

TALENT IN ACTION

TRACY CHAPMAN
JOHNNY CLEGG & SAVUKA

Starples Amphitheater, Dallas

ATTENDANCE was sparse for Tracy Chapman's summer shed tour opener here May 18. Only some 2,800 fans turned out at this 18,000-plus capacity venue. But the faithful few gave the singer an enthusiastic response.

Chapman, dressed casually, fronted a four-piece band with an additional guitarist joining in occasionally for a 90-minute, 23-song set, which encompassed all the material on her Grammy-winning Elektra debut disk as well as its follow-up, "Crossroads."

But the sound was muddled and the band listless. Chapman asked little of her accompaniment and got less. The only times the performance got off the ground were with Chapman's all-too-infrequent solo stretches and a single a cappella number. She performed solo for three songs in the middle of the set and for a couple of her encores—and those moments were riveting.

This was an act that cried out for a more intimate setting. Staging was nonexistent. It was like "writers' night" at the amphitheater. Chapman, who frequently tuned and noo-

dled on her instrument between songs and only moved to amble aimlessly out of the spotlight, was generally lost on the big stage. House lighting was used sparingly to add a little color to the presentation only four or five times during the whole act. Chapman's voice and songs were the only draw. But, gauging from crowd reaction, she was preaching to the choir.

A brief shower an hour before the show likely muted any walk-up traffic. But Chapman's refusal to promote her own tour by talking to the press probably didn't help the turnout, either.

South African act Johnny Clegg & Savuka, promoting their Capitol Records disk "Cruel, Crazy, Beautiful World," played a tight and danceable set. Clegg's act is visually entertaining, if didactic. The crowd, though, was Chapman's. **BOB MILLARD**

CHRIS THOMAS

Tabby's Blues Box & Heritage Hall
Baton Rouge, La.

THIS WAS not your typical venue for a major-label showcase, but it was definitely a successful homecoming for Chris Thomas, who debuted material from his new High-tone/Sire/Reprise release, "Cry Of The Profits," May 4 in this matchbox-size club owned by Thomas' father—Tabby—a noted Louisiana blues artist himself.

However, while Thomas came up surrounded by blues, he has absorbed several other styles during his metamorphosis. In fact, the only traditional blues Thomas and his four-piece group covered was a medley of "Five Long Years/Hoochie Coochie Man/Mannish Boy," obviously in tribute to the down-home setting.

High-energy rock and soul was more Thomas' forte on this evening, as he excelled on the choppy set opener, "Heart And Soul," and "Last Real Man," complete with its funky Memphis chord changes. Another cooker was "All Night Long," very much a psychotic version of John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Children."

Already being compared with Jimi Hendrix, Thomas enhanced the musical parallel by playing dead-on covers of "Little Wing" and "Hey Joe." Original songs that belied Hendrix's influence included the spirited "Wanna Die With A Smile On My Face" and the moody "Alpha Omega."

Thomas displayed an introverted side on "Help Us Somebody," a soulful song that contains his personal views concerning today's social ills. It might have been the strongest performance of the evening.

Thomas is an artist with a promising career on the horizon. It will be interesting to see which audience—blues, rock, urban—embraces his music first. **JEFF HANNUSCH**

(Continued on next page)

NEW YORK-AREA PR FIRM SENDS SHOCK WAVES THRU MUSIC BIZ

(Continued from preceding page)

er SBK Records acts and the likes of Peter Murphy, D-Mob, Richard Barone, The The, Katrina & the Waves, and Kenny Loggins. (She now shares Joel's account with Shore Fire Media, the PR firm formed by former Columbia Records press VP Marilyn Laverty.)

Shock says her diverse clients reflect her eclectic tastes and independence, which during her label days were stifled by corporate decisions about which acts to push and which to let sit on the back burner.

"It would be so frustrating to love something and not be able to spend time on it because the company's priorities were with something else," she says. "Now I can choose to work with people whose work I really like; that's the only criterion for whom

Shock Ink represents."

