

Rolling Stone



GEORGE MICHAEL

Life After Wham!: No More Kid Stuff

GORBY DOES WASHINGTON

William Greider & P.J. O'Rourke at the Summit

PODCAST NEWS



Joel, Springsteen and Simon (from left)



Rubén Blades



Debbie Harry



Lou Reed

ROCK WITH A REASON: A TALE OF TWO NEW YORK BENEFITS

"Why don't you smile?" suggested Paul Simon to a somber-looking Bruce Springsteen as they posed for a picture backstage at New York's Carnegie Hall during the Harry Chapin memorial concert. With that, the Boss burst into a grin. Simon had shown up unannounced to perform at the Chapin tribute. A week later, Springsteen did the same at Simon's Madison Square Garden concert to benefit New York's homeless children. Turns out Simon had recruited him backstage at Carnegie Hall.

Scheduled acts at the Garden included Lou Reed, James Taylor, Rubén Blades and Nile Rodgers. Billy Joel simply showed up on the day of rehearsal. Also making unannounced appearances were Chevy Chase, who marched out with a sax to join Simon on "You Can Call Me Al"; Bill Cosby and Whoopi Goldberg, who backed Blades in the rhythm section; and baseball stars Ron Darling and Don Mattingly. Grace Jones and Debbie Harry sang backup for Reed. (Three days later, Harry and her band Tiger Bomb played a stunning set at an AIDS benefit.)

At the postconcert party, Chase said, "I'm going to move to baritone sax." He'd sported a tenor that night. And Simon was congratulated by everyone, including his son, Harper, his look-alike brother, Eddie, and his ex-wife, Carrie Fisher.



Springsteen (left) and Simon backstage at the Harry Chapin tribute



HEADS ROLL WITH ZIGGY MARLEY

"This is like a dream come true for us," says Tina Weymouth of working as coproducer with her husband, Chris Frantz, on the upcoming album by Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers, a group that features four of Bob Marley's children: Ziggy, Stephen, Sharon and Cedella. "We were big fans of Bob Marley and the Wailers. We feel that Ziggy and the Melody Makers are starting up where Bob left off."

Those familiar with the Melody Makers' earlier efforts will be pleasantly surprised by this album: Ziggy's maturing voice has grown eerily close to his father's, and Chris and Tina's production creates a rich and earthy sound. "It's reggae all the way," says Ziggy.

Weymouth and her sisters sing backup on the song "New Love," with fellow Talking Head Jerry Harrison on piano. And Keith Richards plays guitar on "Lee and Molly."

Chris and Tina say their next project will be to complete the upcoming Tom Tom Club album and to tour with that band this summer; they hope to have Marley on the same bill.

And what have they learned from Ziggy? "Quite a bit," says Chris. "He's a really good singer. So you pick up things about how to sing naturally." Tina adds, with a smile, "You

NOTABLE NEWS

Sting recently lost his cool as a Village Voice critic Howard Hampton wrote a scathing review of his... *Nothing Like the Sun* album. In a letter to the newspaper, Sting called Hampton a "dipshit fascist simpleton."... Billy Crystal was equally pleased with MTV's censorship of his video for "Heavenly Creatures," which shows his friend being raised on a cross. "MTV is trying to say that my video is dirty and bad," says Idol. "They're wrong."... Beastie Boys' Adam Horowitz makes his acting debut, playing a mental patient in a film tentatively titled *Lulu*.... Two weeks after filing for divorce from Sean Penn, Madonna withdrew the papers.

pped doing his patented Sixties medley to protest the use of so many classic songs in advertisements, for the good look of Chillicothe he stretched "O.C.K. in the U.S.A." into searing covers of "Wild Thing" and "Gloria." He brought the medley to a muscular close with his horny garage-band anthem "Play Guitar."

"The last time I was in a gymnasium, people were dancing, so as many people as got the courage, let's see you dance," Mellencamp said to introduce the evening's closing number, "Cherry Bomb." By that point even Governor Celeste — his jacket off, sweat dripping from his face — could be seen shaking it on the track with his daughters.

In an effort to keep the Chillicothe simple and not spoil the gesture he

would repeatedly describe as a "Christmas gift," Mellencamp played down any political implications of the shows. "We came here for no other reason than to have a good time," Mellencamp told the assembled media at his press conference. "We're going to be playing the hit records, and I'm not going to talk about Farm Aid or any social things like that." But in his interviews he kept returning to certain themes despite himself: how corporate America is destroying the distinctiveness of small towns like Chillicothe and Seymour, how artists have a responsibility to give something back to their audience. Even the songs he chose to play — all about living a life of meaning and dignity despite feeling powerless and unheard — were no accident, and their meaning could not have been lost

on this special audience.

On the day of the show, Mellencamp had a full-time job batting away compliments. "You don't have to do a lot, and people really appreciate it," he told one interviewer early on. That remark was borne out by the reaction of two Chillicothe residents who attended the first show, Carolyn and Don Ault. "I hope they're not disappointed with us," said Carolyn, who owns a tanning salon, about Mellencamp and his entourage. "I hope we've shown them that we are very thankful that they came." The Aults had to leave in a hurry to baby-sit for their grandchildren so their daughter and son-in-law could get to the second show.

