

A great day for the blues at Sunset Park

by Roy Theiss
Staff Reporter

The Blues were rampant Sunday, Oct. 7, in Sunset Park. Eight local bands and Dallas recording artist Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets played for eight hours during the Third Annual Fall Picnic sponsored by the Blues Society of Las Vegas.

Denise Faye and the Neon Boogie Band kicked off the show at 1:20 p.m. Unfortunately, the sound system had problems throughout the day and it was especially annoying during Faye's set. During one song, her microphone went dead and she had to scream the lyrics to the audience to finish the song.

When the Austin Exiles took the stage, Zaidee Zole's powerful voice could be heard through-out the park. Pete Nairn tossed out some tasty notes to the audience on his Gibson 335 guitar.

The ever self-effacing Nairn said "It's all in the guitar. It's 30 years old and these old guitars can play themselves."

Paul Anthony, lead guitar player for the Mojo Hand Blues Band, had the audience howling during "Red Rooster."

Billy Johnson returned from Austin, Texas, with his harmonica and joined the Rough Necks to play some fifties music along with some blues. When he sang his signature piece "Lonesome & Dangerous" the crowd went wild. They finished with a tribute to

the late Stevie Ray Vaughan and did a cover of his "Cold Shot."

Next up was the band that most other blues bands in the Las Vegas Valley emanated from The Blues Kings. Nine players, including ex-members, jammed for 45 minutes. When they played an old Rhythm & Blues tune "Soul Man" 200 people showed their appreciation by dancing at the front of the stage.

By the time the headline band appeared, the crowd's numbers had been reduced. Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets' hour and a half set was filled with emotion.

Before they played "Sweet Home Chicago," lead singer Sam Myers thanked the crowd. "There wouldn't be any of us if it weren't for you so give it up for yourselves," he said.

Funderburgh showed the crowd how painful the blues can be. Grimacing with each note, he slowly accented on his Fender guitar during "Hold the Train," the bittersweet music of the blues.

The picnic finished around 10 p.m. and everyone went home feeling the Blues.

Bill Cherry, President of the Las Vegas Blues Society, said he would like to thank all the co-sponsors, volunteers, bands and the media for "making it the most successful picnic in the Las Vegas Blues Society's history and the next one should be even better." Cherry added that 80 new members joined the Blues Society.



Yell Photo / Roy Theiss

Blues in the Park - Local blues fans sit back and relax during the recent blues festival at Sunset Park.

Music Avenue: Elektra and INXS

Various Artists
RUBAIYAT
(ELEKTRA)

HOT SPOTS: Way too many to list!

GRADE: B+

To celebrate 40 years in the record business, Elektra has put out a double CD set. Almost every musical style is represented, with songs ranging from flamenco to heavy metal.

With 38 songs on the CD, there were bound to be many gems and bombs. The Cure's cover of the Doors' "Hello, I Love You" proved to be a real highlight. The cover of "Motorcycle Mama" by the Sugarcubes becomes humorous when they sing with their heavy Icelandic accents. Faster Pussycat adds their rock touch to Carly Simon's "You're So Vain" with a mix of slide guitar and women back-up singers. The 10,000 Maniacs' cover of Jackson Browne's "These Days" does justice to the song. Other notable gems are "I Can't Tell Why" by Howard Hewett, "Stone Cold Crazy" by Metallica, "Inbetween Days" by John Eddie and "A Little Bit of Rain" by Ambitious Lovers.

There also are several bombs. The Gipsy Kings covered "Hotel California" flamenco style, sung in Spanish. John Zorn's cover of the Stooges "T.V. Eye" just plain stinks. Jevetta Steele singing "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" sounds like a remade Coke com-

mercial. Besides a few horrible songs, the CD is a tremendous collection of great covers.

INXS
X

(ATLANTIC)
HOT SPOTS: "The Stairs," "Lately" and "Suicide Blonde"

GRADE: B-

The boys from down under have returned to follow up their multi-platinum-filled album "Kick." The band seems to abandon the early sounds they developed. They have moved from the dancing, new-wave sounds to a more basic rock. Many early fans may think that the band is just copping out. Maybe they are just trying to do different things on every album. For example, the sound and style of "The Swing" is so different from "X" that the musical change is obvious and goes all the way back to their debut album, "INXS."

The songs on "X" range from the rocking dance track "Suicide Blonde" to the mildly paced "By My Side." The band introduces the harmonica playing of Charlie Musselwhite on "Who Pays the Price" and "On My Way." The album has no songs that stand out but in standard INXS style, they just flow together. Give it a couple of listens to make a judgement. It's different from the old, but it is stylishly new.

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