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CARTER: Will Washington rock? Page nine

BIG TOURS BY GENESIS, HALL AND OATES SET

GENESIS and Hall And Oates both celebrate the New Year with big British tours. And the first three Genesis shows will launch the new-look Rainbow theatre in London.

Genesis, the top British and International Live Act in this year's MM Readers' Poll, play a two-week tour prefaced by the Rainbow concerts on January 1, 2 and 3. The theatre, forced to close last year, has been completely renovated at a cost of over £80,000.

The band then embark on a tour of Britain's major cities as the prelude to a world trek which includes concerts in America, Australia, Japan and South America.

The new Genesis album, the follow-up to their chart topping "Trick Of The Tail," is released at the start of the British tour.

● For full concert and ticket details, see page 5.

HALL AND OATES confirm their growing reputation as a major concert attraction in Britain when they return to this country for a three-week tour in January.

Their latest album, "Bigger Than Both Of Us," made the MM chart last month. It is also a hit in America, where the duo's single, "She's Gone," recorded for the Atlantic label three years ago, last week reached No. 6 in the chart.

The duo, who played a sell-out concert series this summer, start the tour at BIRMINGHAM Odeon on January 12, continuing at CARDIFF Capitol (13), BRISTOL Colston Hall (14), BRIGHTON Dome (15), OXFORD New Theatre (16), SHEFFIELD City Hall (18), MANCHESTER Ardwick ABC (19), IPSWICH Gaumont (20), BOURNEMOUTH Winter Gardens (21), LONDON Hammersmith Odeon (23), WOLVERHAMPTON Civic Hall (25), NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE City Hall (26), GLASGOW Apollo (27), EDINBURGH Playhouse (28) and STOKE-ON-TRENT Trentham Gardens (30).

Tickets for the shows range from £3.50 to £13.00. Box-office for the Hammersmith Odeon concert opens on November 20.



FIFTIES SIXTIES SEVENTIES

THREE FACES spanning three decades of music — Tommy Steele in the Fifties, Scott Walker in the Sixties, and Carlos Santana in the Seventies.

In interviews and reviews this week, the Melody Maker looks at the changing face of popular music since rock 'n' roll began in the mid-Fifties. As Carlos Santana plays Wembley Empire Pool and Scott Walker prepares to go on the road again with the Walker Brothers, "The Tommy Steele Anniversary Show, 1956-1976" is already touring Britain.

STEELE was the first British rock 'n' roller. His rise to fame was even lampooned in Expresso Bongo. The day the Beatles were discovered, he opened in Half A Sixpence and turned his back on rock music.

He has some trenchant views about today's music. "The Rolling Stones,"

he says, "are the Shadows plus two thousand decibels." Interview — page 36.

SCOTT WALKER is now "writing surrealist lyrics," but the Walker Brothers began their career touring with Engelbert Humperdinck, Cat Stevens and Jimi Hendrix. Terrified of success, Scott gave up his career in the Seventies, but with the worldwide success of "No Regrets," he's making a comeback. He talks of trying to make it in the Seventies on page 34.

CARLOS SANTANA has been one of the most influential figures of the past ten years in popularising latin rock. But at last Friday's show at the Empire Pool there were no innovations. Has San Franciscan music reached the end of its road? See page 20.

Review section

● Journey's end for Santana (this page) ... Linda Ronstadt says hi (page 21) ... Steve Harley is back in analysis (page 22) ... Who bridges the gap between James Brown and Archie Shepp? Gil Scott-Heron, that's who (page 25) ... as Labelle

AS bands get more and more musically proficient, and technology advances to present their skills in the best possible way, there's a real danger that the music itself will become sterile. Nowhere was this better demonstrated than Santana's concert at Wembley's Empire Pool on Friday.

The sound, performance and presentation was faultless; perfect, in fact, for those who consider that "Santana's Greatest Hits" is the best album the band has ever made (and, to be fair, these people appeared to be the bulk of the audience). New songs were skillfully blended with old favourites in two- or three-song combinations; the band never once faltered; solos were delivered with panache, effectively adding to the recorded versions of the songs.

But it was a soul-less, gutless performance. San Francisco rock was born as a reaction against this kind of slick showmanship; it was (and still is, in some cases) about taking chances, moving forward, and throwing your all into the music.

I doubt whether Carlos Santana threw more than one percent of his unquestionable talent as a guitarist into his performance on Friday; there was probably not one lick that he hadn't played a hundred times before. And remember, this is a man who has worked in recent years with such artists as Alice Col-

Sterile Santana

trane and Leon Thomas, both exponents of an uncompromising jazz style. Santana are now all about compromises. Carlos has turned his back on the advances of "Caravanserai" and "Welcome" and returned to the melodically and commercially sweet sounds of "Abraxas". So pretty has his music become, the irony is that essentially "middle of the road" Latin musicians like the Fania All-Stars now sound raunchier and rockier than the man who made his name on mixing Latin and rock!

