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sweet

It is a popular artifice of writers and rock musicians who haven't been on the Chicago blues scene in five or ten years, if at all, to depict the Chicago blues as a dying idiom. But those who have spent any appreciable time in the more than 30 blues bars on the South and West Sides that still present the music every weekend night know better. They discover Junior Wells and Detroit Junior at Pepper's; Otis Rush at the Alex Club; Luther Allison at the L & A Lounge; Buddy Guy, Andrew Odem, and the Myers Brothers at Theresa's; J. B. Hutto at Rose and Kelly's; Carey Bell and Jimmy Dawkins at Duke's Place; Johnny Littlejohn at the Riveria; Hound Dog Taylor at Florence's; Sunnyland Slim at the J & P Lounge; Mighty Joe Young at the Brass Rail; or 23-year-old Young Blood (Alvin Nichols) at the Sportsman's.

No, the blues is not dying in Chicago. The vital influence of Gospel music and the better soul singers, the cultural interchanges with jazz, the oppressive partnership of the political machine, the crime syndicate, and the racist system must all disappear before the Chicago blues will be spoken of in the past tense.

How did Chicago become a major center for blues activity? Of course, there are no phonograph records to give us any insight into the musical environment of Chicago in the earliest years of black migration to the city. (Since Chicago was founded by a black man, we should speak of white migration.) But very early in the history of so-called race recording, Chicago became important. The venerable Paramount label hired a sportswriter named J. Mayo Williams in 1923 to produce its series of blues, jazz, and vaudeville sessions beamed to the black community. He crossed the street from his office and hired Ma Rainey, Lovie Austin and Ida Cox at the Monogram Theatre, and later went afield to give us the first sides by Blind Lemon Jefferson. Since recording apparatus was quite bulky, the artists were brought to the Chicago area. When the records sold well, many of them stayed.

Chicago was firmly established as THE "race" recording center by 1926 when Okeh and Vocallion centralized their blues activity here. Gradually a body of resident bluesmen developed from this recording activity and from the increasing movement to the city by blacks trying to escape the more naked oppression of the South.

During these early years, the bluesmen literally "put it in the alley" — played on the streets and in the alleys for tips — or worked at house rent parties and whiskey flats (prohibition, remember, wasn't repealed until 1932). A walk through residential neighborhoods on a weekend night provided ample evidence of house parties in progress. Sometimes it was a full-time business: the selling of alcohol and water, gambling and vice to the accompaniment of the rolling bass that found its way to the city from the rural South.

Most of the itinerant musicians were blues singers who learned their songs down home but found a more generous audience in South-Side flats. Some had originally played the guitar, but, with a piano in every building on the South Side capable of a louder volume of sound, the stringed instrument was discarded. A few Chicago pianists who didn't sing developed the instrumental possibilities of the idiom. Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons and Jimmy Blythe were really jazz musicians — and could perhaps be termed the first "soul" jazzmen because of their close association with blues at its most magnificently primitive level.

The development of a recognizable Chicago blues idiom can be seen in the evolution of Big Bill Broonzy's recordings, beginning with his country blues on Paramount and Champion thru the gradually more urbanized approach on his later Bluebird and Vocalion (later Okeh and Columbia) sessions. Some of the credit belongs to Lester Melrose, a white music publisher who eventually supervised two-thirds of Chicago blues sides during the late 30's and 40's. He combined bluesmen often literally off the farm with jazz musicians from New Orleans, who were influencing Chicago's music scene in a way that was unheard of in the early 20's.

Thus, trumpeters Lee Collins and Punch Miller, clarinetist Arnett Nelson, bassist Ransom Knowling, drummer Jump Jackson and many others are featured on numerous Melrose dates of the period and are also known in the world of traditional jazz. Pianists "Black Bob" Robinson and Thomas A. Dorsey had careers in black vaudeville and jazz, which brought some sophistication to their blues accompaniments with Big Bill and Tampa Red. Eventually the piano became an integral part of Chicago-made blues recordings; and a few pianists such as Joshua Altheimer, Blind John Davis, Roosevelt Sykes and even onetime guitarist Peetie Wheatstraw made literally

home chicago



hundreds of sides with various bluesmen.

Now, it must be remembered that Chicago had feeder cities, primarily Indianapolis (Champion Jack Dupree and, before him, LeRoy Carr) and St. Louis (Sykes, Wheatstraw, Walter Davis, Speckled Red, Robert Lee "Nighthawk" McCoy) and more recently Memphis (Wells, Cotton, Big Walter and the BB King school). Also, new talent was constantly coming in from the rural South — all this still keeps the pot melting and the music close to its roots.

By 1938, when blues recording was organized by the black musicians, Union local, electric guitars began appearing on records. In the 40's, the pianists began to overtake the guitarists in popularity with Roosevelt Sykes, Jack Dupree, Memphis Slim and, later, Sunnyland Slim broadening the appeal of the blues to middle-class blacks who chose to forget the unpleasantness of their Southern birthplaces and the music connected with it.

Wartime prosperity brought with it increased wages for workers who brought a love for the blues with them from the Southern rootland. Blues bands started appearing in the taverns of the West and South Sides. Big Bill Broonzy played at Sylvio's, Sonny Boy Williamson sometimes in the band with him. Sykes, more debonair, worked steadily between North Side syndicate joints and 47th Street's then swanky spots. And Memphis Minnie, Curtis Jones, Tampa Red and other really popular blues artists no longer had to depend on cop-dodging on the South Side and Maxwell Street Sunday afternoons for income from their music.

But Melrose, who now had a virtual monopoly (since Mayo Williams Decca operations were moved to New York after 1938's recording ban in Chicago and never returned) on Chicago recording, did not record the bands that appeared in the taverns. His sessions were polished but lacked the robustness of the blues joints.

