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THE WHO



A 1965 photo from 'The Who Illustrated Biography' (Omnibus).

The North American entertainment business has turned the process of swallowing rock music and spitting out dollars into an art form. The most recent example of this was provided by the Who's last show of their farewell tour of North America in Toronto in mid-December. Twentieth Century Fox, CBS and the Molson Brewery combined to produce a simultaneous live radio and television broadcast that was carried to an audience of millions across North America. Prior to the event, the Who held court at a press conference in which both Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey waxed eloquent on a wide range of topics.

Townshend on THE WHO'S FUTURE:

"I hope we'll continue to work together. I have a feeling we'll find new ways of working together, but I'm not quite sure what they'll be. I'd certainly like to keep writing for Roger as a singer."

Daltrey:

"I'm really happy and positive about the group. The future doesn't frighten me at all. Pete has played better than he ever has in his life and it's been a great way to end this part of our career. People have billed this as our last concert, but I don't think that's true. It's definitely the last tour, but there'll be more concerts."

Townshend on VIDEO:

"It is a new medium with potential. I'd feel more optimistic about it if I'd seen something staggering or outstanding. I've found just isolated exceptions where you could say 'that is art, that I could live with for the rest of my life'. Yet every day I hear a record that I'd keep until I die."

"Music has changed because of video. You now have people like Steve Strange who are only as good as their last video."

Daltrey on the WHO REPERTOIRE:

"We're in a difficult position. We tend to be criticised for doing quite a lot of the old stuff, but most of our good stuff is old. 70 to 80 percent of our audience haven't seen us before and they come to see things like bits of *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*. It's hard to know what to leave out."

Townshend on VENUES:

"Our Shea Stadium (New York) concert was archetypal of those large stadium shows that have become such an abomination in rock'n' roll and yet it was still such a fantastic event. I would rue the day when I had to see Springsteen or the Clash at Shea Stadium. I wouldn't go, but neither would I see the Who in a place like that. Rock music deserves venues specifically geared for music, but we end up in sports arenas. When we play those massive arenas of over 50,000 people, you have to be detached from the idea. If I kept thinking about the size of the crowd, I'd be wearing brown trousers by the time I reached the stage!"

Townshend re MUSIC AND MESSAGES:

"I don't have messages, just opinions and feelings. If I had messages, I'd be a politician. Music hasn't lost its ability to communicate feelings, but when it is didactic, it starts to fall down. I still feel strongly that rock is a powerful form."

Daltrey on THE CLASH:

"They are doing what we used to do some time ago and have ceased to do in some ways. I think they have a lot to offer."

Townshend on BRITISH POP:

"The revamped pop phenomena in Britain is just a trend. I think it will probably pass. Music gets lighter when things get tough, deeper when things are easy."

Townshend on THE JAM:

"The fact that the Who perhaps went on past their peak and didn't recognise it at the time, I don't know, maybe Paul Weller has

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