

Talent In Action

.38 SPECIAL GOLDEN EARRING

Universal Amphitheatre, Los Angeles
Tickets: \$13.50, \$12

The sound radio listeners associate with .38 Special—the pleasant, if somewhat strangled, tenor of Don Barnes—is not their chief concert draw. It isn't "Caught Up In You" that personifies the Jacksonville, Fla. sextet; it's the husky caw of that manic munchkin, Donnie Van Zandt. To a full house on April 13, Van Zandt whirled through a 75-minute set to shouts of "rock'n'roll!" and a sea of flicked Bics.

.38 Special works both sides of the line between Southern boogie rock and mainstream pop. Much of the time, they sound like Loverboy with a Southern accent. If "Hold On Loosely" gets the biggest reaction, "Wild-Eyed Southern Boys" and "Roughhousing" project the most energy. With two drummers (Steve Brookins and Larry Jundstrom) on a simple platform and two female backup singers, the band energetically interpreted material from its six A&M albums, concentrating perhaps too much on the hits and not enough on the strengths of the hyperactive Van Zandt.

Though the stage was unadorned, the band made extensive use (too much use, in fact) of fog, flashpots, lasers and strobes. The overindulgence of "Chain Lightning" was a parody of arena showmanship. But the trade-off lead guitars of Barnes and Jeff Carlisi couldn't be faulted, and the crowd reaction was never less than enthusiastic.

The highlight of .38 Special's show is usually Van Zandt's "flying Dutchman" routine, where he takes to a Peter Pan brace and flies 60 feet up and 100 feet over the audience. Unfortunately, since the Amphitheatre ceiling was built as an afterthought and has no structural support, the trick had to be abandoned.

Opening act Golden Earring proved that there is good reason we hear from them once every five years with a great song like "Radar Love" or "Twilight Zone": Those are the only great songs they've got. The Dutch quartet appeared in basic black spray-paint pants; lead guitarist George Kooymans postured so broadly he looked like an outtake from PolyGram labelmate Spinal Tap.

Vocalist Barry Hay suffered wanly through the band's current "When The Lady Smiles" (one of the most off-putting videos ever made). But drummer Cesar Zuiderwijk nearly salvaged the show with a remarkable digitally-delayed drum solo on "Radar Love."

ETHLIE ANN VARE

THOMAS DOLBY

Radio City Music Hall, New York
Tickets: \$15.50

Combining high technology with a high powered performance, Thomas Dolby triumphed here April 12 in his first appearance in a major U.S. city, playing to a capacity Radio City crowd. Dolby's energetic performance

was all the more impressive in light of the fact that he was suffering from an intestinal virus which caused him to leave the stage several times during the evening, and seemed also to give him some trouble with his vocals.

Though he has been labeled by much of the music press as a synthesizer-happy novelty act (mostly due to the synth-laden hit single, "She Blinded Me With Science"), Dolby made it clear that he is in fact an innovative composer/lyricist and arranger, as well as an appealingly frenetic frontman. Still, while he effectively repudiated the "synth wizard" label he eschews, Dolby's creative use of the Fairlight Computer Musical Instrument did provide striking sonic punctuation marks.

The band was tight and surprisingly funky. Strong ensemble playing was accented by several standout performances, most notably from multi-keyboardist Lindon Connah (one of three female keyboardist/vocalists on stage) during a vocal/synth harmony scat session with a ventriloquist's dummy operated by Dolby. Bassist Matthew Seligman and drummer Justin Hildreth also rate high marks for their hard-driving precise performances.

Staging and lighting were, however, merely ordinary, the sole distinguishing mark being three giant circular video projection screens flown above the stage. The screens (designed to resemble Dolby's trademark round specs) could have been used to better effect, with less-than-subtle video segments distracting from rather than enhancing the music.

Still, Dolby's career is just hitting its stride, and he is a welcome addition to the concert stage here. Hopefully, his next appearance will feature stage production values as distinctive as his music.

STEVEN DUPLER

WEATHER REPORT

Beacon Theatre, New York
Tickets: \$15.50, \$13.50

When Weather Report played New York a year ago, it was in support of a rather indifferent album, "Procession," but the group put on a stunning show. This year, Weather Report is touring behind a much stronger record, "Domino Theory"—but paradoxically, their April 14 show at the Beacon was a disappointment.

Keyboardist/composer Josef Zawinul and saxophonist/composer Wayne Shorter have been fronting Weather Report for 14 years, and although they still manage to inject a lot of energy into their music, there were times at the Beacon when their hearts didn't seem to be entirely in it. The young rhythm section, consisting of Victor Bailey on bass, Omar Hakim on drums and Mino Cinelu on percussion, helped, but not enough. Perhaps the biggest problem was the material.

