



Helen Zucker

Stars give glittering shows

The Friday and Saturday pop concert series at Meadow Brook had stars who illuminated the night, with Peter, Paul and Mary on Friday and Tony Bennett and Nancy Wilson on Saturday.

Peter, Paul and Mary, three of America's most intelligent, talented singers, drew an enormous crowd of fans to Meadow Brook on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. After 25 years, the group dubbed "the urban folk singers," easily proved it can sing as well in 1986 as it did in 1961.

The trio's songs sound as fresh as the day they were written. The word "timeless" comes to mind when thinking of Peter, Paul and Mary's repertoire.

The group opened with old favorites like "Early Morning Rain" and the 17th century ballad "Come All Ye Fair and Tender Maidens." The concert's first half ended with one of the liveliest social protest songs ever written, "Day Is Done." The audience clapped in time, roaring its approval.

NOEL PAUL Stookey, who is originally from Birmingham, was very funny, getting the crowd to sing "Rock My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham." He scrambled the parts between "left, right and lawn people" until no one knew which part they were singing.

Peter Yarrow did terrific imitations of Woodward car noises (during reflections on his Birmingham upbringing), and Mary Travers, during her solo, continued "the saga of my family" as she does every year at Meadow Brook.

They sang "Leaving on a Jet Plane," and they sang their hearts out on behalf of liberty around the world. The trio soared into the stratosphere as many people on the lawn rose, candles in hand, and sang

"Blowin' in the Wind," and "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" "If I Had a Hammer," and the powerful "Well, Well, Well," which brought everyone to their feet.

"The band," bassist Dick Kniss, deserves kudos along with the trio he has been associated with for years.

Nancy Wilson, a sophisticated lady, opened for Tony Bennett, with "So Nice to Come Home to" and "Hello, Young Lovers." Wilson's voice ran up and down the scale. She has wonderful control, and I can only marvel at her incredibly fast, clear diction, her ability to handle complex arrangements, and her sudden tonal shifts. What she does best are riffs that come out of nowhere.

WILSON'S STYLE is a bit too intimate for a large concert park. She needs a supper club, a small audience who can lean close and really listen to each note. You have to work to get what Wilson is singing, and a lot of her cool jazz got lost traveling from the stage through the pavilion to the lawn.

Tony Bennett, Wilson's opposite,

came out for the second half. Bennett hasn't got a subtle bone in his body and the crowd yelled, "We love you!" and brought flowers to lay on-stage. Sunny, good-natured Bennett was hoarse, but he's a real trouper and he brought his years of expertise, his great timing and his sense of rhythm to wonderful songs like "From This Moment On," and "It Had to Be You."

He was fun to watch. He's a crooner who's at his best belting out ballads. A 30-piece orchestra did backup, and Ralph Sharon, Bennett's pianist, stole the night. Sharon is an incredible piano man. Paul Langosh on bass and Joe LaBarbara, well-known drummer, helped Bennett send the crowd home happy.

Helen Zucker has many years experience reviewing pop performers for newspapers and magazines in Michigan, New York and Massachusetts. dj30

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table talk

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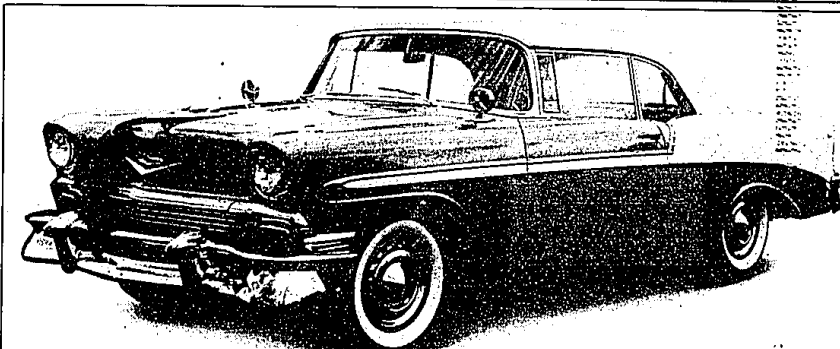
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