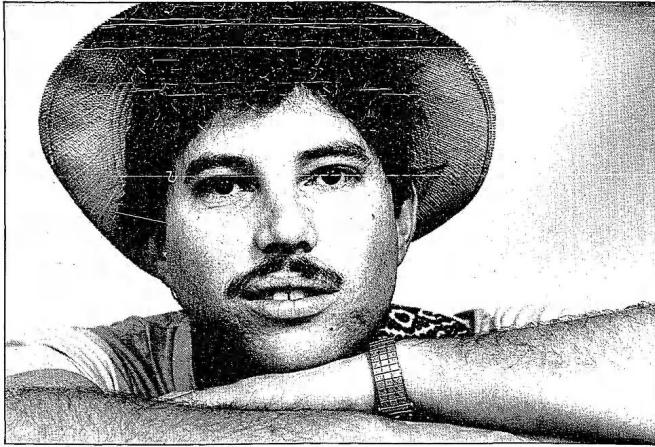


Los Angeles Times

R Friday, July 26, 1985/Part VI 17



John Anello Jr. will give his first performance since the release of his latest album, "Jackson Street Beat," at Sunset Pub in Sunset Beach.

POP BEAT

HE LEADS A DOUBLE LIFE FOR ONE GOAL: SUCCESS

By RANDY LEWIS, Times Staff Writer

At times, John Anello Jr. probably wishes he had a twin to help him carry on the dual existence he leads. By day, he's the president of tiny Costa Mesa-based Cexton Records label. At night, Anello retires his business suit and tie and heads out to local nightclubs to become Cexton Records' premiere recording artist: jazz guitarist John Anello Jr.

Anello will give his first local performance since the release last week of his second album, "Jackson Street Beat," when he plays the Sunset Pub in Sunset Beach on Aug. 14.

What, you may ask, sets Anello apart from the hundreds of struggling musicians who release self-produced records each year, only to watch the results of their work fade into oblivion? Primarily it's hard work, said Anello, whose recording engineers jokingly nicknamed him "Relentless."

Leaving his chair back against a

bed, he never intended to launch a record company when he recorded his first LP, 1983's "For a Dancer."

"When I made the 'For a Dancer' master tape," he said, "I shopped it to the major labels and they all turned it down. I was frustrated, so I decided to do it myself."

Over the next two years, he spent countless hours on the phone talking to record distributors and radio programmers around the country, promoting and monitoring

"At first, nobody (at the record companies) wanted to talk to me. They wouldn't even return my phone calls. But when it hit the R&B chart, suddenly my phone started ringing."

The experience gave Anello the confidence to continue with his Cexton label for "Jackson Street Beat" rather than return to the label-shopping wars. The new album carries much the same musical ground as the first work, inviting comparisons to jazz-pop crossover performers such as George Benson and Earl Klugh.

Because he established a track record with the first album, Anello said retailers and radio programmers are more receptive to the second record. Consequently, most have agreed to stock "Jackson Street Beat."

'... put in a full day of business on the phone and at the typewriter and then play at night.'

make sure the radio stations are playing their record.

"I'm up at 6:30 every day and put in a full day of business on the phone and at the typewriter and then play at night. Sometimes it's weird—living two lives—but I like doing both," he said.

Although Anello proudly claims to be Cexton's top act, it's not a show of egotism—he happens to be Cexton's only act. He is also the label's president, head promotion man, publicist, distributor and delivery boy.

Ironically, Anello said that even though Cexton Records has become "more successful than I ever imag-

ined," he never intended to launch a record company when he recorded his first LP, 1983's "For a Dancer."

That record, a mellow and melodic blend of jazz, pop and R&B styles, received air play in cities across the country and sold surprisingly well for an independently produced jazz album.

It not only made the national Top 30 jazz air play charts of Radio & Records (R&R), a widely read music industry publication, but "For a Dancer" has also been a popular source of commercial background music for television and radio ads.

"My goal was to make a product that could compete with the majors. I did it and it worked," Anello said.

But he remains cautiously optimistic about the future. "You always start from square one, because in the music business you're only as good as your last project," he said. "So I don't take anything for granted."

