

Clapton proves 'It's in the Way That You Use It'

BY GREG W. SWARTZ

Features Editor

I have often wondered what it would be like to be Eric Clapton. Of all the come-and-go guitarists in the world, Clapton has the most distinctive, lasting, and biting style ever recorded. This diminutive little Englishman has taken the predominantly African-American art of blues, and stretched and bent it up to never before heard of levels.

When I first saw Clapton (in 1987), I was extremely excited. I got tickets, and the show was good, but it seemed a slight bit over-staged. I naturally thought that this was a result of Clapton's increasing age.

When I found out that he was touring again, I jumped at the opportunity. This time I lacked enthusiasm, however, assuming that he would be even older and less energetic.

I could not have been more wrong. Starting thirty minutes late, Clapton hit the stage with an intensity rooted in his past -- the blues. This intensity never faltered.

Clapton played a blend of the old and the new, all of which featured the classic playing that sprung from Clapton's signature Fender Stratocaster. They pierced the air of the Spectrum with a beautiful melodious ring that was perfectly complemented by his seven-member stage ensemble.

The sounds from the stage created a feeling of unity in the atmosphere. This feeling was never compromised nor cheapened by the tacky pseudo-psychedelic stage lighting that ruins so many concerts.

Clapton's stage was the most stripped down one that I have ever seen at a major concert. There were no lights or gimmicky lasers obviously meant to symbolize the drug culture of the '60s.

In contrast to so many modern concerts, Clapton's show never emanated a "plastic" feel. If limited to textile analogies, I would have to say that this was definitely a concert of brown leather.

This show was not a "trip" into the past, rather it was a trans-temporal experience in the blues.

I began this review by saying that I always wondered what it

would be like to be Mr. Eric Clapton, and I am obviously not the only one who wonders that. Looking around the Spectrum, I saw an army of teenage sycophants clad in tie-dye t-shirts (or \$20 concert shirts) playing a mean air guitar that followed no rhythm.

After an introduction of piped music from his recent performances with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Clapton tore through three of the five songs that he played from *Journeyman* (his latest album) before delving into his catalog. During the course of the evening, Clapton played such classics as "Layla," "Lay Down Sally," "I Shot the Sheriff," "Can't Find My Way Home," and "Sunshine of Your Love."

Probably the strongest points of the show, however, were the numerous extended solos that "Slowhand" played in virtually every song. Tearing through the range of his totally unique blues

style, Clapton, who now sports a very modern hairstyle, added an intense boost of rough and dirty blues to the otherwise totally clean tracks. The mix was achieved masterfully Clapton proved the prophesy of those

who called him "God" in his early days.

It is frequently said that the "blues ain't nothing but a good man feeling bad," and, young or old, Eric Clapton is definitely bad.



Snapper photo by Joe Vulopas, News Editor

A high point in pledging is Greek Week, in which pledges to fraternities and sororities write and produce skits. These five sorority sisters were among those who performed their Greek pledge skits in the SMC All-Purpose Room.