



Atlanta Music Guide

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"if you know what's good for you" ...
a regular look
by kevin madigan

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Elvis Costello not only has fine rock album out (*When I Was Cruel*, Universal) but he's paying us a visit on June 24th. Unfortunately, the venue is Chastain, a place I detest. It's bad enough that people talk during the music, but what's ridiculous is that when this infraction is brought to their attention, they seem to take offence. One rather effeminate fellow at last year's **Roxy Music** concert burst into tears when I pointed out the error of his ways. Granted, my tone wasn't exactly pleasant, and there was some vague mention of bodily harm, but still. Now I have to decide whether to put up with this kind of nonsense once again in order to see The Great Costello. The Tabernacle would have been a better venue for him, even if morons (with the exception of the sublime Melissa Kennedy) run that place.

Speaking of morons, it seems to be a pre-requisite qualification for employment at quite a few music venues in town. Some of the staff at Variety Playhouse leave a great deal to be desired. Hi-Fi Buys Amphitheatre is another case in point, and don't even get me started on the Masquerade. These guys revel in what little power they have, desperate to appear tough. Rather pathetic, really. And what venues *do* I like, you ask? Well, the Star Bar for starters, as well as Earthlink Live (terrible name, though), Echo Lounge and the incomparable Fox Theatre. The Earl isn't bad, either. The Roxy is pretty good but parking in Buckhead is a nightmare I can do without. In my neck of the woods there's a real dive called the Watering Hole. It costs all of three bucks to get in and you never know who will appear, but it's the most fun I've had at a live music venue in quite a while. A solid 'cover' outfit called **Ripley** shows up now and again, and the female drummer / singer packs a mighty wallop which sounds better to my ears than some of the people whose songs she interprets.

The Atlanta Civic Center is another venue worth mentioning, if only for its extensive renovation, costing millions, and its new name, which I can't even pronounce, let alone spell. At least the audience in this kind of place makes an effort to listen rather than talk, unlike Chastain. It baffles me why someone would pay good money to attend a concert, and then not bother paying attention to it, irritating others in the process. In any other country, the offender would be ejected with great haste, but not in the USA, land of the free and the rude.

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra will have a brand-spanking new auditorium of its own, construction of which will begin shortly and take about two years. The site is the corner of Peachtree and 14th streets, and the venue promises to be first-class.

Until next time...