

WitnessReport: ♣ (Glam) Slams at Paisley Park - June 18, 1995

I happened to be passing by the Minneapolis NPG Store on Saturday afternoon, June 17, and noticed that it was closed when it should have been open. I looked at the sign hanging on the front door and it said something like "Closed - Meet us at Paisley Park at 7:00PM." I had never seen anything like that before, so I called some friends and we went out to Chanhassen at Paisley Park to see what was up. There were about 100 people waiting around when we got there and nothing happened for about an hour when the doors finally opened.

We were searched with metal detectors and charged a \$5 cover, all very unusual for the parties at Paisley we've been to before. The way the studio was set up reminded me a little of a smaller *The Beautiful Experience* party of February 1994. There was a little NPG Store set up in one area, in another you could watch unreleased videos running on a loop, over and over. I think they were "Get Wild," "Same December," "Zannakee," "Empty Room" and "18 & Over." There was also food which you could buy for \$5, and drinks for \$1.50. The Endorphinmachine 3-piece stage set was set up in the sound stage area, but it's three parts were being used for things other than a stage set. One part was reserved for DJ Brother Jules who was playing CDs, another was a mixing booth and the third was set aside for dancers. This was all really cool, but after a few hours passed everyone started wondering whether or not ♣ was going to perform as we had been told that he would. We were informed that he was flying in from Los Angeles and that his flight had been delayed twice, but that if we waited, he would eventually appear.

We're pretty used to seeing ♣ in the middle of the night (morning!) but this was late even for ♣! There were more people in the studio by now, maybe 150-250 people. The band started playing before we actually saw ♣, he came out at 3:40am during the middle of "Days of Wild," which he never sang, we just heard the music. ♣ was dressed in white with a white Fedora hat, and he had one really big hoop earring on. He kind of looked around at the way the stage set was being used, because he hadn't seen it before. He said something like, "Oh, this is my house? I've never seen it." A few people in the audience started yelling out the names of old Prince songs as requests, to which ♣ replied, "Old stuff? Old stuff by who? U don't mean old stuff by that guy Prince? U know what we call people who use the name Prince? We call them..." and he started in playing "Billy Jack Birch." He did what looked like the same dance moves I saw him do on the *American Music Awards*. I don't remember everything that was played, but what I recall is: "18 & Over," "Get Wild," "Brick House," "Big Fun," "Count the Days," "The Jam" and maybe some blues cover I don't know the name of. During one of the songs, ♣ did a stage dive and was caught by his security guards and returned to his place. I do remember that ♣ ended at about 5:20am by playing the Santana medley. As we were leaving, we were handed these small, maybe one inch in diameter, round purple plaster discs, kind of like little marbles, that had a lavender scent and were embossed with the ♣ symbol.

- Anonymous, Minneapolis, MN

The following article explaining the above June 18 performance appeared in a Twin Cities paper two days after the show, the information was picked up by the wire services and appeared in excerpts in many national newspapers and on MTV's *Week In Rock* program:

Paisley Park 2 Open 2 the Public

excerpts from "Paisley Park looks into the future" by Bruce Orwall for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (6/20/95)

Pop star Prince built his \$10 million Paisley Park Studios in 1987 as a film and music recording palace, but last weekend he began testing a new use for his struggling entertainment complex: a community recreation center.

Don't expect football tables and pickup basketball games, however. This rec center is more like an all-ages nightclub, with late-night dancing and music videos. In its first trial run last Saturday, Paisley opened at 7 p.m., charged a \$5 cover to all comers and stayed open until Prince completed a curfew-busting performance at 5 a.m.

... No further public events are currently scheduled, but Paisley Park officials say they want to make the studio a drug- and alcohol-free "safe haven" for the local community. "With the help of the city of Chanhassen, we hope to make this type of event a regular occurrence," said Paisley spokeswoman Michele Schweitzer in a statement.

Chanhassen city officials have given the project their blessing as long as alcohol is not served and there is adequate parking. Paisley also pledged to end all events at 1 a.m., the extension of Saturday's event until 5 a.m., Sunday may prompt discussions about how to enforce Carver County's curfew for people under age 18.

Todd Gerhardt, Chanhassen assistant city manager, said Paisley initially asked whether it could operate an alcohol-free nightclub under its current industrial-park zoning at 7801 Audubon Road. When told that it couldn't, Paisley officials changed terminology and won approval from the city planning department.

"What they're telling us is that it's going to be a recreation center," Gerhardt said. "There are going to be recreational activities for kids — video games, places for kids to dance."

"We would like to offer the families of the area an opportunity to experience a drug-free, healthy environment for dancing and experiencing new music and technology," Paisley facilities director Dan Solys said in a letter to the Chanhassen planning department last week. "We are anticipating in the range of 50 to 300 people per event... Sources of revenue for us would be admission, merchandise sales and refreshments."

Paisley hired off-duty Carver County deputies to work security Saturday night. A report on the event said several hundred people, mostly "young professionals," attended, with no security problems.

Chanhassen Public Safety Director Scott Haer said Paisley has never been a troublesome resident of the community: "They run a clean operation."

But some believe Paisley is sabotaging its already declining film-production business.

Lund, president of James Productions, said his new Energy Park Studios facility at 1515 Brewster St. recently signed a deal to host the upcoming production of "Grumpier Old Men," a sequel to the 1993 ice-fishing comedy "Grumpy Old Men."

The original "Grumpy" was filmed at Paisley Park Studios in early 1993, but not without some delicate negotiation. The film was produced by Warner Bros. Pictures, a sister company to Warner Bros. Records, the record label that has Prince under contract. At the time, top-level Warner Bros. executives had to intervene directly with Prince to persuade him to clear the sound stage time necessary — even though the film generated badly needed revenue for struggling Paisley Park Enterprises.

Since then, Energy Park Studios has opened in St. Paul, providing film producers an alternative to Paisley Park. Lund said he is unaware of any major productions that have been filmed there in recent months, aside from a couple of commercials. The reason: Prince is always using it.

"I know it's been tough for (film producers) to get in out there," Lund said. "(Prince) has been half-booking it and keeping it for his own use."

Sometimes that means Prince has an elaborate tour set constructed there that he uses for rehearsals. But frequently, the studio has quietly thrown open its doors at night — after 1 a.m. — for dance parties. Prince often appears, allows a DJ to spin a couple of newly recorded songs, and sometimes performs.

The parties are usually free, but sometimes there are odd rules. On a recent night, Prince and his band New Power Generation performed in the atrium/reception area at the front of the building. But there was a catch — only women were allowed in the building. Their seething male partners were left waiting in the parking lot until the show ended at 4:30 a.m.

the ♣ family Newsletter



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