Before getting into the modern Chicago scene, several extremely important artists of the early 40's should be mentioned. First, guitarists Baby Doo and Willie James Lacey — who must have influenced greatly the way even T-Bone Walker (who worked Chicago regularly at that time) played the blues. And you must hear the records of Doctor Clayton to appreciate how much this African-born and New York-bred vocalist influenced every aspect of the blues in the postwar years.

Recording of bands as they sounded in the clubs had to wait for the appearance of the independent labels in the late 40's. Of course, the surviving label of this group is Chess, with its Checker and Argo subsides, and marvelous reissue series. But let's pay heed to the others. Miracle, Premium and "United States" were to give us modern-style sides by Memphis Slim, Roosevelt Sykes, Robert Nighthawk, Junior Wells and Big Walter Horton. Disc jockey Al Benson's Swingmaster, "Parrot/Blue Lake" gave us J. B. Lenore, Snooky Pryor, Dusty Brown, and some classic early T-Bone Walker material in the 50's. "Cobra" produced magnificent debut sessions by Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Shakey Jake and Buddy Guy in the late 1950's. J.O.B. entered dozens of great sides by Sunnyland Slim, J.B. Lenore, Johnny Shines, Willie Mabon, Floyd Jones, John Brim, Eddie Boyd, and others. Vee-Jay began with Eddie Taylor, Jimmy Reed and later John Lee Hooker, merged with Chance (J. B. Hutto, Homesick James) before going pop with the Beatles, Four Seasons, etc. (Only poor management prevented Vee-Jay, United and Parrot from becoming major independent operations.)

Elmore James' and Junior Wells' Chief and Profile releases are much sought after by 50's blues collectors. "USA Age," in the 60's brought back Magic Sam, Willie Mabon, Homesick James, and added A. C. Reed, Koko Taylor, Ricky Allen, and others to the blues discography. Bill Lasely's Web-Cor operation concentrated on Mighty Joe Young. In the last few years the small-label tradition continues with Bo Diddley's various labels (TDS, Dud-Sound, FM, etc.), Nation/Salem, and others, offering artists only beginning to appeal to white blues fans: Johnny Littlejohn, J. L. Smith, Big Mac, Rev. Harrington's Atomic-H label continues its very long history with a recent release by Eddie Clearwater.

In the tradition of tavern-owners who have operated labels, Cadillac Baby still recorded Earl Hooker, Little Mack and Eddie Boyd 45's in the early 60's. The day bartender at Theresa's operates CJ/Colt/Firma with items by Hooker, Little Mack, Detroit Junior and a recent release by Lee Jackson.

These 45's are often pressed in quantities as small as 500 or 1000 copies, usually do not get the vital airplay needed to become really popular. But a real local smash such as Junior Wells' UP IN HEAH can break thru to the 35,000-50,000 bracket and mean

more in terms of local gigs than any blues LP's ever made in Chicago by Delmark, Arhoolie, Testament or Vanguard.

It is true that you cannot come to Chicago and expect to find the old country players like Big Joe Williams or Arthur Crudup working the West Side. Times change and with it the music changes. You must either accept change in art or encrust yourself in a sad nostalgia. You will not even hear the Muddy-Little Walter sound very often anymore. J. B. Hutto, Lee Jackson, Sunnyland Slim, Louis Myers, Big Walter and even Junior Wells and Buddy Guy in a mellow mood will give you a glimpse of the past occasionally — but they are with the newer sounds, too, and that's why they remain a part of a vital music scene which is producing new artists such as Jimmy Dawkins, Lefty Diz, Young Blood, and others who are able to think and play beyond the genius of B. B. King's style.

In the "New York Times" (June 21, 1970), Albert Goldman depicted bluesmen as "middle-aged or elderly" but has probably never been inside a blues club. The commentators, promoters and producers of certain white bluesmen who drew most of their inspiration from occasional sitting-in at Pepper's or Theresa's ten years ago tell the same fiction from the same lack of knowledge. It's good for the imitative musicians' ego and Myth (and business) to portray themselves as the saviors of a dying tradition — twenty years ago the Dixielanders were turning the same trick — but the creative ferment of the ghetto is all-encompassing. It can almost be sniffed amid the stale beer and cigarette smoke of the thriving tradition of blues bar sessions.

That's why the young Chicago blues fans who recently kicked off America's first blues magazine dubbed it LIVING BLUES. If you come to Chicago, and are 21, you can usually find some of the clubs listed in the *Sun-Times*' Thursday and Sunday entertainment calendars — a few dozen of the others are listed on the wall chart at the Jazz Record Mart at Grand and State just north of the Loop.

And if Chicago's still cooking, so is St. Louis, Memphis, etc., etc., etc. Anyone who thinks the blues are dying doesn't know much about the sick state of American society, about racism, about artistic evolution, or the fecund musical environment of the black church.

—bob koester

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caught in the act

—richard bizot

The following review of the 1970 Notre Dame Blues Festival is reprinted from Downbeat, November 12, 1970, with permission of Maher Publications. For those who attended the '70' festival, the review will stir memories; for those who did not attend, perhaps the review will strike an interest in the '71 festival.

Blues at Berkeley—sure. A major blues festival two years running at Ann Arbor—not surprising. But now there's blues at Pittsburgh and Portland State, Wesleyan and Wittenberg; there's blues at Bryn Mawr, Beloit, Baldwin-Wallace, and on practically every college campus this side of Bob Jones U.

Blues lives at Notre Dame. When blues establishes a foothold in the citadel of football it should be a sufficient sign that its invasion of academe has reached impressive proportions.

