

# Oldies still golden, though players gray

By MICHAEL SANGIACOMO  
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Most of the faces were familiar, though much older.

Amazingly, the voices still sound the same, as if immune to the ravages of time.

But above all, the songs survive.

How can anyone go wrong singing "My Girl," "Soul Man," or "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"? These are songs that are burned into our national psyche. Songs many grew up with, and thanks to unrelenting classic rock stations, generations that subsequent generations have grown up with as well.

The Gund Arena was the setting Friday night for the oldies musical buffet called "Let The

## MUSIC REVIEW Let The Good Times Roll

Good Times Roll." It was a chance for the older end of the baby-boom generation to let its graying hair down and listen to Jerry Butler, Dennis Edwards and the Temptations Revue, Lesley Gore, The Coasters and six other blasts from the past.

But the age of the rockers is starting to show as the Grim Reaper takes its toll. Sam Moore, half of Sam and Dave, performed without his late partner. There is only one original Coaster left, Frankie Lymon's Teenagers on without him, just as The Crickets persevere without Buddy Holly. With three members of the original Temptations gone, Dennis Ed-

wards backs off a bit and calls the show the Temptations Revue, like Temptations Light.

Absent friends notwithstanding, the rock 'n' roll show was a success. There were a couple of technical problems and the house band that backed up most of the acts was pretty weak, but overall the good times did roll.

All the acts owe a debt of gratitude to Freddy Cannon, who woke up the band and the audience after intermission.

"This is a rock 'n' roll show, you guys are supposed to be drunk and dancing by now," he said. "Let's see some action."

Here was a guy with some energy and excitement who made people enjoy themselves, whether they wanted to or not. "Palisades

Park" and "Action," the theme of the 1960s television show "Where the Action is" roused the crowd for The Coasters.

The Coasters, the first group to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, did the 1958 hit "Yakety Yak," followed by "Youngblood," and the band's signature song, "Charlie Brown." The current incarnation has been together for more than 20 years, but only one of the three was from the original group. They seemed so much like the originals, it was doubtful that anyone would have guessed.

The three guys in the Tokens did their usual class act with impeccable vocals and harmonies and skillful renditions of "Tonight I Fell In Love" and "Portrait of My Love."

Cleveland favorite Lesley Gore ran through her five biggest hits in 12 minutes. Some expected the show to be over at that point and only stopped applauding when she continued singing. Each act performed about 20 minutes, a ridiculously short set by modern standards. But considering that most of the songs of the 1950s and early 1960s were under three minutes, a 20-minute set was not so bad.

The young girl in Gore's songs is the same. She goes from the lovesick optimist in "Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows," to the heartsick girl dumped by her boyfriend in "It's My Party." She gets him back in "Judy's Turn To Cry," and discovers her womanhood in "You Don't Own Me."

Jerry Butler was good, but per-

haps a little too cool. Sam Moore got hot midway through his set with a powerful "Soul Man." The Temptations did a creditable job with the old songs, but the magic is waning. Frankie Lymon's Teenagers were hurt the most by the sleepwalking house band, but "Why Do Fools Fall In Love" killed.

Likewise, if Sonny Geraci wants to be more than a historical footnote, he is going to need his own band to replace The Outsiders. He was great on "Time Won't Let Me," but he could have used some help in the backup vocals.

The Crickets show was so weak it barely went above the level of a country fair performance.

But who can complain? Ten acts, four hours, \$15.

What a country.



Ireland-based Cranberries lit up the Agora Saturday night with a performance rife with showmanship.

## Talented singer leads band in inspired show

By ROBERTO SANTIAGO  
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

### MUSIC REVIEW Cranberries

At a time when vocal quality is sacrificed for lyrics and rock 'n' roll attitude, Cranberries lead singer Dolores O'Riordan is a salvation to the ears.

Blessed with a vocal range that moves from haunting to poignant to bubbly pop, O'Riordan is an artist in every sense. Her compositions: striking. Her vocal inflections: hypnotic. Her stage presence: sharp.

O'Riordan can even play a decent chord on the guitar — and seldom goes off key.

Given that, it should be no surprise that the Ireland-based Cranberries slammed home a powerful concert at the Agora Saturday night. American alternative rock contemporaries Liz Phair, Courtney Love, and Lisa Loeb could take a lesson from O'Riordan on what true artistic showmanship is all about.

