

Quintet Projects Stylishly

SUPERTRAMP, featuring Roger Hodgson, lead vocals, guitar and keyboards; Rick Davies, lead vocals and keyboards; John A. Hellwell, wind instruments, percussion and vocals; Dougie Thomson, bass guitar and vocals; Bob C. Benberg, drums and percussion; Presented at Municipal Auditorium by Chris Fritz & Contemporary Productions in cooperation with KV 102.

By Donna Palatas
Contributing Reviewer
English bands that tour America often appeal to an enthusiastic but somewhat cultlike audience that is able to appreciate the music's progressive nuances, and such was the case with Supertramp throughout much of its early history. The band's sold-out show at Municipal Auditorium

Music in Mid-America

Tuesday night displayed the results of a steadily growing following of fans who have learned to expect a show memorable not only for its audio, but also for its visual, effects.

Supertramp acknowledged the growth by saving of Municipal Auditorium during the show: "This is quite a change from Memorial Hall," the 3,500-seat house they played in during their last area appearance here almost two years ago.

The band performed a two-hour, fifteen-minute show consisting of a major portion of its latest album, "Breakfast in America," as well as a representation of material from earlier albums. An advertised rear-screen projection system was saved for the latter part of the show, and many of the films that appeared were disappointingly similar to projections used in the band's last Kansas City appearance.

However, there were some new effects saved for the latest show, including the addition of a male backup vocal group called The Trampettes on one song. The singers' main function seemed to be to appear in their top hats and tails rather than to sing, since some of them were too far from the microphone to have any real effect. Later, a character dressed as a banana cavorted on stage with someone dressed in a monkey costume and a dress, similar to the uniform worn by the waitress on the album cover of "Breakfast in America."

Opening the show was "School," a song from Supertramp's 1974 "Crime of the Century" album, which brought the band its first major recognition. An umbrella and table on stage brought to mind its next album, "Crisis? What Crisis?" because of the identical umbrella and table on that album's cover.

The "Breakfast in America" album was represented by two songs already getting local radio airplay: "The Logical Song" and "Oh Darling." The dual lead vocals of Rick Davies and Roger Hodgson on the latter characterized a technique used by Supertramp throughout the show to highlight the vocal work, a strategy made even more distinctive by the use of falsettos on songs such as "Goodbye, Stranger."

Another song from the "Breakfast" album, "Child of Vision," pinpointed the band's trademark of a consistent, almost classically precise underflow to its music. It is a sound that requires an amazing array of instruments, from at least three sets of keyboards to a display of four spare guitars and at least that many woodwind instruments. On "Child of Vision," it was a style so continual that it bordered on monotonous at times, contrasting with the powerful simplicity of one acoustic guitar by itself on the following song, "Even in the Quietest Moments." The latter song indicated that, for all its instrumental prowess, Supertramp can do some of its most effective work with a minimum of instruments. Along with "Quietest Moments," the other standout of the show was the well-worn hit "Bloody Well Right," in which band went beyond its previously excellent, but somewhat blasé, playing to give its full enthusiasm to the song.

A rear-screen projection of a train ride from a conductor's point of view, speeded up to look more like a roller coaster ride, provided a grabbing tour de force to the music near the end of the set. Supertramp acknowledged its English heritage with a series of slides of England, then it was on to an encore montage of album covers and old photos that ended with a "Star Wars" style trip through a galaxy of stars. The stars gave way to an ever-increasing logo from the "Crime of the Century" album of a pair of hands holding onto jail bars. The image grew bigger until it filled the screen, but just when it seemed the audience was trapped, the camera zoomed past the bars, and with the freedom of space Supertramp said goodnight.

Irishmen Go on Strike

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP)—Half a million Irishmen—half the country's workforce—went on a strike Tuesday to protest taxes. About 250,000 marchers staged the biggest demonstration in the republic's history.

The 24-hour strike brought industry to a standstill, stopped bus and train services, closed many shops and schools, cut electricity and halted dockside operations.

The march on Parliament in Dublin was the biggest since the republic was founded 57 years ago and halted downtown traffic in the Irish capital as grim-faced strikers strode eight abreast behind union banners.

Strikers are demanding a fairer tax system to ease the burden on wage earners. They want tax laws covering farmers, banks, the self-employed and exporting companies to apply to wage earners.

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