

'Once in a Lifetime Concert' pulls 39,500 into Three Rivers

By REX RUTKOSKI
Staff Writer

THEY CONVERGED, nearly 40,000 of them on Pittsburgh last week, like ever so many hip scout troops en route to a cosmic jamboree.

They came with back packs and blankets, picnic coolers and jugs, in the uniform of the day: blue jeans and t-shirts... walking, hitching, jamming the infamous "Bridge To Nowhere" (Fort Duquesne Bridge) with their vehicles.

In the stadium they camped for eight hours, waving their flags of self expression proudly... A blue peace banner... A green marijuana leaf against white background... The red and yellow South Vietnamese flag.

THEY STROLLED through the stands and across the board-covered tartan turf.

They danced. But mostly they just listened, caught up in the atmosphere of a beautiful night in Three Rivers Stadium.

It was "The Once In A Lifetime Concert," or so it was billed, and it drew 39,500 rock music fans — an alltime city record for a musical — at \$10 a head.

The previous high was set last summer when the premier British heavy metal group, Led Zeppelin, attracted 38,000 to the ball park.

Promoters Pat DiCesare of Monroeville and Rich Engler, formerly of Creighton, had hoped for a capacity of 61,000, but the actual turnout still represented a success for the duo.

(Radio news accounts inaccurately carried reports that 60,000 went through the turnstiles.)

BASEBALL BUFFS may be awaiting the annual all star game in Three Rivers later this month, but Pittsburgh area rockers had their lineup of allstars last week.

The bill, which included the British rock group, *Ross*, and the electronic wizardry of *Todd Rundgren* and his

band, *Utopia*, headlined *The Band*, considered by many to be America's foremost rock group, and *Eric Clapton*, one of the world's leading rock guitarists.

The audience, contrary to the tone of some radio reports, generally was well behaved. The presence of leftover 4th of July firecrackers was about the extent of any rowdiness. (Early in his set, Clapton berated those who were throwing firecrackers and sparklers, telling them to "Stop it, we don't need this silly aggravation.")

ONE PATRON was injured in a fall. The crowd was warm to *Ross* and *Rundgren*, who played during the daylight hours of the concert, which began an hour late at 6 p.m., and displayed an outpouring of enthusiasm for the *Band* and, finally, at 11 p.m., Clapton.

Clapton, a warm admirer of the *Band's* artistry, arrived backstage at 9:30 p.m. and asked to be taken to a stadium box to view the quintet's performance.

THE GROUP'S stature has grown markedly since its appearance at the mammoth Watkins Glen festival last summer and its billing this winter on *Bob Dylan's* historic tour.

They performed 13 songs, including "Stage Fright," "The Weight," "The

Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," "The Shape I'm In," and "Cripple Creek," for which they received \$80,000. They encored with "W. S. Walcott Medicine Show."

Clapton received an introduction filled with pomp and circumstance.

HE MAY have surprised many of his fans in the first half hour of his set, choosing to play laidback acoustic rock with his guitarist *Yvonne Elliman*, star of the original stage version of "Jesus Christ Superstar." Several of the songs

were from Eric's latest album, "461 Ocean Boulevard."

The musician began to move into more familiar material when he strapped on his electric guitar and did "Let It Rain."

Other members of his band were *Jamie Oldaker*, drums; *Carl Radle*, bass, and formerly of Clapton's *Derek* and the *Dominos* group; *Dick Sims*, keyboard, and *George Terry*, guitarist.

CLAPTON received \$125,000 for his efforts, topping *Zeppelin* who earned

\$119,000 in Pittsburgh last year.

Among notables backstage was *Albert Grossman*, former manager of *Janis Joplin*, *Bob Dylan*, *Crosby*, *Stills* and *Nash*, and others.

The next scheduled *Three Rivers*

Stadium rock concert will be Aug. 31 with *Chicago* and the *Doobie Brothers*. Promoters are mulling the possibility of a *Three Rivers* show later this summer featuring *Leon Russell*, *Santana* and *Poco*.

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