

Soul shakin' music came down Russells deliver 'hot' concert


By KEITH TAYLOR
If Leon and Mary Russell lose their popularity on the record charts, they can always hit the evangelism trail, and probably make more money.
The Russells managed to bring one of the hottest shows to G. Rollie White Coliseum in a long time Friday night.
Two of the most outstanding numbers were old gospel songs sung by Mary. She belted out "Mighty Clouds of Joy," and "Jezebel" as if she just came from a tent revival. And she managed to rouse the near capacity crowd while looking as if she was bored to tears.
If there was anything wrong with the concert, it was Mary's lack of just four times.
I guess it is to her credit, though, that she can sing so well while looking so bored.
Leon seemed more interested. Wearing a pinstriped three-piece suit and looking like a satanic insurance salesman, he played the boogie-woogie piano flawlessly.
The band was fantastic. During

the few moments a song began to flounder, the guitar and saxophone came through to save the number. Leon should be shot for not introducing the band.
Leon sang a number of his hits, made famous either by him or other artists.
"This Masquerade," was very smooth. It was nice and jazzy and the saxophone solo made me forget George Benson had ever recorded it.
Leon's shining moment, though, was "Singing This Song For You." The band took a break during the song, leaving just Leon and his piano. Despite his raspy, nasal voice, his rendition put the Carpenters to shame.
At the beginning of the concert, I thought he would have to contend with the typical Aggie audience that politely applauds after each song and rarely stands. But when he started playing "Out in the Woods," people started standing, and when he swung into "Jumpin' Jack Flash"

Review

a song later, the crowd rushed the stage.
He and Mary made their exit during "Jumpin' Jack Flash," and left the band to finish, but the yelling, stomping crowd soon brought them back for more.
Leon finished the concert with a hot rendition of "Roll over Beethoven" that left the audience wanting more.
I had always thought the fine harmonies Leon and Mary managed on their records were due to careful

production, but they proved their different singing styles blend well in real life.
The only disappointment of the entire evening was that Leon did not sing "Youngblood," or "Tight-lusion was his and Mary's biggest hit together, "Listen to Your Heart Beat."
Considering the show they put on, though, I don't think the songs were missed by anyone except die-hard fans.



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Folksinger-Griffith evokes spirit of '60s

By DOUG GRAHAM
Battalion Staff
Folksinger Nanci Griffith evoked the spirit of the sixties Friday and Saturday night in the Basement Coffeehouse.
The Houston-based musician, performed music that recalled the quiet, creative sixties before antiwar violence, Charles Manson, and economics soured the decade.
She, and her warm up act, Texas A&M University student, Lyle Lovett, personified the relaxed, unpretentious nature of folk singing. Both sang either their own compositions or those of others whose work they respected.
And, except for one beautiful moment during Lovett's last song when Griffith walked up on stage and accompanied him, they sang alone.

Review

Folk songs demand thought, unlike mass-produced pop rock. That is the nature of good folk music that banishes it from the top '40s charts.
People no longer desire thoughts and observations; they desire entertainment.
And that is too bad.
Down in the Basement Coffeehouse, it is possible to leave the madness of grades, and indulge in a little humanity. Sipping a coke and talking to a friend and listening to Griffith's strong, soulful voice, proved a restoring tonic.
She had no costume, no fancy lights, just naked lyrics and a voice.
Griffith's songs were of, about, and for people. She sang a Woodie Guthrie song to start. She sang of bar singers, and again about fair-weather friends. She briefly explained the song, as folk singers are wont to do, saying that sometimes everyone needs a "good times" friend who never bothers you and is only around when all is well.
And that was a pertinent observation.
She sang yet again, someone else's song this time, of Kentucky and the ravages of strip mining. The song was a young boy's request to go and see a town devoured by the iron jaws of huge shovels.
Griffith tried to get the audience to sing the refrain.
Too bad.
One song had a viewpoint the Reviewer disagreed with — that William McKinley had been murdered so a pro-wealth Teddy Roosevelt became president.
Yet, the song was beautiful, besides provoking thought.
That thought is avoided in song is sad, for folk singing is America. The common man, the workers, the miners, and the servants, they all have had their tragedies and struggles ensclosed in folk songs.
And when the songs of real life are woven in the rich fabric of Griffith's voice, they develop a texture so compelling, that it is a crime against one's self to continue running the rat race to the disco beat of radio tunes.
It is time to give one's ears and feet a break, and use the mind and heart to listen to good, relaxed folk music.
It gets a person in tune with himself.



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