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LA BAMBA



TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

he Kinks' opening act was Steve Jones, formerly of The Sex Pistols. Jones was practically kicked off the stage and he especially annoyed the crowd when he sang a version of Led Zepplin's "Back in Black". Jones received some cheers, though, when he performed the Sex Pistol's tune "archy in the U.K." -F.B.

Replacements - Beacon Theater/The Ritz In this era of corporate rock, the Replacements are more than just refreshing -- they're downright piratical. Their show at the Beacon was their first non-club performance in New York, and it opened with irreverence, from their cover version of "Honky Tonk Women," "September 16," "Born in the USA," and more; to the taken by leader Paul Westerberg between

breaths of helium that made his voice squeaky; to the final encore, which was played after some of the equipment and most of the fans had left their places, and which included their new single, "Alex Chilton" ("Whaddya think we are, entertainers?"). Westerberg growled before tearing into the song).

Their performance at the Ritz four nights later showed off another side of the band. This time, they played few covers, remembered all the lyrics, and paid more attention to playing their guitars than to playing *with* them. It just proved that the Replacements are the least predictable band in rock-and-roll today -- and hasn't that been part of the music's magic from the very beginning? -MKL

By Fran Brancatelli

Format changes, ratings races, pirate broadcasts and network buy-outs are just some of the reasons why this past summer has been an extremely busy one for New York radio. In case you've missed something or just had trouble keeping up with the stations making headlines, here's a brief wrap-up of what's been going on:

One of the biggest stories of the summer was the format change of country music station WHN 1050 AM to WFAN, all-sports radio. The station, which made the switch on July 1st, is the only one in the country broadcasting sports programming 24 hours a day. Wfan broadcasts a line-up of sports call-in programs that feature athletes, trainers and managers as special guests. The programs are hosted by sports writers and commentators, such as former ABC commentator Jim Lampley. WFAN also broadcasts all New York Met games, and will presumably seek contracts to broadcast games for other professional sports teams. Overall, the station sounds good except for a few minor details. For one thing, the flow of calls taken during phone-in programs aren't organized enough and that tends to make the host sound rude and rushed toward callers. Also, the station should think about having sports updates less often. Why not have an update every half hour instead of every 15 minutes? If these details are worked out, the station could be a big hit here in New York and possibly start a trend around the country. . . With the format change occurring at WHN, struggling adult contemporary station 97 WYNY was able to capitalize on the situation and become Country 97. Country music is a difficult format to work with in the New York market. WHN struggled with the format for years and the only other attempt at the format was made by WKHK [now WLTW-Lite FM] and lasted only six months. There is a way the format could work in this market though. Country standards mixed with tunes by southern rock bands such as 38 Special, Tom Petty, the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd might make the format successful in this area. So far though, WYNY has not branched out in this direction and played it safe by playing only the standard country tunes by artists such as Kenny Rogers, Dolly Parton and Ronnie Milsap. The big test for WYNY will come when the next Arbitron ratings book is released. . . Arbitron ratings will also be the big test as to whether it

Frequencies

Summer Sounds

was worth it for 92.3 WXRK FM [K-Rock] to modify its format. K-Rock used to be AOR or Album Oriented Rock but as of early June, the station changed to classic rock. The major change in the format is the addition of more music from the late '50's, early '60's, with less emphasis on new releases. The station does get away with playing newer music by using the liner "It doesn't have to be old to be a classic, it just has to be great rock and roll." . . . Amid all the format changes, Hot 103 WQHT-FM was quietly slipping into the top ten. The Top 40-dance hybrid has gone from 22nd in the market to sixth-tripling its audience in a year's time. This ratings gain was noted in Arbitron's spring-ratings book which was released in July. WHTZ [Z-100] was slated all alone at number one in that survey. . . Also back in July, a ship known as the SARAH began making waves. The ship according to the FCC was being used to operate a pirate [unlicensed] radio station, called Radio Newyork International [RNI]. The operators of the ship, who were broadcasting their signal on the AM band, claim that the ship was anchored in international waters just outside the three mile U.S. territorial limit. Managers of the station were slapped with close to \$1000 in fines, and arrested. Technically the ship should not have been under FCC jurisdiction, but that decision will be left up to the courts should the case go that far. . . July continued to be a busy month as the Westwood One Radio network announced its decision to purchase the oldest radio network in the country--NBC. When the deal goes through Westwood One will be the biggest radio network in the country next to ABC. . . Another big event this summer was concerts. K-Rock sponsored the concerts at Pier 84, while Z-100 handled the shows at Jones Beach. The remaining concerts at Jones Beach were handled by Long Island's own WBAB 102.3. Incidentally, it's worth it to try and tune WBAB in on your stereo. The station uses an AOR format and provides a good alternative to the constant war between WNEW-FM and K-Rock. . . And finally, I had the opportunity to catch Howard Stern's new television show being taped. Stern toned himself down a bit for TV, although he is still quite obnoxious. The show had its moments, but I think Howard should stick to radio. The program is supposed to air Friday nights after The Late Show on Fox television. So far though, Fox has been stalling airing the program.

The Del Fuegos, a band from Boston which plays a blend of country-rock music, was the Caravan's opening act. They were followed by The Georgia Satellites, who strolled onto the stage to the theme from *The Beverly Hillbillies*. The Satellites sounded great live, and really warmed up the crowd for Petty by playing their recent hits--"Keep Your Hands To Yourself" and "Battleship Chains", as well as other tunes.

From beginning to end, the Rock and Roll Caravan provided a night of great rock, the chance to hear an accomplished musician, plus two up and coming bands. -F.B.

U2/Lone Justice - Brendan Byrne Arena - U2 are one of the few bands that know how to play to a massive crowd effectively. Their shows at the Meadowlands, as at every other date on their mini-tour last May, were packed; yet the band created both intimacy and spontaneity from their very first number (they appeared onstage, with the house lights still on, to join in the music that was playing over the loudspeakers -- John Lennon's version of "Stand By Me"). Though many of U2's songs are anthemic, they never sounded forced. Their messages were moving simply because the band seemed to be so very honest about their music.

While the music of Lone Justice is also obviously heartfelt, their performance was uninvolved. Interesting, yes, considering lead singer Maria McKee's dervishlike dancing, but somehow lifeless nonetheless. -MKL

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

The Rock and Roll Caravan starring Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers invaded Jones Beach for a night of solid Southern Rock.

Petty opened the show with "Think About Me" from his latest album *Let Me Up I've Had Enough*. Petty continued to crank out hits like "Breakdown", "Don't Come Around Here No More" and "An American Girl". He also played two more cuts off the latest album--"Jamm'n' Me" and "Runaway Trains"--but his performance was highlighted by his performance of such classic tunes as "The Waiting" and "Refugee".

Besides playing his own songs Petty did a good rendition of Buffalo Springfield's "For What It's Worth" and also borrowed tunes from Bob Dylan, The Clash, and Chuck Berry.

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