

## Mike Keneally Tour 88 Diaries (6/27)

Newly hired stunt guitarist Mike Keneally kept an audio journal during most of Frank Zappa's 1988 "Broadway The Hard Way" tour that included set lists, backstage goings-on and many personal observations. Here are the transcripts of Mike's diaries, originally posted in chronological order on their 10-year anniversary dates.

FEBRUARY 14 1988

Hello and welcome. Today is literally - as always, because I always do these things after midnight usually - it's literally Sunday, February 14th, 3:51 AM. But the most recent show, of course, was Saturday evening, February 13th, Philadelphia #2. But, to start at the beginning of the day: I slept VERY late, I finally got out of bed around 1:30 or thereabouts, and took a shower and watched some pro bowling, which was really fun, and then the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Calgary, Alberta. And that was touching, although I didn't get to see the torch being run in. And then it was on to soundcheck. I'm going to try to make a practice of remembering what we rehearsed at soundcheck, because that is probably of some historical interest. Today we rehearsed "Big Swifty", and "Bacon Fat" and "Stolen Moments", and "Alien Orifice" which sounded real good, and "Zomby Woof" and "Advance Romance" and probably one or two others. But several of those are notable because we hadn't played them during the tour yet. The show went as follows: Set One: "Stinkfoot", "Turning Again", "Alien Orifice", "Why Don't You Like Me", "Bacon Fat" - this time it was done with the actual "Bacon Fat" lyrics, and not "Confinement Loaf" - "Stolen Moments", wherein Frank sat down at the Synclavier and played a Synclavier solo, not consisting of noises and words but of actual musical notes. It was sort of a violin patch and it was really quite lovely. After "Stolen Moments" we had "No Heart", "Love Of My Life", "Heavy Duty Judy", and "Zomby Woof". The set went over quite well; "Alien" went over, "Zomby Woof" went over big. Set Two was scheduled to start with "I Am The Walrus", interestingly enough, but Diva was there, and, finally, conscious and in the room long enough to hear "Chana In The Bushwop", which Frank wanted to play for her, so we started the set with that. She was at the final rehearsal in Los Angeles but fell asleep before we played "Chana", and she was supposed to come to one of the shows in NYC and hear "Chana In The Bushwop", but she got pissed off at her brothers and sister and said "well, I'm not going to the show." So she didn't hear it that night either. This night she was there and ready, so Frank stuck it in the middle of the show where it wasn't originally scheduled. HOWEVER. Scott's girlfriend also wanted to hear "Chana In The Bushwop", and she just happened to leave the auditorium right when we played that song. And Scott was sad about that. Somebody's always missing when we play "Chana In The Bushwop". So the second set tonight consisted of "Chana", "Walrus", "Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbecue" - oh, I should mention: from the first set, "Alien Orifice" and "Zomby Woof" were tour premieres; in this set, "Eric Dolphy" was a tour premiere also - following that, "Jezebel Boy" - another tour premiere, as I recall...

(1998 comment: It was in fact the only time we ever played "Jezebel Boy", and although it was loaded with mistakes, it's this version which by default ended up on "Broadway The Hard Way". Why we didn't play more versions for Frank to choose from [we rehearsed it at least 100 times in Los Angeles] I do not understand.)

...then "Jesus Thinks You're A Jerk", "Big Swifty" - another tour premiere, and "Advance Romance" - yet ANOTHER tour premiere. You'll note - NO "Republican Retrospective Medley" in this particular show, which, I think, made a lot of the band happy. It's nice to do some new stuff. After "Advance Romance" we were supposed to leave the stage, but Frank said "ah, what the heck, we'll continue on", and we did the "Closer You Are/No No Cherry/Man From Utopia" medley. There were no dancers, no Zappa kids coming up to dance during this medley like the last time we did it. But it was still nice. Oh, let me think of some other stuff which would be of interest: Frank did yet another Synclavier solo of a musical nature during "Big Swifty" - once again, quite lovely, really musical and nice. And I did my guitar solo this evening during "Eric Dolphy". The last few guitar solos, I've been specifically not doing the dual guitar/keyboard thing, and just concentrating on doing a good guitar solo. And tonight I think it was a very good one; I got a number of comments. Once again, at the end of the show, the response for me was gratifying. And so, the final encore - or, actually, the first encore, since what was supposed to be the first encore got tacked on to the end of the second set - the ONLY encore of the evening, therefore - consisted of "Watermelon In Easter Hay", "Whipping Post" - during which Dweezil came out and did a solo with which he was much happier than the last one, and it showed, he was really cooking out there - and, finally, "Strictly Genteel". Bobby sang "I believe, I believe, I said I do believe that I am strictly genteel" and that's how that segue was executed. Earlier, the simultaneously ascending/descending progression at the end of "Walrus", which usually goes into a fairly dissonant guitar solo with an F# over G-natural tonality, instead went right into the downbeat of "Eric Dolphy" which was a wonderful segue, and took the audience by surprise. Their response was gratifying. I think that's the second time I've used that word so far tonight, but it seems to apply oh so frequently.