It was a long time coming. Until two years ago, bottlenecks were strictly for pouring from on home-game weekends, and Bessie Smith's name was known mainly to those who'd read Albee. Then, in the spring of 1969, J. B. Hutto brought his Hawks down from Chicago and a couple of hundred people found him to their liking. A year ago, Son House stopped off on his way to the west coast and an audience of 500 stomped its approval. But South Bend was still on the map for football, not blues. So much so that last spring, when Luther Allison and Robert Pete Williams were contracted to play at Notre Dame, they were given directions to Indianapolis. The concert finally came off, two hours late, but without Williams; he spent the night in the Indianapolis bus depot, 150 miles south of the home of the Fighting Irish.

It doesn't take much exposure to honest blues, however, to make dedicated fans out of neophytes. Within the span of about 18 months, a sizeable blues-digging audience has grown up at Notre Dame. Ample evidence of this was manifest at the blues festival which greeted returning undergraduates on the first weekend of the fall semester. Despite almost no opportunity for advance publicity and despite the relative inexperience of the enthusiastic student promoters of the event, the audience was there, nearly 1000 strong for each of the two nights of the festival.

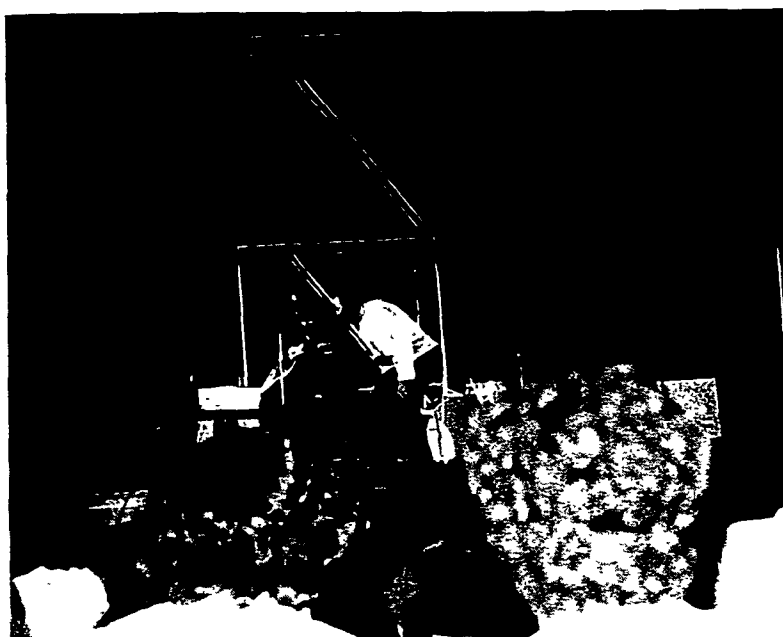
The Friday night session began late. Fred McDowell, chipper after a 17-hour bus trip from Como, Miss., arrived on time; but no one had told the Chicago

performers (J. B. Hutto and Otis Rush) about the time difference between Illinois and Indiana. So there were more than a few anxious moments for promoters Bob Brinkman and Mike Cervas before things got underway. Mississippi Fred ("I don't play no rock and roll.") did a couple of numbers to keep the audience happy, and then Otis Rush took the stage for what was to this observer the best set of the two days.

The dynamo of Rush's five-piece group that night was drummer Sammy Lay, who provided crowd-pleasing vocals on *Mojo* and *Hoochie Coochie Man* in addition to sure-handed rhythmic control. Rush's band was the only one at the festival to use horns; a honking tenor sax and a spirited trumpet (the latter in the capable hands of Bill Naylor) filled out the group's sound. But Rush himself was clearly at the helm. Repeatedly he brought the crowd to its feet, both with his tight-throated singing and with his biting, stinging guitar. By the time he closed with his now classic *So Many Roads*, he had taken the place apart and put it back together again; a tired, impatient crowd (which had waited an hour and forty-five minutes for the concert to begin) had become oblivious to everything but Otis Rush and his talent.

J. B. Hutto followed. The audience seemed to enjoy the prancing and mugging of Lee Jackson, Hutto's 63-year-old rhythm guitarist, but Hutto himself appeared to be down that night. Technical problems with bassist James Brickhouse's equipment were no help either. But nothing could dampen the excitement which Rush had kindled in the crowd, so when Fred McDowell returned to the stand sometime past midnight, things were still cooking beneath the geodesic dome of Stepan Center.

McDowell's set was not an unqualified success. Though he plays an electric guitar now, McDowell's style is still clearly in the country blues tradition. It is the intensely, even painfully, personal style of the Delta, and it wants no accompaniment. Not only was McDowell accompanied, and by the now inappropriately hammy Lee Jackson, he actually found himself upstaged by Hutto's sideman (and Fred's not easily upstaged). Musically, they never got together. Nonetheless, enough of McDowell came through to keep the audience calling for more, until finally, around



1:30, the house lights came up, somebody unplugged the mike, and the hall was cleared.

McDowell, it should be said, established himself as the festival's unofficial but ubiquitous spreader of joy. When he wasn't onstage (and he stayed over an extra day to make an unscheduled appearance at the beginning of the Saturday night session) he was backstage teaching guitar licks to clusters of would-be blues guitarists, or promoting after-session parties, or dancing out front with delighted students. And frequently he crept onstage, snuck up behind whichever vocalist was performing, and puckishly horned in on a chorus or two. The crowd loved him, and he reciprocated.

Following McDowell on Saturday night was Hound Dog Taylor's raucous trio. There was nothing subtle about their South Side Chicago blues; not that there should have been. Hound Dog's bottleneck yelped and growled and his voice barked happily above the blare. It was loud, funky, straight-ahead barrelhouse blues—and it was great fun.

