

Previews

Madrigal feast: medieval food, fun

MSC Madrigal Dinner Committee will present a "Medieval/Madrigal Feast" Thursday through Saturday, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., in Rudder Exhibit Hall.

Madrigal singers, minstrels, magicians and jesters, decked out in 16th century garb, will entertain the feasting crowd

each night with music, song, magic and fun.

MSC Food Services has prepared a special menu typical of the time period.

Some of the more exotic foods that will be served are flaming plum pudding and pumpkin soup.

Yvonne DeGraw, committee member, says over 100 people are expected for each night of the feast.

Committee member Mike Gardner says the production is under new management this year. Frank Coulter, who worked on a similar pro-

gram at the University of Tennessee, is the new artistic director.

Coulter helped organize the production, from training the singers to working on the timing of the performances.

About half the performers are students and half are faculty and commu-

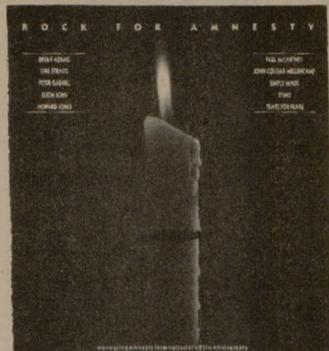
nity members.

Tickets are on sale through Friday at Rudder Box Office and must be purchased at least a day in advance. They are \$17.75 for students and \$20 for non-students. Group rates are available for parties of 12 or more.

—by Nancy Neukirchner

Album Review

Ratings based on a five-star system.
Five — Excellent; One — Pathetic.



"Rock for Amnesty"
Various Artists
Mercury Records

★

In the past couple of years, several all-star albums have been made to benefit various humanitarian causes. Some of the albums, like U.S.A. for Africa's "We Are the World" and Artists United Against Apartheid's "Sun City" albums, have been pretty good. "Rock for Amnesty," the album released to benefit Amnesty International, is the poorest excuse for a record ever to be released in the name of a good cause.

"Rock for Amnesty" features 10 tracks that were donated by 10 artists. At first glance, it may seem that the album contains tracks from Amnesty's fabulous "Conspiracy of Hope" tour. Actually the album contains studio tracks that, for the most part, are already available on other albums.

There are few good

tracks on the album. Peter Gabriel's "Biko," a tribute to the murdered South African civil rights activist, and Elton John's "Passengers," a song criticizing South Africa's policy of segregating public transit, are great songs that attack apartheid. Dire Straits' "Brothers in Arms" is a touching antiwar song. But all of these songs would sound better on their respective albums.

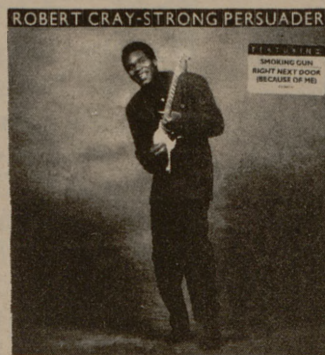
John Cougar Mellencamp's "Pink Houses" is probably the best thing he has ever done, but it doesn't say anything about human rights. Simple Minds' "Ghost Dancing" and Bryan Adams' "Tonight" are only concerned with making money. Paul McCartney's "Pipes of Peace" was pretty worthless when it was released in the first place.

Tears for Fears' "I Believe (A Soulful Re-recording)," a new version of the song from their "Songs from the Big Chair" album, and Howard Jones' "No One Is To Blame," a re-recording of the song from his "Dream Into Action" album, are slightly interesting. The only new song on the album is Sting's recording of the old Billie Holiday tune, "Strange Fruit."

Amnesty could have

found a much better way to celebrate their 25th anniversary than to release a collection of mediocre songs that are available elsewhere. If you want to help Amnesty and get some good music at the same time, pick up "The Secret Policeman's Ball" and/or "The Secret Policeman's Other Ball." These albums have some fantastic live performances from Pete Townshend, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, John Williams, Tom Robinson, Sting, Phil Collins and Donovan, and are well worth the price.

Review by Karl Pallmeyer



"Strong Persuader"
Robert Cray
Mercury Records
★★★★

Just when you think the blues have died...

Just when you think every note in the blues scale has been played in every possible combination...

Just when you think there can be no more great bluesmen...

Along comes someone like Robert Cray to prove you were wrong.

Cray is a hot new artist who plays guitar like B.B. King and Eric Clapton rolled into one. He plays short, clean passages that can bite like a dog or kiss like a lover. It's a sign of a great guitarist to be able to show as much restraint as he does. Aside from the guitar work, Cray's voice is rich and pleasing without the roughness of many blues singers.

Although Cray's music sounds like traditional blues, there is a freshness that is uncommon in much of today's music. The lyrics are typical blues lyrics about women leaving and women doing their men wrong, and the songs are usually structured around the traditional 12-bar blues pattern, but there is something new and wonderful about Cray's music.

"Strong Persuader" is Cray's first album on a major label. In 1980, he released "Who's Been Talkin'" on the Tomato label. When that company went under, he switched to the Hightone label and released "Bad Influence" in 1983 and

"False Accusations" in 1985.

The album is pretty simple and straightforward in arrangement with Cray on vocals and guitar, Richard Cousins on bass, Peter Boe on keyboards and David Olson on drums. The Memphis Horns lend a nice sound to the songs "I Guess I Showed Her," "Nothin' But A Woman" and "More Than I Can Stand."

"Right Next Door (Because of Me)" is a cool song about a neighbor's marital problems that have been caused by Cray. He punctuates his vocals with some jazzy guitar licks. "More Than I Can Stand" has Cray's guitar bouncing around a landscape set up by Boe's organ.

"I Wonder" is nice, slow, soulful song that features some great playing. "Fantasized," with its hot guitar intro, and "New Blood" are harder and faster.

In these days where anyone with a computerized synthesizer and a video camera can make millions of dollars in the music world, it's refreshing to hear a performer like Cray who can play music without a gimmick.

Review by Karl Pallmeyer