



UN FOCU ISED

Tys Van Leer would be one of the most unlikely candidates for superstardom you could ever imagine.

Classically trained, at home with chamber orchestras, a player of superb classical flute, and previously known in this country only for his associations with Focus ... not a big drawcard, the ignorant would think.

Tys proved them all wrong, as the star attraction of Music Expo '78.

A professional to his fingertips, Tys arrived here with only days up his sleeve to get his act together.

He had to play rock, jazz and classical music, and without even taking a rest from the gruelling flight, had to plunge straight into rehearsing.

A work schedule that would cripple a mule, and he took it all in stride.

Problems started as soon as Tys arrived. The musical scores which had been ordered didn't arrive from New York, so he wrote all the scores for a 15-piece orchestra, for the rock show, by himself, in the two days he was meant to be resting up.

"It made me feel tired," he says in his lilted accent, "and proud."

Tys isn't an arranger by profession, and the experience, he says, was worth it.

"My minority complex in writing has diminished a little now," he says (I think he means inferiority).

Focus no longer exists as a touring band, but Tys is far from idle.

"When I am in Europe," he says, "I try to compose a lot. I just sit at the piano, open one window for some fresh air, and work, which is hours and hours of blood, sweat and tears."

In between composing, practising the flute and studying other composers, he's also doing two film scores, and contemplating a follow-up to his new album, *Nice to Have Met You*.

Previously, Tys's solo work has been in a classical vein, a series of fine albums under the common title *Introspection*.

Nice To Have Met You is joyful, energetic jazz-rock, played with America's finest session men, including Ralph MacDonald and Tom Scott.

"It has always been my desire to play with the hottest New Yorkers," says Tys. "Ralph is one of the most beautiful percussionists on earth."

His manager had been trying to convince him for some time that he should record in the States, and a jam session with players like Billy Cobham and George Duke on the final night of last year's Montreaux Summit clinched the idea.

Tys was signed to CBS in America, and off he went. Half the album's material was written in the studio, the rest had been accumulating for some time. An old favourite or two was added for some spice.

Tys was amazed how professional and yet

how relaxed the American musicians could be. Cracking jokes and serious recording just don't mix in Holland.

The future is as full as the present. In the next 12 months, there's a European tour with a symphony orchestra, a series of promenade concerts, another tour with a string quartet that's already sold out, two new classical albums, a chamber concert in a church, recording his film scores, then maybe forming a new group.

Friday night at the Auckland Town Hall. The ground floor is full of musical exhibits, but the balcony is nearly full of people, come to hear the second show, which is jazz-oriented.

Tuesday night's rock show was a great success, and hopes are again high.

The Bruce Morley Little Big Band kicks off the first half, and immediately gets plagued by the sound system, which never quite comes right during the entire show.

Despite the handicap, the band is a delight, with the horn section striking sparks, and each player earning his solo applause in the old style. Everything from be-bop to the more contemporary sounds of Hancock and Corea is covered, and the climax is a spectacular drum duel between Bruce and Billy Nuku that draws a well-deserved ovation.

Bruce has a band to be proud of, and when is someone going to get him into a studio?

Tonight, Tys has a six-piece brass section, the first time he's played on stage with horns, a four-piece backup ensemble which includes Tui Timoti on guitar, and two backup singers.

On he strides, dressed like a travelling troubadour in purple and black. Tys describes himself as an "exhibitionist", and certainly his stage presence exceeds all expectations.

He prowls the stage, dancing like a dervish, controlling the band with expansive waves of his flute.

His playing first displays all the classical purity of touch, and then all hell breaks loose, as he spits out the notes in a style equalled only by Ian Anderson.

The new material is fresh and clean, and includes a number written only that day and rehearsed in just over an hour, in honour of Music Expo.

The old Focus standard "House Of The King" is given a fine airing, with the brass and lead guitar providing a fine underpinning to the flute.

Mention must go to Timoti, who plays one raging solo after another, shining even when lost in the sound mix, which is often appalling.

The finale is, of course, "Hocus Pocus", which is more like a riot set to music. Tys lets his lunacy run wild, and everyone goes home well satisfied.

Tys himself is overjoyed, and full of praise for the local session musicians, some of whom were only recruited the day of the show.

"It's an experience to play music with people you've only known one and a half days, who are thrilled by your presence and you are thrilled by their presence," he says.

"Maybe we didn't play perfectly, and you wouldn't expect that. But there was a very intense communication, and something happened that was very dear to me, very warm."

One can only hope that New Zealand has been half as enriched by this amiable Dutchman as he has by us.

Duncan Campbell



NEW ZEALAND TOP FORTY

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| 1. F.M. Various | 21. Rumours Fleetwood Mac |
| 2. Some Girls The Rolling Stones | 22. Shadow Dancing Andy Gibb |
| 3. Saturday Night Fever Bee Gees/VA | 23. Natural High Commodores |
| 4. Bat Out of Hell Meatloaf | 24. Everyone's A Winner Hot Chocolate |
| 5. Kamahl Kamahl | 25. Here At Last, Live Bee Gees |
| 6. The Sound of Bread Bread | 26. The Legendary Jim Croce Jim Croce |
| 7. Opera Andre Kostelanetz | 27. Masterpieces Bob Dylan |
| 8. Pyramid The Alan Parsons Project | 28. Silk Degrees Boz Scaggs |
| 9. City to City Gerry Rafferty | 29. This Year's Model Elvis Costello |
| 10. The Stranger Billy Joel | 30. I Robot The Alan Parsons Project |
| 11. Darkness on the Edge of Town Bruce Springsteen | 31. Even Now Barry Manilow |
| 12. Greatest Hits Vol II Olivia Newton-John | 32. Hotel California Eagles |
| 13. The Last Waltz Various | 33. Street Legal Bob Dylan |
| 14. Simple Dreams Linda Ronstadt | 34. Will Anybody Marry Me Pam Ayres |
| 15. And Then There Were Three Genesis | 35. Footloose & Fancy Free Rod Stewart |
| 16. The Kick Inside Kate Bush | 36. You Light Up My Life Johnny Mathis |
| 17. Octave The Moody Blues | 37. All 'n All Earth Wind & Fire |
| 18. Before & After Science Eno | 38. Greatest Hits Linda Ronstadt |
| 19. Stranger In Town Bob Seger | 39. Dark Side of the Moon Pink Floyd |
| 20. Barry Manilow Live Barry Manilow | 40. Going Places Ron Goodwin/NZSO |

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