Protest singer

Tom Paxton concert held

By Jack Donahue

Folk music in Boston, was born, and has been nurtured in small intimate establishments, the coffeehouse. Originally, those places provided refreshment, whence the name, and an atmosphere conducive to the coffeehouse singer. The intense popularity of some of the more famous folk artists has made their appearances for a small coffeehouse audience impractical. More famous folk artists have had serious difficulty in reaching new and unproven works to the theatre, of trying to make their production. In this way they are reaching true originality of music to heighten the effects of the play, and not the usual lute or harpsichord music either:

last Saturday, Tom Paxton was presented by this organization, in conjunction with the Club 47, at Jordan Hall.

The atmosphere was not quite that of the coffeehouse, but Jordan Hall is not a mass market auditorium, and was fairly well suited to the occasion. The re-creation of the amplification system was slightly annoying at first, but was a necessary evil.

Original songs

All the songs performed were his original compositions, with two exceptions. One of which was "Bigby's Pub," which he learned as a child. His songs are of two very distinct sorts. His protest songs range in intensity from the light-hearted fun-poking of which "Talking Pop-Art Blues" is typical to the more virulent declarations he is capable of, exemplified by "The Hooker," one of his newer compositions.

Love songs

At the other end of the Paxton spectrum is his tender love songs, such as "Last Thing on My Mind" and "Leaving London" (on his latest album).

However the bulk of the performance was occupied by his tongue-in-cheek protest songs, interspersed with these charming ballads, which are his best. One wishes he would concentrate more on these, since broadside and satire, although amusing at first, tends to wear thin if overused.

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