

TALENT IN ACTION

DOOBIE BROTHERS

Red Rocks Amphitheater
Denver, Colo.

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME that any version of the Doobie Brothers had appeared in concert since 1987, when 12 alumni of the band reunited for an 11-city tour. Now, with the release of the new Capitol album "Cycles," an early lineup of the group has taken to the road for a 65-city North American tour which opened here June 9-10.

The infectious hit-laden sets performed at the Red Rocks Amphitheater were less a commercial for "Cycles," the band's first album in nearly a decade, than a well-intentioned tip of the hat to '70s rock Americana. More than 8,000 turned out for each of the two shows, produced by Fey Concerts.

The reunion two years ago was like a Las Vegas-styled oldies revue, but the new tour and album present a vital band comfortable with its past, present, and future.

The band is again led by Tom Johnston and includes many of the members who played on the "Toulouse Street" and "Captain and Me" albums in the early '70s. Because the sound of the "Cycles" material recalls that era in the band's career, the group inevitably seemed to cover more old ground than new. The absence of latter-day Doobie Michael McDonald further emphasized the show's nostalgic overtones.

Still, by performing plenty of new album cuts as well as the expected classics like "China Grove," the band avoided the trap of a predictable oldies repertoire.

Highlights of the show included "Rockin' Down the Highway," which opened the show; "The Doctor," currently climbing the Hot 100 Singles chart; and a spirited rendition of "Black Water" sung by Patrick Simmons. The only real surprise of the evening was the Cornelius Bumpus rendition of McDonald's "Takin' It To

the Streets."

As the Doobie Brothers come full circle to their album-rock roots, fans may see on this tour how the band would have evolved if Johnston had stayed aboard and if the Doobie Brothers had not become, under McDonald, an R&B/pop band in the late '70s.

PETER M. JONES

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BRAND NEW GAYE

The brother of Marvin Gaye is looking to launch his own solo career, working with a collaborator of the late Motown legend. Frankie Gaye has recorded a single, "People We All," on the Pittsburgh-based independent Hitsburgh Records. And in the works is "Universal Love," an album of songs by Al Cleveland, the owner of Hitsburgh and the co-author of "What's Going On."

Frankie Gaye's manager, Frank
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ARTIST DEVELOPMENTS

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Beaty, of C-Star International in Denver, showcased the singer in Denver June 2 and 3 and wants to stage a Marvin Gaye Tribute tour featuring Frankie Gaye, David Ruffin, Eddie Kendricks, and others.

Both Cleveland and Gaye quickly acknowledge the vocal likeness between the brothers but the similarities on "Universal Love" are more than coincidental. Cleveland had originally written the songs for Marvin to record.

"The concept of 'Universal Love' came up about eight years

before Marvin died," says Cleveland. "And we were going to try to get it back to Marvin before the accident." Gaye was fatally shot by his father in April 1981.

Gaye, who also looks remarkably like his brother, is flattered by the inevitable comparisons, but after the tribute tour, C-Star plans to promote him as a performer in his own right. "You want your own individuality," Gaye says. "The opportunity is here now for me."

PETER M. JONES

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