Elevators, Conqueroo, Jomo Disaster Happen

By BARRY KAPLAN

Thresher Editorial Staff

Maybe it wasn't exactly the Filmore Auditorium, and maybe the presence of the Weird Beard turned a lot of people off, but Houston had an acid-rock show last Saturday night, complete with light show and hippies.

Sponsored by International Artists, the Thirteen Floor Elevators, local group gone big time, and the Conqueroo, an Austin combo refreshingly small time, filled the Houston Music Theatre with the mind-bending sounds of the New Music for three hours. The Jomo Disaster, an Austin-based lighting and special-effects show (under the auspices of the Electric Grandmother) tried valiantly to integrate the visual into the auditory, but was baffled by the size of the hall.

Longhairs

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the concert was the demonstration that Houston, too, has its dropout element. A large number of people with hairdos that would not permit them to have the sort of job that the American Dream promises, wearing a hodgepodge of garments that would put the most imaginative Archi-Arts crowd to shame, showed up and swung along with the sound of What's Happening.

The electronic equipment so necessary to the proper performance of any type of post-Sinatra music covered the revolving stage in bewildering abundance (the Elevators have an electric—hold on—jug) and illustrated the complete acceptance of the New Technology into the New Culture. Blasting out over the 360 degrees of the theatre-in-the-round, the sound was sufficiently intense to throw the most jaded hippie into transports of ecstasy.

Polished Elevators

The only word for the Elevators is polished. With an album selling well and with a reputation spread as far as San Francisco, they played the numbers that have made them famous with an expertise that is one of the hallmarks of professionalism. Their intensity and vigor promises to make them a top group for years to come.

The Conqueroo was a bit more relaxed, but a trifle less polished. Their lack of stage presence was almost charming in a world of performers whose cares about impressing the crowd act to the detriment of their musicianship. Dressed in an assortment of styles ranging from polished Mod to Salvation Army-Skid Row slop, their detachment and natural, free-flowing sound made their set very enjoyable indeed.

Jam Session

The final hour of the three-hour concert was a psychedelic jam session that put one in mind of the great days of jazz, when the greats would come together in some dingy, smoky club and improvise endlessly without consideration of ego-differences or top billing. The audience, rather restricted by the lack of dancing, was shaking the seats of the Theatre in empathy with the performers.

It was a rare thing for Houston, but a reminder that when something Happens, It’s Happening all over.