After the show we got back into the van and came back to the hotel, and I made plans with Bob Stone and Paul Carman to meet at Rex Style Pizza, which is yards away from the hotel. But before that I called Vivian - I figured that she'd tried to call me earlier, but the hotel phones have been all messed up today. Big shock there. Viv said that Mom had tried to call me today also. Why can't a phone work? So Viv and I said "Happy almost Valentine's Day" to each other, which in fact it

is right now as I speak. After that, Paul and I - Bob said he had some calls to make and would meet us later - went to Rex Style Pizza where I got a Philly cheese steak sandwich and a couple of Pepsis, and that was wonderful. And [name deleted], who is sort of a friend of [a different name deleted], was there as well, and [name deleted] is pissed off at [a different name deleted] because he says that [a different name deleted] is only really your friend if you can [activity deleted], and [name deleted] is not currently in possession of [substance deleted], and when I asked [name deleted] if he had any [substance deleted] [name deleted] said no, he doesn't [activity deleted] anymore, so [a different name deleted] had run off and abandoned [name deleted] to find somebody else who might be able to [activity deleted]. So we talked about how sad that was, and then Bob Stone showed up, and then Scott showed up with his girlfriend Freddie, and a couple of Scott's buddies from the band Corrosion Of Conformity. He's got one of their bumper stickers on the back of his Falcon station wagon, which I just found out today that he gave to somebody because it's not running very well.

After the sandwich I went next door to this cocktail lounge the name of which I don't remember, but Bruce Fowler was there. And I had a very nice talk with him, wherein we reminisced about the fact that he was there the very first time I ever met Frank, and he mentioned that I'd made as much of an impression on him as I had upon Frank. The fact that I was able to learn the songs off of records with the degree of accuracy that I had was "quite unbelievable", as Bruce said. He said that I was "great", and he would like to hear me in other situations where I could stretch out and do something a bit more personal. I thought that was a very nice thing for him to say. He's one of the "gods" in this band, as Scott has put it, so for him to be so complimentary was lovely. I'd never really talked to him at length, and I never expected to have a conversation like that with him. And Paul came in, and later Bob Stone came in, and Walt came in, and Albert Wing came in and Kurt came in, and Scott and Freddie came in, and some fans came in, and I signed some autographs and talked to some fans for awhile - Bob Stone doesn't like talking to fans, he walks away when the atmosphere becomes thick with fans. But it's still new and interesting enough to me that I like to talk to them and find out what they think, how they feel about the shows and stuff, because they've been to almost as many of the shows on this tour as I have, some of these people. Which is really incredible to me; I've always thought of myself as a fan, but never went to the extent of following the shows around from city to city or waiting by the stage door or any of these things, and it's really an eye-opener to see that these things actually happen, it's not just something that gets written about in Grateful Dead articles. I think that Frank does have an unusually vociferous fanship, but I can't say for sure - this could be going on all over the place.

There's some kind of crew business going on. The crew is really dissatisfied with the way that [tour manager's name deleted] is running everything, and treating the road guys. They feel that they're being taken advantage of, and they don't like sharing rooms, so there are sort of half-serious bets going on about how many of the crew guys will be lasting until the end of the tour. Especially until October - I think it's likely that the entire crew will have changed by the time October rolls around.

(1998 comment - as this demonstrates, at this point we were under the impression that the touring would be continuing until October. The conflicts within the band actually brought the touring to a halt four months before then.)

On another unfortunate note, there's the current [someone] and [someone else] feud going on: they stand next to each other on stage, and [someone else], since he is a fun-loving person, really gets into the music and likes to bounce around when the music is cooking - another word I've used twice in this entry - and [someone] swears that the resultant stage vibrations make it impossible for him to play; he says that his mouthpiece bangs against his teeth and hurts him when [someone else] has fun. [Another someone else], who also stands next to [someone else], says that from his perspective, no matter how much vibration there is on the riser it has never travelled all the way up his body to his teeth. He thinks [someone] is possibly being overly sensitive, and is perhaps resentful of [someone else] because he's so flamboyant on stage, which brings him a lot of attention, and [someone else] is getting more solos and more little fills and little things which are endemic to the [specific sort of instrument] syndrome. It amused me that [yet another someone else] referred to this whole contretemp as "the jazz attitude", an unusually pointed remark from a gentleman with [yet another someone else]'s musical background.

So we all had a good time at the bar.

I think that's about it for today. After the bar, I just came back here and watched television, and listened to Ike laughing his head off next door, and then I picked up the tape recorder and did this. Happy Valentine's Day. Bye bye.

Also, during the break between dinner and the start of the show, me and Ike and Bobby, and Ike and Bobby's friend Laura, and Paul sat in one of the dressing rooms upstairs and listened to a tape of Sam Kinison's "Louder Than Hell" album, and had a good time laughing at that. That's probably not too crucial a nugget of information but it just struck me as something I could stick on the tape here. In the interest of posterity. All right. Bye.

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