Fair Grandstand, Falcon Hgts., two shows, Sept. 3.
- **SCORPIONS, IRON MAIDEN, GIRLSCHOOL**—\$165,278, 14,372, \$13 & \$11.50, Bill Graham Presents, Oakland (Calif.) Coliseum, sellout, Sept. 4.
- **QUEEN, BILLY SQUIER**—\$157,404, 13,328 (15,000), \$12.50 & \$11.50, Avalon Attractions, Phoenix Coliseum, Sept. 10.
- **QUEEN, BILLY SQUIER**—\$140,064, 10,264 (16,696), \$14.50 & \$13.50, Peryscope Concerts/Donald K. Donald, Vancouver (B.C.) Coliseum, Sept. 4.
- **OAK RIDGE BOYS, RICKY SKAGGS**—\$138,442, 13,359 (16,628), \$13, \$10 & \$9, DuQuion (Ill.) State Fair Grandstand, two shows, Sept. 5.
- **JUDAS PRIEST, KROKUS, THE RODS**—\$138,229, 13,669, \$10.50, \$10 & \$9.50, Stone City Attractions, San Antonio Convention Center, sellout, Sept. 10.
- **HEART, JOHN COUGAR**—\$135,015, 13,181, \$10.50, \$10 & \$9.50, Schon Prods., Met Center, Minneapolis, sellout, Sept. 8.
- **QUEEN, BILLY SQUIER**—\$133,066, 10,969 (14,500), \$12.50 & \$10.50, Bill Graham Presents, Oakland (Calif.) Coliseum, Sept. 7.
- **TED NUGENT, CHEAP TRICK, CONEY HATCH**—\$130,014 (Can.), 11,024 (16,000), \$13.50, \$11.50 & \$9.50, Concert Prods. Int'l., Canadian Nat'l Exhibition Grandstand, Toronto, Sept. 4.
- **BEACH BOYS, MINGLEWOOD BAND**—\$123,425 (Can.), 9,874 (12,000), \$12.50, Concert Prods. Int'l./Donald K. Donald/Bass Clef, Central Canadian Exhibition, Ottawa, Ont., Aug. 29.
- **GENESIS**—\$122,480, 10,847, \$11.50 & \$10.50, Cross Country Concerts/Harvey & Corky Prods., New Haven (Conn.) Coliseum, sellout, house attendance record, Aug. 25.
- **RUSH, RORY GALLAGHER**—\$120,049, 11,942, \$11 & \$10, Schon Prods., Omaha (Neb.) Civic Auditorium, sellout, Sept. 9.
- **DIANA ROSS**—\$115,615, 7,007 (9,954), \$16.50, Jam Prods., Metro Centre, Rockford Ill., Sept. 6.
- **CROSBY, STILLS, & NASH**—\$114,750, 8,500, \$13.50, Bill Graham Presents, Univ. of Calif. Greek Theatre, Berkeley, sellout, Sept. 4.
- **JUDAS PRIEST, KROKUS, THE RODS**—\$112,550, 11,185 (19,000), \$10.75 & \$10.25, Stone City Attractions, Reunion Arena, Dallas, Sept. 11.
- **REO SPEEDWAGON, SURVIVOR**—\$109,908, 10,041, \$12 & \$11, Sunshine Promotions, Ind. Univ. Hulman Civic Center, Terre Haute, sellout, Sept. 6.
- **HEART, JOHN COUGAR**—\$103,331, 10,600 (12,000), \$10.50 & \$9.50, Ruffino-Vaughn Prods., Birmingham (Ala.), Jeffers Civic Center, Sept. 12.
- **HEART, JOHN COUGAR**—\$101,721, 8,988 (12,000), \$11, Brass Ring Prods., Omni, Atlanta, Sept. 13.
- **SANTANA**—\$99,056, 8,500, \$13 & \$11.50, Bill Graham Presents, Univ. of Calif. Greek Theatre, Berkeley, sellout, Sept. 5.
- **APRIL WINE, EDDIE MONEY**—\$98,535, 9,317, \$10.50 & \$9.50, Feyline Presents, Coliseum, Denver, sellout, Sept. 11.
- **JIMMY STURR & HIS ORCHESTRA**—\$91,550, 18,310 (outdoors—no capacity), \$5, in-house promotion, Action Park, Vernon, N.J., Sept. 5.

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