

Beck, Cocker, NRBQ Stone Club With Avalanche of Rock Sounds

NEW YORK—In a rare display of peace and punctuality, Jeff Beck and his moody rock group showed up at Fillmore East, Saturday (3) — after confirming their Fillmore reservations via telegram in the Village Voice — only to discover that British soul singer Joe Cocker and the NRBQ rock group had, seemingly during Beck's disappearing act, grown up, hiked to the big city and made good — very good, in fact. Meanwhile, Beck wasn't any better late than never.

Cocker, a squat, scraggly haired Britisher whose stormy reading of the Beatles "With a Little Help From My Friends" topped the local charts, leveled his booming blues growl on Dylan's "Dear Landlord" and "I Shall Be Released." Mimicking the instrumental work of the Grease Band, who supported him, and wildly fingering an invisible guitar to the racing riffs of Henry McCulloch, Cocker plunged in and out of Ray Charles' "Let's Get Stoned," cramming home the good advice with timing and delivery far above the dubious spit and polish of most pop performers. The A&M artist, whose first album shows how a fine voice and kinetic stage delivery can wither in captivity, also showcased George Harrison's "I Don't Know" and Paul McCartney's

"She Came in Through the Bathroom Window." Only Cocker's precarious and worshipping imitations of Ray Charles, performed with the same incredible pantomime as his aping of the instruments, could stall his deserved rise to pop stardom.

NRBQ, Columbia Records quintet, promises to cure America of what ails her, with their grinning, slap-happy Kentucky barn-rock. Blurred like a corny joke at a hoedown, the group's positive rock and roll leaps, titters, reels and thumps with a brand-new energy lost momentarily with the sad crack-up of John Sebastian's Lovin' Spoonful. Perhaps NRBQ is the answer. Led by Steve Ferguson, the group frolicked through "Stomp," their new single, a nifty trip on Sun Ra's "Rocket No. 9" and "Down In My Heart."

As for Jeff Beck, his return to Fillmore was triumphant. His guitar excursions accompanied by the vocals of Rod Stewart

were typical Beck magic, as he flirted with his flashy street-rock riffs, celebrating his guitar like a piece of dubious sculpture created as though for the first time by his bluesy scramblings up and down the frets. Beck, with new drummer Tony Newman, visited Elvis tunes, old tunes, and blue tunes from his upcoming Epic album, which should travel up the charts faster than Jeff Beck can say (or play) Fillmore East.

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