

Talent In Action

LUTHER VANDROSS DEBARGE

Westbury Music Fair,
Westbury, N.Y.
Tickets: \$18.75

As the most successful black music tour of the season entered its final dates, neither of the acts showed any sign of weariness. The only problem was one of pacing. The ingredients—great talent and good songs—were there; they just weren't mixed together well enough.

Luther Vandross has the most distinctive new voice in pop/soul, and if anything he emitted more power on stage than he does on record. The show got off to an energetic start with "I'll Let You Slide" and "Don't You Know That," as he combined the effortless command of his singing with some agile dance steps (a bit surprising for Vandross, who, in a sequined tux, looked like a cross between Liberace and Barry White). But he immediately brought the crowd down with his endless version of "Superstar."

The show picked up again with the title cut from Vandross' latest album, "Busy Body," and a Smokey Robinson medley. Vandross settled into a comfortable groove that was building toward his best song, "Searching," but he rushed through it and seemingly became preoccupied with set changes and interaction with his background singers.

A logical progression from there would have been to his hit medley of "Bad Boy"/"Having A Party," but instead he changed tempos again with his lengthy version of "A House Is Not A Home." Though it was much more moving than "Superstar," it was still too long and would have worked better as the finale.

Vandross closed with "Bad Boy" and "Never Too Much," leaving a sense of incompleteness. A better edited show would leave room for more of his excellent songs, such as "I've Been Working," "Sugar And Spice" and "How Many Times Can We Say Goodbye."

Debarge's opening show was similar to Vandross' in that it transcended the records and in that its high points were scattered. Gone was the treacly polish and in its place was spontaneous verve on "All This Love," "I Like It" and "Time Will Reveal." The band suggested that it's more than just the latest Motown formula hitmaker, but not quite a seasoned, cohesive unit. Still, if their records take on the fervor of their concerts, that won't be far away.

ROB HOERBURGER

EURHYTHMICS

The Ritz, New York
Tickets: \$15

Eurythmics looked and sounded exactly as one might have expected them to during their recent three-night stand at the Ritz. The band played with letter-perfect precision and skill. The British act's greatest shortcoming was in its lack of on-stage innovation to match its visual image and seductive dance-rock. Eurythmics simply delivered nothing more than was expected of them.

Annie Lennox, the band's carrot-topped vocalist, was full of smiles and charisma, and she sang the exact arrangements found on Eurythmics' two RCA albums without a flaw. But there was no indication that there is a personality behind the voice; Lennox was just the latest rock cover girl coming to life.

Guitarist Dave Stewart, the other half of the team (the backing band and vocalists were just that and knew their place), seemed to have only one purpose: to look cool. And that he did, hidden behind his trademark shades and bouncing about, stepping out only for a brief introduction to a song and one admirable guitar solo.

The rhythm section, keyboardist, horn team and look-alike female vocalists behind Lennox and Stewart did their job well; they were a likable white soul-pop outfit guaranteed to get one's feet moving. Still, the lack of anything special to adorn the music—no spontaneity or particularly interesting stage set or choreography—made the proceedings drag by mid-set.

JEFF TAMARKIN

JEFF LORBER FUSION ALLAN HOLDSWORTH I.O.U.

Town Hall, New York
Tickets: \$14.50, \$12.50

Jeff Lorber was one of the leading lights of the second wave of fusion players—or was it the third? His early work, while rather lightweight, was certainly easy on the ears. But with interest in fusion on the wane, Lorber finds himself facing a dilemma: whether to stay the course, rock out or get funky.

Lorber's March 23 concert here underscored his musical identity crisis. His set began with some of his better-known instrumental pieces—"Wizard Island," "Fusion Juice"—played with a jaunty air if too much volume by his aggressive quintet. Most of the rest of the set was devoted to selections from his new Arista album, "In The Heat Of The Night," which were noteworthy mostly for their emphasis on vocals and their lack of originality.

The album's title song—on which Lorber got up from his bank of electronic keyboards to strap on a guitar—sounded like a dozen other melodic rock songs you've seen and heard on MTV. At other times, Lorber and his band laid down a dance-rock groove reminiscent of any English synthesizer band you care to name. And "Blast Off," an instrumental, sounded so much like Herbie Hancock's "Rockit" that it wouldn't have been surprising to see a troupe of robots dancing onto the stage.

Some might call this versatility. Others might call it lack of direction, and note that Lorber is not a commanding enough musician to make much of an impact this way.

