

# Talent In Action

## CULTURE CLUB

*Municipal Auditorium, Nashville  
Tickets: \$12.50*

Nashville must have loomed as a crucial question mark on Culture Club's current American tour. Nashville, after all, doesn't exactly have a reputation for progressive musical tolerance—and it remains a bastion of the Bible Belt to boot.

But the Brits had nothing to fear. Nashville revealed itself to be Boy George territory April 16 in both spirit and regalia (colorful Boy George dress-alikes dotted the 9,900-seat auditorium like wayward punctuation marks).

The band seemed genuinely pleased by its reception and relaxed in its delivery. Though there were eight musicians onstage, noticeably absent was the marvelous harmonica lead that makes such impact on the band's records. However, the two horn players contributed enough flaring brass to duplicate a full section, and backup singer Helen Terry shivered rivets on the auditorium's aging dome more than once with her outrageous vocal power.

Despite Culture Club's polished pop serenity on record, there is considerably more rough-edged ignition driving the live performances. Boy George is much more of a rock/r&b stylist in concert, his voice taking on a husky, gravelly quality. Freed by the fueling instrumental flames of musicians Jon Moss, Mikey Craig, Roy Hay and Phil Pickett, Boy George teased the audience with devilish asides and pranced around exuberantly like an elegant cherub in costume. But he also delivered sensitive, searing vocal volleys in traditional hard-rock fashion.

The audience, primarily teenaged and euphoric, stood on their chairs all the way through the 90-minute show (which included three encores). The concert was impressive, if not electrifying. Culture Club relies on personality as well as musicianship to create a glittering cabaret charisma; in the cavernous Muni-

pal Auditorium, personal warmth and good acoustics are impossible to duplicate. The act would fare better in smaller halls where its various subtleties could be heard properly.

About the Exotic Birds, who opened for Culture Club. The name is infinitely more interesting than their material. The question most frequently asked during their 30-minute set was, how did they get on this tour, anyway?

KIP KIRBY

## THOMPSON TWINS

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

Anyone concerned that video is putting unrealistic expectations on young acts ought to catch the Thompson Twins in concert. Their April 10 show proved that standard video techniques can be used effectively as a springboard to an exceptionally vibrant live performance.

Relying on a tight four-piece backup band, the Twins emphasized showmanship more than musicianship. Their bang-a-drum here, ring-a-bell there attitude jibed perfectly with the varied rhythm structures of their music. Headset mikes enabled the trio to act out the storylines of their songs.

The Twins worked well as a team. Tom Bailey stayed front and center most of the set, while Alannah Currie and Joe Leeway contributed vocals, percussion, keyboards and dance moves from various spots on stage. "Sister Mercy" showed off the sparkling backing vocals of keyboardists Carrie Booth and Roger O'Donnel. Drummer Boris Williams anchored the set with a flexible, hard-hitting beat.

Assigned seats were ignored during the almost two-hour show, with most of the audience dancing in the aisles. A convincing version of "You've Got Love On Your Side" ended the Twins' relentlessly upbeat set, but the crowd called them back for three encores.

KIM FREEMAN

## ELVIS COSTELLO T-BONE BURNETT

*State Univ. of New York  
Stony Brook, N.Y.  
Tickets: \$10*

It was the old, familiar scene of singer/songwriter bearing acoustic guitar and playing for an attentive college crowd. What wasn't so familiar was that the singer/songwriter was Elvis Costello.

Costello brought his first solo tour to this campus on April 14, and despite the absence of his regular band, the Attractions, Costello had his audience in awe from the moment he took the stage to sing "Accidents Will Happen."

Working with an arsenal of acoustic and electric guitars as well as piano, Costello's 90-minute set included compositions spanning his entire career. He reached far back to the pure country of "Stranger In The House" and "The Angels Wanna Wear My Red Shoes" and moved to the more recent past with such songs as "Shipbuilding" and "Everyday I Write The Book," his 1983 top 40 single.

To add spice and demonstrate his versatility, Costello threw in a handful of covers. Dylan's country-period "I Threw It All Away" became a Costello natural, as did Merle Haggard's "The

Bottle Let Me Down," which appeared on Costello's "Almost Blue" country album. For the fans of true obscurities, he resurrected a 1965 Dusty Springfield recording, "Losing You."

But, predictably, Costello's own material drew the best response. "Almost Blue" and "Kid About It" brought out the balladeer in Costello. Even the rockers lent themselves nicely to the "folky" interpretations.

