

Buffy Sainte-Marie offers tribute to Pauline Johnson at Chiefswood

By Marcus Van Steen

OHSWEKEN — Between 600 and 700 people gathered on the spacious grounds of Chiefswood on Saturday evening for a concert to raise money for the restoration of Chiefswood. It was the first event in a fundraising campaign organized by a committee made up of representatives of the Six Nations council and a number of surrounding communities.

The aim is to raise \$500,000 to restore the old building and to leave a fund substantial enough to ensure regular maintenance. The committee was fortunate in that the weather co-operated, providing a clear evening with cooling breezes. And it was doubly fortunate to secure Buffy Sainte-Marie as the star attraction. She came to Chiefswood after a performance Friday in Toronto.

The appreciative audience, naturally enough, had a strong representation of people old enough to remember the folksinger when she took the music world by storm in the early sixties. But there was also a large number of younger people, many of whom were hearing Buffy for the first time, and obviously enjoying it.

Buffy always manages to achieve instant rapport with her audience by her informal friendly approach and her tremendous energy. She stamps her feet and is constantly on the move. She gives every appearance of enjoying herself, which allows the audience to relax and enjoy itself, too. For a small woman she packs a

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tremendous wallop, belting out songs with enough power to rival the high-decibel accompaniment. But for several of her songs she had only a minimal accompaniment or none at all. For one of her most successful numbers, Cripple Creek, she accompanied herself on a mouth bow, a strange, ancient instrument which she had made herself.

Buffy started her concert with a tribute to Pauline Johnson, whom she described as Canada's first superstar who is generally underrated today. She also made the point that Pauline, like herself, proudly aligned herself with Canada's first inhabitants.

In spite of her Indian heritage (she was born on a Cree reserve in Saskatchewan) Buffy has written few Indian songs. She had two on Saturday. One was a powerful plea for fair treatment of the Indians, Now That The Buffalo's Gone. She prefaced this number by saying it was written a long time ago and she regretted that it was still relevant. The other was a sort of Navajo spiritual, Eagle Man, Changing

Woman, which had a touch of eerie, gently imagery about it that contrasted vividly with the rest of the program.

Buffy has written more than 400 songs and she had little difficulty in selecting several old favorites for this concert. Among them was the anti-war song, The Universal Soldier, which was written more than 20 years ago. The numbers which elicited the most applause were Until It's Time For You to Go, and Love Lifts You Up Where You Belong from the film An Officer and a Gentleman. Perhaps the most rousing number was Star Walker, which she belted out with contagious energy.

Before Buffy was allowed to say goodbye, the audience, which gave her a standing ovation, demanded an encore. Buffy consented with the jocular remark, "There's no rest for the wicked."

Finally, there was a brief ceremony in which the Six Nations council thanked her for her generous help for the Chiefswood restoration project. Among the gifts bestowed on her, Buffy, a Cree, was given a Mohawk name which translates into English as Great Singer.



Expositor Photo

Chiefswood on Highway 54 was built in 1853.