Wednesday, Jan. 31, 1973

Van Zandt Concert at Jordan Hall

of his fans.

the cult level.

songs tend to be completely

contemporary in their con-

cerns. A decent country pick-

his material is disconcertingly

consistent, and this is probably

the reason he has never

boosted his following beyond

Almost every song he per-

forms has the same slow,

droning pace, and his vocals

are uniformly monotonous. He

managed, on Saturday night,

spirited "Dead Flowers" into

a virtual dirge.
In addition, Van Zandt was

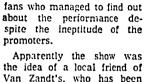
hindered, at Jordan Hall, by

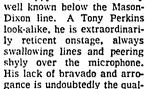
turn the Rolling Stones'

Despite Boston's growing reputation as a concert market (Neil Young's three days of appearances at the Garden and the Music Hall have been an almost immediate sellout). not all pop concerts are suc-

On Saturday night Townes Van Zandt, a troubador from the South, gave a concert at Jordan Hall and practically no one came. The hall, which is capable of seating well over 1000 people, was occupied by about 150 diehard Van Zandt fans who managed to find out about the performance despite the ineptitude of the

Apparently the show was the idea of a local friend of Van Zandt's, who has been advertising himself as the Unschooled in the 'Gipper.' ways of concert promotion,





tap the body of cultish sup-

port Van Zandt has acquired

in this city over the past few

doubtful that all of Townes'

Boston fans could have filled

Pop Scene

Jordan Hall, there was no ex-

cuse for the poor turnout

over the last few years, to sur-

vive if not to flourish. He has

made some four albums on

the Peppy label, and is fairly

Van Zandt has managed,

Saturday night,

While it may be

Mime Circus Opens Feb. 1

The Pocket Mime Circus. Boston's resident mime troupe, is now in rehearsal for a new production entitled "This Is No Movie."

The production will open Thursday, Feb. 1, with performances after that every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:30 in their Laughing Alley theater on 592 Commonwealth ave.,

MOTION PICTURE RATINGS

FOR ADULTS AND

YOUNG PEOPLE

MARGARET

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A YOUNG FELLINI speaks to the proprietress of an outdoor restaurant in "Fellini's Roma," at the Plaza

the "Gipper" was unable to lity which endears him to most the presence of his friend, the "Gipper." Not content at His music is folk tempered having bungled the presentaby country, though his own tion of the concert, the promotor sat stage right during a portion of the evening and shouted requests to er, Van Zandt underlines his melodies with slow, spare fingerpicking and occasional Zandt, made comments while Townes was singing and, worst of all, occasionally sang treble runs. His approach to

The effect of all this was especially jarring because Van Zandt's material is so delicately constructed and his presentation is so quiet and understated.

He has chosen to stake out a fragile portion of the human soul for musical investigation. He does it decently, but it is obvious that he is engaged in a task which neither excites nor interests very many peo-



INGRID THULIN arrives at the country estate of her dying sister in Ingmar Bergman's "Cries and Whispers," opening Feb. 7 at the Pi Alley.

'Shamus' Preview Friday Evening

"Shamus," starring Burt Reynolds and Dyan Cannon, will preview Friday evening, Feb. 2, at the Astor in Boston, Loew's in Natick, and the Cinemas in Braintree, Burlington

The current attractions at each of the theaters will be shown before and after the screening of "Shamus."

'Pops Concert'

The Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra will present a "Pops Concert" at Temple Mishkan Tefila, Hammond Pond Parkway in Newton on Sunday, Feb. 4 at 3:30 p.m.

Proceeds will benefit the Youth Symphony Orchestra Scholarship Fund.

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Elliot Norton

An Actor to Admire: Edward G. Robinson

The late Edward G. Robinson was one of many, fine actors abducted into Hollywood by panicky producers in the late twenties when movies began to talk and the West Coast tycoons decided they had to get "stage actors" for what seemed likely to be a new medium.

They hired him because of his success playing a gangster and they turned him into the most celebrated movie gangster of them all. As "Little

Caesar," a snarling hood who was supposed to be modeled after snarling Al Capone, he created the prototype of all criminal gang leaders for the cinema, inspired a thousand mimics, who earned their living imitating him for happy night club patrons and, reportedly, led at least a few real life criminals to do likewise.

Filiot Norton

Because of his success, he had trouble losing the gangster image. Because he was so popular - and so capable - in the films, he was lost to the stage, along with many other actors who had been similarly "abducted" at about the same time, men like Spencer Tracy.

Tracy came back to Boston and Broadway stagesjust once, in Robert E. Sherwood's "The Rugged in '45, a play that didn't really work but in which he proved that he could act effectively in any medium.

Robinson made his one return visit in Paddy Chayevsky's "The Middle of the Night" in February, 65, and stayed with it for two years. He played it in Boston after New York.

Like Tracy, he demonstrated that after having made more than 100 movies, he was still able to command an audience in the theater night after night. He was not merely a "movie actor," nor a 'personality"; he was a first rate actor in any sit-

"Middle of the Night" presented him not as a gang leader but as a middle-aged manufacturer of New York married to a neurotic twenty-four year

He was 63 when he began acting in "Middle ofthe Night." At 65, while still starred in it, he married his second wife, who was then 38.

His performance in the play was strong, solid and persuasive. He created a warmly sympathetic character, without tricks; with none of the vocal; inflections he had sometimes used in films. It was an honest performance.

There was a scene in that essentially serious play: in which the word "cancer" was used by one of the characters in such a way that it frequently triggered a most unfortunate laugh.

There was nothing funny about the line, and nobody - least of all Eddie Robinson - was ever able to understand why playgoers laughed. It made: him angry, because the laughter spoiled the scene.

That he would himself die of cancer is something he could not have known at that time; there is a sad kind of irony in that.

What bothered him was not a personal feeling, but professional indignation that thoughtless playgoers were so badly misunderstanding what he and the others were trying to do.

His onstage reaction was interesting. What he wanted to do, he said afterwards, was to step out of character and tell the audience: "This is not a comedy; it is a serious play. If you want a comedy, please leave and go next door to see 'No Time for

He was, of course, too much the professional to do that. Instead, he recalled afterwards when the play was in Boston, he would "freeze-play the next scene coldly! And the audience would catch on."

In effect, he rebuked the audience, which is rather extraordinary. It is extraordinary that he would take pains to indicate his indignation and just as unusual that he was able to convey that indignation, without words, to playgoers. He was a remarkable actor.

Offstage, he was soft-spoken and gentle. Like so many of Hollywood's tough guys, he was smaller than they made him seem in the films. And he had none of the snarling mannerisms which the mimics found so entertaining.

He had been brought to this country as a boy, a refugee with his family from Jewish persecutions in Rumania. He had to work hard for an education, and had to fight for recognition and understanding more than once in the time of his life.

He was one of many actors accused without proof of being a Communist sympathizer in the witch hunt days of the 40s, and one of the few who was able to fight his way free of the red taint before the head-hunting, publicity-seeking House Un-American Activities Committee.

The battle for survival in his early days and later for success and dignity made him kindly, not bitter. He had a gentle sense of humor.

He had learned how to act with distinction and how to live with kind regard for others.



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