Security fails to repress enthusiasm of Paul Weller concert

PAUL WELLER WITH JILL SOBOLE
Barclays Performance Center, Nov. 11.

By Paulo Cucurullo

A nyone who has listened to Boston’s WFNX or read any of a number of music publications in the past few weeks will most likely have heard the buzz about Paul Weller, a British music legend whose time finally may have come in America.

For ever a decade, first as guitarist/vocalist/songwriter of punk-pop pioneers the Jam, then as half of the jazzy duo the Style Council, and now on his own with his first solo album, Weller has never really been out of the limelight in his own country. And, if the reaction to his solo album, his first solo single “Uh Ha Oh Yeah,” and his latest tour of this country is any indication, America may finally be ready to look and listen.

Being a Weller fan in the States has, until this album, been akin to a favorite cult movie; three of us in the “know” loved the songs we heard and wondered what everyone else was missing when they’d never even heard of him. Maybe there were more fans out there than anyone could have guessed. Weller himself has said that he is surprised and touched by the many Americans who have told him how much his music has meant to them over the years. The fans at the Fleetklock show, most of whom seemed to be Weller’s long-time, seemed excited at the prospect of seeing him in Boston for the first time since the Jam’s last tour of the area 10 years ago. Their low-key behavior during the show seemed to indicate the security of the half, which disdained standers and dancers, much to Weller’s stated chagrin. But this problem could not diminish the energy of the band, who performed what could be one of their best shows on this tour, on a par with their homecoming show in the massive Royal Albert Hall in London (which I was lucky enough to see) in October.

Weller’s time is hardly new to him; all five of the other players were either in the Style Council during its seven-year existence or in Weller’s touring band after the Council broke up in 1990. Their long-term association list included more than half of his new album and some newer, unrecorded songs, but he chose to showcase quite a few older songs (mostly those of the Style Council) as well. It seems that his current introspective attitude is giving him even more of an appreciation of his musical influences (the Who, Traffic, the Beatles) and his own earlier work. Perhaps the biggest surprise of the evening was that Weller used keyboards for the gorgeous new song “Ends of the Earth” came during the acoustic portion of the set, with just Weller and basseg Camille Hinds on the stage. After they played the latest UK single “Above the Clouds,” Weller prepared to play the next song, which he said they had just started play-

The crowd was more animated for the rest of the set, eventually moving in front of the stage. They danced in defiance of the security guards but in the obvious pleasure of the band. Weller rewarded their enthusiasm with the new song, “The Weaver” (a favorite during recent British Weller shows which will probably show up on the next album, due to be recorded in February). The band finished the encore with the last song from the album, the sweeping “Kronos,” a perfect closer and one of the best songs from the album. The band is planning to return to the States sometime in April 1993, it is almost a given that Paul Weller will not be forgotten here before then.

Jill Sobule opened the show with a short but sweet set of acoustic pop which reminded me of Shawn Colvin’s work with some Christine Lavin-esque humor thrown in for good measure. She amused the crowd by ask-

The Brecker Brothers reuniting to create a vibrant and powerful new album

THE BRECKER BROTHERS
Return of the Brecker Brothers.
GRP Records.

By Douglas D. Keller

The Brecker Brothers of the 1970s were on the cutting edge of jazz-funk-fusion, garnering a string of critical and commercial successes. The brothers, Randy and Michael, broke up in 1982 and began solo careers. After ten years, they have come back together and have put their solo experiences to good use on The Return of the Brecker Brothers. Randy and Michael Brecker are well-known in the jazz world for their trumpeting and saxophone virtuosity. Fans of Paul Simon might remember Michael as the front-line saxophonist on Simon’s Rhythm of the Saints project. Classic rockers might remember that Randy was a part of the horn line for the original Blood Sweat and Tears. The brothers have been sought by the likes of James Taylor, Franl Taylor, Jaimie Lincoln, Mitchell, Steely Dan, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, and has had studio work. In fact, they collectively have appeared on over 1800 recordings.

As the Brecker Brothers defined jazz-funk-fusion in the 70s, so too their triumph returns combine straight jazz, funk, funk musicians, keyboard samplings, reggae, and African rhythms into an eclectic and engaging album. One of the most entertaining tracks is “That’s All There Is to It,” a reggae-styled piece written by Randy which features Randy on vocals in a non-singing style comparable to that of Lou Reed.

The tracks on Return of the Brecker Brothers are peppered with Randy’s artistic trumpet and Michael’s inventive saxophone style. Michael also makes extensive use of his CVI (Electronic Wind Instrument) to complement Randy’s trumpet. At times the tracks become an exchange of riffs between the brothers, but it seems that they always have the ever-present backbeat of guitar and drums. The brothers are joined on the album by, among others, Daniel Sanberg, Mike Stein, Armond Sable, and Jon Paul Simon, and Boston’s own Dennis Chambers on drums.

The beauty and power of Return of the Brecker Brothers lies in the skill of the brothers to write pieces of varying intensity and style. Slow pieces such as “Insidious (Alone)” seem perfectly at home with funk numbers like “King of the Lobby.” What results is a rich tapestry full of vibrant play, an engaging album that never fails to surprise and delight the listener.

The Brecker Brothers are poised to redefine jazz for the ’90s and beyond, creating a style that will include world rhythms, technological innovations, and standard jazz chops.

The Arts November 17, 1992

THE BRECKER BROTHERS

Michael and Randy Brecker, who have played on over 1800 recordings, display their virtuosity on The Return of the Brecker Brothers.

CHILDREN’S SKATING LESSONS

Enrollment is open for MIT children’s group skating lessons (ages 6-14 yrs.) to be held on Saturday mornings in the Johnson Center Rink beginning December 5. Classes are scheduled for December 5, 12, 19, January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Beginners at 10am, with intermediate lessons at 11am. Each class limited to 30 children instructed by MIT Physical Education staff members.

There is a $35 registration fee ($25 with an MIT athletic card) for each child enrolled in the classes, payable at the time of registration. Registration forms are available at the Physical Education Office W32-125 or at the Equipment Desk in the lobby of the DuPont Athletic Center. For further information, call X3-4291.

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