With his own two albums as a foundation, Anello hopes to parlay Cexton into a multi-artist label soon. But following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who both were jazz musicians, and having taught guitar in Orange County schools for seven years, Anello finds it mildly amusing that other musicians are suddenly turning to him for help.

His 2-year-old marriage keeps me anchored. It's nice to have someone else to consider. When I'm alone, I can come up with some strange ideas. If I didn't have a family at home right now and a wig to do—man, I'd do anything."

He also has a nonchalant attitude toward his lack of fame—a fact similar to other talented county songwriters who haven't had the best of luck as performers, like Guy Clark, Mickey Newbury, Steve Young and the late Steve Goodman. "I never had great hopes about that. I was a folk singer, and that's what I still am. If people come up and say they got something out of a song, that's an awful good feeling. Otherwise, I don't think about it."

One thing he does think about is his image as a writer and singer of "dovey" songs.

"We played New York and Boston last night," he said. "I was surprised to find out that I was a folk singer, and that's what I still am. If people come up and say they got something out of a song, that's an awful good feeling. Otherwise, I don't think about it."

LIFE'S NOT SO BLUE ANYMORE FOR TOWNES VAN ZANDT

By TERRY ATKINSON

Tall, lean and gaunt, Townes Van Zandt looks enough like Norman Bates to be slightly disconcerting.

And like Tony Perkins' character in "Psycho II," he's had a trying life. The country-folk singer/songwriter (who performs at McCabe's tonight) has fought depression, demon rum and legal battles over the publishing rights to his often mournful songs. He's been in and out of the hospital—and mostly out of the public eye despite releasing eight albums and writing "Pancho and Lefty" (a hit for Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard) and "If I Needed You" (recorded by both Emmylou Harris and Don Williams).

Unlike Norman Bates, though, the only person Van Zandt has come close to killing is himself.

A press biography tells of a time when Van Zandt would lock himself in his apartment for a week,



Townes Van Zandt

take his phone off the hook, get drunk, listen to records by Lightnin' Hopkins, Hank Williams and

Bob Dylan, and then throw a big party. During one party, he sat on the ledge of a balcony and decided "I was gonna lean over and just see what it felt like all the way up to when you lost control and you were falling."

As a result, he also found out what it felt like to plunge four stories—though he claims to have walked away from the fall unharmed.

Now 40 and married, with two children, Van Zandt is finding most things easier than they used to be. He's hoping to record his first album in several years in September, and he makes enough money to keep his Austin household going with fees from performing around the country and song royalties.

Keeping his drinking to "a lot of apple juice" and having settled a dispute over royalties, Van Zandt said he's now settled down and is making a decent living. "I can't go out and buy a Cadillac right now, but I can support my family," the

singer said during a phone interview from San Francisco.

His 2-year-old marriage keeps me anchored. It's nice to have someone else to consider. When I'm alone, I can come up with some strange ideas. If I didn't have a family at home right now and a wig to do—man, I'd do anything."

He also has a nonchalant attitude toward his lack of fame—a fact similar to other talented county songwriters who haven't had the best of luck as performers, like Guy Clark, Mickey Newbury, Steve Young and the late Steve Goodman. "I never had great hopes about that. I was a folk singer, and that's what I still am. If people come up and say they got something out of a song, that's an awful good feeling. Otherwise, I don't think about it."

One thing he does think about is his image as a writer and singer of "dovey" songs.

"We played New York and Boston last night," he said. "I was surprised to find out that I was a folk singer, and that's what I still am. If people come up and say they got something out of a song, that's an awful good feeling. Otherwise, I don't think about it."

STAGE REVIEWS

'PIRATES OF PENZANCE' AT HUNTINGTON PLAYHOUSE

Anyone wary of all things Gilbert and Sullivan should hasten over to the Huntington Beach Playhouse, which has mounted an outrageously sung, mischievously low-brow, lovingly executed production of "The Pirates of Penzance."

Accessible and irresistible, director Kent Johnson's version rascally caricatures all-

ranges, but their physical comedy makes a buoyant distraction. The seashore set, which works well in Act I, works less well in Act II. The amount of movement choreographer Kyna Cobb unleashes on the playhouse's tiny stage is amazing and appropriately zany, including bumbling pirates swinging from overhead riggings.

"The Pirates of Penzance" will play through Aug. 24 at Huntington Beach Playhouse in Seaciff Village, 2217 Main St., Huntington Beach. For information, call (714) 852-1465.