The evening was not solely devoted to old favorites, however, and if the seven or eight new songs he performed were an indication of what's to come on the next album, fans are in for some solid stuff. One tune, co-written with Jerry Dammers of Special A.K.A., was apparently titled "Your Girlfriend Is What I Like Best About You," and is easily one of the most humorous efforts Costello has ever been involved with. "Only Flame In Town" was another countryish foray, while "Worthless Thing" seemed to be a putdown of cable television. "Peace In Our Time," an import single which Costello released under the pseudonym "The Imposter," is a powerful anti-war anthem.

Opening act T-Bone Burnett also played a solo acoustic set, but unfortunately the impatient college crowd didn't give the tall Texan the attention he deserved. Burnett chose songs from his most recent Warner Bros. albums as well as such appropriate covers as "Not Fade Away" and "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood." The folk roots that Burnett showcased here reminded old-timers of his stint with Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue tour nearly 10 years ago, and also proved just how similar Burnett is to the unadorned Dylan.

JEFF TAMARKIN

## OSCAR PETERSON

*Blue Note, New York  
Tickets: \$25*

Oscar Peterson is one of the few non-electric jazz musicians who can legitimately be called a superstar, so his first appearance at a New York jazz club in 20 years was more than just a gig; it was an event, drawing enthusiastic capacity crowds every night despite the steep admission price and the \$10 minimum.

To the faithful, Peterson can do no wrong. And even for those who are somewhat put off by his rather melodramatic approach to the piano, it's hard to avoid getting caught up in the galvanizing excitement of his playing. He's a technically awesome player, and he unquestionably puts on a hell of a show.

In fact, the biggest problem with the show is trying to find some relief from the ferocious torrent of notes Peterson throws at the audience. His fans on April 17, the opening night of the six-night engagement, clearly found his frantic, busy approach to the keyboard inspiring, but some of us would have been grateful for a little more breathing room.

Helping immensely to keep Peterson's excesses in perspective, and to provide contrast to his intensely heated sense of swing, was a crack rhythm section of longtime associates. Bassist Ray Brown was rock-solid as always and tastefully understated in his solo spots. Guitarist Joe Pass played almost as many notes as Peterson—the two got into a few exchanges that sounded something like machine-gun battles—but also frequently displayed a mellower, more lyrical side. Drummer Martin Drew was a trifle heavy-handed, but perhaps such an approach was necessary simply to keep up with Peterson's pianistic pyrotechnics.

PETER KEEPNEWS

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# AMUSEMENT BUSINESS Boxscore

Survey for Week Ending 5/5/84

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).