The somewhat lower-keyed (and musically more interesting) Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins was next up. What Otis Rush was to Friday night, Dawkins was to the Saturday night session: impassive of visage, restrained in his movements, and spectacular as hell on his axe. Like Rush, he worked the crowd at will, taking it up with a hard-driving blues, down with a plaintive blues, and every which way with a nasty blues—then back up again. He received able backing from bassist Roosevelt Bromfield (who added two effective vocals of his own) and drummer Lester Dorsey.

Lightnin' Hopkins closed the festival and he did it—though with some difficulty—alone. Lee Jackson wanted to accompany him; Lee Jackson got chased. Then Fred McDowell sidled onstage (still busily spreading joy); and he got chased. Perhaps Lightnin's desire for solitude on the stand had something to do with the fact that a camera crew was filming the Texas bluesman for educational TV. At any rate, Lightnin' played to the camera, not the house, and thus failed to establish the complete rapport with his audience that he is capable of achieving, and with so little apparent effort. (His best number, not coincidentally, was *Baby Please Don't Go*, which came while a camera was being adjusted or loaded or something.)

Still, Lightnin' proved himself to be, as always, a

wonder. His soft voice was in fine form, his amplified acoustic guitar was mellow, and his familiar line of patter wove its familiar charm:

"I'm going into a key now I don't 'low nobody to play in but me.

[Pause; fiddles with tuning pegs.]

Now don't you gittar players get mad at po' Lightnin'.

[Chuckle; pause; etc.]

I don't 'low nobody to play in "A", but me and Blind Lemon Jefferson

[Pause; sideways shake of head]

—and he dead and gone."

You know it's his act, you know he's gone through it thousands of times in coffeehouses and clubs and on campuses, and yet it gets to you: the sly humor, the rib-nudging innuendo, the double take, the chuckle. Despite the tomfoolery, there's nothing fake about the man. He's absolutely authentic—in his music, in his style. And at the mention of the legendary Blind Lemon you remember that Hopkins really does go back that far, that the man from Houston—no matter where he has been or how many times he has performed—does represent a link with a fading past. And then you forget the rest.

The festival was a satisfying one, not only because of the individual performers' and groups' merits, but also because in the space of two nights one had encountered such a representative cross-section of the history of blues. From the remote past there was Fred McDowell, from the somewhat less remote past, Lightnin' Hopkins. The raw city blues of a generation ago was there in the persons of J. B. Hutto and Hound Dog Taylor. The present generation of Chicago bluesmen was ably represented by Otis Rush and Jimmy Dawkins. And then there was the audience.

If the performers represented past and present, the listeners—young, and in almost all cases very new to the blues—represent the future. They won't be the blues musicians of tomorrow, the kids at Notre Dame and hundreds of other schools, to be sure. But the blues, whose incipient death is forever being predicted or announced, will die only if there is not sufficient demand for those who can play it to do so. College students everywhere comprise a large and growing market for the blues, and they assure its future.

midwest blues



*the
artists*

mississippi fred mc dowell

Fred McDowell is, without question, one of the finest country bluesmen in the Mississippi tradition. With his emotional voice and vibrant guitar playing, McDowell ranks in the same league as such great Mississippi bluesmen as Charlie Patton, Son House, and Robert Johnson.

Fred McDowell, in reality, should be called Tennessee Fred McDowell because he was born in 1905, in Rossville, Tennessee. McDowell lived and worked on farms in the area until he was about 21. At that point, he became a farmer for himself.

It was during his teen years that he became interested in the guitar. He would go to various parties and country suppers in the Rossville area and would sing while others played the guitar. After he finished singing, he would pick up an instrument and pick out various accompaniments that he had heard.

In 1926, McDowell moved to Memphis, where he held a number of jobs as a laborer. It was while he was in Memphis that he received his first guitar from a white Texan named Mr. Taylor. Since Memphis is considered to be part of the Mississippi Delta area by blues collectors, it may have been during this time that McDowell first learned to use a broken bottleneck as a slider, a technique that is so typical of Mississippi Delta bluesmen.

In 1940, McDowell moved to Como, Mississippi, and, in December of that year, he married Annie Mae Collins, who is a fine singer in her own right. Como is a very interesting town to scholars of black folk music in that it is the only area in which one may find African-sounding fife and drum bands.

It wasn't until 1959 that Fred McDowell was finally able to record his music. Alan Lomax, son of folklorist John Lomax (discovered Leadbelly), was in the Como area on a field trip documenting the ongoing traditions of black music, when some citizens in the area mentioned McDowell. Lomax found him and proceeded to record some of the most powerful rural blues since before the Second World War.

Since that time, McDowell has toured the country and Europe, playing at various festivals and colleges.

In addition, he has recorded a number of albums for various companies. Below is a selected discography.

Roots of the Blues: Atlantic 1348

The Blues Roll On: Atlantic 1352

Mississippi Delta Blues: Arhoolie F1021

Fred McDowell Vol. 2: Arhoolie F1027

Fred McDowell and His Blues Boys: Arhoolie F1046

I Do Not Play No Rock 'n' Roll: Capitol ST404

Long Way From Home: Milestone 3003



homesick james

Among the various blues guitar styles, the use of a bottleneck is perhaps the most startling to the new blues fan. Wearing this device on his finger and sliding it up and down the strings of his guitar, the bluesman can create a close unity between his voice and the notes of his instrument. Over the last fifty years, the style has been recorded in nearly every major blues area in the United States, although it is most typical of the Mississippi Delta area. One of the best bottleneck bluesmen is Homesick James.

Homesick James Williamson was born April 30, 1910, in Sommerville, Tennessee. He was born into a musical family, as both his father and mother played instruments. His father was a drummer, and his mother played guitar. With this environment, it is not surprising Williamson would be interested in playing a guitar. However, his mother strongly objected to this as she didn't want her child to be a musician, especially of the blues. Fortunately, Williamson learned to play on his own, behind his mother's back, and, as he learned, began to follow the classic route of playing for dances and country suppers that were held in the area.

