

A RELAXED EVENING WITH DON

by Kevin Gauthier

American singer-songwriter Don MacLean, on his first tour of Atlantic Canada, appeared at Confederation Centre on Thursday, Feb. 14, and gave a full house a rare Valentine's treat. So seldom is it that a performer of Mr. MacLean's reputation and ability visits Charlottetown, that any such occasion is to be greeted with great anticipation. So it was, and the star did not disappoint his audience, although he undoubtedly did surprise many with his repertoire.

Mr. MacLean's performance included, of course, his standard hits, American Pie, and Vincent. For those who wished to reminisce, however, there was little else to jog their memories. Rather than relying upon Golden Oldies to support his performance, the singer rounded out the concert with a diverse program comprising of country and western, folk and

blues, all of which were executed with energy and competence.

The concert began on a somewhat shaky note as the performer walked on stage without introduction and immediately launched into a pair of country-ish songs without pausing for so much as a "Hello", causing many people to wonder if perhaps Mr. MacLean might be anxious to get the performance over with and leave town as soon as possible. Following the second song, however, we learned that he could indeed speak, and any illusions about his desire to perform were quickly dispelled as he urged the audience, as he said, to settle back for a "relaxed evening with Don". And we did!

If one had to pick a high point and a low point for the evening, this reviewer would single out the following. The low point was the performance of American Pie, which, un-

fortunately, was executed with a total lack of enthusiasm.

Of course, after so many years, it is understandable why Mr. MacLean might have grown tired of singing the song time after time, but such a song deserves better treatment than it received that night. The high

All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable concert. Mr. MacLean managed to transform Confederation Centre Theatre into a fire-side sing-a-long with 1000 friends, which is a rare feat, and his audience demonstrated their appreciation with two standing



AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER DON MACLEAN PLEASSED HIS AUDIENCE AT CONFEDERATION CENTRE ON VALENTINE'S DAY.

point stretched through the entire performance; and it was Mr. MacLean's mastery of the guitar and banjo. A performer who can entertain an audience for two hours with nothing more than a guitar and a voice must have complete control over both, and control was displayed that night, although the voice was given too much power on several of the ballads that would have benefited from a gentler approach. The lyrics to Mr. MacLean's ballads are undoubtedly among the most beautifully composed in modern music, and their poetry benefits from a sensitive presentation, which they are given in his albums, but which seemed to be lacking at certain points during his concert.

He in turn, demonstrated his appreciation by promising to return, so look for him in future, and get your tickets early.

The concert was the 2nd in the series of five "Starry, Starry Night" sponsored by Confederation Centre this Spring. This writer awards five gold stars to the Centre for bringing performers here, such as Don MacLean, who otherwise would never grace Charlottetown with their talents. We're fortunate to have the Centre, and we should hope they continue to treat us to such events in future - Look for Spring Thaw, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and CBC Country Roads in coming weeks.



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