"A lot of writers write to what they strive to be, not what they are," Mellencamp said.

camp said to Chip Arledge in a radio interview that afternoon. "In a funny way, you set goals for yourself emotionally and intellectually, and you try to reach those. I've written songs that were overreaching songs — I didn't quite get the quest because I didn't understand what I was writing about. But I try to practice what I preach. I don't always do that, and I'm not always the greatest guy in the world. But I think it's important that we all keep ourselves in some sort of check."

Mellencamp and his band will tour Europe, the United States and Australia in 1988. And in Chillicothe, Ohio, life will go on, long after the thrill of this visit is gone.

BY ANTHONY DECURTIS

Paul Simon hosts all-star benefit show

Springsteen, Joel and Taylor at concert aiding New York's homeless children

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND Billy Joel were among the "surprise" artists who joined Lou Reed, James Taylor and others for Paul Simon's December 13th benefit concert at New York City's Madison Square Garden. The show raised \$475,000 for the New York Children's Health Project, which will use the money to purchase a medical van to aid the city's homeless children.

The four-hour show was anchored by Simon, who played several brief sets throughout the program. Others on the bill included the South African cappella group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Paul Shaffer and the World's Most Dangerous Band, Laurie Anderson, Rubén Blades, Dion, Grandmaster Flash, Chaka Khan, Nile Rodgers, Debbie Harry and Grace Jones. Also making unannounced appearances were Chevy Chase, Whoopi Goldberg, Bill Cosby and the baseball players Ron Darling and Don Mattingly, who introduced Springsteen.

Musically, the biggest surprise of the evening came during Dion's set, when the doo-wop singer was joined by Simon, Springsteen, Joel, Reed, Taylor and Blades for a campy rendition of the 1950s' "Teenager in Love."

The concert was the latest and largest of several gestures Simon has made on behalf of the Children's Health Project. Last November, Simon personally donated \$100,000, as well as the same amount from the proceeds of his *Graceland* tour, to the project. That money, plus contributions from the real-estate firm S.W. Bird and Company, the city of New York and other groups, got the project off the ground.

"It's not about being pretentious enough to think that we can solve the homeless problem in this country," said

do is to look at one particular aspect of this horror and provide medical care to homeless children."

The fully equipped mobile medical unit, with a staff of five, visits twelve New York-area shelters, aiding an estimated 3000 of the city's 12,000 homeless children. The money raised from the Garden benefit, which was matched by Warner Communications, will purchase a second van, plus a couple of minibuses to transport children in need to hospitals. The former medical director of USA for Africa, Irwin Redlener, is overseeing the project in association with New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center.

Throughout the Sunday-night concert, artists spoke about the plight of the homeless. "I think everybody's earliest memory is about their home," Springsteen said as he began his set. He told a story about the early days of touring with his band, when he would call home and his mother would assure him that he could always come home. "It's sad to think that there's a generation of children whose memories of their home is gonna be a welfare hotel."

Introducing the song he was about to play, Springsteen said soberly, "I wrote this song about fifteen years ago; [it's] about a guy and girl who thought they wanted to run. I guess at the time I thought that was me, and maybe it was. But I woke up one morning and realized that I wanted to have a home. And that nobody wants or deserves to be homeless." With that, he eased into an acoustic version of "Born to Run."

But the evening was by no means a somber affair. After "Born to Run," Springsteen traded his acoustic guitar for an electric one. "Rhymin' Simon is going to be rockin' Simon," he said jokingly.



Joel, Simon, Springsteen and Reed (from left) provide backup vocals for Dion during the Madison Square Garden show.

in a rousing version of "Glory Days," which saw the three slinking across the stage in unison.

Though Springsteen was obviously a tough act to follow, Latin singer Blades pulled it off with a beautiful set of salsa songs. Debbie Harry and Grace Jones introduced Reed and then reemerged as two of the four backup singers for "Walk on the Wild Side." Shaffer led his band through a cover of Roy Head's "Treat Her Right," strutting and side-stepping across the stage.

Rodgers did a medley of his late-Seventies hits "We Are Family," "Le Freak" and "Good Times," turning the Garden into an arena-size Studio 54. Taylor, who received some of the evening's loudest applause, closed his set with a snappy, campy

Grandmaster Flash rapped through "The Message," and Chaka Khan did her hit "I Feel for You." Joel hadn't planned to perform a solo set but got caught in the spirit of the show and sat down at the piano to sing "New York State of Mind."

Shortly after midnight, Simon was re-joined by Ladysmith Black Mambazo to sing "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes." Then the evening's entire cast of characters was brought out to jam through "Rock and Roll Music."

Asked if the show had been filmed, Simon said he wanted the performers to be as relaxed as possible and not have to worry about any issues beyond the show's charitable aims. "This was for New York," he said.