

'Michael Jackson, Miss Nude Canada' among capacity crowd

by

PAUL SANDERSON

Michael Jackson and Miss Nude Canada 1984 joined a three brother strip act, a disobedient Grade 5 public school class, the Canadian champion male body builders, and a girl with a four foot tongue, to entertain a cheering capacity crowd at the Country Mill in Tiny Township last Saturday evening.

With nothing more than the power of suggestion, the gifted entertainer Fernandez had once again transformed volunteers from his audience into instant celebrities.

The slim, dark haired performer has been developing his talents since the age of five when he began performing with his father's show of magic and illusions in Cuba. He describes the power of suggestion (the latest phrase for the old term hypnotism) as "both art and science." The entertainment value is art, while the science lies in Fernandez'

polished control of each situation.

After a roast beef buffet supper, Fernandez' opening show of classic magic illusions, and a hilarious schleppey and athletic performance by young comedian Martin Putz, about 30 people stepped from the audience to volunteer as subjects for the power of suggestion demonstration.

A large percentage of the young crowd had previously seen Fernandez two, or even three, times. Between August and Halloween this year, the Inn at Bay Moorings booked Fernandez three times.

The act was twice held over by popular demand, and Inn manager Ruth Gully was forced to turn away about 150 Fernandez fans on several occasions.

As the show progressed, Fernandez gradually identified 11 volunteers as being the most susceptible to the power of suggestion.

"The most important thing is person's ability to concentrate," he explains. "They have to have a conscious or unconscious desire to 'go under'. They do it themselves with a little help from me."

Then, with the co-operation of his 11 sleepy subjects, Fernandez gave the crowd what they had come to see. Two girls slapped their arms and legs to shoo away a swarm of mosquitos. One young man took off his sweater because it was getting too hot, while the girl beside him shivered from the cold. As half the group milked an imaginary cow, one poor volunteer tried over and over to count to 10, but she had forgotten all about the number six!

At Fernandez' count of three, a young lady opened her eyes to discover she had just been crowned Miss Nude Canada. She hid behind the drapes as her friend was 'awakened' by Fernandez believing he was Michael Jackson,

on stage live. With the appropriate music playing in the background, he actually did a very believable imitation of the superstar, including Jackson's very difficult Moonwalk dance step.

Despite his successes with a very receptive audience last Saturday, Fernandez admits there are real limits to his powers of suggestion. "If you've never seen a seal, I can't make you act like one," he says.

Nor can he make you stronger, or do anything you might be morally opposed to, like robbing a bank.

Although the power of suggestion has never been satisfactorily explained, Fernandez knows it is part of our lives every day. If you have to wake by 7 a.m., and you open your eyes at 10 minutes to seven, that's the same power of suggestion Fernandez used on the stage.

Between the lines

by ELI HENDRIKS-WITMER

Warner Brothers Studios have launched a major search for a new recording artist to star in their upcoming production Ronnie Finkelhof, Superstar. The artist they are seeking "should look 17 or 18 and have the potential of being highly successful in the recording field." It will also help if you can act. Anyone who thinks they might fit the bill should write to Alan W. Livingston, 141 El Camino Dr., Ste. 207, Beverly Hills, CA 90212. Orion Pictures' next

release, tentatively titled Teen Angel, will star Lewis Smith (Buckaroo Bonzai) and Jason Gedrick (Risky Business). The story is about a boy killed in a drag race in 1960 and sent back to help out a shy teenager in 1985.

Anne Murray was elated over her recent wins at the Country Music Association Awards. She took the honors for her album A Little Good News as well as the single of the same name and was the only double winner of the night. Anne's previous awards include

19 Junos, four Grammys, and an ACTRA. Congratulations Annie! You deserve every one of 'em!

Willie Nelson is walking around bare faced these days much to everyone's amazement. And not only that, he's cut off his hair! Country music's favourite redhead says he did it for comfort, but the main reason is obviously his new film role opposite Kris Kristoferson in Song-writer.

Boy George and Culture Club will make only one Canadian stop on their

current North American tour and that will be in Toronto at Maple Leaf Gardens. Meanwhile their new album Waking Up With The House On Fire is causing quite a stir and is said to be a giant step forward for the group. More on this later.

Saturday Night Live original Chevy Chase will star as a newspaper man turned detective in Gregory McDonald's Fletch. The film will be directed by Michael Ritchie and will co-star Joe Don Baker and Tim Matheson.