Weather Report was one of the groups that virtually invented fusion music, and over the years Zawinul and to a lesser extent Shorter have amassed an impressive and varied body

of compositions. But on this tour Weather Report is playing almost nothing that doesn't appear on the last two albums. Some of that material is outstanding: Zawinul's "Two Lines" and Shorter's "Plaza Real," highlights of last year's show, remain highlights, and Zawinul's "Db Waltz," from the current album, packed a wallop. But a lot of powerful earlier compositions have been scrapped in favor of newer ones that are just not as compelling.

Still, when the material was right and the musicians were into it, Weather Report played with both fire and intelligence. At their best, when they're locked into a swinging groove and Shorter is cooking his hardest, Weather Report is—despite what the purists might say—one of the best jazz groups around.

PETER KEEPNEWS

JOHN DENVER

Radio City Music Hall, New York
Tickets: \$15

It was a loyal crowd that braved one of Manhattan's worst storms to fill Radio City March 29 for the first of John Denver's four nights there. Working alone in a cozy, no-frills stage setting, Denver proceeded through an enjoyable if predictable set that relied heavily on sentimental oldies.

The 90-minute show was geared towards pleasing longtime fans rather than recruiting the new and suffered some slow moments for that reason. But overall, Denver brought a campfire ambience to the night, along with loads of sing-along opportunities.

Using a clever song sequence, Denver moved with ease between the serious and the frivolous. His soliloquies on peace, hunger and preventative medicine were thankfully short, and were enthusiastically received by most. Non-musical highlights of the show were Denver's reading of an Indian poem in sign language and several tales from his tours abroad.

Biggest crowd-pleasers included "Rocky Mountain High," "Grandma's Feather Bed" and "Sunshine On My Shoulder," but Denver also did well exposing a deeper side of his character with songs from his latest RCA album "It's About Time." The title cut and "Falling Out Of Love" were emotive ballads reflecting his concern for world peace and an inside look at his recent divorce. Another highlight was an old Pete Seeger folk tune on which Denver coaxed the sound of chiming bells out of his 12-string guitar.

Sporting contacts and leather pants, Denver is a fairly hip 40-year-old. Aside from a few too-wobbly yodels, the grown-up country boy was in great voice. His consistent sense of humor kept the politics in perspective and made for a solid night of low-key entertainment.

KIM FREEMAN



STUDY BREAK—MCA act the Fixx entertains more than 15,000 college students during the Rolling Stone Music Festival in Daytona Beach. Modern English shared the bill for the event, which was co-sponsored by Molson's beer and Hawaiian Tropic suntan lotion.

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AMUSEMENT
BUSINESS

Survey for Week Ending 4/28/84

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).

