

Concert Review

B.B. KING with Millie Jackson & Bobby "Blue" Bland
The Celebrity Theater, April 2

by Pat Kramer



In what was his strongest, most animated show in a long time, "King of the Blues" B.B. King played to a sold-out crowd at Anaheim's Celebrity Theatre, in the first of two L.A. area shows. King was preceded by singers Bobby "Blue" Bland and Millie Jackson, for shows that combined the best of each performer's styles, resulting in a cohesive night of music that built in intensity.

The dapper Bobby "Blue" Bland started the night's entertainment with a wonderfully, flirtatious set with a cool, begging style of singing the blues. In his sweet, clear voice the crooner directed the lyrics of his songs at women in the front rows, often with hilarious results: in one song, beseeching a woman as to why she had done him wrong, in another asking a woman if she were single and what her problem was.

Bland's band, led by trumpet player Joseph Hardin, provided dramatic overdrive to the 63-year-old singers' selections, keeping the show moving during the 40-minute set.

As cool as Bland was, Millie Jackson was all sizzle, with a very sexy, power-driven bravado that was heavy on audience dialogue and equally strong on talent. Millie's show challenged the men in the audience, directing her love-scorned blues lyrics at them, often with racy dialogue to boot!

A captivating performer, Jackson is also very versatile. Her show featured an exceptional Tina

Turner impersonation, a "funked-out" version of Merle Haggard's "Go Your Separate Way" and an engaging duet with keyboardist Douglas Knight called "Young Man, Older Woman." Knight's gospel-tinged vocals added depth to the song, as the two acted out a very convincing display of love and devotion that ended Jackson's show in an arresting and most stimulating fashion.

As smooth as Bobby was, and as provocative as Millie was, B.B. was just as dynamic. From the moment he took the stage, to a standing ovation from the house, B.B. King was ready to play, jumping in for a full kilter version of "Let the Good Times Roll." The show featured a laid-back selection of many of his best tunes, including his Grammy Award winning "The Thrill is Gone," "Paying the Cost to be the Boss," "Guess I've Got to Move Out of My Neighborhood," "Have You Ever Had the Blues," and selections from his new album *There is Always One More Time*.

King's band added additional flair, especially 15-year band veteran James Bolden, whose colorful trumpet playing and energized dancing got the audience to their feet to shimmy and shake. At one point, King stood up and shimmyed back at an attractive woman doing a sultry dance in the front row. Other high moments of the show included Ike Turner's appearance on stage, after B.B. announced Ike and Larry Davis were in the audience.

About halfway through the show, King got serious for a moment, as he dedicated a song to friends he made during his 42-year career who have now passed on. The list included Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Miles Davis, Albert King and Doc Pomus.

Now age 67, B.B. King shows no signs of slowing down, with another tour coming up this summer and his new album, *There is Always One More Time*, a recording which King refers to as "the best album I've recorded in my career." His career has covered four decades, during which time King has rolled with music industry changes and managed to succeed at playing a style of music, not traditionally commercial in nature. With his own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, a Lifetime Achievement Award, four Grammy's, four Honorary Doctorates and numerous endorsements by popular, contemporary artists, King is perhaps the most commercially successful black artist in blues history.

As a guitarist, King adds a flair to the simplest songs, dressing each up with a flurry of notes and scales. As a singer, he can be fiery or soulful, putting on a show for Anaheim fans that was hard-driving, intimate, and imaginative. ■

MUSIC NOTES

continued from page 26

Designed with kids in mind, Epic Records has announced a new collection of nursery rhymes set to slamin' hip-hop beats. *Rap Rhymes* brings the hip sound of the street to classic nursery rhymes like "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe," "Mary, Mary Quite Contrary," and "The House That Jack Built," by offering versions of traditional children's songs by Tone Loc, Mellowman Ace, Kid Frost, and others.

The project is the brainchild of veteran talent agent and artist manager Mike Gardner, who also served as the project's executive producer. Says Gardner, "No one talks about the socially positive side of rap. I think this record will get across the fact that not all hip-hop is about violence and profanity." No, some of it can be about learning your ABCs hip-hop style. ■

POWER VAN APPEARANCE WITH GIVEAWAYS **Power 106 FM** **ROTATING INTERNATIONAL GUEST DJS**
MIDNIGHT BALLOON DROP

SATURDAY NIGHTS

POWERNIGHT

MULTI-LEVELS OF ENTERTAINMENT

\$12 ALL NIGHT HOTLINE 213.462.3000 213.467.4571 **UPSTAIRS LIVE/REEL C-SPOT 10PM-2AM**

THE PALACE

1735 N. VINE ST. HOLLYWOOD
DOORS OPEN 10:30 PM... MIDNIGHT PRIZES
18 AND OVER WITH VALID I.D.

If You're Not Happy With What You Buy, Neither Are We!

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!

The Wherehouse has taken all the risk out of buying music, movies, blank tape, accessories and everything else we sell in our stores. It's simple. We guarantee you'll be totally satisfied with everything you buy at The Wherehouse. If, for any reason, that's right...any reason, you're not happy with your purchase, just return it within ten days with the receipt and original product packaging and we'll exchange it...no questions asked.

At The Wherehouse, we're not completely satisfied until you're completely satisfied...**We Sell Satisfaction!**

the WHEREHOUSE