

Arts & Entertainment

Stookey never gets stale

Paul's musical mystery evident with, without Peter and Mary

By James Sennett
Staff Reporter

American music history will be seen live on stage at UNL Thursday night. Noel Paul Stookey — the "Paul and" of the legendary folk-rock group Peter, Paul and Mary — will be performing in the Centennial Room with his band, "Bodyworks." No connoisseur of contemporary American art forms should miss it.

Profile

Since "Puff the Magic Dragon" was born well before most readers of this newspaper, it is appropriate in light of this historic concert to present an introduction to the music of this delightful balladeer. Stookey has pressed vinyl many times since breaking up with and subsequently rejoining the classic trio, but his aesthetic contributions can be adequately summarized with a look to three of his productions: his live concert album "Real to Reel" (Sparrow, 1977), his anthology album "There is Love" (NewPax, 1983) and his latest production with Bodyworks, "State of the Heart" (NewPax, 1985).

"State of the Heart" proves that the really great ones never weary; they just find new and better ways to do what they do. The album never parts significantly from the open-endedness in lyric and ultimately satisfying, non-electronic style that was the earmark of P, P & M and their contemporaries. The heritage of Dylan, Baez and the upright bass are still fully evident.

Yet, if charges of staleness and lack of variety were ever warranted against this master, they have been laid to rest here. Eleven cuts give 11 different approaches to the folk style, from the unabashed country ballad "For Christmas" to the rocking, almost (but not quite) AOR sounds of "Circuit Rider." And in between there is folk, soft rock, pop and even a hint of jazz — all the offerings that more enlightened tastes would desire.

"There is Love" is the story of Stookey at his best. The title cut, sung at thousands of weddings over the last decade, introduces us to a man in love with his Lord and anxious to help others fall in love as well. This anthology brings us the human situation in full



Courtesy of Stookey

Paul's here, but where are Peter and Mary? Stookey now performs with Bodyworks (above).

force as only such sensitive eyes could see it.

We learn of "Sebastian," "John Henry Bosworth" and ourselves ("You're the Only One") and see in each face a hint of what it means for humanity to long for, strive for and maybe despair of reunion with the One who holds all promise of fulfillment. Even in a world where awe is fast being replaced by ability, Stookey reminds us in "Miracles" that "A scientist can tell you how night turns into day/But they can never take the wonder away."

It is in "Real to Reel" (and the second side of "There is Love") that Stookey is seen for what he truly is: a wandering minstrel with guitar and suitcase, living for the too-rare moments on stage when the spotlight makes his message the plan of the hour.

Stookey favorites "The Winner," "Old Lady," and a guest appearance by Puff himself highlight this night with the bard. Even in the comfort of one's living room, the magic of a Stookey concert

comes through the grooves to sweep the attentive listener to the magic land of Honoh Lee.

The career of Nobel Paul Stookey is a towering example of how music can be used to mirror, challenge and shape culture. His conversion to Christianity and subsequent translation of humanitarian causes into the language of the church was a natural transition in the life of one seeking truth in the eyes and hearts of people. His words and music tell us — lovingly, unobtrusively, seductively — to a seeker's haven, a protester's paradise.

He is not the sticky-sweet, shallow, deceptively sunny "I just want to praise Jesus all the time!" that oozes from most evangelical labels. Rather, he draws from his faith an unshakable assurance, a love for — and disdain against judging — others, and a social and evangelical mission for peace, justice and, above all, joy. "For wherever two or more of you are gathered in His name, there is love."



Michelle Milnes/Daily Nebraskan

Springsteen rocks in decade of concerts

By Tom Lauder
Art Director

After years of rumors and speculation, Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." (1984) is a 12-track collection of 12 live songs, all the great hits.

Record Review

The album has received a lot of exposure and single after single copies were released last Friday. USA Today, Entertainment Tonight, CNN and practically every news service have been following the progress of "Springsteen Live" for months now. But once the hype and public eye dies and the inevitable critical backlash sets in, this collection will still stand tall as an incredible chronology of Springsteen concerts.

