

# Talent in Action

**LUTHER VANDROSS**  
**CHERYL LYNN**

*Universal Amphitheatre,  
Universal City, Calif.  
Tickets: \$17.50, \$15*

LUTHER VANDROSS delivered a show here July 4 that was an intriguing mix of music and theatre: There were enough lights, sets and extras to mount a revival of "Hello, Dolly!" The elaborate staging gave the show a witty, stylish quality, sort of like a two-hour enactment of Chic's "Good Times." The showy aspects served another, more important function: They helped offset the sense of melancholy and longing that's at the heart of much of Vandross' material.

Vandross' anguished versions of Bacharach & David's "A House Is Not A Home" and Leon Russell's "Superstar" have cemented his reputation as one of the finest ballad singers in contemporary music. Indeed, his approach to those songs is so literal that his show would be unbearably downbeat were it not for the brightening effects of the stage business and his on-stage personality. Vandross was exceptionally light-hearted and playful, approximating Michael Jackson's moonwalk at one point, joking about Eddie Murphy's jibes about his weight at another.

Vandross' show was the opener of a five-night stand at the Amphitheatre, which is believed to be a record for a black artist without a substantial crossover audience. Indeed, four years after his emergence with "Never Too Much," Vandross remains slotted as an "r&b artist." Despite the fact that all four of his Epic albums have been certified platinum, Vandross has yet to claim a top 20 pop single.

His show shed some light on his crossover difficulties. Vandross makes few concessions to pop tastes: His versions of ballads are drawn-out in the r&b tradition. Even the references he made in his patter tended to be about black celebrities.

Not all of the songs in Vandross' nearly two-hour set were ballads. He also included dynamic versions of such uptempo rhythm pieces as "Never Too Much," "Busy Body" and his "Bad Boy"/"Having A Party" medley. His band lent strong support throughout, as did his seven (count 'em) backup singer/dancers.

The show was opened by Cheryl Lynn, whose set incorporated her black radio smashes "Got To Be Real" and "Encore." Lynn blends the intense, show-stopping style of a Jennifer Holliday with a more sassy feminist stance.

At times, she tried too hard to be contemporary, as in "Infidelity," which contained this charming lyric: "I don't want to catch a disease/ And I'm not talking about the flu." If Lynn is going to continue to open

for a performer as classy as Vandross, she should check her tendency to be too trendy. PAUL GREIN

**GLENN FREY**

*Universal Amphitheatre,  
Universal City, Calif.  
Tickets: \$17.50, \$15*

THAT GLENN FREY has become the most visible ex-Eagle may be due more to luck than judgment; both his MCA solo albums sold disappointingly until "The Allnighter" was resuscitated by Frey's soundtrack work on "Beverly Hills Cop" and "Miami Vice." Frey wasn't about to look a gift horse in the mouth on July 9; not only did he mention "Miami Vice" every other song, but he took the stage wearing Don Johnson's jacket.

In fact, Frey mentioned *everything* twice. He stopped to chat after every number, telling the audience who co-wrote the tune, who played backup on the tune or where he was when he made up the tune. Audience rapport is nice, but Frey came across like a DJ who knew he was on a week's notice.

With a veteran crew including players from Shalamar, Rufus, Jack Mack & the Heart Attack, the Amazing Rhythm Aces and Loggins & Messina, Frey put across a solid, professional set. It was slick without being perfunctory, and instrumentation was tight all around. There were 15 players up there at one point, and the music was never muddy or cluttered.

But the music was also pretty predictable, relying on tried-and-true rock'n'roll riffs and ostentatious horn work for excitement. When a cover of Frankie Ford's "Sea Cruise" is one of your best songs, you have to wonder about your songwriting.

On the second encore following a 65-minute set, Frey wowed the crowd by playing one Eagles song, "Heartache Tonight." The full house also responded well to "The Heat Is On," "Smuggler's Blues" and "Party Town." It was a happy hometown crowd cheering a homeboy who had made good, and if the homeboy tried a little too hard to come across like the boy next door, at least one could understand his motivations.