The Cranberries got off to a good start with O'Riordan on acoustic guitar and had the audience in its control by the third

song of the set, "Linger" which inspired the sold-out crowd to sing back the chorus line back to her louder than her amplified voice.

Knowing where the vibe was headed, O'Riordan did her awkward twistlike dance steps, left the guitar behind, grabbed the microphone, and let loose a better-than-CD version of "Pretty."

This set up the atmosphere for the gorgeously melodic "Dreaming My Dreams." The lighting effects made the band look like Venus emerging from a shell of light.

So when the Cranberries followed up with "Daffodil Lament" and "I Can't Be With You," it was clear that the show — at least for a few minutes — was attempting a narrative flow.

It was an effective strategy that worked well right through the climax, "Ode To My Family," where O'Riordan played a few inaudible notes on the keyboard and showed more than ever how ex-

traordinary and effective her voice can be.

O'Riordan then shifted the mood with "Ridiculous Thoughts" and did a horrible, off-key rendition of her most lyrically powerful song — "The Icicle Melts" — a timely song about mothers who kill their own children.

But O'Riordan recovered with "Waltzing Back," "Still Can't..." and closed with the trademark hit — "Zombie."

The audience erupted. The moshing crowd increased its fury. People stood up and danced and weaved to the beat. The Cranberries kept the high energy through its encore set "No Need To Argue," "Empty," and its 1992 hit "Dreams."

Boston-based opening act, Gigolo Aunts, showed that it is a band that might headline one day if it develops an effective stage presence.

In the meantime, its songs are wonderful. The best of the night were "Mrs. Washington," "Coat," and "Serious Drugs" — a power ballad Gigolo Aunts claims is suitable to play at the high school prom.

## Young masters of jazz superb, solo after solo

By MICHAEL DREXLER  
PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

### MUSIC REVIEW Joshua Redman

When a serious jazz crowd cheers not only the main artist in a quartet, but also the side men after each solo, you've got a supergroup.

At Peabody's Cafe in Cleveland Heights, Joshua Redman — the young giant of Generation X jazz tenor sax artists — presented Saturday evening what he has always dreamed: his own superensemble, a la John Coltrane of the '60s, and Miles Davis' groups of the '50s and early '60s.

Redman, 25, is nearing the height of his powers, with technique as superb as his ability to enunciate vast flights of emotion from his horn. He is the genuine article in acoustic jazz — a player who will probably dominate the music in this decade.

Now on tour to play live his lucid, hard bop-inspired compositions of his new "MoodSwings" compact disc, he and Christian McBride on bass, Johnny King on piano and Brian Blade on drums felt the love of the crowd as they cheered solo after solo. These young artists all have a sense of jazz history, yet remain fresh, original, personal.

The group meshed beautifully on all the compositions — especially Redman's "Mischief" and the Matt Dennis ballad, "Angel Eyes." The emotional cohesion was thrilling.

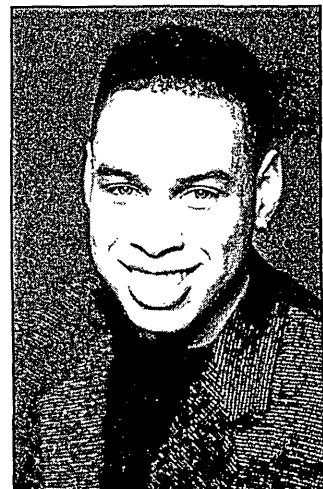
Redman is master of the witty lyric line, the long, slow blues statement and the crying emotionalism of post moderns like Albert Ayler. Redman's sax mentor is Sonny Rollins, and, like that great tenorman, Redman has a romantic willingness to take emo-

tional chances — sometimes building such intensity in rhythm and lyric line that he sends his blues-based style spiraling into long chromatic smears ending on the bluest, hippest possible note.

McBride, the top jazz bassist right now, will remind some listeners of the great Paul Chambers — elegant and soft in accompaniment and daring as a soloist. Drummer Blade was deft, clean. Pianist King, not on the album, was nonetheless perfect in performance, a fine exponent of McCoy Tyner who also likes the bluesy snap of Wynton Kelly's style.

All these players draw on their sense of history and personal poetics in jazz — something central to Redman's concept of the music.

When that happens, you have no less than a supergroup.



Joshua Redman: standout tenor sax artist

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