

13 MAY 88

Jesse goes straight to the musical heart

By JOHN GRIFFIN
Gazette Pop Music Critic

REVIEW

The small Stanley St. concert room was full by 9:30 p.m. People sat on church hall chairs and window ledges and stood in corners, waiting for what people wait for when they've waited three years for the return of Jesse Winchester.

At 9:40 p.m. he walked on-stage, carrying his six-string acoustic guitar and amplifier pickup, sat at a stool, said hello, adjusted mikes and began to sing and play.

From his past

He sang and played songs many people had come for — *Brand New Tennessee Waltz*, *Yankee Lady*, *Little Glass of Wine*, *Let the Rough Side Drag*, *Talk Memphis* — songs from his past and theirs that defined the late '60s and early '70s and have since defied the passage of pop time.

He played them as only Winchester can play them — with wit, compassion, dexterity, control, conviction, a fierce and sometimes bitter irony, and without an ounce of fat.

In doing so he reached out and touched the heart of Saturday night. There were echoes of soul, the miracle of doo-wop, pure spring country, gospel, rural blues, folk, vaudeville and the

Jesse Winchester, at the Golem, and Dissidenten at the Spectrum, Saturday night.

magic of '50s radio in every finely crafted song, and they flew from his fingers and around the room the way pure pop flies — moments captured forever, and gone.

Winchester also played new material from his upcoming LP *Humour Me*, which was anything but. It was wise and wry and crafted with quite perfect simplicity, balance and grace, and it was beautiful and sad as hell.

Two sets, an encore, and Winchester was gone. The album arrives later this spring.

Later, mad worldbeat music at a packed Spectrum with the wonderful Euro-Moroccan group Dissidenten.

No boundaries

The avowed intention of this group and this music is to break down the national boundaries that divide and conquer us.

No fools they, Dissidenten fuse techno-beat rhythm sections, hypnotic Moroccan tribal tunes, hyperactive vocals, huge keyboard synthetics and one crazed flute player — it's dance music to remove borders and move the dead.