- **ANNE MURRAY—\$466,844, 35,431 (37,096)**, \$17.90, \$14.90, \$9.90 & \$4.90, Ray Shepardson, Fox Theater, St. Louis, eight shows, April 3-8.
- **ANDY WILLIAMS, THE OSMOND BROTHERS—\$401,375, 30,968 (37,096)**, \$17.90, \$14.90, \$9.90 & \$4.90, Ray Shepardson, Fox Theater, St. Louis, eight shows, March 20-25.
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$297,121, 19,429 (28,165)**, \$16.50 & \$13.75, Cellar Door Productions, Capitol Center, Landover, Md., April 16.
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$256,724, 17,082**, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Metro Center, Minneapolis, sellout, April 11.
- **THE SCORPIONS, JON BUTCHER AXIS—\$207,556, 16,300**, \$13.50 & \$12.50, Evening Star Productions, Memorial Coliseum, Phoenix, Ariz., sellout, April 5.
- **DURAN, DURAN, MODEL PRISONERS—\$204,628, 14,882 (15,237)**, \$13.75, Cellar Door Productions, Capitol Center, Landover, Md., April 2.
- **THE GRATEFUL DEAD—\$203,875, 8,155**, \$25, The Rex Foundation, Morin Veterans Memorial Auditorium, San Rafael, Calif., four sellouts, March 28, 29, 31 and April 1.
- **THE GRATEFUL DEAD—\$194,720, 15,000**, \$15, \$14 & \$10, Bill Graham Presents/Avalon Attractions, Irvine Meadows, Laguna Hills, Calif., sellout, April 7.
- **JUDAS PRIEST, GREAT WHITE—\$160,075, 12,969**, \$12.50, Cellar Door Productions, Baltimore Civic Center, sellout, April 11.
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$144,664, 9,415 (10,175)**, \$15.50 & \$13.50, K.S. Productions, Dane County Coliseum, Madison, Wis., April 10.
- **CULTURE CLUB, THE MISSTAKES—\$127,775, 10,489**, \$12.50, Contemporary Productions, Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis, sellout, April 14.
- **THE GRATEFUL DEAD—\$101,052, 7,500**, \$14, Bill Graham Presents, The Aladdin, Las Vegas, sellout, April 6.
- **YES—\$100,103, 8,333 (9,470)**, \$14, \$13 & \$11, Sound Seventy Productions, Municipal Auditorium, Nash., Tenn., April 15.
- **THE SCORPIONS, JON BUTCHER AXIS—\$97,100, 7,768 (9,933)**, \$12.50, Evening Star Productions, Tucson (Ariz.) Community Center Arena, April 4.
- **YES—\$93,184, 6,903 (9,813)**, \$13.50 & \$11.50, Stardate Productions, Dane County Coliseum, Madison, Wis., April 11.
- **THE OAK RIDGE BOYS, SYLVIA—\$93,072, 7,759 (12,280)**, \$12.50 & \$11.50, Jerry Bentley Productions, Inc., Greenville (S.C.) Auditorium, two shows, April 7.
- **THE ROYAL NEW YORK DOO WOPS—\$92,528, 5,874**, \$16.50 & \$14.50, In-house, Radio City Music Hall, N.Y.C., sellout, April 7.
- **THE OAK RIDGE BOYS, SYLVIA—\$81,115, 6,724 (8,000)**, \$12.50, \$10.50 & \$10, Bolton & Associates, Central Alabama Music Park, Jemison, Alabama, two shows, April 4.
- **THE OAK RIDGE BOYS, SYLVIA—\$71,454, 6,000 (7,111)**, \$12.50 & \$11.50, Future Entertainment, Inc., Freedom Hall, Johnson City, Tenn., April 8.
- **ANDY WILLIAMS, HUSTON POPS ORCHESTRA—\$68,387, 5,007 (7,536)**, \$15 & \$10, In-house, University of Texas at Austin, Frank Erwin Center, April 6.
- **.38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$61,724, 5,529 (6,185)**, \$11.50 & \$10.50, In-house, University of Texas at Austin, Frank Erwin Center, March 31.
- **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS, EDDIE & THE TIDE—\$60,560, 6,056 (7,955)**, \$10, United Concerts, BBU Pavilion, Boise, Idaho, April 15.
- **NIGHT RANGER, ERIC MARTIN BAND—\$58,796, 4,339**, \$13.50 & \$12.50, Bill Graham Presents, Warfield Theater, San Francisco, two sellouts, April 6-7.
- **WAYNE NEWTON—\$53,515, 3,058 (4,843)**, \$17.50, Sound Seventy Productions, Memorial Auditorium, Chattanooga, Tenn., April 7.
- **TED NUGENT, MICHAEL SHENKER GROUP—\$47,325, 4,264 (6,189)**, \$11.50 & \$10.50, In-house, University of Texas at Austin, Frank Erwin Center, March 30.
- **PETRA—\$45,951, 7,195 (9,000)**, \$8.50 & \$7.50, Harvest Productions, Odeum Arena, Chicago, Ill., two shows, March 29-30.
- **THE STATLER BROTHERS, REBA MCENTIRE—\$44,411, 4,671 (6,888)**, \$10 & \$9, Varnell Enterprises, Prairie Capitol Convention Center, Springfield, Kansas, April 13.
- **WAYNE NEWTON—\$43,675, 3,882 (8,738)**, \$12.50 & \$10.50, Sound Seventy Productions, VonBraun Civic Center, Huntsville, Ala., April 8.
- **ADAM ANT, JOE "KING" CARASCO—\$37,433, 3,592 (6,139)**, \$11 & \$9, In-house, University of Texas at Austin, Frank Erwin Center, April 7.
- **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS, DR. GONZO—\$36,562, 3,250**, \$11.50, Pacific Northwest Concerts, Central Washington University, Nicholson Pavilion, sellout, April 12.
- **PETRA—\$36,536, 5,103**, \$8, \$7 & \$6, Cornerstone Concerts/Petra-fied Productions, Fox Theater, Detroit, Mich., sellout, April 6.
- **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS—\$36,508, 3,042**, \$12.50 & \$11.50, Double Tee Promotions, Portland (Ore.) Civic Auditorium, sellout, April 14.
- **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS—\$35,781, 2,978**, \$12.50 & \$11.50, Albacross, Paramount Theater, Seattle, Wash., sellout, April 30.
- **JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP, DAN ROSS & THE BRUNETTES—\$33,068, 3,100**, \$12.50 & \$10, Modern College Concerts, State University New York Gym, Albany, sellout, April 2.
- **THOMPSON TWINS, RE-FLEX—\$32,785, 2,661 (3,397)**, \$12.50 & \$11.50, Monarch Entertainment Bureau, Capitol Theater, Passiac, N.J., April 14.
- **PETRA—\$31,692, 5,055 (5,794)**, \$8, \$7 & \$6, Columbus Youth For Christ/Petra-fied Productions, Ohio Theater, Columbus, Ohio, one sellout, April 7.
- **HUEY LEWIS & THE NEWS, DR. GONZO—\$31,153, 2,505**, \$13.50 & \$11, Regal Productions, Eugene (Ore.) Hult Center, sellout, April 10.

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