

Rock-symphony a rare treat

When Blood, Sweat and Tears performed with the North Carolina Symphony Saturday in Raleigh, a musical and social phenomenon unique to this area occurred. Musically, the concert was a rare fusion of rock, jazz and classical music, tastefully put together.

As a social event, the concert brought together under the single roof of Dorton Arena two and three generations of listeners—for a single evening. The often stereotyped gap in musical tastes between them was bridged.

Watching the audiences' reactions to the performance was almost as enlightening as seeing, for the first time, a jazz-rock group

on the same stage with a symphony orchestra. I use "audiences" in the plural because of the phenomenal variety of people at the concert.

There were the usual concert-goers, students from area colleges who came to see the band that meant so much to the early development of jazz-rock, different though the group's personnel may be from the band Al Kooper put together in 1967.

And then there was another audience. They came in coats and ties and gowns, that looked like formal wear in contrast to the casual attire of the younger audience.

The middle-aged and the senior citizens

came to hear the symphony and conductor John Gosling, whom they know well. Gosling has been delighting audiences throughout North Carolina and surrounding states with increasing excellence and imaginative programming. He saved his farthest out for this orchestra's first joint rock concert.

Though the college crowd was there, and the room was packed, the hoards of fans who are typically drawn to rock concerts did not show. In fact, the youth (excluding the kids who came with their parents) did not decisively outnumber members of the two older generations.

Three or four years ago, a college audience

alone would probably have bought out this same show, but the band has been plagued with an unattractive commercial image since the *You've Made Me So Very Happy* days of their superstar status.

Yet the musicians are first rate. About half of the original group are still playing, and some of the new members are worthy of favorable notice. For example, Lou Marini, besides playing a tender soprano sax, arranges the horn section—all of which are good jazz musicians.

Big shoes were left to be filled when talented lead singer David Clayton Thomas went off on his own two albums ago. But replacement Jerry Fisher, with a Joe Cocker voice texture, is an exciting stage performer besides being a capable vocalist.

Kinks cut their 500th

by Alan Bisbort
Record Critic

Preservation Act 1—The Kinks (RCA)

It's 1974, by God. (1984 minus 10, if you like statistics.) We won't talk about the future because we all know rock music is suffering from too many egos spread too thin. Just set your time machines back 11 years... If we're gonna talk about the past, then we're gonna talk about THE past.

The British Invasion saved us from grease and growing up like Mom and Pop. The Beatles were so cute. The Rolling Stones were so nasty. The Who were so mod. And then there were the Kinks.

They created an image, but they all looked alike, so that people had a habit of forgetting about them. (Plus, they wore identical red suits, and only kinky people or people named Rudee did that sort of thing back then.) The group knew about four guitar chords, and those sounded as if they were played by the drummer (lailing away at an electric guitar with the reverb and volume turned up to ten.) These same chords were interchanged for every one of their early songs, such stunners as *You Really Got Me* (their first American hit), *All Day and All of the Night*, *Till the End of the Day*, and *Tired of Waiting for You*. The Kinks pushed all the other British punks into the back seat as far as simple 1-2-3-4 rock went.

Why make things harder than you have to? That was the Kinks' guiding principle. No, you couldn't get any more basic than the lovable Kinks in those days. Now, everyone

asks what happened to the Kinks as if they suddenly disappeared (a pleasant memory). Bringing things back to the present, the Kinks have a new album out (their 500th or so) and, with it, they only certify that they will never suffer the humiliation of being fodder for the nostalgia manufacturers. Never will they be as fun and forgettable as Whoopie Cushions.

In the course of their recording years, they have alone—above and beyond any other group's output—cemented a consistent world vision. And the visionary is Ray Davies, the singer, songwriter and recorder of life in general. He will eternally occupy a seat in songwriter heaven.

With this new album, Davies does not pretend to bring out startling new themes for all of us to obediently swallow and then forget. The old themes are here: the desire to escape from modern life and all of its complexities, the wish to sit in the sun and watch life pass by and the hankering for innocence in the face of a cruel world.

After all, as the title suggests, this album is about preservation. And preservation to Davies (embodied in the character he would most want to be—the Tramp) means getting as close to his world vision as possible. Just look at the man...he's been wearing white socks for years (because they are comfortable, no less). He doesn't own a car or even a stereo that works properly.

Thematically, *Preservation Act 1* only explores the same Kinks themes. But musically, it is their best album in two years. They have stopped the unhealthy trend toward horns which plagued their last two albums. They muddle only one song,

Cricket. You can also hear the trade-marked Kinks sound, simple and addicting chord progressions. It makes me want to smile to know that after all years, they aren't afraid to play it like they preach it.

Another thing about the album that makes it so refreshing is that it is unashamedly British. In the past two years, Davies has tried to explore the American way of life as only an outsider can (never as poorly as E. John-B. Taupin's feeble attempts, though).

England, that great land of tradition, kings and queens, is cold-bloodedly entering the Twentieth Century and R. Davies doesn't like it one bit. He gives no intellectually compelling argument for his dislike of what's happening, but he doesn't need to. He is only reporting what he sees. *Money and Corruption* / *I Am Your Man* and *Demolition* set new highs in bitterness toward modern, matter-of-fact business practices (which really equals capitalism).

