

Queen
Madison Square
Garden
New York City
December 1st, 1977

By Chet Flippo

WELL, WHAT else could you expect from rock's only Persian lead singer? Here he is, just seconds after the 1812 Overture

wafted over the heads of 20,000 impenitent Queenheads, mincing around onstage in a little black and white Nijinsky-harlequinade ballet outfit, gingerly tiptoeing through the billowing smoke that passes for theatrics in rock. And he has the nerve, pouncing around there, to chant, "We will, we will rock you!"

Therein lies the serious paradox that will forever keep Queen from being a truly major group: its ambivalence. Queen cannot decide between art rock of the most pretentious sort or hard rock of the most derivative sort. Freddie Mercury cannot

decide whether he wants to be Mick Jagger or Paul McCartney. Queen's songs cannot decide whether to be the Who or Led Zeppelin or the Beatles or tortured chanting Gregorians. Obviously, based on audience appeal, they get the job done. I'm just not sure what that job is.

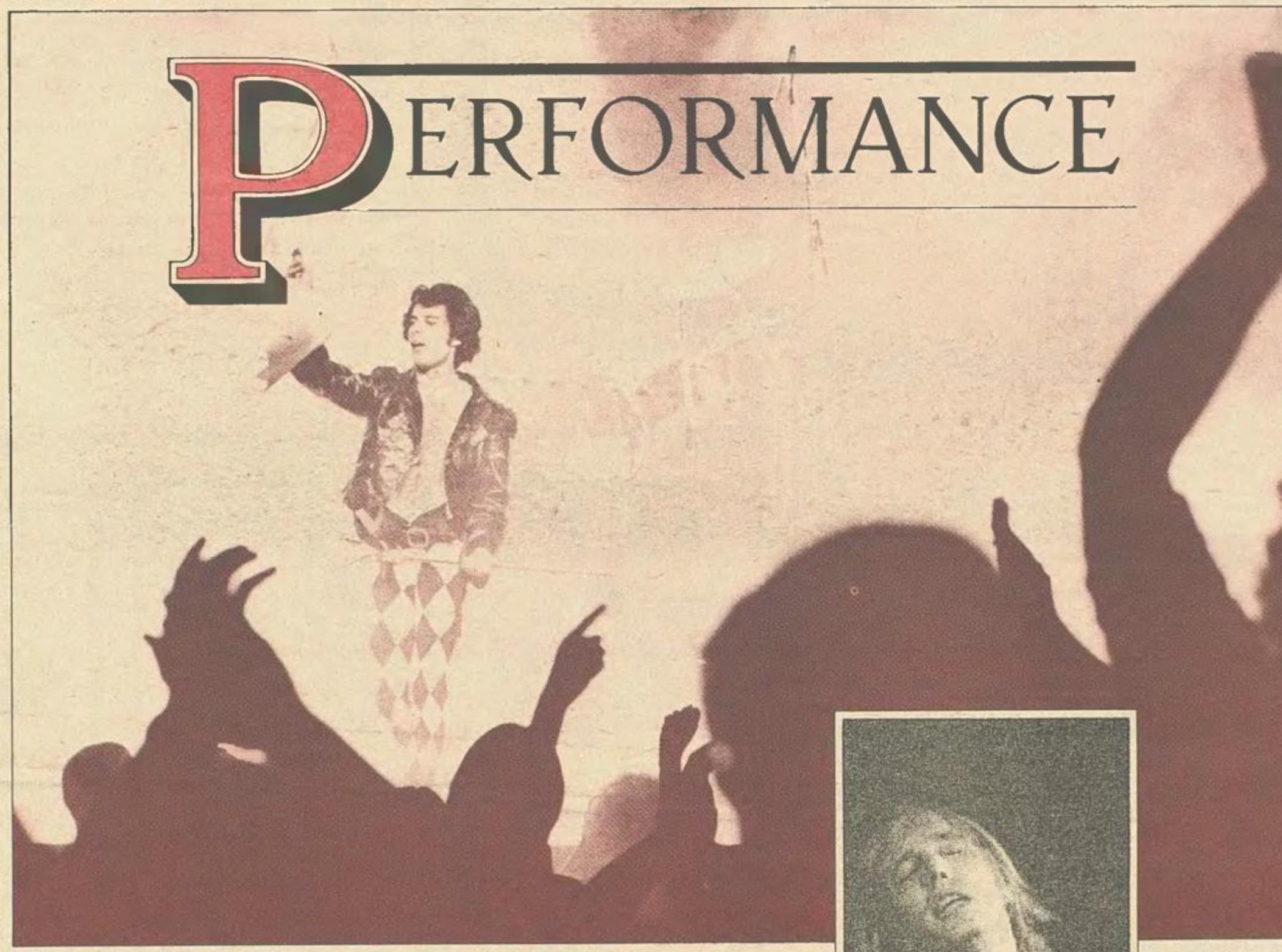
The show, by and large, is enormous—and harmless—fun. There's no real menace in even the hardest numbers, even when Mercury spits out the line, "I sucked your mind, you blow my head."

