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Hammond and the boys

Atlanta Rhythm Section sings songs of the South

By STUART AUSTIN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer
The boys from Doraville — better known as The Atlanta Rhythm Section — dropped into Rec Hall Saturday night for a little jam which turned out to be a dynamic concert.

The audience was in a reserved mood, surprising after the Nittany Lions' victory earlier that afternoon. However, the concert was not sold out (an estimate of 1000 in attendance) and the reserved seating tended to dampen things, compared to crowded, sweaty "festival seating." Not a single frisbee was thrown.

But that's what warms-up hands are for. McGuffey Lane, an Ohio-based band, punched out some hot outlaw country-rock, heart-breaking lost-love ballads and electrified bluegrass. Guitarist-vocalist John Schwab taunted the audience: "I heard you all are crazy... well, we're crazy too. When we get crazy we like to do some bluegrass."



Photos by Steve Shaw



Viva Montoya: flare of Spain from the strings of a guitar

By STUART AUSTIN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Old Carlos Montoya! A warm smile, lightning fingers and a fiery heart — these are the things which the world-famous Flamenco guitarist brought to Eisenhower Auditorium Friday night, things he gave us in each piece of a fabulous show.

Montoya was a serious performer, but he was warm and friendly throughout the entire concert. Into each piece he put his concentration and his talent, as every performer must. But he put all of himself into the performance, all the warmth, all the feelings within his Gypsy spirit. This is how Montoya distinguishes himself — one cannot play Flamenco without "feeling" Flamenco.

Montoya created variations in his music through dynamic and rhythmic manipulations. Loudly throwing out strums with his right hand, softly plucking a chord "backwards" (from high notes to low), marching, syncopating, using harmonics, throwing in an abrupt stop — all these techniques were spun together into a web of Gypsy magic by the archaic Montoya.

Unfortunately, what should have been a minor element caused a major blemish

on an otherwise spectacular performance — acoustics, the sound system through which Montoya's magic was muted. This is something a performer should not have to face in Eisenhower, especially considering the caliber of performers that appear there. The volume was awfully low (I had to strain to hear from about 12 rows back, so pity those sitting in the back) and Montoya's forceful four-finger strums came out garbled and muffled.

However, that was the only thing which could have dampened the spirit of the show. Montoya performed three "sets" of traditional Flamenco music — music which has no written score, only a characteristic rhythm and chord structure. Thus it is up to the performer to make the music do what he wants it to do. And Montoya has no difficulty making the music say "Spain," through an almost endless supply of techniques which yield an infinite number of variations.

Montoya's multifarious techniques were impressive enough in themselves, but when put together just so, here is the Montoya magic. Playing a nylon-stringed Flamenco guitar with a capo at the third fret, his style made broad use of the instrument. Usually picking in the

classical thumb-and-three finger technique for the basic chord structure of each piece, Montoya added his own dimension with percussive taps on the body with his little finger as he played.

He frequently picked only with his thumb on the right hand, letting his left hand's pull-offs and hammer-ons create lightning arpeggios. Often he created a fluid, harp-like sound using only his left hand pulling off the strings. Other times he tapped the fingerboard when executing a hammer-on, yielding a staccato, percussive quality. He imitated the sound of a tambourine by slapping the strings and body with his right hand, and even mimicked the sound of Spanish bagpipers by intoning slightly off-key.

Yet, talent and good technique are only part of the story. What clearly distinguishes Montoya is his feeling, his fire, the way he draws us willingly into the spider's web. He gradually brought us closer as the evening went on. The last set forceful, burning from the lightning striking from his fingers, the excitement of Gypsy dancing racing along the strings. It almost sounds like a corry National Geographic advertisement, but it's true: we visited Spain without ever leaving home.

concert review

This was just what the doctor ordered. The ice now broken, the stage was prepared for ARS. They arrived onstage to the music from "Gone With the Wind," a fitting intro. They launched wholeheartedly into "Champagne Jam," the title track from their seventh album, and continued through the evening with this intense energy.

Ronnie Hammond (left) and The Atlanta Rhythm Section rolled into Rec Hall Saturday night. Below Barry Bailey and Paul Goddard (l) to r) do a "Champagne Jam."

