



# JOE COCKER

## Enzed Concert

For my money Joe Cocker has put on some of the best concerts Auckland has ever seen. His first show in 1972 with the Chris Stainton band, was widely misunderstood. Cocker unveiled new material and the large audience, familiar only with his well-known songs, became disgruntled.

They don't know what they missed. His versions of "St James Infirmary" and "Do Right Woman" were killers, that most of the crowd in their resentment at not hearing their favourites, ignored.



Cocker's second appearance in Enzed was even better. I'd rate it as one of the best rock concerts ever seen here. With a totally immaculate band that positively reeked of class, Cocker put on a show of immense subtlety and power. With Richard Tee on piano, Cornell Dupree on rhythm guitar, Gordon Edwards on bass and the amazing Albert Lee on lead guitar, he couldn't miss. I've yet to hear any other band achieve such a full and nellow sound at an outdoor concert and Cocker more than matched them.

This time through Cocker was billed as "The Return of the Mad Dog". But he no longer looks so mad. In fact, he was distinctly subdued; his hands no longer claw at the air or at his hair in the way they once did, and his vocal power seemed more limited than in the past.

However, with his new band, American Standard, and well-known session players Nicky Hopkins and Bobby Keys, together for only the second

time on stage, it was perhaps no surprise that no chances were taken either vocally or instrumentally.

Indeed, his versions of some of the old favourites such as "Space Captain" and "High Time We Went", were pretty lame stuff. American Standard are not the class unit that either the Chris Stainton band or Stuff were, and predictably Nicky Hopkins contributions on piano and Bobby Keys' sax solos were the instrumental highlights of the night.

But the most encouraging note of the concert was the energy Cocker put into many of the new songs. "Worrying Over You", "Wasted Years" and "All Because of What You Did to Me Last Night" were proof enough that there's life in the mad dog yet.

Hell, I'd go and see the man anytime. For Joe Cocker's gift is the ability to throw himself into a song. Not just vocally but mentally and physically too. So, when Joe gets it right, he doesn't just sing a song, he lives it, and that makes him the consistently compelling performer he is.

There's too little genuine passion around to ignore someone like Joe Cocker.

Alastair Dougal

