

# SHOW GUIDE

• Elliot Norton  
• Dorothy Manners  
• Ken Mayer

Wednesday, Jan. 31, 1973

## Van Zandt Concert at Jordan Hall

By PETER HERBST

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 successful.

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 promoters.

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

the "Gipper" was unable to tap the body of cultish support Van Zandt has acquired in this city over the past few years. While it may be doubtful that all of Townes' Boston fans could have filled

### • Pop Scene

Jordan Hall, there was no excuse for the poor turnout Saturday night.

Van Zandt has managed, over the last few years, to survive if not to flourish. He has made some four albums on the Peppy label, and is fairly well known below the Mason-Dixon line. A Tony Perkins look-alike, he is extraordinarily reticent onstage, always swallowing lines and peering shyly over the microphone. His lack of bravado and arrogance is undoubtedly the qual-

ity which endears him to most of his fans.

His music is folk tempered by country, though his own songs tend to be completely contemporary in their concerns. A decent country picker, Van Zandt underlines his melodies with slow, spare fingerpicking and occasional treble runs. His approach to his material is disconcertingly consistent, and this is probably the reason he has never boosted his following beyond the cult level.

Almost every song he performs has the same slow, droning pace, and his vocals are uniformly monotonous. He managed, on Saturday night, to turn the Rolling Stones' spirited "Dead Flowers" into a virtual dirge.

In addition, Van Zandt was hindered, at Jordan Hall, by

the presence of his friend, the "Gipper." Not content at having bungled the presentation of the concert, the promoter sat stage right during a portion of the evening and shouted requests to Van Zandt, made comments while Townes was singing and, worst of all, occasionally sang along.

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 people.

## 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.



Elliot 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 stages just once, in Robert E. Sherwood's "The Rugged Path," 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 situation.

"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 old.

He was 63 when he began acting in "Middle of the 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 Sergeants!'"

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.



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 and Peabody.

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.

"Richly melodic, beautifully expressed, always inventive... full of wonderful characters wonderfully played," KELLY, Boston Globe



A Little Night Music  
a new musical comedy  
MAT. TOMW. 2pm  
TONIGHT at 7:30  
COLONIAL  
426-9366

### SEATS NOW ON SALE

DON AMECHE  
EVEN KEYS  
ANN B. DAVIS  
SVEN SWENSON  
LAINIE NELSON  
No No Nanette  
with these great song hits —  
"I WANT TO BE HAPPY"  
"NO, NO, NANETTE"  
"TEA FOR TWO"  
SHUBERT NOW THRU FEB. 10  
MATS. WED. & SAT.

### 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., Boston.



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

MOTION PICTURE RATINGS FOR ADULTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
G. All Ages (General Audiences); P.G. All Ages (Parental Guidance Suggested); R. Restricted (Under 18 requires accompanying parent or guardian); X. No one under 18 admitted (Age limit may vary in certain areas). All G, P.G. and R films receive the seal of the Motion Picture Code of Self-Regulation.

MARGARET RUTHERFORD  
AGATHA CHRISTIE'S DELIGHTFUL  
**MURDER MOST FOUL**  
AND  
**MURDER AT THE GALLOP**  
MON. THROUGH FRI. 9:00 TO 5 AM.  
SAT. 9:00 AM. SUNDAY 2:00 ALL DAY  
EXETER

MUSIC HALL BOX OFFICE OPEN  
Daily except Sunday — 10 to 5:45  
**BOSTON BALLET**  
E. VIRGINIA WILLIAMS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
Feb. 1-2-3 at 8:00 — Feb. 4 at 2:30  
TWO WORLD PREMIERES  
"BOSPIR" Music: Edward Elgar Chor: E. Virginia Williams  
"LOUS ADZAK" Music: Alan Hovhaness Chor: Samuel Kurkjian  
"RODEO" Music: Aaron Copland Chor: Agnes DeMille  
"FOUR TEMPERAMENTS" Music: Paul Hindemith Chor: George Balanchine  
DISCOUNT PRICES FOR STUDENTS & SENIOR CITIZENS  
ALL REMAINING SEATS NOW! INFORMATION: CALL 542-3945

GODSPELL  
"EXPERT, ENDEARING, HILARIOUS"  
Original cast album Bell Records  
TODAY 2 & 7:30 P.M.  
WILBUR HA 6-5827  
752 TREMONT

New England Conservatory  
290 Huntington Ave., Boston, 02115  
PRESENTS  
The Boston Debut of  
**COLLAGE**  
The Contemporary Music Ensemble of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.  
Works by Davidovsky, Carter, Selig, Pustulka, Knussen, and Foss.  
Friday, February 2, 1973  
8:30 p.m. Jordan Hall  
Admission \$2.00; \$3.50 with student I. d. Tickets available at Jordan Hall Box Office.

Tonight at 7:30  
"A STARTLING DRAMATIC EXPERIENCE" — KELLY-GLOBE  
**ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST**  
CHARLES PLAYHOUSE  
76 WARRENTON ST.  
423-1767

"ONE OF THE YEAR'S 10 BEST FILMS!"  
New York Magazine • WPIX-TV • Group W (WINS)  
New York Post • New Republic • New Leader  
New York Daily News • Gannett Newspapers • After Dark  
Cue Magazine • Newsweek • The National Observer • Life Magazine  
"BEST ACTRESS" LIV ULLMANN  
—New York Film Critics  
Max von Sydow  
Liv Ullmann  
**The Emigrants**  
Screenplay by Jan Tjell and Bengt Forslund. From a novel by Vilhelm Moberg. Produced by Bengt Forslund. Directed by Jan Tjell.  
Technicolor • A Svensk Filmindustri Production  
From Warner Bros. A Warner Communications Company  
NOW Playing at Selected Theatres Near You:  
BOSTON ..... Symphony  
CAMBRIDGE ..... Harvard Sq.  
MARBLEHEAD ..... Waverly  
NEWTON ..... Academy  
NO. READING ..... Meadows Cinema  
WELLESLEY ..... Community  
Check your local newspaper listings

When someone knocks on your door and says **permessso?** ...be careful before you say **Avanti!**  
**Avanti!**  
THE MIRISCH CORPORATION presents  
**JACK LEMMON • JULIET MILLS**  
A BILLY WILDER FILM **AVANTI!**  
with CLIVE REEVILL • EDWARD ANDREWS • Produced and Directed by BILLY WILDER  
Screenplay by BILLY WILDER and L.A.L. DIAMOND. Based on the play by SAMUEL TAYLOR JOHNSON  
Produced on the New York stage in association with DOLBY by DeLuxe  
by MONTE JACOBI and JEROME AMYTE. In association with RICHARD RODGERS. A PMA-ATA-JAFM Production  
United Artists  
NOW PLAYING AT THEATRES & DRIVE INS NEAR YOU!  
Check your local newspaper listings

THE PUBLIX  
SPECIAL PRESENTATION  
LADY FRANKENSTEIN  
Also "The CREMATORS"

FAMILY MOVIE  
**NORTH COUNTRY**  
A Rainbow Adventure Film  
Spectacular **ALASKA!**  
Exciting story of a rugged sour dough in America's Last Frontier  
STARTS TODAY ONE WEEK ONLY  
LEXINGTON 862-3260 SURF Swampscott 598-0071  
STRAND Lowell 452-1271 CINEMA Marbleboro 485-7886  
STARTS TODAY 4 DAYS ONLY  
CINEMA Marshfield 834-6100  
HELD OVER ONE WEEK ONLY  
JERRY LEWIS CIN. Brockton 588-1891 CINEMA Stoneham 438-4350  
Product of T-American National Enterprises