The Aero and The Mott

by Mark Balloon

Saturday night at the Orpheum wasn't just another rock concert for me. It was a night to step back in time. Waiting out the "cooling-off" period before the show, I suddenly noticed that I was standing in front of a balcony. There was an old-fashioned dome standing behind me, who obviously couldn't hold his chemicals. Inside, there was a balcony with a colorful balloon on the floor in front of my seat, which I continually avoided. Suddenly, I killed a balloon at the balcony and a bunch of air began to blow up. I thought of the spirit of the balloon entering my body, which is why I've changed my name to Mark Balloon. But the concert, got to the concert. It was a goodie. Aerosmith and Mott the Hoople. American punk versus British pretty boys. I've said before and I'll say it again, the Hoople has a twisted, consistent sound act, and for my money Aerosmith stole the show.

Admittedly Aerosmith's lead vocalist Steven Tyler took his Jagger-mimicry a step too far, with his sparkly eye-shadow, purple nails, silver lame jumpsuit, spit open to just below the navel, and practically the same floppy hat Mick wore for "Angie" on "Some Girls." Steve, who looks startlingly much like Rolling Stones junior Marianne Faithfull (the "Reading One," except with smaller tits), had his Jagger dance moves down OK, made the microphone simulate orgasm 3 times, and did a startling mid-shot which left me feeling sick. It was a tragic muddle; the judge gave him only 5.

But why gluttle, they put down one hell of a performance musically, doing all the album cuts save "Movin' Out," opening for Mott the Hoople. It was actually the best, "Mama K." for. Last, Steve is a dynamic vocalist, his voice was mean well to the front, unlike Hoople's Hunter, whose lead vocals are crushed beneath the guitar forest-aerial. Aerosmith also did two new tunes from their upcoming album, and they were kinds: the same old riff, no matter how great the first time around, are bound to lose on the rebound. But with the warped guitar interplay between Perry and Brad Whitford, and solid vocals and rhythm act, they did it.

Mott the Hoople, on the other hand, has problems: guitarists are too overpowering, Ian Hunter's lead vocals get buried. Which is perhaps just as well. With his Mark Bolek hairdo, he's an arrogant asshole, radiating more audience-avoided energy than in the fifth column could stomach. Then there's Ariel Bender, new lead guitarist replacing Mick Ralphs. Well, it turns out he's actually done played with Spooky Tooth, recorded some solo material, did a spell with Stecker's Wheel, and has been with the Hoople only four weeks. With the possible exception of the Wacker's Randy Bishop, Luke's cock's prettiest male guitarist, looking like Dave Bowie's maiden aunt, or maybe Barbara Bain. He's sort of a father/son feud, but is flashier than Ralphs and ultimately diminishes the Hoople's live act. They did, however, display a few favorites remarkably well, none-the-less negotiating three tunes off their latest LP, "Whiz Kid," "Violence," and "Hoofiecowhoogee." The version of their classic "Rock and Roll Queen" was their very first album, was disappointing sounding like "Twistin' Jack Flash." when it should sound like "Betch," and with much fuzziness around the center of the "Violence" choruses, a line from "Jear. Garski, 3000 years ago, "Get Back," turned in the middle. And I still think they butcher "Sweet Jane" and should mercifully put it from their repertoire. "All the Young Dudes" was great in the studio and a new ballad, "Room," was damningly good. At all their other gigs at rock theater fell flat. Airel/Father looks like a more than ample replacement for Mick Ralph, Ian Hunter deserves a stroke sandwich, and "All the Way From Memphis" is, in convos, almost as good as "All the Young Dudes."