And the current hit, "We Are the Champions," comes across as overproduced MOR, despite its obvious overtones of Aryan rock. Queen's none-too-subtle use of taped background choruses only underscores its identity problem. Mercury, when he was hit by a shower of roses from the crowd, seemed bewildered for a moment:

Featuring court jester Freddie Mercury

A night at Queen's royal carnival

PERFORMANCE



"My gawd, this is like a carnival."

Even the encore was an attempt at all things for all people; Mercury raced back out in a silver-sequined suit for a grandiose version of "Jailhouse Rock." The carnival version.

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers
Riviera Theater
Chicago
December 2nd, 1977

By John Milward

BEFORE THEIR SET, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers treated their audience to a tape of unreleased Rolling Stones songs culled from the Stones' early years. The

choice was appropriate, as the Heartbreakers owe much to the unruly rock & rollers of the first wave. Although the quality of Petty's songs prevents him from being labeled a throwback, it is his commitment to a Sixties goal, to take the big beat and make it bigger, that really defines his music.

Headlining a show opened by Elvis Costello, Petty and the Heartbreakers performed with the calculated polish that marked late-Sixties rock. The band is anchored around Stan Lynch's steady drumming and Mike Campbell's wrought lead guitar work. Campbell's polished lead

Tough guy Tom Petty (right) and rock's only Persian lead singer (above)

lines almost charged ahead of cuts like "Breakdown" and gave the band a sense of electric foreboding.

In the midst of a concert that added three new songs to the repertoire of Petty's first album, the Heartbreakers did a letter-perfect version of the Animals' "Don't Bring Me Down." Written by Goffin-King, made famous by British rockers and now reinterpreted by a New Wave Yankee band, that song illustrated perfectly the chain of influences that determines

Petty's own songwriting.

Petty's "American Girl" sounds more like the Byrds than Roger McGuinn's own version. Of the new songs, the hard-rocking "Dog on the Run" is the strongest, with an especially dramatic Campbell solo over the dynamic rhythm section.

Petty has learned much from a year of touring; his tough-guy stares are now backed not only by stone-hard songs but also by his band's confidence. His calls to the audience to make noise were strained (as such pleas inevitably are), but during his encore, the Isley's "Shout,"

he didn't have to ask the audience for anything. They answered gladly and loudly.

Calendar

Earth, Wind and Fire: Memphis, TN (1/10), Fort Worth, TX (1/12), Houston, TX (1/17), Lakeland, FL (1/18-19), Louisville, KY (1/26).

Kiss: Dayton, OH (1/10), Richfield, OH (1/12), Pittsburgh, PA (1/13), Syracuse, NY (1/14), Chicago, IL (1/16-17).

Ted Nugent: Ft. Wayne, IN (1/12), St. Louis, MO (1/13), Little Rock, AR (1/14), Kansas City, MO (1/15), Atlanta, GA (1/19), Nashville, TN (1/20), Jackson, MS (1/21), Memphis, TN (1/22), Columbia, SC (1/26).

Jane Olivor: Lakeland, FL (1/11), Daytona, FL (1/12), Orlando, FL (1/13), Fort Lauderdale, FL (1/16-23).

Styx: Corpus Christi, TX (1/10), Beaumont, TX (1/11), Oklahoma City, OK (1/13), Springfield, MO (1/14), San Antonio, TX (1/17), Flagstaff, AZ (1/19), Albuquerque, NM (1/20), Denver, CO (1/21), El Paso, TX (1/25), Las Vegas, NV (1/27).