

Nancy Wilson knows audience

By JIM WINDELL

You expect certain things with Nancy Wilson. Like a smooth performance, a superbly balanced program of soul, blues and ballads; and, classically, dramatic ballads.

Nancy Wilson hasn't lasted in the entertainment business for 28 years by failing to live up to people's expectations. Friday night's performance at Meadow Brook Music Festival was no let down to the several thousand fans who filled the pavilion and spread themselves over much of the visible lawn space in the outdoor theater.

After working out some initial sound problems and tuning down the orchestra, Nancy Wilson proceeded to bedazzle her fans. The top-notch show covered familiar territory but still captivated the audience.

The Persuasions opened the concert

review

to an audience that did not really appreciate all it tried to do. As a capella vocal quintet, the Persuasions mustered little enthusiasm from the crowd.

THE GROUP MAY have gone over better teamed with a big band or a comedian, and that's the way Meadow Brook had it planned originally. A switch in schedules between Ms. Wilson and Bill Cosby resulted in a pairing of Ms. Wilson with the Persuasions and Cosby with the Duke Ellington Band.

If the Persuasions scored at all, it

was with Paul Simon's "Slip Sliding Away" or the melody of "50s Rock 'n' Roll." The group's gospel harmonies tended to fall flat with an audience that seemed to view it as a nuisance to endure until Nancy Wilson performed.

MS. WILSON'S hour-long set skipped lightly from some of her early tunes and a reference to late alto saxophone player Julian Cannonball Adderley, who accompanied her on her fourth album back in 1962. She followed up that musical reference with a Dinah Washington medley featuring growls and shifting chords.

The medley proved if she had chosen to be a blues singer only, she could have been the best around.

Her old songs, from '50s and '60s albums, were a staple in her concert. One of the reasons they stay fresh is their

strong message. Also, Ms. Wilson knows a thing or two about working an audience.

With her contrasting vocal range and a sense of drama, she can turn even a trite lyric into a story telling tour de force. Gliding up the scale and then setting into a confiding whisper, Ms. Wilson related the well-known stories of a love affair in a gloomy bar in the afternoon and about knowing herself as a woman.

HER FAVORITES tend to be those tunes that continuously thrill Nancy Wilson fans: "Guess Who I Saw Today," "How Glad I Am" and "I've Never Been to Me." These songs have been around for years, yet she can make them sound young and unused.

That's the ability she has as a singer who is as much dramatist and story teller as superb vocalist.



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Seeger's a painter with his music

By NICK CHARLES

Bob Seeger looked up from the lights and realized he was finally there at last. The Detroiters were welcomed by the Pine Knob crowd on Sunday-Tuesday.

He opened his concert at the outdoor music theater in Clarkston with the song "Nine Tonight" from the "Urban Cowboy" soundtrack. With a guitar hanging from his neck, wearing jeans and track shoes, a pudgy Seeger told the crowd "I feel funky tonight."

Three female background singers added a rich sound to Seeger's rough voice on the ballad "You'll Accompany Me" from his 12th and latest album, "Against the Wind" (Capitol).

He strapped on an acoustic guitar for the moody "Mainstreet" from the "Nightmoves" album. Seeger played the role of a Picasso as he carefully painted pictures in the minds of thousands. He chose words like a painter would choose colors until each fan could see the hustlers and the losers as they found their feet down on Main Street.



Bob Seeger was in a funky mood.

The crowd quieted down as Seeger strummed the chords of the title song and sang "I wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then."

In this song, he captures the pain of youth that rolls helplessly into adulthood. His words touch us deep inside

and make us wish we could relive those innocent moments.

However, before the next verse is sung, we're glad for where we are and know that we wouldn't want to go through it all again for all the money in the world.

review

SAXOPHONE AND horn player Alto Reed was featured on the Jackson/Jones composition "Old Time Rock and Roll." His tremendous horn talents were also featured on one of the best road songs ever written: "Here I am on the road again/There I am up on the stage/Here I go playing star again/There I go - Turn the Page."

Seeger played most of the new album, such as the easy rocker "Good for Me,"

the hard rocker "Her Strut" and the single "Fire Lake."

Older songs like "Ramblin' Gambler" Man," "Fire Down Below" and "Katmandu" got the crowd up on its feet. The more wild fans enjoyed the new rocker "Betty Lou's Gettin' Out Tonight," while the more mellow fans enjoyed "We've Got Tonight."

New and potential members are being invited to a get-acquainted party at the theater, 8501 W. 10 Mile Road, Pleasant Ridge (between Scotia and Ridge Road), at 2 p.m. Sept. 7.

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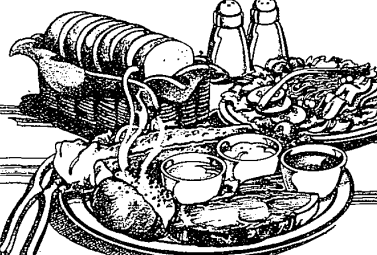
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