

THE WEEK THAT WAS

A look at the past week in concerts

ROBYN HITCHCOCK,
The Palace, April 27
by Steve Baltin

When Eric Clapton left the stage at the 1985 Live-Aid show, promoter Bill Graham said of Clapton, "there is only one, there is only one Eric Clapton." If Robin Williams had ever emceed any of Robyn Hitchcock's shows he might be tempted to say the same of Hitchcock.

Nobody in popular music today brings as much humor into a performance as Hitchcock does. His show at the Palace was no exception. He greeted the small but adoring throng at the show with a monologue about our fair city done in a robotic voice that had the crowd in hysterics.

But Hitchcock is not a stand-up comedian and this was still a rock concert. During the 90-minute set Hitchcock showed why he is one of the most popular artists on the college music scene. He is a master of the catchy pop riff, both acoustically and electrically. As well, behind the humor lie truly inspired lyrics. Among the highlights of the show were two new numbers, "The Yip Song" and "Railway Shoes," in addition to his first encore, a beautiful love song he introduced by dedicating it, "To Cynthia."

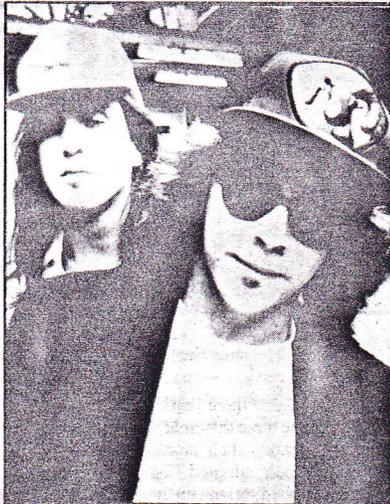
Robyn Hitchcock may never have a number one record, but for those of us in on the joke there is only one Hitchcock.

TOWER OF POWER,
The Roxy, April 27
by Pat Kramer

In a blazing show of force, Tower of Power packed the sold-out Roxy for a performance that showed they're still going strong, after some 14 albums. The band, led by tenor saxman Emilio Castillo, showcased material off its new album, T.O.P., featuring great funky grooves set up by the fiery five-piece horn section. This show, Castillo announced, was the beginning of their world tour. It was also the first show they've done here in 12 years.

In its two hour long show, the band covered many of its "hits," including "What is Hip," "You're Still A Young Man," and "So Very Hard to Go." But they didn't rely on the hits, as their new material, including "A Little Knowledge Is A Dangerous Thing" and "Atti-

tude Dance" has equally serious grooves. In this show, T.O.P. provided a consistently strong performance, from singer Tom Bowes, right down to trumpet player Lee Thornburg, a 24-year veteran of the band. Pumping rhythms, gutsy vocals and the transcendent sound of the T.O.P. horns contributed to this vividly entertaining show.



DINOSAUR JR.

THE FLEW, Ventura Theatre, April 30
by Pat Kramer

This powerful band of heavy hitters, led by Joe Walsh, provided serious moments of magical musicianship interspersed with bad jokes and silly banter as The Flew buzzed into town. The all-star lineup included Walsh, singer Terry Reid, Rick "The Bass Player" Rosas, Ian McLagan on keyboards (substituting for the ailing Nicky Hopkins), drummer Phil Jones, and a special guest appearance by guitarist Dave Edmunds.

Walsh opened the show with his usual brand of zany humor advertising, "free Ronald Reagan cowboy hats." After a few more jokes he was joined by Rick "The Bass Player" for an inspired version of "The Confessor," before bringing the rest of the band on stage.

The show offered many brilliant moments of muscular musicianship including Terry Reid's compelling vocals on "I Can't Stand The Rain," Ian McLagen's vibrant keyboard playing, and Dave

Edmunds' energetic performance on his own hit "I Hear You Knocking." The true high points of the show were The Flew's no-holds-barred version of "Rocky Mountain Way" and the finale, the blues classic "Going Down."

Walsh's spirit of unpredictability worked well with The Flew, as various band members jumped in to take up the slack when Walsh, at one point, had to go to the bathroom. Everybody got involved, including the drum tech who lent his vocals to the Flew original, "Dirty Games." The group's unconventional humor and loose arrangements offered a refreshing performance endowed with talent and imagination.

DINOSAUR JR. W/ REDD KROSS & GUMBALL, Santa Monica Civic, May 1
by Steve Baltin

One way for a band to make it if they don't have the talent, or even if they do, is by acting strange. All three groups on Saturday night's bill have the talent, but they also don't have to act

strange, there was genuine weirdness.

Gumball opened the show with a 35-minute set of songs that sounded primarily the same in much the same way all those Ramones' songs blended together so well for the medley of hits that came out a few years ago. Gumball's sound came off with an untouchable attitude that worked very well for their style and should suit them nicely in the future.

Second-billed Redd Kross have built up a loyal base with their nerd rock, but on Saturday's bill they were outclassed by both bands in the weird and the music.

Dinosaur Jr. left no challengers in all the world to the title of strangest group. They played an hour plus set of gloom that both delighted and deafened the crowd. Led by J. Mascis, the trio formed a triangle around a dummy in a straw hat and never moved from their positions. The group's music was done against a backdrop of dark lights that created a feeling of doom and gloom throughout that would've left any gothic group envious.

Great music with the weird, what better way to spend a Saturday night.

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