In *Where Are They Now?*, Davies makes his nostalgia statement. (A very popular practice these days, if you'll just notice.) But, he takes a new angle: "I wonder what became of all the Rockers and the Mods. I hope they are making it and they've all got steady jobs." The Kinks have left open the option that they are *One of the Survivors* (another song from the album).

Yes, survival is very big these days. And, it's so nice to see that the Kinks are still with us, doing what they've done all along, battling for every inch in a "mixed up, muddled up, shook up world..."

Taster's Choice

Cinema

"Fantasia." Carolina Theatre. Walt Disney's setting of music to animation smacks a bit of cliche, but it is a beautiful, imaginative work all the same. 2:21, 4:30, 6:39 & 8:48. \$2. Ends Thursday. Late show Friday and Saturday: "Candy." 11:15. \$1.50.

"The Erotic Memoirs of a Male Chauvinist Pig." Varsity Theatre. 1, 2:46, 4:08, 5:47, 7 & 8:50. \$2. Ends Sunday. Late show Friday and Saturday: "Play It Again, Sam." 11:15. \$1.50.

"American Wilderness." Plaza I. The makers of this film say, "We don't have any artistic ability, and we don't need any." Enough said. 4:30, 7 & 9:15. \$2. Ends Thursday.

"Executive Action." Plaza II. Semi-fiction story of the John F. Kennedy assassination. It's all really terrible but the worst offender is the script, with its heavy-handed hindsight irony. 3:30, 5:25, 7:20 & 9:15. \$2. Ends Thursday.

"Magnum Force." Plaza III. The sequel to "Dirty Harry," which was a masterpiece of its genre. This film, however, is a pretentious revolting piece of junk. 2:30, 4:50, 7:10 & 9:30. \$2. Ends Wednesday, Jan. 23.

"Ivan the Terrible, Part II." Chapel Hill Film Friends. The conclusion of the Sergei Eisenstein magnificent epic. Music by Prokofiev. Friday at 9:30, Saturday at 11:30 in Carroll Hall. \$1.50.

"Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me." Alternative Cinema. Francois Truffaut's black comedy about a female murderer. Good reviews from the New York critics. Friday at 7, Saturday at 2, 4:30, 7 & 9:30. \$1.50.

Free Flicks: Friday, "The Gold Rush." Perhaps the greatest Chaplin film set in the days of the Klondike Gold Rush. Saturday, "The Girls." This Swedish import deals with actresses on a tour of "Lysistrata" who gradually discover the play working in their personal lives. Sunday, "Repulsion." Confused by her feelings for men, a girl is driven to the brink of insanity by her fears and fantasies. All flicks at 6:30 & 9 in the Great Hall.

Theatre

Johann Strauss' "Die Fledermaus." UNC Opera Theatre. Directed by UNC music professor, Dr. Wilton Mason. Friday and Saturday at 8 in Memorial Hall. Tickets, \$2, are now on sale at the music department in Hill Hall and will be available at the door shortly before the performance.

Woody Allen's "Play It Again, Sam." New Theatre, Durham. Friday and Saturday at 8. For reservations call 286-9414. Tickets, \$1.50, are also available at the door.

Auditions for Laboratory Theatre's production of "The Martyrdom of Peter Ohay" by Sławomir Mrożek will be held today at 7:30 in 205 Graham Memorial. Directed by Alec Donaldson.

Auditions for Laboratory Theatre's production of "Confessions of a Female Disorder" by Susan Miller will be held 1:30 Saturday in Graham Memorial Lounge. Script is from the Eugene O'Neill Foundation. Ms. Miller will direct.

"The Music Man." Village Dinner Theatre, Raleigh. Buffet at 7, curtain at 8:30. Call 787-7771 for reservations. Nightly except Monday.

"Romeo and Juliet." Performed by the Oxford and Cambridge Shakespeare Company. Wednesday and Thursday at 2 and 8 in Stewart Theatre, Raleigh. Tickets are available for all performances except for Wednesday at 8, which is sold out.

Radio

WDBS. 107.1 FM stereo. "Daily Concert": Liszt, Bach, Strauss, Haydn, Sibelius, Messiaen. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. "Crosswords": A talk with Edmunn Carpenter, an anthropologist who has some interesting ideas. 6 p.m. "Spotlight": The soundtrack to "Sounder" by Taj Mahal. 6:30 p.m. Live music. 9 p.m.

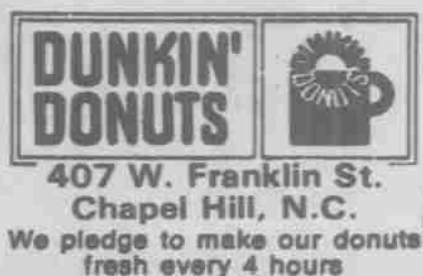
CBS Radio Mystery Theatre every night at 11:06 on WDNC, 620 AM and 105.1 FM.

Art

Paintings and sculptures by 7 UNC graduate students on display through January at the Wesley Foundation, 214 Pittsboro St.

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WITH
GEORGINA SPELVIN
STAR OF (THE DEVIL IN MISS JONES)

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