

Benefit concert aids guitarist

by Louis Hilgartner
Battalion reporter

The British Invasion, a gathering of England's finest rock musicians, completed the first leg of its four-city North American tour in Dallas last Tuesday night.

The concert honored Ronnie Lane, former guitarist for the English band Small Faces, who suffers from multiple sclerosis. All proceeds from the concert will be donated to M.S. research. The idea for a tour by this group started with a benefit concert in London.

Now friends and neighbors, shows like this don't come along every day.

Assembled in one band are the three original guitarists from one of Britain's greatest bands — the Yardbirds: Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. Maybe you haven't heard of the Yardbirds, but do the names Cream, Blind Faith, Derek and the Dominoes or Led Zeppelin ring a bell? Those are just a few of the bands these guys are responsible for.

Performing in the rhythm section are The Who drummer Kenny Jones, and Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman and drummer Charlie Watts.

And the roll call continues: Bad Company singer-guitarist Paul Rodgers; Jan Hammer, keyboardist extraordinaire; singer Joe Cocker; and guitarist Andy Featherwood Low.

The Reunion Arena stage in Dallas was covered with amplifiers, drums and keyboards. Most of the sound system speakers were hung from the ceiling, as well as a huge video screen. Roving cameras kept the audience in touch with the show from all angles.

After a 20-minute delay, the second night of the British Invasion commenced.

First to take the stage was Eric Clapton. Performing with him were Wyman, Watts, Jones, Low and others.

Clapton began his set with well-known cuts from his "Slowhand" album: "Lay Down Sally" and "Wonderful Tonight."

Although it's been almost two years since a major Clapton tour, he showed he still had the stuff which inspired the "Clapton is God" graffiti on London streets in the late '60s.

He played with the tasty, laid-back sound that has made him famous as one of the world's premier blues guitarists.

Once he warmed up, Clapton cut into a hard-core blues medley featuring "Have You Ever Loved A Woman" from the "Layla" album and another song entitled "Sad Day."

Clapton was joined by singer Joe Cocker. Although Cocker looks older and more tired every year, his voice is still strong and his rendition of "You Are So Beautiful" almost was touching.

Clapton and Cocker closed the hour-long set with "Feelin'

Alright," during which the crowd screamed enthusiastically.

The sound mix throughout the show had been very good. So often it's easy — in a show of this size — to turn up everyone's volume to the point of distortion. You could hear the people you needed to hear, when you needed to hear them.

After a short intermission, Jeff Beck took the stage accompanied by a different group of musicians featuring keyboardist Jan Hammer.

Review

Beck had more stage energy than Clapton, but the styles of music are different.

Beck's relatively short set was highlighted by cuts from his album "There and Back." Probably the most popular of these was "The Pump," a song now on the soundtrack of "Risky Business."

Beck also demonstrated his unique playing style combining tasteful playing with good use of effects and well-controlled feedback.

Beck closed his set with the classic "I'm Goin' Down." The crowd joined in full force as Beck and Hammer traded guitar and keyboard solos.

The house lights stayed down and the crowd cheered wildly in anticipation of an encore.

They were disappointed, but in a bittersweet way as Jimmy Page strode onstage.

Page was greeted by a standing ovation from the 14,000-plus spectators. Another ovation

went up as he strapped on his guitar and walked to center stage.

However, he had played for no more than a minute when his guitar was suddenly silenced by a technical malfunction. Page fought gamely, but he was drowned out by the rest of the band.

By the time he started his second tune, "Who's to Blame?", the problem had been fixed, and Page was joined by Paul Rodgers.

One of the liveliest songs of the evening was a tune introduced by Rodgers as "Boogie Mamma." Rodgers vocals were red hot and Page ripped out a killer lead.

But the evening's highlights were still to come.

Page strapped on his famous doubleneck guitar, one neck with 12 strings and the other six, and played an instrumental version of "Stairway to Heaven." This proved to be too much for the audience who already had been chomping at the bit all night long. The crowd rushed the stage and the security guards jumped behind the barricade at the front of the stage.

At the lead break toward the end of the song, Page was joined by Clapton and Beck. The trio swapped leads as they finished "Stairway."

The last regular "set" song of the evening was Clapton's "Layla."

This one number was more than enough to give the audience its money's worth. Britain's finest musicians were playing — together — one of the greatest rock tunes ever re-

corded. Upon finishing "Layla," the superstar band was saluted with another standing ovation.

It may have seemed nothing could top "Layla," but the two encore songs that followed came close.

Joe Cocker sang his smash rendition of the Beatles' "A Little Help From My Friends."

