

Concert Reviews

Murphy big asset to talent-rich Nelson show

By DAVID DOKKEN

Willie Nelson is a member of a group of musicians comprised of the grand old pros of country rhythm and blues.

Along with Willie, Leon Russell, Waylon Jennings and a number of old southern rhythm and blues impressarios belong to this group. These guys go back a long way. When they sing the blues of bars, of hard times, of untrue women, it's not without the feeling that comes from many years of travelling the south with a guitar.

So when Willie came out and played all the blues and country music a person could want Saturday he played it well. In three hours he didn't miss a note on an old six-string that sported the autographs of Jennings, Russel, Glen Cambell and Roger Miller, among many others. He went through a wide repertoire of songs ranging from bluesy rock to spirituals with every song showing Nelson as one of the masters of country guitar.

But as good as Willie was it

was Michael Murphy who made the evening. Murphy played with and studied the likes of Willie and Leon Russell for quite a while. What he has learned from them shows in the variety and mastery it has brought to his music.

Murphy's show featured his own beautiful lyrics along with excellent solos on the harmonica and flute by members of a very talented back-up group. At one point during the song, "Geronimo's Cadillac," he had the crowd on its feet and singing along.

After Murphy's performance

the crowd was excited and it was obvious that Willie had a hard act to follow. But follow it he did by starting his show with a couple of blues rockers that left nobody disappointed. After this beginning Willie settled into a good solid show highlighted by such songs as "Red-headed Stranger" and "Me and Paul."

However, the high point of the evening was neither Willie Nelson nor Michael Murphy individually but Willie Nelson and Michael Murphy together. They performed together on several songs including

"Amazing Grace," in which Willie, Michael and the Rhythm Guitar player got together and sang a very nice flowing harmony.

It was a long concert and a good one. Nelson and Murphy put on an excellent show; it was interesting the way it showcased two considerable talents, each representing a different generation of the same brand of music. One the teacher, one the learner, one tradition, one innovation, they combined to present a performance that was both unique and highly entertaining.