

**SOUND** Excellent

**IMAGE** Tonight's camera is on the grassy slope (see COMMENT below) to the right of centre stage. It takes a bead on Bob with Kemper behind and Larry, coat flapping in the breeze, to his right, and that's the shot - no zoom, pan, with just one exception (see PERFORMANCE) no iota of movement all night. Thus no Bucky, no band and just the odd glimpse of Tony as he wanders in and out of frame. Pictures are reasonably well-lit, clean, fresh and pleasantly tinted (see below) in plum, sepia and rose. Not one head, shake or tremor to vex us - but is the odd wobble or head a price worth paying for a more active, acquisitive lens? Yes and yes again. (Since the taper ably tracks D off stage each time he leaves, he clearly has no problem with panning shots. All that's lacking is the will - but then, maybe he just wanted to watch the show, as indeed would I. So it goes.)



**RUNNING TIME** 84:30, complete.

**PERFORMANCE** Lots to savour, though the playing is occasionally (If You See Her, Times) formulaic. Van and Joni join D for Released and between them the three pull off a surprisingly coherent rendition (listen out for Joni's nice, part-extemporised Get Out Of Jail). This is the one time the camera moves slightly left to take in Larry's mike (into which Joni sings). Blink and you'll miss it.

**HIGHLIGHTS** Another superb seven minute Simple Twist, Me Babe (again), Love Sick (again - though notably good work here from both Larry and the unseen Bucky). The other highlight - made me laugh out loud - is the comment made in a voice full of weary foreboding by a fan close to the audio mike just before the start of Tangled ...

**COMMENT** If you'd gone to this gig, you'd have seen sets by Van Morrison, Joni Mitchell then Bob - more than five hours, start to finish - with an additional three hours, before curtain

up, of PA Frank Sinatra. What's more, you'd have attended "North America's best major outdoor concert venue" (*Pollstar* magazine). The Gorge sits beneath the rimrock and cliffs of the mighty Columbia, on the east bank of the river itself, with the stage facing a natural bowl that becomes, on show nights, a "sitting lawn" rising above and beyond the limited reserved seating. Thus, though the performers have their back to the water and see only crowd, their audience have before and all around them hundreds of square miles of river-break country in pretty much its natural state. On view this May eve (while the light lasted, anyway) as well as Van / Joni / Bob:

*many hawks and ravens, Great Blue Herons ... a Golden Eagle flying up from the river.*

In 1988, D, with Tracy Chapman to open, became the first headline act to play here - an event plagued by security snafus, excessive drinking (What!? *Bob* fans?) and traffic problems. He's since returned in 1990, 1998 (this the first show of two on consecutive days), 1999 and 2000 (two shows again). Tonight, Joni sang a verse of her Big Yellow Taxi in "a hilarious D parody voice". So now that's her and Baez (see [D071.su](#)). What is it with these Joans? (Actually, Joni's really a Roberta which surely makes her a Bobby!) Will Joan Osborne / Long Black Coat be next? Don't bet against it.



Released L to R: Campbell, Joni M, D, Van M

**DANKE** Tom

**STARS** This short Spring '98 West Coast Tour is well-represented in the catalogue. If made to choose just one show, my pick would still be [D174.suu](#), although this one, [D097.su](#), is alright too. A solid four.