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REVIEW | MUSIC

Rush's show is all about balance

By **DAVE FERMAN**
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

FORT WORTH — Tom Rush did two blues songs back to back that perfectly encapsulated why his show Saturday at McDavid Studio was such a treat and why he continues to have few peers as a folk musician in general.

The first, Sleepy John Estes' ancient *Drop Down Mama*, was right out of the Mississippi Delta, frisky and rough and raunchy. The second, a cover of Steve Walters' *The Remember Song*, was sung in the voice of an aging yuppie having a series of senior moments — he can't remember where his cell-phone is, or much of anything else.

Rush's ability to balance his past and present was one of this show's consistent strengths. The New Hampshire native was a major part of the '60s folk/blues boom, which flourished in East Coast coffeehouses. He recorded his first LP in 1962, and you can hear his influence in the music of everyone from James Taylor to John Prine to Tom Russell.

At 65, still trim and singing and picking the guitar with an easy assurance, he deftly balances original material like *River Song* with covers of songs by such legends as Joni Mitchell. He balances all that with dryly funny, self-deprecating stories about everything from meeting Mitchell in a Detroit club in the '60s, to having his baggage lost between California and Texas on the way to the show, to the culture shock of moving from New Hampshire to Wyoming.

Concertgoers felt the down-to-earth resonance of a man who is both a world-class folk artist and, one would think, probably very good company over a couple of beers.

Dave Ferman, 817-685-3957
dferman@star-telegram.com