

ENTERTAINMENT

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By Seth Rogovoy
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PITTSFIELD

How disappointed those who tried everything in their power to keep Saturday's "Woodstock 20" benefit concert from happening must be.

In spite of all the eleventh-hour efforts to halt the crossover rock and jazz concert to benefit the Berkshire Opera Company, the concert came off without a hitch.

Mother nature sided with the promoters, giving the musicians and the fans a sunny, warm day, ideal for an outdoor music festival. Even the original Woodstock festival was rained on, if not rained out.

The concert began on time with the funky Pittsfield cover band, B-Side, and continued until Strut brought the show to a climactic close at 7 minutes to 10, the time deemed as the witching hour.

Kudos to stage manager Chris Schweitzer, his assistant Reuben Taylor, and the rest of the stage crew, all volunteers, for their excellent efforts at getting the bands on and off the stage with a minimum of fuss and the utmost alacrity.

The day's offerings were an eclectic mix, from the inspirational gospel of the Second Congregational Church of Pittsfield's gospel choir to the pop-metal of South County's Xavier, from the smooth folk-rock of Christian "Moe" Parker to the

Moe Parker, from Canton, N.Y., was the day's most Woodstock-like performer. His acoustic set included a few Dylan tunes, Simon and Garfunkel's "59th Street Bridge Song" and the Beatles' "Norwegian Wood." An excellent guitarist with a dulcet voice, he played an original song that blended so well with his

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covers that one wasn't certain whether it was a Parker tune or an obscure Crosby, Stills and Nash number.

Dumbwaiter, from Stockbridge, played a funky set of covers, including numbers by the Doors and Sly Stone. The group ended its set with an ambitious rendition of the Beatles' "Helter Skelter," not an easy tune to play, but the band pulled it off.

Local comedian Bucky Lewis provided humorous color commentary during the first half of the show, which was videotaped for cable TV channel 20. The concert will be broadcast on the cable channel, and tapes of the show are available for purchase for those who enjoyed it and those who missed it.

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Which brings up a final point. Unfortunately for the promoters, the turnout was below what was expected. With only 450 paid attendees, the Berkshire Opera Company will not benefit from Saturday's benefit — they'll be lucky to cover expenses.

It's hard to pinpoint the reason for the lack of audience support. Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that the Pittsfield Police Department rendered the ballpark an armed camp, into which fans were shuttled after being heavily scruti-

nized by the two armed guards standing by the entrance gate.

Five steps into the park, another couple of cops hovered by. In all, there were 10 uniformed officers stationed at Wahconah Saturday. That's five times as many as for a regular Pittsfield Mets game, at which alcohol is freely dispensed and fans are encouraged to be rowdy and exuberant.

Saturday's no-alcohol event was also marred by other strictures imposed on the performers and the fans. The stage was out by second base; the audience had to stay in the stands. This effectively prohibited any give-and-take between audience and performer, eliminating any possibility of the kind of interaction essential to the success of such a show.

It's too bad the city fathers, or whoever was responsible for making it so difficult to stage Saturday's show, couldn't have been there. They might have learned something from the spirit of collegiality and good musicianship that existed on stage and among the small crowd of fans, at what turned out to be a police benefit.

CHRISTIAN PARKER

CHRISTIAN PARKER, a Canton, NY folk singer-songwriter barely out of his teens, draws his inspiration from such 60's troubadours as Simon and Garfunkle and Bob Dylan.

An acoustic solo artist who has been performing since age 15, he has recorded one sold-out album, *Reflections of Tomorrow*, and is writing and recording more material. He hopes to reach a wider audience by playing outside of the North Country; the Albany Music Expo should provide him the perfect opportunity. He can be reached at Boyden Rd., Box 71, Canton, NY 13617.