Homesick James learned to play, using the bottleneck, after having seen his mother use a knife while playing a version of the folk song "John Henry." At one point, sometime later, he recalls seeing the great ragtime guitarist Blind Blake using a slide.

Homesick James left Sommerville, when he was 16, and moved to the Chicago area. He secured a job in a restaurant in an effort to earn the money to buy a better guitar. After he obtained a guitar, he began to follow the great, and now legendary, blues artists, who were living in the Chicago area at the time. Among them were Big Bill Broonzy and Lonnie Johnson.

It was in 1938, that Homesick James formed his first band, and played in the small taverns in the Chicago area. He also toured the South and worked, at times, with Sleepy John Estes, Yank Rachel, Baby Face Leroy, and Snooks Pryor. From about 1954 on, Williamson worked with perhaps the most influential of the Chicago city bluesmen, Elmore James. He worked as a sideman on a number of Elmore James' records and, after Elmore's death, made several records of his own. Among the best of his recordings is *Homesick James Blues on the South Side* (Prestige 7388).

carey bell

Appearing at Midwest Blues, along with Homesick James, is one of the masters of the Blues harp—Carey Bell. Carey was born in Macon, Mississippi, on November 14, 1936. He says that his grandfather got him into blues when he was eight years old by buying him a 25-cent harmonica. By the time Carey was thirteen, he was playing blues in his stepfather's band. (Carey's stepfather, Lovey Lee, still plays blues piano on Chicago's South Side.)

Carey came to Chicago in 1956 with his stepfather and his band. They played several places on the South Side before trying the West Side of Chicago. It was

on the West Side that Carey met Honey Boy Edwards, who later introduced Carey to Little Walter Jacobs. Carey studied harp with Little Walter and eventually worked some gigs with him. Since then Carey has played as a side-man on practically every important blues band in Chicago, and he also played with Mike Bloomfield at the Fillmore. Notably Carey has played with Howlin' Wolf, Earl Hooker, Johnny Young, Little Walter and appeared at the late Ann Arbor Blues Festival. Carey's only major album is a Delmark release (DS 622) *Carey Bell's Blues Harp*—a brilliant album featuring Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins, and Eddie Taylor (also appearing here).



eddie taylor

Eddie Taylor, the third member of the Midwest Blues version of a supersession for Friday evening, was born in Benoit, Mississippi, on January 29, 1933. Eddie was raised in the Delta back country; he met and influenced many of the best blues singers around. Naylor Leland was a small blues town that boasted singers like Son House, Willie Brown and Charlie Patton at the dawn of the 30's and Eddie saw them and studied their playing. While "hoboing" it Eddie met Big Joe Williams in Clarksdale. Big Joe loved to teach blues; Eddie was anxious to learn; a fast friendship developed.

Around this time Eddie also met Jimmy "Big Boss Man" Reed and the two teamed up and began playing country suppers throughout the Delta region. The blend of Eddie's guitar and Reed's harp and vocals was ideal.

In 1946 Eddie Taylor went to Memphis and became a truck driver, supplementing his income by moonlighting as a bluesman. During this time he played second guitar behind the legendary likes of Elmore James and B. B. King.

In 1949 Eddie left Memphis for Chicago. After a quick look at the blues scene up north, he returned to Memphis for Jimmy Reed and Big Walter Horton (the innovator of the high compression blues harp) and again went to Chicago to become a familiar performer in blues joints on the West and South Sides.

howlin' wolf

The Howlin' Wolf, otherwise known as Chester Arthur Burnett, was born in 1910 in the deep South—more exactly in Aberdeen, Mississippi—"between Memphis and Jackson on Hwy. 45, goin' South" as he says. He grew up in Arkansas around Forrest City and West Memphis, ran around with Charlie Patton, farmed a little, and even made a stint in the Army. In the late 40's, he did a radio program on KWM in West Memphis, playing blues and advertising plows, tractors, and seeds. Sometime in these late 40's he began gigging with his first band and cut his first record for Ike Turner on the Sun label. Shortly thereafter, he started recording with Chess Records, though he had been playing for a while before this time. As he puts it, "I been playin' long before I start to cuttin' records, doin' out the South."

While living in West Memphis, the Wolf received his basic musical training from Patton, who influenced



his incredible vocal style, and Rice Miller (Sonny Boy Williamson II) who taught him to play the harmonica (harp) and influenced his down-home harp sound.

Chess brought the Wolf to Chicago, his permanent hangout, in 1952 and thus to the place where he would carve a lasting niche among blues greats. Since 1952, when Muddy Waters got the Wolf his first job, he's been playing his dirty down-home country blues in Chicago clubs and nightspots, making the scene at occasional blues festivals, and acting the part of the good time man—"300 lbs. of heavenly joy." As he puts it, "I just like to play anywhere."

During his career in Chicago, the Wolf played with many different musicians, most of whom left him to form their own bands or record their own songs. But he remained himself, always howling away and blowing his powerful harp, sometimes even playing guitar. He has cut a large group of records, of course, and a number of his songs have been re-recorded by such well-known white rock groups as the Doors ("Back

Door Man"), the Cream ("Spoonful") and Jeff Beck ("I Ain't Superstitious"). They still belong to the Wolf and his nasty, gravel voice, though. He has cut a few rock 'n' roll singles but is at home when he's seated at the first table before his band, shouting and wailing the blues which have pursued him from the Delta to the South Side. He prefers "those old blues" because he knows them intimately—"I suffered 'em in a lot of places." His music often refers to his manliness and "badness"—his ability to live with trouble whether it is restlessness in the "city" or bad women.

