

Smiles and hurt



There was hurt in Victor Rock's face as he drove his fiddle furiously through the strains of "Tomorrow Never Comes," and other fiddle tunes.

His partner and back-up guitarist Robert Dutchman had very recently died in a tragic fire in Shageluk, hometown for both of the musicians. After that, Rock didn't want to come to the festival, but was finally persuaded to come anyway. "I was glad," he said afterwards. "I was proud to prove to the public that I can play the violin. I can do it in public, before a million people, with a spotlight. I'm not going to be ashamed." Although playing reminded him of Dutchman, and hurt deeply, Rock says he is already teaching other musicians in Shageluk. After his performance, Master of Ceremonies Richard Frank (below) gives Rock a special grip of appreciation and encouragement.

PHOTOS BY BILL HESS



As the audience applauds his performance, Frank Hobson, above, smiles with pride. Although he is Inupiat and not Athabaskan, Hobson is from the Copper Center area and is very much a part of the Interior fiddle tradition. The 82-year-old man made the violin which he holds himself. He has been making the instruments for about 35 years, and is currently asking \$3,500 for an instrument. He patterns the knives which he uses after the carving knives his people have made for many decades. Stevens praised Hobson's violins as having a good, sweet tone.

Edgar Nollner (right) of Galena dances with Bessie Wholecheese during a special song dedicated to him. It was Nollner's 79th birthday. Nollner credits his longevity and good health to living an alcohol-free life, rich with subsistence foods.