If they keep on with these empty versions of "Black Magic Woman", "Savor" and so on they'll soon be bland enough to earn themselves a BBC-TV series, in which case they can again invite along Eric Burdon to guest. He, too, is still dredging up the past with "new" versions of "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" and other assorted Animals hits of yesteryear. Who needs it?

Certainly not Journey, who were given a mere half-hour to accompany the nostalgic-trippers to their seats, and in even that disgracefully short time managed to show that rock is alive and well and liv-

ing in San Francisco. A quartet formed by two Santana renegades, Neal Schon and Gregg Rolie, they wasted the first half of their show with a worthless thrash-about but then settled into superb versions of "Look Into The Future" and "Of A Lifetime". Not for them the cop-out of putting the sound quality before the feeling; they were raw, rugged — and rock. — MICHAEL OLD-FIELD

WISHBONE ASH

IT PROBABLY had something to do with becoming more familiar with the material from their new album "New England", which is featured heavily in the set, but Wishbone Ash (at HammerSmith Odeon on Friday night) displayed far more bite than on my previous experience of their live set, at Croydon the week before.

Though I enjoyed the Fairfield Halls gig, I felt that too much of their set was all very nice and sweet but without total conviction. There was "Blind Eye" from the first album, "Jailbait" from "Pilgrimage", "Warrior" from the overrated "Argus", and "Silver Shoes" from "There's The Rub," but that's a sparse collection of classics.



SANTANA: a gutless performance for 'Greatest Hits' fans

I'm beginning to change my mind about them, though, partly because of the consistency I found on "New England", mostly because of the immense enjoyment I derived from the London gig on Friday night, when Wishbone Ash were much more positive than I believed them to be, but with enough subtlety in their arrangements and playing to maintain an interesting balance. As I said, my allegiance to their cause probably has something to do with the fact that I spent the days leading up to the gig listening to and growing very fond of "New England", but there were also tracks from older albums which sounded more refreshing on

stage than on record. I never before reckoned on "Persimmon" from "There's The Rub" as being a potential classic. The same goes for "Time Was". Live performance has forced a re-assessment of their value. I can't understand, however, the inclusion in the set of the mediocre "It Started Off In Heaven", from the equally mediocre "Locked In."

It's cheap boogie and extremely inferior to the rest of the material. The set is built around the new album, opening strongly with the dynamic "Runaway". All the album tracks are excellently adapted to stage performance, especially "Mother Of Pearl" with its grinding, choking riff, and the beefy instrumental "Outward Bound", which has guitarists Andy Powell and Laurie Wisefield wrenching the last notes out of their axes.

Apart from the encores two straight-ahead rockers, "Bad Weather Blues" and "Jailbait" — Ash are never too obvious, testing their audience's concentration with exacting solos and pretty intricate arrangements, but always doing so in a thoroughly entertaining fashion. — HARRY DOHERTY

KURSAAL FLYERS

IT IS the sign of a good band, and, perhaps, of a great one that each time one goes to see them a new side to their musical character is revealed. Recently, the profound capabilities of the Kursaal Flyers' guitarists Graeme Douglas and Vic Collins have become much, much more apparent.

The Kursaal Flyers are currently touring Britain with the Works-Outing Tour, and have a good album, "Golden Mile," and a single, "Little Does She Know," which sounds excellent

over the radio, thanks to Mike Batt's finely attuned production. It's a marvellous, witty song, too.

Initially, the Kursaal's vocalist Paul Shuttleworth, bassist/banjoist Richie Bull, and drummer Will Birch make the impression: Shuttleworth for his showmanship, Bull for his bass-playing and impeccable banjo work, and Birch for his urgent drumming, reflected in his rather tortured facial expressions (call it controlled mania), and, of course, his very dominant role as a songwriter who experiments with styles.

At the Southend show in October Graeme Douglas's guitar work ultimately won full honours for its biting power, which may've been the result of some sort of anger. At Brunel University 15 days later, it was a very complete band performance highlighted by Vic Collins' versatility and Bull's banjo feature on "Choc's Away."

The Works-Outing Tour opens with a celebration of the traditional Cockney day-at-the-seaside, with music-hall songs played over the PA, shots of Southend seafront projected onto the backdrop and all the sounds of a fun fair. The band stroll leisurely onstage (to great applause, I might add) and melt easily into "One Arm Bandit," a song off the new album about a gambler's addiction. Of the earliest Kursaal tunes, "Yellow Sox," "Speedway" and "Pocket Money" were particularly good, while the later "Palais De Dance," a rumba, most recent songs, "Radio Romance" is melodically sweet. "When The Band's On The Stand" is a shade too jerky but has a fierce guitar climax, and "Street Of The Music" has another good lead guitar solo and illustrates their vastly improved harmonic vocals.