Recently, Howlin' Wolf got together in London with the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton to produce an album entitled "London Session." Really, though, it's the blues ("your inheritance" as he likes to call it) that keeps this artist and his band (Hubert Sumlin, Calvin Jones, Willie Williams, and Detroit Junior) cooking. In the past, the Wolf has had such famous performers as Sam Lay and Carey Bell play in his band. But this current list of his bandsmen should not be taken as definitive because the Chicago blues scene has always been characterized by a great fluidity of musicians and groups.

The Wolf's fame continued when, in March of this year his was the inaugural act at the opening of the new Pepper's Lounge on South Michigan in Chicago. The old Pepper's on 43rd Street is a famous blues spot and is often referred to as the Home of the Blues.

Evil: Chess 1540

Howlin' Wolf: Chess 1469

The London Sessions: Chess 60008

shirley griffith

Shirley Griffith was born in Brandon, Mississippi (near Jackson) in 1907. While in the Delta he had heard and learned from Tommy Johnson and Ishman Bracey. He came up to Indianapolis—known as "Naptown" to its black residents—at the age of nineteen and made a living playing in the many joints that thrived before the Depression forced their closing. It was always possible to hear Shirley in the taverns on Bright Street—a true Mississippi Delta sound emanating from the heart of the Midwest. Griffith, as mentioned, was a student and a close friend of the late Tommy Johnson—the great Mississippi bluesman of the 1920's. He does a perfect version of Johnson's greatest songs: "Canned Heat" (from which the rock group got its name and much of its material), "Maggie Campbell," and "Big Road." Shirley did a magnificent guest set at the first Ann Arbor Festival and has a few albums on the Prestige label but they are unfortunately no longer available. While not a Chicago or Delta bluesman by residence, Shirley is their equal in talent and will have at Midwest Blues the opportunity to play with his peers and receive some long overdue attention.

little brother montgomery

Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery was born on April 18, 1906 in Kentwood, Louisiana. Eurreal's father ran a barrelhouse-juke joint for the workers at the local sawmill and his mother played accordion and organ. Little Brother began playing piano at age five and left his home when he was eleven to start his long career. He went first to Saratoga Street in New Orleans and then roamed up and down the Mississippi River playing the barrelhouse-juke joints, entertaining the levee camp and sawmill workers. Legend has it that he met up with Skip James in Vicksburg, Mississippi and the two traded songs—Little Brother giving Skip his "No Special Rider Blues" and Skip returning the favor with his "Vicksburg Blues." It was during this time that Little Brother's style was maturing—profiting from an eclectic exposure to many unknown and now forgotten barrelhouse pianists. Also during the 1920's Little Brother played in the bands of Clarence Desdune and Leonard Parker.

Little Brother Montgomey came to Chicago in 1928 and was thrown into the company of such blue blues pianists as Jimmy Yancy, Pintetop Smith, "Cripple" Clarence Lofton, Charlie Spand, Albert Ammons, and Meade Lux Lewis. His first recordings were made, not in Chicago, but in Grafton, Wisconsin, in 1929 as accompaniments for Irene Scruggs on the Paramount Label. While Miss Scruggs soon dropped into that dark obscurity that was the fate of many blues singers and players (and, in this case, a well deserved obscurity) Little Brother started his own recording career starting with a September, 1930 session in Grafton consisting of two cuts—"Vicksburg Blues" and "No Special Rider Blues". After the crash, however, things tailed off and Little Brother was discouraged enough to return to Mississippi where he formed his own band in Jackson. In 1936 he recorded again in New Orleans. He toured with his band until 1939 when he moved to Hattiesburg before returning north to Chicago at the beginning of World War II. In Chicago he played at the Hollywood Show Lounge regularly for twelve years.

From the early fifties Little Brother has lived in Chicago playing at Northside and various suburban clubs. In 1966 he toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival and he appeared at the Second Ann Arbor Blues Festival in August, 1970.

Little Brother Montgomery Blues: Folkways FG 3527
After Hours Blues: Biograph BLP 12010
No Special Rider: Adekphi AD 1003S



otis rush



Otis Rush is probably one of the finest blues guitarists in Chicago today, as anyone who saw him at last year's blues festival can well attest. Unfortunately, he is just now escaping the tag of Chicago's most underrated blues artists. Underrated, of course, not by his peers, but by the white blues audiences. Perhaps this stems from the fact that he is just now putting out some records, after a silence of six years, forced by a recording company which had him under exclusive contract, and which for some reason also had a policy of not recording "hard" blues. Or, perhaps it stems from the fact that Otis is very reserved and in command in his playing, restrictin a more flamboyant performance to occasionally playing behind his back. Whatever the reason, he has a new recording company, and is on his way to the recognition which he so richly deserves.

Otis was born in Philadelphia—Mississippi, that is—in 1934. He learned his early blues from the records of such artists as John Lee Hooker, and Lightning Hopkins. He moved with his family to Chicago in 1948, where exposure to the many great blues bands of that period provided him a further blues education. He formed his own band in the early 50's and in the middle fifties made his first recording, on Cobra records.

Otis has developed a powerful singinge style to go along with his unique guitar work. What makes his guitar work unique is that he plays left handed, holding the guitar backwards and upside down, but not reversing the strings' order, so that when he plays, he hits the treble strings first, instead of the bass.

Otis played a set in last year's festival and really brought the house down, and the Midwest festival is fortunate in having him again this year.

Door To Door: Chess 1538

The One's A Good Un: Blue Horizon-7-63222

muddy waters

Muddy Waters, one of the all time blues greats was born McKinley Morganfield in Rolling Fork, Mississippi on April 4, 1915, the second son of Ollie Morganfield, a farmer. Born in the Delta region, Muddy grew up in Clarksdale, Mississippi. During his youth, he came to be called Muddy Waters supposedly because he enjoyed playing in nearby Deer Creek. Muddy remembers singing in the Baptist church and in the fields of the Delta's farms, usually in time to the workers' hoes. By 17, he had married and formed a band with a friend, playing the guitar and doing most of the singing. At some point in this period, he heard Son House perform and was influenced strongly by this bluesman's guitar and vocal style; also, he listened to Robert Johnson and adapted much of his slide technique and his agile rhythms. Muddy refers to himself as a mixture of all three—himself, House, and Johnson.