It's understandable why there has been so much anticipation for a live Springsteen set. His concerts grew from local folk festivals to international events. Only a few live songs had ever been released (on the "No Nukes" soundtrack and on a couple of his sides). The bootleg market of Springsteen material rivals and, by now, surpasses that of any other artist, including Dylan.

Ever since his massive "Born in the U.S.A." tour, Springsteen has stayed out of the spotlight. (He has done a couple benefit shows, but no major concerts.) Meanwhile, the repercussions of his success and popularity have become almost bitter. The critics no longer saw Springsteen as a savior of rock 'n' roll but as an American media image. Episodes of "Growing Pains" and "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" have played up on the growing mythology surrounding Springsteen. But with this album Springsteen lets his music do the talking.

"Springsteen Live" traces the evolution of Springsteen from a Dylan clone to a writer in debt to a modern-day blues virtuoso to the Elvis Presley of the 80s. Opening with a live acoustic version of "Thunder Road," the album touches upon all the classics and crowd-pleasers that have made his albums so famous. Some of the best recordings are of songs from his first two

albums, such as "It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City." Since these songs were so poorly recorded in the first place, we thought we might as well give them a new lease on life.

Highlights from the "Live" set include "Hungry Heart" (with the crowd singing the final verse) and the definitive version of "Two Hearts" with Steve Van Zandt (aka "Miami Steve aka Little Steven") singing along.

Not much difference. Since the album was basically recorded live, the songs from "Born in the U.S.A." don't differ much from the versions here. One notable exception is the acoustic rendering of "No Surprises," which Springsteen started doing in tribute to friendship and his own relationship to Van Zandt.

And, at long last, Springsteen releases from his own versions of songs that he wrote but never released. "Fire," a 1975 hit for the Pointer Sisters, and "Because the Night," a top-10 song for co-writer Patti Smith, finally see the light of day. "Paradise by the 'C'" is a jumpy instrumental tune. "Seeds" is a song Springsteen wrote on his last tour.

The selection of cover tunes reflects the influences Springsteen credits. His remake of the Motown song "War" will be the first single released. Springsteen also does Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" the way it was meant to be done — not as a pseudo-patriotic hymn but as a folk reaction to the over-romantic "God Bless America."

The Boss' respect
Springsteen is known for the respect he carries for his fans, and the sound quality of this collection reflects that. Songs from his '84-'85 tour were recorded digitally, and the whole set was digitally mixed and mastered.

For Springsteen fans, this anthology is a dream come true. Springsteen's voice has never sounded so pure in all its rough glory, and the E Street Band rocks. His songs aren't just for Vietnam war or anti-war, but for anybody who's ever experienced the pain and joy of the road.

"Springsteen Live" is more than a concert souvenir. It's an invaluable testimony to 10 years of the best concerts ever.

State of the Arts

Compiled by Stew Magnuson
Staff Reporter

At Cornerstone:
George Ritchie, UNL School of Music professor of organ, will perform a faculty recital on the Bedient organ at Cornerstone, 640 N. 16th St., at 8 p.m. Sunday. The free concert will feature Bach's organ works much as they sounded when performed by Bach in the early 18th century on the organ of his time. The Bedient organ is a recreation of the North German organ of the 18th century.

At Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery:
This is the last week to see the excellent Alexander Calder exhibit at Sheldon. The show includes many of Calder's famous mobiles and some nice paintings. Since they are mobiles and there isn't much of a breeze inside Sheldon, I wish the Sheldon people would turn on some high-powered, oscillating fans and point them toward the mobiles. When I saw the exhibit, I had to blow on the mobiles so hard just to see them move that I almost passed out from hyperventilation. The exhibit runs through Nov. 16.

If you know of an event you would like us to announce, send press information to:

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Courtesy of NETV

'Candide' on NETV
"Live From Lincoln Center" presents Leonard Bernstein's satirical opera "Candide" tonight at 7 p.m. on channel 12.