Shock Ink has worked with O'Connor since "The Lion And The Cobra." Now, with the chart-topping, double-platinum breakthrough of "I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got" and the No. 1 success of "Nothing Compares 2 U," O'Connor has vindicated Shock's contention that "there's no reason to limit so-called alternative artists to the usual kinds of exposure in the alternative media, hoping the mainstream picks it up."

"That strategy hardly ever works, anyway," she insists. "I wanted to get Sinead all the press I could, wherever I could."

"It's extraordinary the job Elaine Shock did with the press," says Nigel Grange, who signed O'Connor to Ensign Records in the U.K. He attri-

butes the success of O'Connor's debut disk to the media buzz Shock Ink helped create.

Billy Joel demanded a different publicity tack. Critics certainly had heard of him but many either yawned at or actively attacked his music.

"I had to convince people to be fair," says Shock, whose husband, Jeff Shock, is creative director of Joel's management company, Maritime Music. "He puts on a terrific show, but critics usually just pan his album, although 'Nylon Curtain' got good reviews. So even though I only got called in to work on 'Storm Front' about three weeks before its release—which is nowhere near enough time—I pushed hard to get people to give it a serious listen and come out for his shows."

"I wanted that ripple effect: a couple of good early reviews in visible places that would hopefully make other people pay more attention."

Here again she seems to have succeeded. The New York Times and Rolling Stone both gave "Storm Front" solidly favorable reviews. Shock also drew press from the attention high school educators gave to Joel's history-montage single "We Didn't Start The Fire."

"I've never had to go sell myself to anybody, which is a good thing, because I'm uncomfortable doing that; I'm not really any good at it," says Shock. "So I don't really have a game plan for the future. It depends on who calls me, and whether I like what they do and want to work with them."

"Right now," she says, gesturing around her cramped office, "I just want to take over the office next door so we can all have room to work."



Just Say Uncle. 3 Mustaphas 3, the sextet claiming "Balkan" origins despite their British accents, brought the world-music mix of their current Rykodisc album, "Heart Of Uncle," to the Lone Star Roadhouse recently, transforming that down-home New York venue into a kind of Middle Eastern cafe for the evening. The show was taped by the Rebo High Definition Studio as part of its "Manhattan Music Magazine" for syndication in Europe by MTV International and the Far East by Tokyo-based affiliate Rebo Hi-Vision Company Ltd. (see story, page 59). (Photo: Chuck Pulin)

