

Dig Music, Not Image!

R & R Crusader

1967

The Crusader keeps wondering how long people are going to go on eating up images instead of music.

When a group comes to town all the hip people are here waiting to eat them up—which is as it should be—but even when the band isn't making it musically or is just good, these people keep coming up and screaming about how out of sight they are or how the band is just blowing their minds.

What they mean is that here is a band out of San Francisco or New York or London who we've all read about in CRAWDADDY or HIT PARADER and all the underground papers and seen their albums and heard their records on the radio and in our living rooms and how they're RIGHT HERE and maybe if we're lucky we can get to touch them. (wow!) groovy, they're really out of sight and the bands here are pretty good but man they're just from Detroit and these other bands are from places that are really hip and (wow!) man ain't it too much!

Yeah, well, groovy. The CREAM were in town at the Grande and played as much as their reputation(s) would give you to expect. Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker are all outstanding soloists, roots in American blues and branches in contemporary British pop, but they don't seem to work very effectively as a band.

It seems to me that a band is more than just a collection of individual egos, that a group sound is the possibility for a group of musicians, and that solos are something short of contemporary. The CREAM's general format would be to take a tune like "N.S.U." from their "Fresh Cream" album, play and sing the head or melody, and then turn it over to Clapton for a 10-minute guitar solo, with Bruce and Baker playing rhythm patterns behind him.

This form of music can be more or less exciting, depending on the individual virtuosity of the soloists, but never passes into total group excitement. A three-piece rock band is limited to begin with as far as developing a group sound is concerned, and the CREAM try to make up for the lack of a rhythm player by using a lot of volume—Clapton and Bruce each use 4 huge Marshall speaker cabinets, but they just make it loud rather than intense.

It just strikes me as weird that reviewers on both coasts talk about the Cream like a religion—they're a good band, all right, but that's all. At any rate, the kids dug them, which is just fine, and there were turnouts of approximately 1500, 2000, and 1500 again, and they'll be back the next time they hit America. Evidently they really dug Detroit and were surprised at the sophistication of their audience. A lot of people will be surprised when they get here.

The Crusader went to Ann Arbor to hear the Doors at the U of M Homecoming dance last Saturday night, but neglected to pick up advance tickets and couldn't get in. Standing on the steps outside the auditorium, however, I heard a lot of funny stories about what was going on inside.

It seems that there were two basic misunderstandings at work: the Doors apparently weren't aware that their audience would be a typical homecoming crowd, loaded with frats and straight, and the audience thought that they'd hear the Doors they knew from records and radio. Apparently the Doors started out by playing their thing, which was improvisational music, and the people wanted to hear their hits.

When the first set started to drag on, the crowd (close to 5,000 people by all reports) started booing. The Doors responded by putting the audience down, telling them "Fuck you," and generally alienating them completely. They

were booed off the stage, and people started to leave the dance in droves, muttering loudly to each other as they came outside.

There are cases where people might think they're too hip for other people, but I really can't see it. I should think that if the Doors don't want to play for that kind of audience, they shouldn't take the gig and the people's money (\$3,500). A University Homecoming dance is not the Grande Ballroom by any means, and it's up to the musicians to communicate with their audience since they know better and the audience doesn't. If you try to talk down to someone then you're not talking TO him, and you might as well not be there- As it was, the Doors blew a lot of fans, and there's no way they'll be able to pick those people up again. They were MAD.

ON THE DETROIT SCENE: the MC5 were featured on a Seymour Ricklin WTVS "OPEN END" show recently, with John Sinclair, Bill Hutton, and FIFTH ESTATE co-editor Harvey Ovshinsky on the talking panel. The band played a short version of "Looking at You" and returned for a 10-minute "Black to Comm" that flipped out the cameramen completely and shot them into some of the most exciting camerawork I've ever seen on television.

The screen bucked and swayed under flashing images, montages, stroboscopic effects, and other visual delights as the video men got right into "Comm" with the band. They were as surprised as everyone else when they ran the tapes back after the show...

MC 5 will be recording a single in a week or so for Jeep Holland's Ann Arbor label.

Scot Richard Case reported to have signed with ACTA records, on the west coast...

MC5 gig at University of Detroit High was canceled a couple of weeks ago when a priest in power at the school saw a picture of the band in action, decided that he didn't want "his" kids exposed to that kind of magic...

Watch out for the Rationals! Known around town as a "teeny bop band," in the past, the Rationals are getting it together and have turned in some very exciting sets lately. It's happening all over, and it's beautiful.

Last minute word: latest edition of the Spikedrivers appears to have broken up after their eastern trip (New York, Boston, Vermont). More word next time.

Indian Music Concert

India's master of the sarod, Ali Akbar Khan, will be appearing for the last time for at least two years this Nov. 10 as part of Oakland Community College's Concert Series.

As Ali is returning to India this concert is a must for lovers of Indian music.

For those unacquainted with Ali, the sarod is even farther out than the sitar and his father was Ravi Shankar's guru.

He will be accompanied by a tamboura and the tabla played by his son.

Ticket information is available elsewhere in this issue.

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