

Thursday  
July 2, 1987

Final  
25 cents

Weather  
Hazy and mild/A-2

Vol. CXVII No. 63  
Copyright © 1987 Los Angeles Herald Examiner

# Hillman's Desert Rose Band sizzles

## Lyle Lovett gives 'em country jazz

By Todd Everett  
Herald staff writer

There must be quite a buzz around town about the Desert Rose Band and Lyle Lovett. The two country acts' Tuesday night performance at the Roxy, a showcase sponsored in part by their record label, was oversold to the point that fire marshals were turning fans away at the door.

To see either of them, those not admitted to the Sunset Strip club will have to catch one or another of Emmylou Harris' upcoming area shows.

Headlining was the Desert Rose Band, a group of five veterans of the Los Angeles country music scene. Best-known among them is frontman Chris Hillman, who played bluegrass mandolin before helping form the Byrds and Flying Burrito Brothers; after participating in several shorter-lived rock acts, he's now a lot closer to country and seems a lot more comfortable for the change.

Now that country radio's accepting traditionally oriented acts like Ricky Skaggs and Dwight Yoakam, the Desert Rose Band seems a worthy candidate for stardom.

In addition to Hillman, Desert Rose includes longtime studio backup singer Herb Pedersen, who came to L.A.

Hillman/B-7



Desert Rose Band's Chris Hillman played bluegrass mandolin before helping form the Byrds and Flying Burrito Brothers.

## Hillman

Continued from page B-1

nearly 20 years ago to play banjo with the Dillards; flashy young guitarist John Jorgensen; and old country nightclub stalwarts Bill Bryson on bass, Steve Duncan on drums and steel guitarist Jay Dee Maness.

The group's solid, brightly paced set included old country standards like Buck Owens' bouncy "Close Up the Honky-Tonks" and "Hello, Trouble," "Why You Been Gone So Long," "Somebody's Back in Town" and "Ashes of Love" (a recent hit single for the band); a Hillman composition from his Byrds days, "Time Between"; an uptempo reading of James Taylor's "You Can Close Your Eyes," with Pedersen singing lead; and several newer Hillman originals.

Though they're all skilled musicians, with Jorgensen a particular dazzler on guitar and mandolin, the

group's strongest asset is its vocal work, never more so than on the breathtaking three-part harmonies on "Once More."

The Desert Rose Band will open Harris' Universal Amphitheater show on July 21.

Lyle Lovett's about as far from the Desert Rose Band as an act can be and stretched the boundaries of what's generally thought of as "country," to boot. The young Texan has a clear affinity to jazz, with much of his best music featuring lots of walking bass, tinkling piano and (on Tuesday, at least) a unison-riffing sax section straight out of the '30s.