But if Frey wants to pretend he's just a friendly bar band, he should play bars—for less than \$17.50 a head. One Huey Lewis & the News is good enough to go around.

ETHLIE ANN VARE

**JOHN DENVER**

*Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver  
Tickets: \$15.40*

JOHN DENVER came home to the Rockies July 6 for a remarkably diverse show that mixed his old country-shaded hits, tender love songs, symphonic pieces, rock-edged material and even a reggae tune. The show was a benefit for the Denver Symphony Orchestra, which backed Denver on several selections, and the Windstar Foundation, an ecological concern which Denver founded.

The show drew a sold-out, warmly responsive crowd, underscoring the fact that Denver has held on to his concert audience despite an absence of major pop hits in the past

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**AMUSEMENT BUSINESS**

# BOXSCORE TOP CONCERT GROSSES

ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
LIVE AID	JFK Stadium Philadelphia	July 13	\$3,552,800 \$50/\$35	89,484 Sellout	Bob Geldof/Bill Graham Presents/ Electric Factory Concerts
GRATEFUL DEAD	Merriweather Post Pavilion Columbia, Md.	June 30- July 1	\$491,439 \$16/\$11	38,394 two sellouts	Monarch Entertainment Bureau
GRATEFUL DEAD	Saratoga Springs (N.Y.) Performing Arts Center	June 27	\$420,208 \$17.50/\$10	40,100 sellout	Monarch Entertainment Bureau
GRATEFUL DEAD	Ventura (Calif.) County Fairgrounds	July 13-14	\$375,000 \$15/\$13.50	25,000 two sellouts	Avalon Attractions
GRATEFUL DEAD	Hersheypark Hershey, Pa.	June 28	\$295,515 \$15/\$13.50	21,890 25,000	Monarch Entertainment Bureau
ERIC CLAPTON GRAHAM PARKER & THE SHOT	Red Rocks Amphitheatre Denver	July 11-14	\$261,424 \$15.95/\$14.85	16,998 17,909 one sellout	Feyline Presents
ROBERT PLANT	Reunion Arena Dallas	June 24	\$233,100 \$15	16,190 sellout	Pace Concerts
NEW YORK FRESH FESTIVAL	Joe Louis Arena Detroit	June 29	\$209,400 \$12	18,000 sellout	Pace Concerts/CW & Associates
ALABAMA	Astrodome Houston	July 6	\$171,976 \$7	30,373 unlimited	Dale Morris & Associates
BRYAN ADAMS KIM MITCHELL	St. Paul (Minn.) Civic Center	July 6	\$169,679 \$14.50	11,702 sellout	Beaver Prods/Jam Prods.
GRATEFUL DEAD	Blossom Music Festival Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio	June 25	\$167,269 \$14/\$11	15,214 18,773	Monarch Entertainment Bureau
AL JARREAU DAVID SANBORN	Blossom Music Festival Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio	July 8	\$164,558 \$13	13,951 18,773	Chris Ehlman
ROBERT PLANT	The Omni Atlanta	June 27	\$159,550 \$15	11,129 11,700	Pace Concerts
GRATEFUL DEAD	Pittsburgh Civic Arena	July 2	\$157,465 \$14.75/\$13.75	11,510 17,580	Monarch Entertainment Bureau
AMY GRANT PHILIP BAILEY	Greek Theatre Los Angeles	July 9-10	\$153,021 \$15/\$14	10,531 12,374 one sellout	Nederlander Organization
BRYAN ADAMS KIM MITCHELL	Fort Wayne (Ind.) Coliseum	July 11	\$152,867 \$13.50	10,000 sellout	Sunshine Promotions
