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RECENT COMMENTS

[Keith Urban/Sugarland @ Times Union Center 10/07/09 \(21\)](#)

KJ Thomas: I thought all of the performers were terrific and I LOVED Keith's departure-out the door,down the...

Tom: a joke – Thank you for articulating our point of view (post #18) better than I ever could have. Very well...

Tom: a joke – I'm so glad to know that there are others out there like you who recognize that the...

[BEN FOLDS @ THE EGG, 9/7/09 \(3\)](#)

HUGE Fan!: No mention of 'Don't Change Your Plans'....perhaps Eck meant that one, Jade? And,...

Jade: Your Redneck Past wasn't played last night (I was there)- perhaps Eck is confusing the song with Army,...

[Bernie Williams @ The Egg 10/06/09 \(3\)](#)

Joe Goman: As with most "Critiques" around these parts, I trust my own ears much better! Putting...

[Peter Rowan and Tony Rice @ The Egg, 10/4/09 \(1\)](#)

Jim Rawson: Aw Sarge c'mon, don't be bitter! These two legends have more talent in their pinky's...

FAUST @ Proctors, 9/30/09

October 1, 2009 at 12:38 am by [Greg Haymes](#)

By GREG HAYMES

Special to the Times Union

SCHENECTADY – When was the last time you went to a concert that featured a cement mixer?

Yes, it was that kind of night on Wednesday when the legendary German experimental rock band Faust dropped into the GE Theatre at Proctors.

Proctors, you say? Yes, that's right. The Schenectady theater complex best known for presenting polished productions of blockbuster Broadway-style musicals like "Rent," "Phantom of the Opera" and the upcoming "Wicked" teamed up with the maverick Albany Sonic Arts Collective to play host to an avant garde rock band that a) played a music box and a toy accordion b) deposited buckets of rocks into a swirling cement mixer and all around the stage c) dropped wire coat-hangers onto an amplified cymbal.

And all of that took place within the opening ten-minute "overture" of Faust's deliriously demented, undeniably self-indulgent and at times thoroughly captivating concert.

A bit of background: Faust is indeed an important band that began nearly four decades ago. Like the Velvet Underground, Faust didn't sell a lot of records and never really became stars, although everyone from Brian Eno to U2 to Sonic Youth and the entire New York City No-Wave scene of the '70s owes a deep debt to their experimental sound. In other words, they were more musically influential than financially successful.

The band is in the midst of only their third American tour in all those years, and they probably wouldn't have made a tour-stop in a secondary market like the Capital Region if bassist-vocalist-founding member Jean-Herve Peron hadn't spent 1967 as an exchange student at Mont Pleasant High School. "My hair's a lot longer now, and I'm a bit weirder," Peron explained to the crowd shortly before attending to the cement mixer.

The fact is that the concert was as much a '60s art happening as it was a rock concert. Drummer and co-founding member Werner "Zappi" Diermaier spent some time banging away on a slab of sheet metal. Newer band recruits James Johnston (of Gallon Drunk and Nick Cave's Bad Seeds) and his wife Geraldine Swayne switched off of guitar and keyboards, although Swayne was also Peron's key foil on vocals. There were long interludes of sonic chaos and spoken word between such songs as "Miss Fortune" and "Jennifer," the latter of which began with a touch of hippie flower power and turned dark as Diermaier took an electric sander to his sheet metal, sending sparks flying across the stage and nearly into the crowd.

Opening the show vocalist-banjo player Holland Hopson magnificently melded old-timey roots music with 21st century technology, while Century Plants (the duo of bassist guitarist Eric Hardiman and electronics effects master Ray Hare) offered a denser, yet minimalist soundscape.

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Faust

With Century Plants and Holland Hopson

Where: The GE Theatre at Proctors, 432 State St., Schenectady

When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 30

Length: Faust – 85 minutes; Century Plants – 20 minutes; Hopson – 25 minutes

Musical highlights: Highlights? Heck, the whole thing was a happening.

Upcoming: The next Albany Sonic Arts Collective show takes place at Upstate Artists Guild on Saturday, October 24 featuring Ben Miller.

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Greg Haymes is a freelance writer from the wilds of Schodack.