AB BOXSCORE TOP CONCERT GROSSES

AMUSEMENT BUSINESS®

ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
MADONNA TECHNORONC	Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Oakland, Calif.	May 18-20	\$1,278,245 \$30.00	42,608 sellout	Bill Graham Presents
ANITA BAKER PERRI	Radio City Music Hall New York	May 22-26	\$774,515 \$35/\$30/\$25	23,824 sellout	Radio City Music Hall Prods.
DIANA ROSS A.J. JAMAL	Westbury Music Fair Westbury, N.Y.	May 22-27	\$715,804 \$37.50/\$32.50	22,141 22,960	Music Fair Prods.
CHER DOM IRRERA	Meadowlands Arena East Rutherford, N.J.	May 12	\$408,267 \$25.00/\$22.50	16,987 sellout	Metropolitan Entertainment
FRANK SINATRA	Niagara Falls Convention & Civic Center Niagara Falls, N.Y.	May 12	\$305,414 \$100.00/ \$40.00/\$30.00	7,022 sellout	Metropolitan Entertainment
WHITESNAKE BAD ENGLISH	Shoreline Amphitheatre Mountain View, Calif.	May 19	\$299,382 \$22.00/\$21.00/ \$19.50	15,255 20,000	Bill Graham Presents
HANK WILLIAMS JR. & THE BAMA BAND SAWYER BROWN THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS	Starwood Amphitheatre Nashville	May 26	\$287,976 \$19.50/\$16.50	17,452 sellout	in-house
LOS CAMINANTES YURI	Los Angeles Sports Arena Los Angeles	May 26	\$267,790 \$30.00/\$25.00/ \$20.00	11,566 16,000	Jalisco Promotions
DON HENLEY INNOCENCE MISSION	The Spectrum Philadelphia	May 22	\$260,228 \$22.75/\$18.75	14,875 sellout	The Concert Co.
WHITESNAKE BAD ENGLISH	Cal-Expo Amphitheatre Sacramento, Calif.	May 18	\$256,446 \$22.00/\$21.00/ \$19.50	12,976 14,000	Bill Graham Presents
DON HENLEY INNOCENCE MISSION	The Woodlands Pavilion Woodland, Texas	May 18	\$207,155 \$25.75/\$23.75	10,000 sellout	PACE Concerts
CHER DOM IRRERA	Niagara Falls Convention & Civic Center Niagara Falls, N.Y.	May 15	\$197,250 \$25.00	7,960 sellout	Metropolitan Entertainment
ALABAMA CLINT BLACK LORRIE MORGAN	The Woodlands Pavilion Woodland, Texas	April 29	\$195,122 \$25.00/\$20.00	10,000 sellout	PACE Concerts
FRANK SINATRA TOM DREESEN	The Woodlands Pavilion Woodland, Texas	April 28	\$168,980 \$100/\$50/ \$37.50/\$20	7,535 10,000	PACE Concerts
REBA MCKENTRE GARTH BROOKS	The Woodlands Pavilion Woodland, Texas	May 19	\$111,976 \$22.00/\$18.00	6,056 10,000	PACE Concerts
AEROSMITH JOAN JETT & THE BLACKHEARTS	UTC Arena Univ. of Tennessee Chattanooga, Tenn.	May 22	\$99,345 \$18.50	5,707 11,648	Pro Motion Entertainment Group Limited
B.B. KING/MILLIE JACKSON BOBBY BLUE BLAND	Valley Forge Music Fair Devon, Pa.	May 27	\$95,499 \$20.00	5,864 sellout	Music Fair Prods.
KISS FASTER PUSSYCAT SLAUGHTER	Wendler Arena, Saginaw Civic Center Saginaw, Mich.	May 15	\$88,002 \$18.50/\$17.50	4,983 5,501	Belkin Prods.
THE JUDDS HIGHWAY 101	Rochester Community War Memorial Rochester, N.Y.	May 10	\$87,228 \$18.50	5,250 5,834	Pro Tours
RANDY TRAVIS SHENANDOAH	Carl Farley Coliseum, Amarillo Civic Center Amarillo, Texas	May 20	\$83,633 \$17.50	4,779 5,683	Special Moment Promotions in-house
TRACY CHAPMAN JOHNNY CLEGG & SAVUKA	The Woodlands Pavilion Woodland, Texas	May 20	\$70,560 \$22.00/\$18.00	5,064 10,000	PACE Concerts
WILLIE NELSON MARK KOENIG	Olympic Saddledome Calgary, Alberta	May 25	\$69,462 (\$82,173 Canadian) \$23.50	4,287 5,597	Perryscope Concert Prods.
WILLIE NELSON PRAIRIE OYSTER	Copps Coliseum Hamilton, Ontario	May 14	\$64,064 (\$75,083 Canadian) \$23.50	3,195 3,500	Concert Prods. International Donald K. Donald Prods.
TEARS FOR FEARS CHALK CIRCLE	Copps Coliseum Hamilton, Ontario	May 15	\$56,504 (\$66,223 Canadian) \$23.50	2,818 7,500	Concert Prods. International Donald K. Donald Prods.
WILLIE NELSON GEORGE FOX	Sault Memorial Gardens Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario	May 13	\$53,178 (\$62,325 Canadian) \$22.50	2,770 3,000	Concert Prods. International Donald K. Donald Prods.

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