

THE STONES IN CLEVELAND

By Karla Tipton

(111 Lines of 50 Spaces)

A STONES CONCERT is a phenomenon anywhere and anytime. It's an experience one doesn't soon forget and it leaves a lasting impression on all who witness it--and even some of those who don't. When the supergroup played Cleveland July 1 nothing was any different. At the moment they walked onstage, Cleveland Stadium could have been Madison Square Garden or the L.A. Forum. The feeling was universal. The Stones had arrived and Cleveland welcomed them.

"Let It Rock" opened the show--a move no one expected, or heard over the crowd's din. In a shiny red rain jacket, black leather pants and yellow tennis shoes, Mick pranced and spit out the words while Keith Richards furiously hit the strings of his guitar in the truest Chuck Berry tradition. Ronnie Wood, as was noticed on the '75 tour, was a valuable addition, especially in the sense that he provided a personality for Mick and Keith to interact with. Keith never looked or played better than

when he was bouncing notes off of and trading riffs with his adopted brother of rock. And there's nothing more amusing than watching Mick and Woody roughhousing onstage.

The group stormed into "All Down the Line", then "Honky Tonk Women", giving the audience what it had hungered for all afternoon. On the concluding notes of "Star Star" Mick, stooping low, surprised even himself by slipping on the rain slickened stage and falling the remaining couple of inches to his ass. With the poise born only to a dancer, Mick recovered quickly, no one ever noticing he had lost his balance for a second.

After Mick assured Cleveland the group was glad to be back, the Stones set out to prove they were the best group of 1978 as well as every year preceding it. They did eight out of ten songs from their new album Some Girls, and they did them all in a row. For the first time in years the Stones were out to prove something that no one would soon forget. One thing that Mick himself proved was that he was no longer just the singer. Mick joined Keith and Ronnie on guitar, and for three songs the Stones were a three guitar group. With Mick doing much of the rhythm guitar work, Keith and Ronnie exhibited

just how well they do play together. The twosome added some passionate harmonies to Mick's vocals on "Beast of Burden" and "Imagination". The guitars were tight and the Stones themselves seemed to be having an enjoyable afternoon. "Shattered", an unlikely concert number, contained Keith's only major guitar solo and turned out to be one of the concert's best songs. Adding to the already "fun" lyrics, Keith and Ronnie chuckled their way through the "sha-doobies". "Shattered" was shortly followed by "Respectable" and all was going well.

"We're going to do a country song," Mick drawled, announcing "Far Away Eyes". He moved to the piano where Ian Stewart and Ian McLagan (ex-Faces) had been taking turns on all evening. "I can't play standing up and I can't play sittin' down," Mick twanged, "but I'm gonna play anyway!" Ronnie sat down at the pedal steel guitar leaving Keith to rhythm guitar and vocal harmonies. After Woody's amazing slide solo, and some ending choruses, "Far Away Eyes" ended the steady stream of new material of which, with good reason, the Stones seemed so proud. Their new songs are as excitingly vital as their old ones, and the Stones had proved what they had set out to prove.

But they weren't finished with Cleveland yet. "We ain't sugar--we ain't gonna melt in the rain," Mick assured the audience. The sound system began to crackle as Keith led the group into "Love in Vain", but there was no need to worry. The guitars were wireless. Their sound was sent through the amps via transmitters fixed on the guitars. The system fixed itself and the song continued undaunted. To hear "Love in Vain" in concert again after so many years was a surprise and a delight. Ronnie stepped out to the front on the lead guitar solo, his rumpled black hair glistening with rain. The Stones brought their fans back to reality with a classic example of "Tumbling Dice"; Keith and Ronnie grinned and grinded out the song in the typical Stones fashion. Keith stepped out to sing lead vocals on "Happy", and by watching him, one was made aware how much his music really does mean to him. His tight fitting cherry red shirt clung to him as he stalked the stage between verses. The true midnight Rambler with his guitar as the machine gun, Keith indeed looked happy. The group rolled into Chuck's "Sweet Little Sixteen" where, again, the guitarists burst into smiles. This was the Stones. They didn't have to prove anything to