The turning point in his life and career came when he moved to Chicago in 1943, looking for the good life the city reputedly promised to bring most blacks and hoping to "make it." He began life in Chicago as a truck driver in the day and an entertainer at house-rent parties and small West Side clubs at night. It was a tough life and the blues were waning badly. Big Bill Broonzy introduced him at Sylvio's sometime around 1945 and in 1946 he recorded a couple of sides at Columbia which were never released. Later that year, however, Muddy was heard by the Chess brothers' talent scout and recorded his first session for Aristocrat (Chess).

His first real break came in 1948 when he and Chess had their initial success—his first release on that label, "Rolling Stone." It was a hit, which in those days meant 60,000 copies sold in the exclusive "race" market of Chicago, St. Louis, Gary, Memphis and the South. At this time, he was playing informally with Little Walter (harp) and Jimmy Rogers (guitar)—both outstanding soloists in their own right. This group would go around to the clubs and challenge other amateur bands in contests. That didn't last long, though, as Muddy's talent was soon recognized and owners wouldn't let him compete. Finally in 1951 he gained enough confidence to form his own blues band which comprised himself, Rogers, Little Walter, Elgin Evans, and the superb pianist Otis Spann. He became an established national star and placed three of his nine records on Billboard's R&B Top Ten charts. He felt that that this early success was attributed to his retention of the traditional "Mississippi sound" while putting a beat to it—"a little drive" as he says. This success continued when in 1954 he landed three records in the Top Ten including "Hoochie Coochie Man" and "I Just Want To Make Love to You." And the true Chicago style of blues was established—the electric ensemble blues of which Muddy's first band was a peerless example. But when rock and roll crashed into the market, the "race" market was forever lost. As a result, Muddy never had another real hit after 1956.

His records sold steadily until around 1960, but Chess avoided him, looking for new markets. Muddy himself was losing interest in the blues and increasingly let his band do all the work—often having Spann and James Cotton on vocals. The nightclub routine was taking its toll on him. Finally, Muddy adopted a new style—a music of the club atmosphere—entertaining a joyous, drinking crowd. His renewed interest was due to a larger white audience which began listening to his music. His styles and music began to be studied and employed by the white rock groups (Beatles, Clapton, and Rolling Stones) as Muddy started playing guitar again and in a way that resembled his original style. His fame grew to international dimensions after he



made British tours in 1958 and 1963 and occasional returns thereafter. He has reached both black and white audiences.

Today, Muddy seldom plays the tavern circuit and works little around Chicago. He appears occasionally at larger clubs like Mr. Kellys and at college festivals. However, the "Muddy Waters sound" is an unmistakable, lasting part of the blues. It is a further tribute to his talent to know that many modern, Chicago style bluesmen have been in Muddy's band—Big Walter Horton, Junior Wells, Willie Dixon, James Cotton, Earl Hooker and Buddy Guy. He has also aided and encouraged a great number of singers over the years—such greats as the Wolf, Chuck Berry, Otis Spann, Mike Bloomfield, and Paul Butterfield. Many of the younger stars (Buddy Guy and Luther Allison) have emulated his unique style and used Muddy's art to launch their separate careers.

Sail on: Chess 1539

Fathers and Son: Chess 127

More Real Folk Blues: Chess 1511

They Call Me Muddy Waters: Chess 1553

AKA, Muddy Waters: Chess 2CH 60006

mance lipscomb

Among the collectors and scholars of folk music, Mance Lipscomb is described as a songster. In addition to performing a wide selection of the blues of Texas, Mance's music also includes gospel, folk songs, the music of the white folk singers, and popular tunes. One of the main characteristics of the songster, aside from the wide repertoire, is that he will make a great effort to perfect his performance of any given song and play it the same way each time. One might compare the recordings of another famous songster, Mississippi John Hurt, listening to his 1928 recordings and those



made after his rediscovery in 1964. They are identical.

Mance was born on April 9, 1895, in Brazos County, Texas, near the town of Navasota. He began to be involved in music when he played bass guitar for his father who was an excellent fiddle player and an ex-slave from Alabama. By the time Mance was eleven, his father had left home and Mance was forced to hire out as a laborer in an effort to support the rest of his family.

At the age of sixteen, Lipscomb became involved in the sharecropper system. Anyone who is familiar with this system knows that it is so designed as to keep the sharecropper in a state of continuous debt. Fortunately, Mance is not the type of person to be easily defeated by this kind of system and many long hours were spent trying to keep ahead. Mance tells of how, during a good year, he would be able to show a \$200 profit for his effort.

While he worked those six-day weeks as a farmer, he began to play for parties in the Navasota area. He performed at both black and white parties and while he would sing blues at the white parties, they would be what he called, "White Man's blues." Once when asked if he knew any songs that were of particular interest to the black people, he said, "Oh, you want to hear the real thing." He then proceeded to sing classic blues and folk songs of his area for the next five hours. The results of this effort may be heard on his first LP entitled "Texas Sharecropper and Songster" (Arhoolie F1001). He has since played at many clubs and colleges and has recorded a number of other albums.