Opening act Allan Holdsworth, who honed his guitar chops with Soft Machine and the Tony Williams Lifetime, showcased a less than impressive band and some derivative material, but a powerful and distinctive style. The guitar freaks in the audience—many of whom were there only to see Holdsworth—loved it. But Holdsworth faces an identity crisis of his own: His stuff is a little too sophisticated for the head-banger set, and a little too metallic for either the jazz or new music crowds.

PETER KEEPNEWS

DISH

Trax, New York
Admission: \$5

It's nice to see four women who aren't afraid to sweat. Backed by a male drummer, Dish's female front line is that and more. As women who can rock with a rugged grace, they suggested a new dimension to the term "girl group."

During the Boston quintet's hour-plus set March 16, Dish's original material reflected influences as diverse as the Pretenders and the B-52's. But Dish's style is as much their own as it is hard to categorize.

On stage, lead singer and guitarist Dorthy Rackus has Chrissie Hynde's tough sense of humor and a fast set of fingers. Her intense vocals are softened by harmonies from keyboardist Maggie Lange, bassist Leah Doran and saxophonist Claire Daly. Daly was a show in her own right with bluesy solos that moved the full house from seat's edge to relaxing slouches.

Dish displayed a versatile repertoire including the bopping "Do The Jerk," the haunting "Sincerely" and new-wavish rockers "Close Enough" and "Temptation Vacation." While Dish isn't your typical pop act, they have two strong top 40 radio candidates in "Popular Girl" and "Race With The Moon," the latter of which is available on Rock Dock Records.

KIM FREEMAN

AMUSEMENT BUSINESS Boxscore

Survey for Week Ending 4/21/84

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).

