

Buffet sunshine

Album, Durham concert reflect Jimmy's style

By DAVID POOLE

JIMMY Buffet has traveled a lot of miles, sung a lot of songs and — if you believe his lyrics — partaken of a lot of mind altering substances on his road to the top in the world of rock 'n' roll music.

Yet through all those miles, through all those songs and through all those bottles of tequila (or rum, or gin, or whatever), Buffet has held on to the one thing that makes this fun-loving singer from down Florida way one heck of a performer.

Jimmy Buffet has a sense of humor.

He talks with—not to or at—his audience and he at least acts like he's grateful to the folks who pay his salary—his fans—for all the records and concert tickets they buy. In short, Buffet has fun doing what he does.

That fun flowed across the footlights and into a nearly-full Cameron Indoor Stadium at Duke Sunday night as Buffet and his Coral Reefer Band blew into Durham on a warm breeze and brought a breath of the Florida sunshine into the area that no high pressure system or cold front could ever match.

Buffet's stop in Durham was the

last of a swing made through North Carolina on his latest tour, which is timed with the release of Buffet's latest album, *Coconut Telegraph*.

Both the album and the live show devised for this tour are vintage Buffet. If you like him, you'll love the new album and you missed a show you'd have loved. If you don't particularly go for Buffet, neither the LP or the show will or would have changed your mind.

First, there's the album. It is perhaps most notable among Buffet albums for its jacket art—a soft-toned photo of Buffet in a phone booth beneath a swaying palm tree, a drawing of a set of coconut stereo headphones—a more subdued overall style than found on most Buffet LPs. Once you get inside, though, there's not much doubt that the music is that of Jimmy Buffet.

Side One is almost cliché. The lilting quality of the title cut, "Coconut Telegraph," is typical of the almost-reggae tunes found on *Volcano*, his previous LP release. The other songs on the first side are OK, but the theme gets a little old.

But while the first side of *Coconut Telegraph* is a little less than exciting, the second side is much better. The best two songs, in fact, lead off the side.

"The Weather is Here, I Wish You Were Beautiful," is almost as cute as a song as a title. The best song, though, is "Stars Fell on Alabama," a tune written in 1934 which sounds like a song Frank Sinatra would croon. Buffet does a good job on it, though, and it offers a nice break before he goes back into the Caribbean/Gulf

motiff on "Island."

The first single released from the LP is a tune from Side One called "It's My Job," which is an OK tune, and a song Buffet calls his theme for the '80s (also on side one), "I'm Growing Older But Not Up," is similarly mediocre.

Buffet worked in these and a whole lot more during his two hour, 25 minute show at Duke Sunday. Buffet uses no opening act, choosing to play two sets of just over an hour each with a 15-minute break in the middle.

It was a Jimmy Buffet tour de force. From the opening number, "Stranded on a Sandbar," which includes the line Buffet seems to live—"I enjoy this life as a drifter, it seems to keep me moving around,"—to the last notes of "Stars Fell on Alabama" in the second encore, the audience was Buffet's.

All the Buffet favorites from "Come Monday," "Manana," and "The Pirate Looks at Forty," to "Margaritaville," "Cheeseburger in Paradise" and "God's Own Drunk" were a part of the show. Buffet sang just about everything the crowd could have come to hear, and the Buffet fans were pleased.

Buffet is one of those performers who does what he likes to do and in doing so, he pleases the fans who like that kind of stuff. The rest—well—Buffet's come a long way and he's making enough money to keep the crew on the road, the record company happy and his recreational substances supplier in business. **W**

David Poole is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*.



Jimmy Buffet belts out a "breath of Florida sunshine" to a crowd at Cameron Indoor stadium at Duke University. Photos by Scott Sharpe.



WEEKENDER

is the weekly entertainment and feature magazine published by *The Daily Tar Heel*.

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