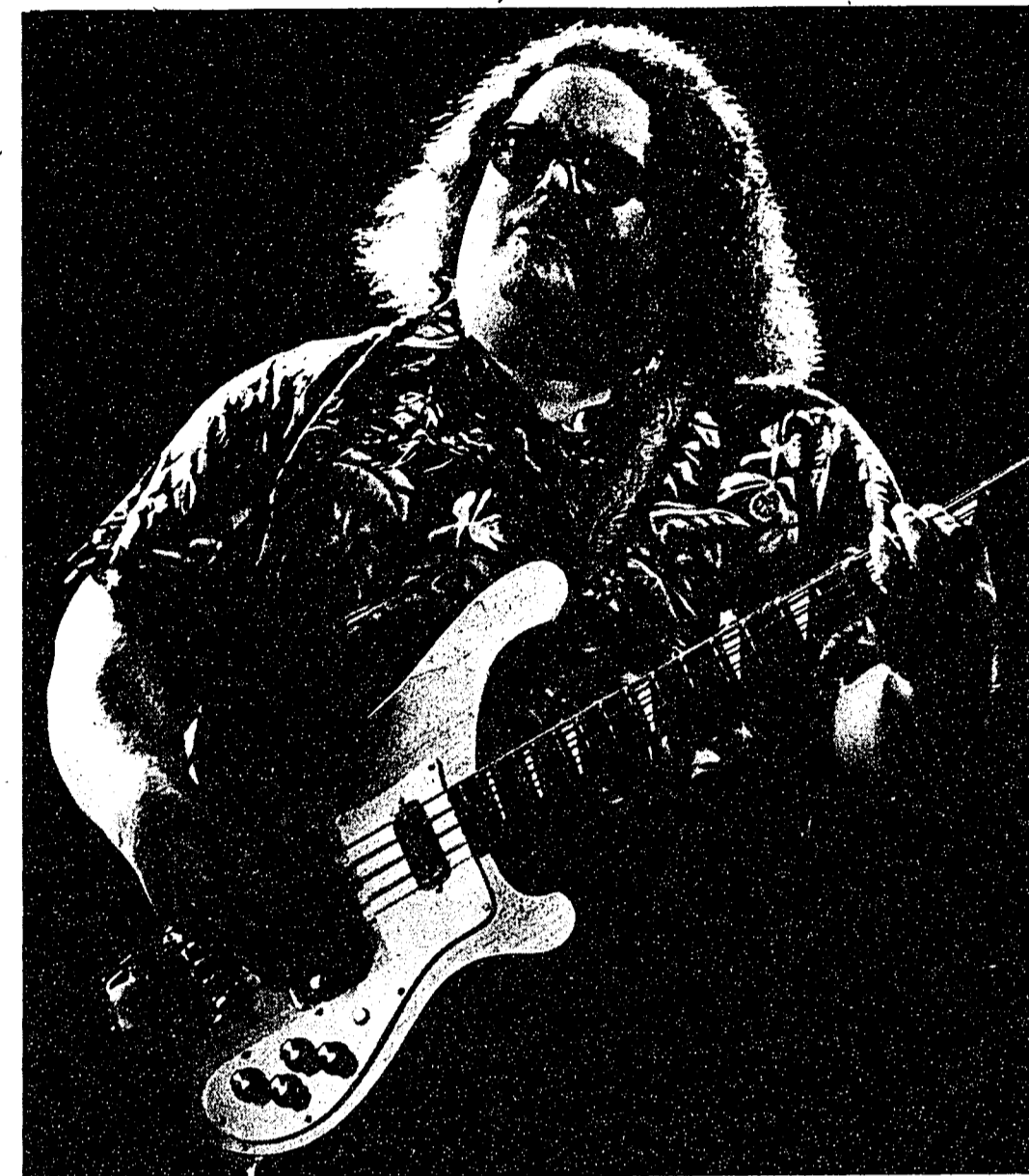
They played about a dozen songs, mostly from their newer, more familiar material, including "So Into You" and "Georgia Rhythm" from the 1977 *Rock and Roll Alternative* and "Large Time" and "Imaginary Lovers" from *Champagne Jam*. They reached into the past for "Back Up Against the Wall," the title track of their second album, and into the present with "Allen," the single from their newest LP *Quinella*.

ARS performed rockers like "Homesick," also from *Quinella*, with butt-busting intensity, with lead singer Ronnie Hammond tossing and twirling his mike stand as he roamed the stage — now at the edge of the stage, then back — as guitarist Barry Bailey steadfastly laughed into a lead — now up front, belting out lyrics, waving to people in the front row, staring them in the eye, even once reaching down and shaking the hand of the Daily Collegian photographer who was kneeling at the foot of the stage.

Hammond continued to put out, like a blast furnace of musical energy, wailing into slower numbers like "Imaginary Lovers" and "Spooky," diving with the crowd between numbers. He said he wished we could all get a little higher, as he handed down his Styrofoam cup of vodka and water for the audience to imbibe. The band then launched into its new single, "Higher."

Each member of ARS got his chance in the spotlight. Hammond would break in the middle of a song for a slide guitar lead from J.R. Cobb, a keyboard highlight from Dean Daughtry, a bone-crushing bass solo from the mighty fingers of Paul Goddard, a dramatic percussion climax by Roy Yeager.

ARS managed to heat up an otherwise chilly night in Happy Valley with its unique brand of music — bringing a little of that Southern comfort for all to taste. Sure tasted good.



Paul Goddard Photo by Barbara Parkyn

Hammond: leader of regrouping ARS

By STUART AUSTIN
Daily Collegian Staff Writer
"Lovin' the life we're livin', Playin' that Georgia rhythm. Let's give it everything we got. Just one more time!"

For Ronnie Hammond, lead singer for The Atlanta Rhythm Section, those aren't just lyrics, they're a way of life.