—CATHY DE MAYO

'FIDDLER ON THE ROOF'

Coming out of most productions of "Fiddler on the Roof," it's usual to leave humming "Sunrise, Sunset" or "Tradition." But at Saddleback Company Theatre, you'll walk to the parking lot talking about the sets and the lighting. Scenic designer Wally Hinton and lighting designer Jeff Calderon have set the much-acclaimed, much-produced musical in a fairytale of textured woods and dappled forests that could have been borrowed from the Snow White ride at Disneyland.

It is a physical interpretation that emphasizes the idealism in the show's themes of family bonds and attempts to gain a foothold in an ever-shifting environment—in this case, the life of Russian peasant Jews before the revolution.

It's only the show were equal to the setting.

"Fiddler" is one musical in which corners simply cannot be cut—it requires a solid sense of the epic and a courageous heart. Yet this production continually creates us of a sense of richness as well as poignancy.

Robert Michael Conrad's direction is given over to inappropriate broad comic excesses that rob the show of its simple beauty and its evocation of simple country people. Instead of loving lines, we get all hard edges. The approach cruelly trivializes the play, narrows its scope and extinguishes the emotion.

Fortunately, Gary Gordon, as the impoverished milkman Tevye, plays the role locally several times, although it has a distinctly clownish shading that occasionally gets out of hand.

Nevertheless, Gordon carries the show without blinking, skillfully gauging the lightness and darkness of the role. He shares Tevye's philosophies and the daily travail of having five unmarried daughters with a fatherly affection.

Please see STAGE, Page 18

'BLACK COMEDY' CASTING 8 ROLES

Newport Theatre Arts Center will hold auditions for the Peter Shaffer farce "Black Comedy" next Thursday and Friday at 7 p.m. Roles for five males and three females are open. Auditions will be at the theater, 2901 Cliff Drive, Newport Beach. For more information, call (714) 631-0288 or (714) 731-2468.

\$22.50*

Orange County Summer Weekend

This summer enjoy a memorable weekend at the AAA-4 Diamond Award Winning Irvine Marriott Hotel. Located in the heart of Orange County, 10 minutes from Newport Beach and 25 minutes from Disneyland. Pamper yourself with a weekend escape to Orange County's most luxurious hotel. Large indoor/outdoor pool and patio area, fully equipped health club and game room. Day and night tennis is available on four courts. Four restaurants and lounges to choose from and a superb champagne Sunday Brunch is also available. Take advantage of this special Summer Weekend Room Rate. Advance reservations are required. Rate is offered on Friday and Saturday nights. A limited number of rooms are available at this special rate and may not be available on certain weekends. Not applicable to groups. Offer expires September 29, 1985. *Rate is per person based on double occupancy.

For reservations and information please call 714-851-1100 and ask for our \$22.50* Orange County Summer Weekend.

IRVINE Marriott
18000 Van Korman Avenue, Irvine, California 92715

THE RIVALRY
Directed By: Richard Rossi

THE TEMPEST
Directed By: John C. Fletcher

★ Reserve Seats Now! ★

Co-sponsored by the Garden Grove Association for the Arts & Rancho Santa Jo College

Delicious Prime Rib Dinner

BAKED HAM, ROAST TURKEY & CORNED BEEF
Complete Dinner includes Salad Buffet, appropriate Vegetables, Choice of Dessert and Dinner Beverage
Open Every Day \$7.95 Beautiful Cocktail Lounge

"Come back for seconds of any entree"

The Barclay Inn

So. Bristol at MacArthur (next door to Honda Federal Savings & Loan) Bristol Town & Country Shopping Center, Santa Ana
Phone: 548-0286

GROVE SHAKESPEARE

"This production of THE RIVALRY is rife with delightful surprises... It could leave you happy for days."
—Polly Wierfeld, DRAMA LOGIC

★ Now Thru August 3 ★

THE RIVALRY
Directed By: Richard Rossi

THE TEMPEST
Directed By: John C. Fletcher

CHARGE TICKETS: (714) 636-7213

TICKETMASTER

★ Reserve Seats Now! ★

Co-sponsored by the Garden Grove Association for the Arts & Rancho Santa Jo College