BRYAN ADAMS KIM MITCHELL	Market Square Arena Indianapolis	July 10	\$148,702 \$13.50	11,015 13,000	Sunshine Promotions
GRATEFUL DEAD	Riverband Music Theater Cincinnati	June 24	\$143,900 \$15/\$10	11,451 16,000	Monarch Entertainment Bureau
AMY GRANT PHILIP BAILEY	Red Rocks Amphitheatre Denver	July 1	\$136,917 \$15.95/\$14.95/ \$13.50	9,000 sellout	Feyline Presents
CROSBY, STILLS & NASH THE BAND	Red Rocks Amphitheatre Denver	July 10	\$136,763 \$15.95/\$14.95	9,000 sellout	Feyline Presents
ROBERT PLANT	Market Square Arena Indianapolis	July 5	\$127,080 \$15	8,472 13,000	Sunshine Promotions
RICK SPRINGFIELD 'TIL TUESDAY	LSU Assembly Center Baton Rouge, La.	July 6	\$123,989 \$14.50	8,551 sellout	Beaver Prods.
TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS LONE JUSTICE	Sun Dome Tampa, Fla.	July 12	\$122,514 \$14	9,218 sellout	Gulf Artists Prods.
BRYAN ADAMS KIM MITCHELL	Mesker Music Theater Evansville, Ind.	July 9	\$121,500 \$13.50	9,000 sellout	Sunshine Promotions
BRYAN ADAMS KIM MITCHELL	Veterans Auditorium Des Moines	July 5	\$119,164 \$13.50	8,827 sellout	Beaver Prods.
REO SPEEDWAGON CHEAP TRICK	Freedom Hall Johnson City, Tenn.	July 6	\$118,703 \$13.50/\$12.50	8,990 sellout	Sunshine Promotions
DAN FOGELBERG	Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre Laguna Hills, Calif.	July 14	\$118,512 \$17.50/\$12.50	7,704 15,000	Avalon Attractions
ERIC CLAPTON GRAHAM PARKER & THE SHOT	Sandstone Amphitheatre Bonner Springs, Kan.	July 9	\$117,908 \$15.50/\$11.50	9,153 16,008	Feyline Presents
RICK SPRINGFIELD 'TIL TUESDAY	Monroe (La.) Civic Center	July 8	\$111,412 \$14.50	7,958 sellout	Beaver Prods.
ERIC CLAPTON	Indianapolis Sports & Music Center	July 6	\$111,197 \$13.50/\$12.50	8,283 8,700	Sunshine Promotion
LUTHER VANDROSS CHERYL LYNN	San Francisco Civic Center	July 13	\$104,302 \$20/\$17.50/\$15	5,527 5,700	Bill Graham Presents
JIMMY BUFFETT & THE CORAL REEFER BAND	Chastain Park Atlanta	June 21	\$100,816 \$18.50/\$16.50/\$13.50	6,351 sellout	Alex Cooley Prods.
ALABAMA	Comiskey Park Chicago	July 3	\$99,169 \$7.50	30,360 unlimited	Dale Morris & Associates
NEW YORK FRESH FESTIVAL	MECCA Arena Milwaukee	June 26	\$94,105 \$11	8,946 sellout	Pace Concerts/CW & Associates
TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS RANK & FILE	Omaha Civic Auditorium	June 28	\$93,510 \$14.50/\$13.50	7,192 10,000	Contemporary Presentations
NEW YORK FRESH FESTIVAL	Public Hall Cleveland	June 30	\$90,414 \$12/\$8.50	8,692 11,000	Pace Concerts/CW & Associates/ Hank LaConti
LUTHER VANDROSS CHERYL LYNN	San Francisco Civic Center	July 11	\$86,325 \$20/\$17.50/\$15	4,503 5,700	Bill Graham Presents
OAK RIDGE BOYS MARK GRAY	Westbury (N.Y.) Music Fair	June 30	\$86,253 \$16.75	5,559 5,724	In-House
AL JARREAU DAVID SANBORN	Indianapolis Sports & Music Center	July 5	\$82,558 \$13.50/\$12.50	6,123 7,400	Sunshine Promotions
AMY GRANT PHILIP BAILEY	Compton Terrace Phoenix	July 4	\$76,090 \$13.50/\$12.50/ \$11.50	6,123 20,000	Sunshine Promotions

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