

Inti-Illimani performs passionate native blend

By Emily Wray
Music Critic

The cold, cruel, freezing weather provided little warmth and hope outside the Lied Center for Performing Arts Friday night.

But inside, Inti-Illimani warmed the audience with a passionate, inspired, near-perfect performance in front of a full house.



The premiere Chilean folk group blended the visual with the audible to obtain a spiritual, mind-opening experience.

By wearing brightly colored native costumes and featuring a virtual light show in the background, Inti-Illimani delighted the visual palette.

There was so much more to hear, though. Unique native instruments blended with European classical instruments and vocals in Spanish.

A diversity of instruments, ranging from the lower half of a horse's jaw, an instrument native to Chile, to a native Peruvian instrument to a saxophone, were featured all in the same piece, along with a myriad of guitars.

By adapting instruments from different countries, Inti-Illimani has shown that it is truly a group of international scope and that all music is

intertwined and inspired by other music.

The beauty of this octet is that it's able to keep its native music intact, with the non-native instruments adding to the beauty.

Inti-Illimani also showed its talent for providing a successful array of musical styles by showcasing the full spectrum of possibilities, from ballads to dance tunes and everything in between.

One up-tempo piece blended vocals, guitars and South American flutes to provide a traditional Andean melody, while another piece presented a haunting love song with an Italian feel.

Another number featured a clarinet and European flute in a conversation with a guitar played mariachi-style. The piece held a surprise ending, as well, as the final expected chord never appeared at the song's finish.

The richness and texture of the music was incredible, and the passion and intensity never waned, much to the delight of the audience.

The group's rapport with the audience was excellent, coaxing the crowd to take an active listening role and asking it to ponder political issues and the weather, too.

The audience carried with them the warmth and hope portrayed by Inti-Illimani. And after a spiritual experience such as this, perhaps the cruel, freezing world wouldn't seem quite so cold.

What followed was a string of hit albums, videos and appearances in movies such as "Memphis Belle," and, most recently, "Copycat."

"I'm the kind of person who's always changing it up," he says.

Those experiences and that attitude played into the making of "She," including the song "Booker," inspired by his early piano teacher. Tuesday night, Connick, the funk band and the music of "She" will bring with them a show the likes of which has never been presented on the Lied Center stage.

Connick

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Louisiana town. By the time he was 6 years old he was playing at his father's swearing-in ceremony as district attorney. A few years later, the 10-year-old Connick was recording with a local jazz band.

He studied with the likes of Ellis Marsalis and James Booker while playing his music in the city's French Quarter. His first album was released by the time he was 19.

Music Reviews

"Original Soundtracks 1"
Passengers
Island Records
Grade: A

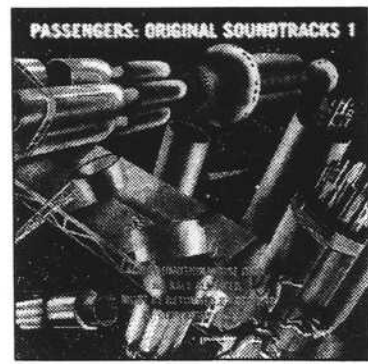
This is a U2 recording. This is not a U2 album.

Therein lies the basic dichotomy that is Passengers.

While it is true that Passengers contains all four members of U2, it also adds Brian Eno, who had often produced U2, to the official lineup. Eno, an audio junkie who could very well be to electronic music what Hendrix was to the guitar, does everything from synthesizers to strategies. The sound is beyond anything U2 has done before.

Thus, it is not a U2 album. The music, however, is nothing short of incredible, an immersive sonic experience. The quality has not declined in the slightest.

Thus, it is a U2 recording. "Original Soundtracks 1" is a collection of music done for film usage, along the same lines as Eno's



project "Music For Films" many moons ago. Each song is for a film, and each film has a story. Part of the beauty of this album is that the music doesn't always need words to tell a story. The sound itself is thought-provoking.

The collection is broad, from the almost "One"-like "Miss Sarajevo" from the film of the same name that tells of a beauty pageant during the war, to "One Minute Warning" which is used in "Ghost In the Shell," a Japanese animated

movie based on the graphic novel by legendary comic artist Masamune Shirow.

Plus, there are "additional Passengers." On "Miss Sarajevo," a bridge between verses is performed by one of the greatest tenors of all time, Luciano Pavarotti. The Italian bridge is beautiful. On "One Minute Warning," Japanese singer Holi adds his own lyrics and vocals to Bono's.

The album is not devoid of music akin to U2's usual. The song "Your Blue Room," which is being used in Wim Wenders' ("Until The End Of The World" and "Stay (Faraway, So Close!)") new film, "Beyond The Clouds," is on par with the quiet ballads one may be used to. Clayton's narration toward the end is haunting.

It's not a U2 album, but "Original Soundtracks 1" as a work of its own, is a towering work of immeasurable magnitude.

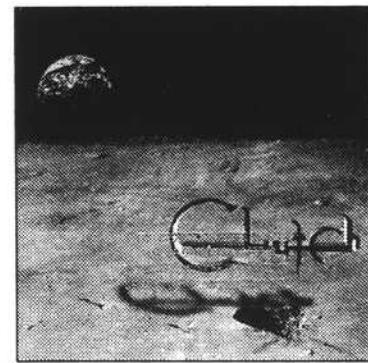
— Cliff A. Hicks

"Clutch"
Clutch
Eastwest Records
Grade: F

Clutch is not only slightly out of gear, it has broken the whole crankshaft. These guys don't know how to start the car, much less downshift.

Somehow, the low funky rock is built wrong, like the engine of a Yugo in the chassis of a Ford Bronco. But the whole album is best compared to being in the eye of a hurricane: While what's going on around you should probably impress you, all you can feel is dead calm.

Both "Big News I" and "Big News II" are too simple, and Neil Fallon, the singer, sounds like he wants to be singing drunk with the Mighty Mighty Bosstones. A lot of this album fits into that basic repertoire.



It's all one big jumble, no distinction from song to song. Everything pretty much sounds ... well, like the first song. "Rock 'n' Roll Outlaw," "Texan Book of the Dead" and "Escape from the Prison Planet" could have been recorded all at once, and no one would have noticed. Might even be the same notes.

"Spacegrass" is an attempt to be

different. The guitars don't play all of the time. My, is that impressive. Difficult too, I'm sure. Both chords of it.

"Tim Sult v. The Greys" starts out pretty well, but it deteriorates into the same old stuff.

Nothing on this album is great, if even decent. It's just a typical bunch of non-standoutish rockers with no real songs, no real hooks and, from the looks of it, no real talent. The guitarist has some promising moments, but not until every song has some life and individuality will anything worthy of merit come from these guys.

Rehash, rehash, rehash.

End the cycle. Skip this album.

— Cliff A. Hicks

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