The camaraderie among the musicians was evident as Beck and Clapton had an impromptu exchange of each other's parts.

The house lights came up again, and Ronnie Lane was helped onstage as the crowd came to its feet again. In a voice that sounded almost desperate, he sang "Goodnight, Irene." Lane received another ovation as he was escorted offstage.

One of the unique aspects of this concert was the lack of commercial concerns usually associated with big concerts. No one was trying to sell any albums, and the musicians all seemed to enjoy the show just for the sake of playing together, especially considering the charitable cause.

None of the artists made a dime from this concert, nor will they make any on the rest of the tour — scheduled for San Francisco last night, today and Saturday; Los Angeles on Monday and Tuesday; and New York on Thursday and Friday.

Technically, the show might not have been the best the world has ever seen, and the musicians may have had better performances in the past, but it was more than memorable. It was inspiring.

Groups unite in concert

by Nicole Williams
Battalion reporter

"Dashing through the snow in a one-horse open sleigh, o'er the fields we go, laughing all the way."

Aggies may not be dashing through any snow in Aggieland this year, but they still can get into the holiday spirit by attending the annual Christmas concert held Sunday.

The Singing Cadets, The Reveliers, the Century Singers and the Women's Chorus will perform a variety of Christmas songs at the fifth annual concert. Music ranging from the serious classic, "Silent Night," to the not-so-serious "Sleigh Ride" will be featured.

Robert Boone, director of the Singing Cadets and The Reveliers, says the concert is the vocal music department's way of sharing the Christmas spirit with everyone.

"Let's turn 'em on to Christmas," says Boone. "This is a night of all kinds of music."

He says the groups will perform individually until the final presentation, which will include all 230 members of the four groups.

The Singing Cadets will begin the two-hour program with "It's

the Christmas Time of Year." They will be followed by the 55-member Women's Chorus singing two Negro spirituals in addition to the well-known "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

The Century Singers will perform last and will present a variety of Christmas melodies.

The Reveliers, a vocal-jazz ensemble of seven women and 13 men, will entertain the audience between the numbers by the larger groups.

The final piece will be Handel's famous "Hallelujah Chorus" from "The Messiah," sung by all four groups.

Boone says this is the only time during the year that the groups sing together.

Patricia Fleitas, director of the Women's Chorus and the Century Singers, says this is the highlight of the evening. The audience is invited to sing along with the groups.

"It's very powerful ... very moving," says Fleitas. "The audience is standing, and almost everyone in the auditorium is singing."

The concert will begin at 7 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium. Tickets are on sale at the MSC Box Office and are \$2 for students and \$2.50 for non-students.

Christmas parade rolls Sunday, rain or shine

by Cathy Smith
Battalion reporter

Studying frantically for those last-minute tests, fighting the wet and chilly weather and recovering from turkey leftovers can leave anyone feeling like Scrooge. Why not take a break and get into the spirit of the coming holiday season by watching the annual Bryan-College Station Holiday Parade on Sunday.

"Christmas 2000" is the theme for this year's parade. In keeping with the theme, the grand marshal will be Col. Donald Peterson, who flew in the maiden voyage of the space shuttle Challenger.

Between 3,000 and 4,000 people will participate in the parade — on floats decorated for Christmases of the future, in bands and drill teams, on horseback or in Christmas clothes of the future — parade chairman Rodger Lewis says.

The floats have been designed and built by small and

large businesses, adult and youth groups, elementary, junior high and high school students and university students. Artists, media personnel and chamber of commerce people will judge the floats according to originality, use of design and color, relevance to the "Christmas 2000" theme and overall entertainment quality.

All entries except bands will be judged and prizes will be awarded in each float category and to the two most outstanding units in the marching, mounted and specialty categories. Those selected will receive a framed color picture of their entry taken at the reviewing stand. First place winners also will receive cash prizes.

Although cash awards are given, Lewis says that the money is not important to the participants. Most people want to make a good showing and have a good time, he says, and being in the parade is not

only fun, it's also good publicity and good for the morale of those involved.

The Aggie Band and the Ross Volunteers will lead off the parade, but other students at Texas A&M are not as involved in the parade as would be expected, Lewis says. They are part of the Bryan-College Station community too, he says, and it's a shame that more students aren't involved.

This year's parade will begin at 3 p.m. Sunday at Texas Ave. and University Drive in College Station and end at Villa Maria Road in Bryan. The route will be closed to traffic from 2:30 p.m. until the end of the parade, between 4 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., Lewis says.

And what happens if it rains on the parade? The show will go on, Lewis says. If there is a downpour, the starting time will be delayed, he says, but otherwise things will go according to plan.