ARS' Saturday night show in Rec Hall was the second stop on a 20-day tour for the band that's getting back in the rock 'n' roll business with the tour and the release of its new album *Quinella* (Columbia, PC 27550). It's (the album) happening a little slow," Hammond said in a backstage interview following the concert. "So is the single, but records happen one of two ways: real quick or real slow. We hope that in the process of happening slow, they'll maintain the momentum. It's happening slow but at least it's a comeback. We were through with two years ago."

The tour is the most extensive road-work ARS has done since 1979, and Hammond hopes things will again work out for the band. "We released the album four weeks ago, and the single's been out about four or five weeks earlier than that. We had laid off all year making the album. It took six months, and we decided to wait until the single and album were released until we started an extensive tour," he said.

"This is the first one we've done extensively and we don't intend to slow down at all. Like I said, we've been a little cold since '79, and to get a little reaction sure is nice. We had a good decade in the '70s, and would like to have a good decade in the '80s. It's a strange business to be in, the competition is varied," Hammond said. "But were into it, we'll be around for the next ten years."

'If we could stay together for another 10 years and have a good run like we did in the '70s, that'd be enough to satisfy my soul, because I don't know anything else to do but music.'

—Ronnie Hammond, lead singer for The Atlanta Rhythm Section

Hammond talked about some of the songs from *Quinella*. "Southern Exposure" — that's a very special song for me. If I may be so presumptuous as to say this, I put in my will that when I die, the last verse of "Southern Exposure" be put on my tombstone. "Southern Exposure" to me is the epitome of any social commentary on Southern rock 'n' roll, or Southern living.

"I've tasted success in the last part of the '70s, of course I relish success, as anyone would that's trying to make it. It's not the all-important thing, but it is instrumental in paying the bills. I'm out for success, as we all are, but not in a way that dictates what we do for people. We have control of the creative thing, what we put out."

Hammond talked about his plans for the future of ARS. "We have had a lot of time at home since '79. Nowadays we're starting to work a lot more and I'm glad 'cause I do not want to retire now. Keep playing good music for 40 then I'll think about retiring. It's wonderful to be able to travel around, and see people, and make music and make friends. Damn good."

"I suppose if I could say it all in a nutshell, that in my opinion, if I could stay together for another 10 years and have a good run like we did in the '70s, that'd be enough to satisfy my soul, because I don't know anything else to do but music."

"I'd really rather make music than anything else for the next 10 years. We'll see how that turns out."



Ronnie Hammond

Organist to perform Bach

The University's School of Music will present an organ recital by June Miller, associate professor of music, at 8:30 tonight in the Music Building Recital Hall.

Selected works by German and French composers from the baroque, romantic and contemporary periods will be featured. The recital will begin with Max Reger's "Toccata and Fugue in D, opus 59." Also included in the initial segment will be three works by J.S. Bach: "Sonata No. 2 in C Minor," "Lectister Jesu, wir sind hier," and "Prelude and Fugue in C."

Heralded poet to give reading

Poet Gerald Stern, the author of "Red Coal" and various other works of poetry, will present a reading at 4 p.m. tomorrow in the Rare Books Room of Pattee Library.

Stern, a resident of Easton and professor of English at Somerset County College in Somerville, N.J., last year won the first Governor's

Award for Excellence in the Arts. His 1977 book "Lucky Life" was the Lamont Poetry Selection of the Academy of American Poets.

The reading is co-sponsored by the Institute for the Arts and Humanities Studies, the English Department and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Royal Philharmonic thrives on rock

By ANDREW WARSHAW
Associated Press Writer
LONDON (AP) — The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra topped Britain's singles charts in August with the disco hit "Hooked on Classics," and later played to sell-out audiences with blues wizard B.B. King and the American jazz-rock band The Crusaders.

What's happening to the orchestra founded by Sir Thomas Beecham 35 years ago? John Binson, who plays French horn and serves as chairman of the self-governing London orchestra, said the RPO is having to diversify to make a living these days.

Organist to perform Bach

When the RPO joined forces with B.B. King and The Crusaders for concerts at London's Royal Festival Hall, tickets quickly sold out.

Crusaders founder Sly Hopper described the collaboration as "a milestone in our career."

Hopper, King and the RPO said they had never before bridged the musical fence in such renowned company.

"We've backed Jose Feliciano, Andy Williams and the Three Degrees on stage, but these guys are something different," said Binson.

"They are all terribly talented musicians in their own right and maybe some of the classical fans who come to see the shows will realize not all contemporary musicians have long hair and take drugs," he said.

The RPO became a household name to pop fans in August after recording a medley of popular classics to a disco

beat, including Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumblebee." The single, "Hooked on Classics," shot to the top of the charts.

Dismissing criticism that the orchestra had "sold out," Binson said: "The record introduced us to a whole new audience. Our show, traditionally lose money and these youngsters are beginning to come along and hear the real thing played right through. That's got to be healthy — for us and them."

Heralded poet to give reading

At the same time, it wants to dispel the notion among pop fans that classical musicians are "boring old fuddy-duddy."

The average age of the RPO is about 40. Orchestras have some of the most versatile musicians in the world. You can put any music down before them and

they'll just play it," Binson said in an interview.

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