Rolling Stone Ron Wood will play a small part in his lady love Kim Basinger's next flick 9½ Weeks. Will Ron take up a career in movies? Not likely. Says he "It's too much hard work. They keep making us do it over and over". Mickey Rourke co-stars with Basinger and the scheduled release date is spring of 1985.

Plans are underway to make a movie based on Cyndi Lauper's hit video Girls Just Want To Have Fun. No word yet on who will star.

Actor singer and teen heart-throb Michael Damian of Young and Restless fame has released his first album entitled Love Is A Mystery. Michael is currently on a promotional tour backed by his band The Weirz. Ontario dates include Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Kitchener and London.

Harbour committee member resigns

A former chairman of, and member of, the Midland Harbour committee, Douglas Wright, has resigned.

Wright was a member for eight years.

Wright was highly involved with the improvement of the town's harbour area, Midland Alderman Dan Herbert told Midland council this week.

Dolly Parton's tune Single Women will be made into a movie for ABC-TV. Stay tuned for details on signing for this one.

If you want to do something really nice for your mother, your grandmother, your aunt or just someone you

really like a lot, take them to see Liberace if he shows up anywhere near your town. The show is pure Las Vegas and nothing short of spectacular. He received standing ovations from full houses every night at his recent engagement at Toronto's O'Keefe

Centre. Mr. Showmanship is celebrating his 40th year in show biz and has never been better. And, appearing with him on this tour is a dynamic new young vocalist named Cat Adams about whom I'm sure we will be hearing a great deal in the near future.

Country there's a need for more movies like this...

by TERRY DUPUIS

After many of the light-hearted, and in some cases light-headed, bunch of movies which came out over the summer, it is refreshing to find that Hollywood is bringing out some meatier and more mature for our theatre screens. Recently there was Norman Jewison's movie, A Soldier's Story. Then there was the poignant Depression drama Places In The Heart with Sally Field. Now we have another meaningful and superior drama called Country.

Country bears some similarity to Places In The Heart, both in theme and in the excellent execution of its storyline. Both movies deal with rural values, with the land and the people who work the land. Both stories have spunky heroines who are desperately struggling to keep their family together during a time of economic crisis. The crisis of the American farmer was dealt with in the classic Grapes of Wrath, but generally speaking it has not been considered a surefire topic to attract movie audiences with. It strikes me as being a healthy sign, that all is not lost in today's Hollywood, when the film industry comes up with two socially conscious films which reaffirm the value of human dignity.

Country in some ways is a sort of contemporary Grapes of Wrath. The movie is a labour of love for actress Jessica Lange, who co-produced the movie as well as starring in it. Lange plays Jewell Ivy, a young wife and mother who makes a living on her small Iowa farm. The farm land has been in her family for over a hundred years, and she runs it with her father and her husband.

However, due to today's uncertain economic times, there is a good chance that the Ivys are going to lose their land. They suddenly find their livelihood threatened by a forced

foreclosure. The imminence of their losing their farm has not only a disastrous potential for economic calamity, but the pressures begin to affect the personal relationships within the family. The father, Gil Ivy, begins to feel that he is a failure and he starts to drink heavily. And his father-in-law becomes bitter towards him, blaming him that he may lose the farm which has been in the family for a number of generations. And both parents begin to take things out on their children.

It is interesting to note that no one took Jessica Lange very seriously as an actress, when she made her movie debut 8 years ago in Dino de Laurentiis' pitiful remake of King Kong. But 6 years later she had established herself as one of Hollywood's major actresses, thanks to dramatic performances in The Postman Always Rings Twice and Frances. She proved she could handle comedy as well in Tootsie, for which she won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

These roles gave Jessica Lange the clout to choose her next film carefully, and she decided on Country. From a midwestern farm background herself, Lange is very conscious of this segment of American society, and she wanted to capture the plight of the contemporary American farmer as honestly as she could.

How well Lange has succeeded will be readily apparent to anyone who sees Country. It has some sterling performances not only from Lange, but also from Sam Shepard who plays her husband, and Wilford Brimley who plays her father. The absorbing and believable screenplay was written by William Wittcliff, who co-produced the movie with Lange. Direction was by Richard Pearce. Country is indeed a fine job by all concerned. In my view, we need more movies like it.

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