



1964

*The Rolling Stones
and
San Diego's own*

Joel Scott Hill & The Invaders

*Balboa Park Bowl
(now Starlight Bowl)*

*"That band was hittin' a lot of
clams, man.
There was just a lot of wangin' and dangin'
goin on up there." _ Willie Kellogg*

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Calendar MUSIC SCENE

Beatles to town a few months earlier and was wary of repeating the mistake. Now 79, he chuckles at the details.

"I think I paid [the Rolling Stones] \$400. I paid Rosie and the Originals \$500!"

Rosie and the Originals were one of four local bands on the bill. A few years prior, the band had found fame with a modestly produced single, "Angel Baby."

"I needed the Originals on the show to sell tickets," Millsap explains. "They were the hottest thing going around here. Nobody had heard of the Rolling Stones."

I was barely 14 the day a plane dropped the Rolling Stones onto the runway at the old Lindbergh Field terminal on Pacific Highway. At my parents' house in Pacific Beach my anxiety had begun to peak. Word had come down that I could not attend the show alone and attempts to find an interested companion had become a struggle. A couple of months earlier I had snatched a Rolling Stones album from a pile of promotional discards after I had won a call-in radio contest. I had never heard them, but the banner proclaiming them "England's Newest Hitmakers" and the shadowy rendering of the band on the cover was irresistible. When that piece of vinyl plopped onto the family hi-fi and spit out a sinewy reworking of Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away," I stood transfixed. The sound, highlighted by a pounding Bo Diddley rhythm and a biting harmonica wail, seemed to echo my teenage existence.

My parents were disgusted. So were my Beatlemania friends. This was not bouncy Liverpudlian pop played by guys in matching suits. Consensus was that the Rolling Stones were

just too ugly. As showtime neared, hopes that I would attend my first rock and roll concert began to fade. I started calling people from school I hardly knew. No luck.

Across town, near La Mesa, another 14-year-old was having a similar experience but bringing it to a happier conclusion. Clutching a pass won on a radio contest and dressed in a black turtleneck and boots "to look as much like a Rolling Stone as possible," Jan Tonnesen hung a camera around

"That band was hittin' a lot of clams, man. There was just a lot of wagin' and dangin' goin' on up there."

his neck and slid into his dad's car for a ride to the airport to attend a press conference following the Stones' arrival. When we met recently in a downtown bookstore to swap stories, Tonnesen tried to console my envy.

"I guess my parents, being from the 'old country' [Denmark], were a little more liberal than most," he laughs.

Tonnesen had become a Rolling Stones fan after he fished an album from the record bin at Unimart, a discount store in his area. "I hadn't heard of them. I just thought they looked really cool — kind of dangerous. These guys weren't even wearing uniforms! I talked my dad into letting me buy it."

Late in the afternoon on the day of the show, Tonnesen stood at the airport with a group of about 25 contest winners and radio DJs.

"We watched their plane fly in from a long way off," he says. "Then they got off, climbed into a series of cars, and...drove away! We all stood there with our jaws dropping."

Tonnesen produces three rough-looking photographs of the Stones onstage in Balboa

Park. "I printed these myself at Horace Mann Junior High. I just wish I had been a better photographer," he laments.

The pictures show the band clustered near the edge of the stage, surrounded by several security guards. In one photo, Brian Jones plays his white, teardrop-shaped Vox guitar. In another, a boyish Keith Richards (the sat the end was added later) smiles at the camera.

Most of the audience surged forward when the Stones took the stage. "There were no prob-

lems," Millsap says. "The kids were very well behaved."

Tonnesen does not agree. "I was surprised at how aggressive everyone was. I was using a camera that required a new flash bulb after every shot. Whenever I popped one out, this guy next to me would grab it and throw it at the stage. I couldn't understand why someone would do that!"

Willie Kellogg also witnessed the pelting of band members. "The girls were throwing small model paint bottles at some of the guys. Inside were little pieces of paper with phone numbers on them. At one point, Jagger stopped and said something like 'Hey, stop throwing that shit — you're hittin' us!'"

Standing slightly offstage to the left, then sometimes to the right, and occasionally sticking his head out from between the curtains behind the band was Louis Lacayo, a 12-year-old kid who was no stranger to local rock shows. Lacayo, who now operates a bootery in Old Town, had made it his business to arrive early to such events. His offers to help with the equipment and stage sets often led to privileges. Stagehands knew



The Rolling Stones at Balboa Park, 1964

him, as did security people, and local performers. They would look the other way as Lacayo wandered backstage areas, sidling up to the musicians he'd been hearing on the radio. Lacayo was standing in the loading area when the Stones pulled in.

"They arrived in a bunch of station wagons. I didn't recognize them as the band at first. I thought they were business people. They were wimpy-looking dudes."

While helping to unload equipment from the vehicles, Lacayo befriended Brian Jones. He would spend the next few hours stringing and tuning several guitars under Jones's tutelage. "I still string a guitar exactly the way he showed me," Lacayo says. "We talked about guitars and amplifiers, and he taught me the parts to 'It's All Over Now.' He was completely in charge of how that band sounded."

How the Rolling Stones sounded that night remains in debate. Kellogg and his crew of journeymen heard them as young, inexperienced interpreters of American music, posing stiffly, and unable to "dig in."

"Their goddamn hands were too small," Kellogg scoffs.

Danny Millsap's son Mike, a junior at San Diego High at the time, said, "Because the crowd was so small, you could actually hear what the Stones were playing... They sounded better that night than any time I've heard them since."

"What set the Stones apart from everyone else on the show was their sense of production," Lacayo adds. "It was not so much what they played as how they played. It was simple and spare, but they were a stage show."

Guy and Eileen Denicola had left their home in Clairemont that evening for a stroll in Balboa Park with their three young children when the concert's ample sound system introduced them to the Rolling Stones.

"I wondered, 'What's this mess of noise?' and walked over to the bowl to see what was going on," Eileen recalls. The Denicolos passed by a makeshift billboard mounted on an easel near the entrance. Scrawled lettering announced, "Direct from England, The Rolling Stones." Eileen, a native of Great Britain, admits her interest was piqued.

"We just walked in — nobody stopped us. They were letting everyone in free."

Danny Millsap explains that this was a common practice at his shows at the time. About halfway through a show, if there were people outside without tickets, they would open the doors. "We figured, what the hell; we had made everything we were going to, might as well let everyone enjoy themselves."

A few days later, Eileen Denicola wrote a letter to her sister back in England. "Have you ever heard of the Rolling Stones?" Back came a downcast reply. "Yeah, we know them. They're a scruffy bunch."

Still scruffy, despite leopard-skin coats, and inflatable women to back them up, the Stones are famous because of their scruff. As they returned to the main stage over their suspended bridge, Richards strode to the edge, guitar in hand, gesturing to the crowd. Having survived drug addictions, blood transfusions, and countless "this could be the last time" puns, Richards stood with arms outstretched, absorbing the most direct drenching of the night. Wearing a sleeveless T-shirt with the colors of the Mexican flag, Richards mocked El Niño. He then fingered the fretboard for the beginning of "Brown Sugar." The band continued to rock. At song's end, they hustled off through a side door. A fireworks display ended the show, accompanied by a cloud of confetti. The Stones were seen sailing through the parking lot toward Friars Road in a couple of unmarked white passenger vans before most people had left their seats.

The "gentleman's agreement" that Danny Millsap had used to facilitate the Rolling Stones' first trip to San Diego now seems impossible, even laughable. What was handled with hundreds of dollars then now requires millions.

"I think I lost about 500 bucks on that show," he laughs. "It was no big deal. The kids had a good time." ■