

Pleasant music with a drink

By IFAN PAYNE
Music Critic

*Hello, it's me,
I've thought about us for a long,
long time.*

The voice behind that musical greeting belongs to Gary Steven. Mr. Steven has been in town, performing at the Burgundy Lounge of the Holidome throughout the holiday season. He has sung for us on Christmas Eve, indeed, he sang on Christmas Day, and he will be entertaining the revelers again on New Year's Eve.

Gary Steven has a clear and pleasant baritone voice, and he sings Top 40 tunes while strumming his guitar

to the accompaniment of pretaped backup and rhythm section.

He started his first set on Tuesday evening slow and easy.

"Gonna keep it mellow for the people eating dinner," he announced.

Mellowed out on prawn cocktail.

He gets around the songs without disturbing the surface of the formula writing of the genre. But every now and then in amongst the banality of the bubble gum words of AM music, there are minor dramas:

*Over by the window there's a pack
of cigarettes,*

Not my brand,

You understand,

Sometimes a girl forgets...

There could have been more feeling communicated, more of the nuances of the situation.

She forgets to hide them...

Don't know what he looks like,

Don't know who he is.

Nevertheless, his music goes well with a drink, and makes one forget the wind and ice outside. And hitting the right mode, somewhere between background music and entertainer, is not easy, but he does well with it.

Apparently those who are eating are still zonked out on the chicken a la king.

"For those who are itching to dance, there'll be some up tempo later, but right now we'll keep it mellow for the diners."

Within the basic Top 40 format, Gary Steven spices the set up with a bit of variety, including a touch of Broadway in the form of *Pippin*. Which seems apt for storm tossed Manhattan.

Everything has a season...

...children fit in the snow.

It is an interesting paradox that one would sing about spirits running free while remaining firmly earth bound to a taped back-up track which allows for no deviation from night to night as the spirit might take the singer.

Gary Steven is a personable young man who puts on a bouncy show, and provides a pleasant if undemanding way to spend an evening.

One could do worse than spend New Year's Eve at the Burgundy Lounge when,

Yesterday's blues

May be yesterday's news