

Fleetwood Mac cover band makes Concerts in the Garden fun

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FORT WORTH -- *Rumours* has it that the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra might have found another hit.

The orchestra's summer series, Concerts in the Garden, which has included numerous tribute bands in recent years, added one to its list Sunday night in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

The Music of Fleetwood Mac, performed by a Toronto-based trio of vocalists and their four-piece band traveling under the name Jeans 'n Classics, showcased many of the biggest hits by that legendary rock band from the 1970s and '80s -- including tracks from the group's megahit 1977 album, *Rumours*.

These types of acts have frequently gone down well in the Garden, especially when the symphony is along for the ride, as it was Sunday. Tribute acts devoted to Elvis, the Eagles and The Beatles have become popular mainstays in these performances where the only roof is the stars.

This Fleetwood Mac show, in the Garden schedule for the first time, made a strong bid to join those ranks with a well-presented and nicely structured show that made good use of the orchestra to aggrandize the highly familiar chart toppers in a concert performed before an enthusiastic crowd of almost 1,700 -- including lots of dads.

Fronting the band were singers Rique Franks, Kathryn Rose and Neil Donell. For the most part, Franks stood in for Stevie Nicks while Rose covered Christie McVie. Donell took on Lindsey Buckingham's role, sans guitar.

Of the three, only Franks really sounded like her subject. She had Nicks' timbre and vibrato down pretty well. Her two cohorts both had pleasing voices that were in the ballpark with the originals. Donell captured Buckingham's tone, though with phrasing that was much more rounded than the famously sharp attack employed by Mac's lead guitarist.

But that was not a problem. The trio sounded especially good (and especially Mac-like) when singing in unison. And even when they were not note for note with their source, they were still highly appealing interpretations.

The set list, made up of Mac and Nicks favorites, offered no surprises. Among the tunes covered were *Rhiannon*, *Say You Love Me*, *Sara*, *You Make Loving Fun*, *Little Lies* and an especially nice take on *Landslide* that was based on the Dixie Chicks' version rather than the original. It was a standout of the evening.

The orchestra, under the baton of associate conductor Andres Franco, was frequently only a rumor itself, drowned out by the rock band and singers. We knew the musicians were playing because we saw their bows move.

But when the home team was audible, they added a great deal. Also, unlike most of the tribute shows, the orchestra was part of every number. So even when the players could not be heard individually, they collectively made the overall sound larger and fuller.

About the only glitch in an evening so charmed that even the weather was perfect were some problems with the sound mix that marred the first couple of numbers.

But those issues were quickly addressed, and the well-received show that followed suggested that this group probably did not leave the Garden stage thinking they were *Never Going Back Again*.