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Rock 'n' Roll Madness Mass Youth Hysteria at Paramount Theatre

By JAMES McGlinicy and JAMES DONAHUE

Elvis wasn't on hand but pelvises were flung with abandon Friday as a mob of frenetic teenagers rocked the Paramount Theatre in the biggest "ball" since Frankie Boy rolled them in the aisles almost 20 years ago.

They had 'a rock, they had 'a roll, they had 'a rock nigh through the balcony—until horrified fire officials did a fast waltz to the scene and nearly closed the show.

THE OCCASION of it all was a rock 'n' roll show starring disc jockey Alan Freed on the stage and "Don't Knock the Rock" on the movie screen.

While some 1,500 youngsters shuffled impatiently outside, the inside was a bedlam as shrieking, barefooted girls rocked to "The Fish," their whirling dervish young escorts rolled with the "Night Train" and the 1,596 in the jammed balcony threatened to stomp clear through to their 2,000 compatriots in the orchestra.

Worried theatre officials cleared the first four rows of the balcony and kept it clear for an hour until Chief Building Inspector Nicholas Lanese took a careful look and okayed the teenagers' returning to those four rows—provided there would be no more stomping, jumping or other gyrations.

VETERAN COPS SAID it was the wildest demonstration of mass youth hysteria since the early Sinatra days.

Ushers and 25 private policemen in the theatre were powerless to keep order. Couples broke into dancing, first in one section, then in an-

other. The youngsters sat atop seat backs or stood on the seats. When the stage descended at the end of one show, boys tried to storm the orchestra pit.

While the movie was being shown, performers in the stage show waved from their dressing room windows to the thousands of still waiting teenagers jamming 44th St. The performers dropped their autographs on scraps of paper, touching off wild scrambles.

In the balcony the audience, standing on seats, rocked so furiously to the music, that the balcony actually could be seen to sway by reporters in the mezzanine just below, MIRROR movie critic Frank Quinn reported.

THE YOUNGSTERS, many wearing blue jeans, first began to line up at 10 a. m. Thursday, but police dispersed them. At 4 a. m. Friday the line reformed. By 8 a. m., when the theatre opened, there were 5,000 boys and girls in a line blocking 43d St. to Eighth Ave. and stretching up Eighth Ave. to 44th St.

A force of 125 policemen, including 10 on horseback, patrolled the crowd. For the first show, 3,700 were allowed in the theatre. Many of them stayed to see it a second time. More thousands continued to join the line outside, though police told them they might have to wait eight hours to get in the theatre.

In the first rush on the box-office, three ticket windows were smashed. A glass panel door of Andy's Food Shop, 210 W. 43 St., collapsed under the crush of the crowd. Two girls, Carol McGrath, 17, of 172 34th St., and Josephine Torrea, 19, of 58 Wyckoff St., both Brooklyn, were treated for leg injuries at St. Clare's Hospital after they were pushed against fire hydrants.



Wooden police barriers shake, rattle and roll under the teenage tide in Times Square.
(Other Photos on Page 1 and Center Fold)

(Mirror Photo by Popsie Randolph)