Lastly, the jokes, a great factor in the band's audience rap-

Caught in the Act

port. Some are old: "Here's a song," says Richie Bull, "which we had the great pleasure of performing in front of the King and Queen. (Pause). Which is a pub in the Old Kent Road." Or Paul: "Betcha didn't know when you came here tonight that you'd be seeing a chart band. Well, this week our single's gone in the charts at 120 — 120 with a bow and arrow." He was only half kidding; the single is selling faster and faster. It's a strong outside bet. — GEOFF BROWN

CHARLEY PRIDE

CAN a black man sing the whites? Well, the history of American country music has its roots in the right-of-centre white Southern states; an exact comparison to the blues, which is the music of the oppressed blacks. So how's Charley Pride amidst the redneck? Judging by the adulatory reception given to him by the Birmingham Winter Gardens audience last Friday, he has no reason to feel self-conscious. Dravon and Sugar opened the show. They've been making big noises in Nashville as well as assaulting the American charts, and, going by their performance, quite deservedly.

Charley Pride went straight into "Oklahoma Morning" playing acoustic guitar whilst the Pridemans and Sugar backed up. With the third number he discarded the guitar and, after a rousing "He And Bubble McGhee," he went into a very tightly rehearsed medley of his older material like "Just Between You And Me" and "Tennessee Girl," each song clipped to a verse or so and, as the reaction indicated, playing only the best received number in this case, "Crystal Chandeliers" in its entirety. A clever move. As the show progressed it got warmer. A couple of pop songs, "Let Me Live In The Light Of His Love," and a combination of "Amazing Grace" and "Sweet By And By," followed his latest single. Then, after Louisiana Medley, a rather abrupt ending, he came back to sing, of all incongruities, "Danny Boy," all the while shaking the hands of the performed audience.

Charley's "Amazing Grace" put the show back on the right track, diminished slightly by a rather tedious reading of "Kris Kristofferson's 'Help Me Make It Through The Night,' which seemed to lag. The show ended with a rendition of "The Streets Of Baltimore," he left an enraptured audience on their feet. — JEFF STARRS

THE DAMNED

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Fiery ELP of soul

NEW YORK: Earth, Wind and Fire now rank as the second biggest black act in the States and, while Stevie Wonder bids his time before taking "Songs In The Key Of Life" on the road, they are selling more tickets to blacks than any other soul show. The situation has come about in much the same way as it does in the same rock stakes: EWF have worked hard and their show is very visual.

It would not be an understatement to describe them as a couple of show. At Madison Square Garden last weekend and begged their audience with flashlights, dry ice, disappearing bass players and curiously designed triangular stage props that cranked down to create a slanted stage on which all 12 of them could dance furiously beneath strobe lighting.

EWF like to think of themselves as an experience rather than a band and, in keeping with this, their show is one continuous stream of high energy from beginning to end, rarely stopping between numbers, let alone flagging through any musical default. Their

songs are liberally scattered with references to love and happiness, his love best through nuanced leader Maurice White) and the show takes on the air of a musical sermon to racial harmony.

They enter dramatically, each member of the band wearing a robe and coming into view as the front sides of their three gigantic triangles descend above his head and bows in some of the participatory drumming traditional rite. Both the band and run through their material for upwards of two hours.

At various points in the show take solos. Most impressive, in some at any rate, was bassist Verdine White, who donned a curious mask and, after pouring out some funky lines, his Fender cranked a curious chamber that resembled a siren-box outside Buck Howard. The box elevated for a few feet and was suddenly hidden from view as a flashlight erupted ahead of it. At the same in-

stant a similar light flashed at the other side of the stage revealing that self-same bass player, who immediately deduced that a substitute bass player got introduced into the scheme at some stage during the trick).

Keyboard player Larry Dunn, surrounded by a wall of instruments at the rear, had the audience cheering simply by playing one very high note through various shrilling effects, and was left to second vocalist Phillip Bailey to really inspire. He can really sing; a soaring and power reverberated around the Garden's walls in an extraordinary fashion.

Unhappily the concert ended on a bad note when most of the power disappeared on a vocal closing song. All the mikes and all the drums went dead; the band came on and dancing and the power had been a dramatic flourish. The power returned and the show ended on a high note. Fortunately the show was a success. The box was suddenly hidden from view as a flashlight erupted ahead of it. At the same in-