- **VAN HALEN, AUTOGRAPH—\$516,921, 36,314, \$15 & \$13.50**, Monarch Entertainment Bureau, Meadowlands, E. Rutherford, N.J., two sellouts, April 1-2.
- **ANNE MURRAY—\$466,844, 35,431, (37,096)**, \$17.90, \$14.90, \$9.90 & \$4.90, Ray Shepardson, Fox Theater, Atlanta, Ga., April 3-8.
- **ANDY WILLIAMS, OSMOND BROTHERS—\$401,375, 30,968, (37,096)** \$17.90, \$14.90, \$9.90 & \$4.90, Ray Shepardson, Fox Theater, Atlanta, Ga., March 20-25.
- **CULTURE CLUB, FLASH KAHAN—\$304,095, 23,048, \$13.50 & \$12.50**, Brass Ring Productions, Cobo Arena, Detroit, Michigan, two sellouts, April 7-8.
- **DURAN DURAN/RESCUE—\$258,268, 17,163, \$16 & \$14**, Monarch Entertainment Bureau, Meadowlands, E. Rutherford, N.J., sellout, April 5.
- **BILLY JOEL—\$255,075, 17,005, \$15**, Brass Ring Productions, Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Mich., sellout, April 4.
- **BILLY JOEL—\$219,006, 14,973, \$15**, Pioneer Productions/Contemporary, University of Wisconsin, Carver Hawkeye Arena, Iowa City, Iowa, sellout, April 6.
- **DURAN DURAN—\$195,892, 13,548, \$15 & \$12.50**, Ruffino-Vaughn Productions/Freefall Presentations, Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y., sellout, April 3.
- **ALABAMA—\$191,350, 15,308, \$12.50**, Salem Spirit Concert Series/Keith Fowler Promotions, Asheville, N.C. Civic Center, two sellouts, March 20 & 30.
- **DURAN DURAN, THE SWINGING RICHARDS—\$177,674, 13,630, \$13.50**, Pace Concerts, Omni, Atlanta, Ga., sellout, March 29.
- **AMY GRANT, MICHAEL W. SMITH, GARY CHAPMAN—\$164,789, 12,502, \$13.50 & \$12.50**, Terry Garland Productions, Universal Amphitheater, Universal City, Calif., two sellouts, April 6-7.
- **ALABAMA—\$149,100, 11,928, (13,500)**, \$12.50, Salem Spirit Concert Series/Keith Fowler Promotions, Leon County Civic Center, Tallahassee, Ala., April 1.
- **TED NUGENT, MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP—\$136,215, 10,406, (11,079)**, \$13.50, Pace Concerts, Reunion Arena, Dallas, Tex., April 5.
- **JOHN DENVER—\$132,585, 9,112, \$15 & \$13.50**, John Scher Presents, War Memorial Auditorium, Rochester, N.Y., sellout, April 17.
- **ALABAMA—\$122,875, 9,830, \$12.50**, Salem Spirit Concert Series/Keith Fowler Promotions, Civic Center, Albany, N.Y., sellout, March 31.
- **.38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$122,377, 9,854, (12,604)**, \$12.75, Pace Concerts, The Summit, Houston, Tex., March 30.
- **OZZY OSBOURNE, RATT—\$121,116, 9,864, (11,000)**, \$12.50, Avalon Attractions, San Diego Sports Arena, San Diego, Calif., March 31.
- **JUDAS PRIEST, GREAT WHITE—\$117,675, 10,200, \$11.50 & \$10.50**, John Scher Presents, War Memorial, Rochester, N.Y., sellout, April 3.
- **.38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$105,687, 8,852, (9,663)**, \$12.50, Beaver Productions, Reunion Arena, Dallas, Tex., April 4.
- **YES—\$102,164, (124,641 Canadian), 8,818, (10,000)**, \$15 & \$14, Perryscope/John Bauer, Pacific Coliseum, Vancouver, B.C., April 2.
- **DURAN DURAN, THE BLADES—\$101,712, 8,433, (9,504)**, Contemporary, Myriad, Oklahoma City, Ok., April 9.
- **YES—\$96,855, 6,541, (10,274)**, \$15, Rock'N'Chair Prods., Thomas Mack Center, Las Vegas, Nevada, March 24.
- **SCORPIONS, JON BUTCHER AXIS—\$96,300, 8,050, \$12**, Stone City Productions, El Paso, Tex., sellout, March 3.
- **RICHARD NADER'S DOO WOPP SHOW VOL. 7, LITTLE ANTHONY, FLAMINGOS, MOON-GLOS, CHANNELLS, CHANTELLS, RUDY WEST & BUBBY COMSTOCK'S ROCK AND ROLL BAND—\$95,686, 8,000, (9,000)**, \$15 & \$13.50, Richard Nader, Madison Square Garden, N.Y., N.Y., one sellout, March 23-24.
- **BIG COUNTRY, WIRE TRAIN—\$91,616, 7,774, (8,800)**, \$13.50, Avalon Attractions, Hollywood Palladium, Hollywood, Calif., two shows, one sellout, March 30.
- **MERLE HAGGARD, JOHN ANDERSON—\$82,814, 8,042, (13,000)**, \$12 & \$10, Little Wing Promotions, Harper's Coverd Stadium, Ft. Smith, Ark., April 7.
- **OAK RIDGE BOYS—\$76,653, 6,591, (7,960)**, \$12.50 & \$10.50, In-House, Central Alabama Music Park, Jamison, Ala., two shows, one sellout, April 6.
- **MERLE HAGGARD—\$73,505, 3,312, \$50, \$25, \$20 & \$15**, Charlie Magoo Prods., San Francisco War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, Calif., sellout, March 25.
- **OZZY OSBOURNE, ROUGH CUTTS—\$70,267, 6,408 (7,200)**, \$11.75 & \$10.75, Avalon Attractions, Selland Arena, Fresno, Calif., March 29.
- **TED NUGENT, MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP—\$61,749, 4,861, (6,818)**, \$13.50, Pace Concerts, Sam Houston Coliseum, Houston, Tex., March 29.
- **.38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$61,724, 5,529, (7,388)**, \$11.50 & \$10.50, Pace Concerts, Special Events Center, Austin, Tex., March 31.
- **BILLY IDOL, PLATINUM BLONDE—\$57,070 (69,626 Canadian), 5,504, (6,000)**, \$13.50 & \$12.50, Perryscope, The Fieldhouse, Edmonton, Alberta, B.C., April 1.
- **.38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$54,509, 5,247, (8,701)**, \$11.50 & \$10.50, Pace Concerts, Civic Arena, San Antonio, Tex., April 1.
- **BILLY IDOL, PLATINUM BLONDE—\$53,813 (65,652 Canadian), 5,196, (5,500)**, \$13.64 & \$12.50, Perryscope, Winnipeg Arena, Manitoba, B.C., April 3.
- **EDDIE MONEY, VAN WILKS—\$53,188, 4,691, (6,000)**, \$11.50, Pace Concerts/Randy Shelton Stardate, Civic Coliseum, Beaumont, Tex., April 1.
- **HANK WILLIAMS, JR., MCGUFFEY LANE—\$53,182, 5,428, \$10.50**, Richard Mischell, Hara Arena, Dayton, Ohio, sellout, April 7.
- **AMY GRANT, MICHAEL W. SMITH, GARY CHAPMAN—\$52,690, 5,400, \$10 & \$9**, Terry Garland Productions, Celebrity Theater, Phoenix, Ariz., two sellouts, April 5.

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