

mean? I normally do three. But when I feel the audience isn't right I restrict myself to two. Do you think I did 10 minutes too short a set?

Yes. I could have taken ...

Ten minutes more. You know why I didn't? Because Jim (*Young, her keyboardist*) is such a lazy bastard (*she smiles*). Ten numbers would be alright for him. And then the people you know if only only do my solo stuff, the fans like it but only sometimes it's right.

You think it's only the fans who like the solo stuff?

"Well, unless I'm getting new ones ..."

Were you disappointed with the size of the crowd (400-odd) last night?

A little. But what can I do? Maybe it was the day of the week, but that shouldn't make any difference (*she says, adopting a slightly hurt tone*). It wasn't raining. In New York they stand in line even when it's, you know, a foot of snow ..."

And Bob Dylan came through the other week and got 40,000.

I know ... *that is ironic.*

(*She leafs through an Australian music paper and scans a page.*) "Martin Plaza? Who is he? Is he good? He looks a little like Jim Morrison ..."

He's a lot shorter. But anyway, Bob Dylan's a millionaire many times over, Lou Reed's one, quite a number of other people you've been associated with are now very comfortably off — do you think it's a reasonable thing for you to expect to be wealthy?

"Yes, but you can't be ... a poet at some stage has to be poor. And somehow money spoils poetry. It does, it takes away, it changes your original intention. I always become nasty when I have money. I think I'm persecuted and I think people are after me for my money. Although I never had a million for instance. The most I ever had was \$10,000. (*She smiles*) Because everybody owes me royalties, they all cheat me. You know, from *The End* album I never received a penny. It was a sub-label of Island, and this Joe Lastic, he was my first manager and I left him and went to meet Andy (*slight emphasis — there's Andy and there's ANDY*). I didn't come back, so he thinks he has a hold on me for being my first manager, that he should cash in on me. Even now. Maybe he's right.

You don't sound very bitter about it.

(*Her face softens, and she smiles again*)

Noooo (*she says softly ...* As long as I can sing. Because that gives me great satisfaction. Although it might not seem that way. But I always like to underplay rather than overdo. Like I don't like to use my hands. It's like I intentionally don't use my hands because a robot doesn't."

But you do use your cigarette as a prop.

Oh that — that's for the lighting. And it helps me breathing. It does! Strange, huh? It sort of reminds me that my lungs are there (*chuckles*).

Are you conscious of being gazed at during a performance?

Yes. Sometimes, like last night, when I'm very close to the edge of the stage and people can see how many teeth are missing! It's true!

Does that ever make it hard to perform?

(*Pause*) "Oh no, no, no. I've gotten over that now. I just accept it. But sometimes I'm very sober, last night I was very sober. And Jim and the others were very impressed — I didn't even smoke a joint or have a drink. I just had juice, pineapple juice (*laughs*).

You seem to be very good at making eye contact with people in the audience.

Eye contact? Oh yeah? It's a terrible habit of mine!

Your singing was very good — much better than on the record.

Thank you. And that's true, I mean that's one thing John (*Cale*) doesn't like to underline, my voice. Somehow it isn't put out front, it's like another instrument.

You've said that before yourself.

Yes. A long time ago, some jazz fanatics said that my voice sounded like a saxophone. (*then, quietly*) That made me kind of happy.

Does that make the words any less important?

Oh no, no, no — I really have to choose very carefully what I sing. I have to restrict my vocabulary. Some songs, the old ones, they sound more religious ... they're more ... still, like as if I hadn't already become a nihilist.

(*A pause. What do you say to that?*)

Why are you still working with John Cale? It's a long time ...

We just complement each other best. He just seems to, without a question, it just happens that we can work together. He always gives me a stronger thing — like since we recorded the album the group has automatically gotten better. They were the same musicians before that, but before that they didn't play like that. So that's what John has done, it's really very good.

About the time he was here a couple of years ago, he was quite frank about wanting a hit record. He even said something to the effect of "Lou's had his 'Walk on the Wild Side', I want mine." Do you relate to that at all?

No, I don't think I'm a number one chart singer. I mean, the type of song ... I would

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