- **STEVE LAWRENCE AND EYDIE GORME, JAN MURRAY—\$463,502, 35,632 (37,384), \$17.90, \$14.90, \$9.90 & \$4.90, Ray Shepardson, Fox Theater, St. Louis, Mo., eight shows, April 9-15.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$297,121, 18,667, \$16.50 & \$13.75, C.K. Spurlock, Capitol Centre, Landover, Md., sellout, April 6.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$261,006, 17,460, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Riverfront Coliseum, Cincinnati, Ohio, sellout, April 4.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$254,774, 16,991, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Metro Center, Minneapolis, Minn., sellout, April 11.**
- **BILLY JOEL—\$231,270, 15,544, \$15, Pace Concerts, Reunion Arena, Dallas, Tex., sellout, April 14.**
- **BILLY JOEL—\$214,533, 13,898, \$15.75 & \$14.75, Pace Concerts, The Summit, Houston, Tex., sellout, April 15.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$202,248, 12,337, \$16.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Civic Center, Baltimore, Md., sellout, April 5.**
- **BILLY JOEL—\$197,204, 13,318, \$15 & \$13, Contemporary Productions/New West Productions, Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Mo., sellout, April 17.**
- **BILLY JOEL—\$190,298, 13,066, \$15 & \$13, Contemporary Productions, The Arena, St. Louis, Mo., sellout, April 19.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$184,075, 12,216 (13,670), \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Civic Center, Charleston, W.Va., April 18.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$180,049, 12,008, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Reynolds Coliseum, Raleigh, N.C., sellout, April 7.**
- **VAN HALEN, THE VELCROS—\$179,106 (\$229,256 Canadian), 16,072, \$14.50 & \$13.50, Concert Productions International, Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, sellout, April 17.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$171,286, 11,259 (12,131), \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Civic Center, Peoria, Ill., April 12.**
- **THE SCORPIONS, JON BUTCHER AXIS—\$159,286, 11,970 (13,967), \$13.50, Pace Concerts, Reunion Arena, Dallas, Tex., April 12.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$155,180, 10,479 (12,000), \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Stokely Coliseum, UT, Knoxville, Tenn., April 3.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$150,642, 10,017, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Centennial Hall, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, sellout, April 13.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$144,674, 9,533, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Dane County Exposition Center, Madison, Wis., sellout, April 16.**
- **JUDAS PRIEST, GREAT WHITE—\$141,215 (180,756 Canadian), 13,081, \$14 & \$13, Concert Productions International, Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, sellout, April 12.**
- **YES—\$136,482, 10,000, \$13.75, Silver Star Productions, Civic Center, Lakeland, Fla., sellout, April 19.**
- **TED NUGENT, MICHAEL SCHENKER GROUP—\$136,215, 10,406 (11,379), \$13.50, Pace Concerts, Reunion Arena, Dallas, Tex., April 5.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$135,187, 9,043 (10,900), \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Coliseum, Richmond, Va., April 4.**
- **THE PRETENDERS, THE ALARM—\$123,275, 10,154, \$12.50, Cellar Door Productions, Fox Theater, Detroit, Mich., two sellouts, April 7-8.**
- **KENNY ROGERS, B.J. THOMAS, THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS—\$117,676, 7,696, \$15.50 & \$13.50, C.K. Spurlock, Civic Center, Wheeling, W.Va., sellout, April 15.**
- **THE SCORPIONS, JON BUTCHER AXIS—\$111,870, 8,512 (12,604), \$13.75, Pace Concerts, The Summit, Houston, Tex., April 10.**
- **GEORGE CARLIN, LEON REDBONE—\$107,010, 8,410 (9,588), \$13.75 & \$12.75, In-House, Front Row Theater, Cleveland, Ohio, March 16-17.**
- **YES—\$106,947, 7,982 (10,000), \$13.75, Silver Star Productions, Civic Center, Lakeland, Fla., April 18.**
- **JUDAS PRIEST—\$106,306, 8,330 (12,000), \$12.75, Di-Cesare/Engler, Civic Arena, Pittsburgh, Pa., April 9.**
- **JOHN DENVER—\$100,912, 7,700, \$13.50, Stage On Entertainment, Civic Center, Augusta, Maine, sellout, April 10.**
- **.38 SPECIAL, GOLDEN EARRING—\$97,227, 7,202 (7,500), \$13.50, Greg Munsy Presents, NBC Arena, Honolulu, Hawaii, April 18.**
- **JOHN DENVER—\$91,017, 6,725, \$13.50, Stage 1, Stabler Arena, Lehigh, Univ., Lehigh, Pa., sellout, April 15.**
- **JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP, DAN ROSS AND THE BRUNETTES—\$90,990, 7,419, \$13.50, \$12.50 & \$11.50, M.U. & Tour Mgt. Assoc. Inc., Indiana University Auditorium, Bloomington, Indiana, two sellouts, April 10-11.**
- **JON BUTCHER AXIS—\$82,493, 7,390 (12,128), \$11.50 & \$9.50, In-House, Frank Erwin Center, University of Tex., Austin, April 9.**
- **BEACH BOYS, MICK FLEETWOOD—\$79,110, 6,809 (12,249), \$12.50 & \$10.50, In-House, Frank Erwin Center, University of Tex., Austin, April 14.**
- **AMY GRANT, MICHAEL W. SMITH, GARY CHAPMAN—\$78,959, 9,016, \$9.50 & \$8.50, Morning Star Productions, Convention Center Arena, Dallas, Tex., sellout, April 13.**
- **YES—\$78,552, 6,293 (9,000), \$12.75, Silver Star Productions, Lee Civic Center, Ft. Meyers, Fla., April 20.**
- **AMY GRANT, MICHAEL W. SMITH, GARY CHAPMAN—\$77,110, 8,711, \$9.50 & \$8.50, Morning Star Productions, Hofheinz Pavillion, University of Houston, Tex., sellout, April 14.**
- **HANK WILLIAMS, JR., MCGUFFEY LANE—\$64,858, 6,440 (6,800), \$10.50, Richard Mischell, Ohio Center, Columbus, Ohio, April 12.**

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