

Saturday, October 1, 1988 C-9

# Old and bold rockers gather in Nicaragua benefit

By Larry Kelp  
The Tribune

What started as a simple benefit in the 450-seat Great American Music Hall quickly snowballed into a grass-roots version of an all-star Amnesty International or Live Aid concert.

And the last thing anyone expected was the once feuding members of Jefferson Airplane, Paul Kantner and Grace Slick, together again. Not only were they together, they were well-rehearsed. Slick looked years younger, slimmed-down, vibrant and healthy.

## CONCERT REVIEW

The show drew a standing-room-only crowd that came to see more than the Bay Area rock legends. College favorites Billy Bragg and Michelle Shocked, from England and Texas, respectively, joined show organizers Kantner and Slick, Nicaragua's Grupo Mancotal and San Francisco's future-punk band the Beatnigs in a concert that ran well past midnight.

And what a mix of music it was. Those who came for Slick and Kantner got a nostalgia hit with "White Rabbit." And those who wanted whacked out percussion got the Beatnigs playing gas tanks with hammers, and a skill saw ripping a piece of sheet metal, sending sparks into the audience.

Although Slick and Kantner weren't creating musical sparks of their own, it was exciting to see them with just Kantner's acoustic, 12-string guitar for accompaniment, as they sang "Wooden Ships" and "Stairway to Nicaragua."

A wild, multiethnic finale had everyone but Shocked singing along in Spanish on the Nicaraguan revolutionary anthem "Comandante Carlos Fonseca."

A bit earlier, Bragg had helped Mancotal sing the pretty "Nicaragua, Nicaraguita," the first time I've heard Cockney Spanish, funny and touching at the same time.

They had the crowd dancing and singing along on "Banana," a Caribbean tune in English that comes from the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, where Creole African slaves brought from Jamaica sang it while harvesting plantation crops. "All the races like banana. All the nations like banana." That's world music for sure.



Paul Kantner and Grace Slick gave nostalgia buffs a thrill with 'White Rabbit.'

By Matthew J. Lee/The Tribune

Bragg concluded his portion just as he had on Tuesday at Zellerbach Auditorium, by inviting the Beatnigs to accompany him on his political reworking of Prince's "Purple Rain" into "Acid Rain." To his electric guitar, and the piano and bass accompaniment of his entourage — pianist Cara Tivey and one-man road crew "Wiggy" on bass — that's when Beatnigs emptied out the garage for their percussive accompaniment.

The Beatnigs, an Afro-Asian band, were Bragg's opening act during his just-completed Canadian tour. Now he launches his American tour with Mancotal as the opener.

Through most of his hour performance Bragg used just his electric guitar for accompani-

ment. A moral-political hero in the eyes of his fans, Bragg blasted through "There Is Power in a Union" and "Help Save the Youth of America" and a reworking of Bob Dylan's "Chimes of Freedom" into "The Sound of Ideologies Clashing."

Although Shocked has played the Music Hall in the past, this time it wasn't for her usual feminist crowd. Her songs were immediately beguiling.

There was her "Campus Crusade" look at evangelists, and "Graffiti Limbo," about a young, black, New York street artist killed by a group of white police officers. Several songs were set in her East Texas home. "Anchorage" is her first single, picking up airplay on more stations than the college circuit and

KPFA. But it was her a cappella version of the late Steve Goodman's anti-Vietnam War "Penny Evans" that was her most impressive moment.

The eight-man Mancotal is Nicaragua's premier band. But lead singer Luis Enrique Mejia Godoy broke his foot a few days ago, and is still at home.

Had they actually spent some time planning, Bragg and Kantner could have raised more money putting this big show into a theater. But the intimacy and lack of a big production made for one of the finer and more unique moments in Bay Area music.

Doris Worsham is off today.

## Today at the Movies

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| <b>ALAMEDA COUNTY</b><br><b>ACT 1 &amp; 2</b><br>Center of Shattuck<br>Berkeley 548-7200<br>Bargain Matinees Sat/Sun/Hols Before 3:30pm<br>• "FASCAL'S ISLAND" 1:30-3:30 5:30-7:30 9:30<br>• "BIG TIME" 1:30-3:30 5:30-7:30 9:30<br><b>ALBANY 1 &amp; 2</b><br>Sokano Ave.<br>524-5656<br>Bargain Prices 5:15 ALL SHOWS ALL DAY<br>• "BULL DURHAM" 4:00-6:05<br>• "YOUNG GUNS" 7:00-9:05 10:10<br>• "SPELLBINDER" 7:00-9:05 10:15<br>• "CLEAN AND SOBER" 7:05-9:10<br><b>BERKELEY</b><br>848-4300—Berkeley<br>Shattuck & Hoste<br>Bargain Matinees Sat/Sun/Hols Before 3:30pm<br>• "ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK" 12:30-1:30 4:45-7:00 9:15 | <b>NORTHSIDE THEATRE</b><br>1828 Euclid Ave., Berkeley—841-8000<br>• "Magnificent, a unique, infinitely moving homage to Van Gogh"—Jesse, S.F. CHRON<br>• "VINCENT: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF VINCENT VAN GOGH" 1:30 3:45 4:00 4:15 10:20<br>• "Katie Regan, S.F. CHRON<br>• "A new, per seversely brilliant retelling of Alice in Wonderland. Magical. A must see."—David Armstrong, S.F. CHRON<br>• "ALICE" 2:00-4:00 4:00-6:00 10:00<br><b>OAKS 1 &amp; 2</b><br>524-1834—N. Berkeley<br>1875 Sokano Ave.<br>Bargain Matinees Sat/Sun/Hols Before 3:30pm<br>• "WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?" 12:05-4:40 7:15-9:30<br>• "MOON OVER PARADISE" 7:00-9:30<br>• "MEMORIES OF ME" 8:00<br><b>PARKWAY 1 &amp; 2</b><br>Park Blvd./E. 18th | <b>CENTURY 9</b> 180 Apollon Way—Pinole<br>722-8030<br>Bargain Price Shows Starting Before 3:00pm<br>• "ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK" (PG-13) 1:45-3:30 5:35-6:50-10:00<br>• "HEARTBREAK HOTEL" (PG-13) 11:45-1:45 5:50-7:00-9:00<br>• "GORILLAS IN THE MIST" (PG-13) 12:00-2:00 5:00-7:00-9:00<br>• "RAMPAGE ON EMPTY" (PG-13) 12:30-2:30 5:30-7:30-9:15<br>• "CROSSING DELANCEY" (PG) 12:30-3:30 5:35-7:45-9:15<br>• "DEAD RINGERS" (R) 12:35-3:15 5:30-7:45-10:05<br>• "SPELLBINDER" (R) 12:35-7:15<br>• "NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 4" (R) 1:30-5:20-9:10<br>• "A FISH CALLED WANDA" (R) 12:35-3:35-5:45-10:05<br>• "Snack at 8:00"<br><b>CINEMAS SUNVALEY</b><br>Phone 887-7440 Lower Mall Concord<br>Bargain Matinees Daily—All Shows Before 4:30pm<br>• "BG" 1:30-3:15 5:15-7:15-9:20<br>• "DE HARD" 1:30-4:15-7:00-9:30<br>• "BAMBI" Sat/Sun Only 12:00 |
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