Mance Lipscomb: Reprise 2012

Texas Songster Vol. 2: Arhoolie F1023

Texas Songster in a Live Performance: Arhoolie F1026

Mance Lipscomb Vol. 4: Arhoolie F1033

Texas Songster Vol. 5: Arhoolie F1049

buddy guy & junior wells

Buddy and Junior are representative of what may be called the new bluesmen, and as such are exerting great influence on the blues scene today. As B.B. King says, "They are the young guys who are gonna have to carry on." They are carrying on the blues tradition, but they are carrying it on in many new, innovative, and exciting ways. They are the ones who are responsible for taking the blues' roots and applying them to the modern, fast, demanding and often chaotic world of today. In this application they have adopted many new techniques, while never forgetting their strong traditional blues heritages. *Newsweek* refers to them as being "in the vanguard of the newest blues styles—theatrical, visual and spontaneous, stretching the limits of the once rigid form toward jazz, toward rhythm and blues."

Junior Wells was born in Memphis (1934) and lived his early years in Arkansas. As a young boy he



heard Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King, Big Walter and others, who all lived near him, and who imbued in him strong blues roots. His love of the blues was born and nurtured here, and he carried it north with him to Chicago. Junior was especially enamoured of the great blues harp players of that time, like Big Walter and Sonny Boy Williamson. There is an oft-quoted story about how Junior got his first harp, at about age 12. He had set his sights on a harp offered at the local pawnshop for \$2.00, and set to earning the money. After he had amassed \$1.50, however, he decided that he couldn't wait, and proceeded to the pawnshop to ask for a 50c discount. When refused, he attempted to avail himself of a five-finger discount, which led to his appearance before the judge. The judge was intrigued by the story, and asked Junior to play. After hearing him wail for a while, he fished the 50c from his own pocket, and dismissed the case, and Junior has been playing a harp ever since.

Junior got his start by going around to the various clubs and sitting in with whomever would have him. After a while, he was being invited to sit in, and after a little while longer, was headlining.

To see Junior perform is to see why he is one of the foremost among the blues showmen. He is often on the move onstage for, as he says, "if the music's good, then it moves you around." He is equally at home with the fast blues tunes, such as his "It's All Soul," and with the gutbucket blues of "Hoo Doo Man" or "It's So Sad to Be Lonely."

Junior has cut many good sides, but he allows that he won't make a record unless Buddy Guy plays guitar on it. Junior says that Buddy "makes blues moan and say anything he wants."

Like Junior, Buddy was born in the South, near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to be more precise. That was in 1936, and Buddy spent the first 20 years of his life soaking up the blues tradition. He was inspired by the records of John Lee Hooker, Lightning Hopkins, and T-Bone Walker, and was playing regularly when he was seventeen. He also had an interesting experience involving his first instrument, a guitar, which he made himself from a couple pieces of screen wire nailed to a wall. Buddy came to Chicago in 1957, to a music scene which was, as he admits, very tough. He sat in with a few bands, such as Otis Rush's, and got a few gigs, but didn't really get a big break until he won a "battle of the blues" at a Chicago club, over a field that included the likes of Rush, Magic Sam, and Junior Wells. Otis and Magic Sam each then contributed to Buddy's career by introducing him to recording companies.

He started his own band, and today is recognized as one of the "heirs apparent" in blues. He is also recognized as one of the greatest showmen around, one who excites perhaps the most audience identification and participation. His style is very alive, and he is known to play the axe behind his back, holding it with one hand outstretched, or during a series of ever-intensifying leaps.

His innovative conception and style of the blues has led him to incorporate many different sources into



his personal musical whole. He admires jazz very much, and has recorded while being backed by a jazz group. He also appreciates "soul" music, or Rhythm & Blues, and has been known to knock off "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" or "Money (That's What I Want)" or "Knock on Wood." Of course, his main thing is still the blues. And the great feel for the audience, to which he admits, and which is the real reason for whatever deviation he makes from traditional blues, will never turn him from it.

Buddy and Junior together present probably the most dynamic and exciting blues show around. They show great talent, whether they are playing electric or acoustic blues, and this year's Midwest festival is fortunate enough to have them playing a set of each.

Hoo Doo Man Blues: DS-612 Delmark

South Side Jam: DS-628 Delmark

Buddy & The Juniors: Blue Thumb BTS-20

I Was Walking Through the Woods: Chess 409

Chicago/The Blues/Today Vol. I (4 cuts): Vanguard

VSD 79216

johnny littlejohn & jimmy rodgers



Jimmy Rogers is not only a great second guitarist. Besides playing such a role in what is considered by many as the greatest city blues band ever (that of Muddy Waters in the early and middle fifties) Jimmy is a fine vocalist and lead guitarist (as is borne out by his Chess album, "Chicago Bound").

Jimmy Rogers (né James A. Lane) was born in Atlanta, Georgia on June 3, 1924. He is considered by many as one of the finest examples of early and middle fifties blues guitar often employing "sweeping bass runs and deep rhythmic accents to drive his songs." His vocals are sharp and smooth.

Excepting what Jimmy tells us in the song "Chicago Bound" little is known of his background save that he was in Chicago playing harp in 1945. He later switched to guitar and worked regularly with Little Walter, Sunnyland Slim, and Baby Leroy Foster. In 1949 Jimmy teamed up with the budding McKinley Morganfield for what was to be a eight year partnership producing the greatest city blues ever recorded. It was this band that set the pace and cast the mold which blues performers still strive to attain. The rhythmic interplay between the guitars of Muddy and Jimmy is still unparalleled. Jimmy's first record on his own was "That's All Right," which was a big hit for the burgeoning company of the fledgling Chess brothers.

In 1956 Rogers recorded one of his best pieces—"Walking By Myself"—which featured the high compression blues harp of Big Walter Horton.

In 1959 Jimmy forsook the blues and began driving a cab on Chicago's South Side. He came out of this imposed retirement in the summer of 1970 and now is a featured member of Johnny Littlejohn's excellent band. But it is the performances he made with the Muddy Waters band that mark Jimmy's pinnacle. It was this band of Muddy, Jimmy, Otis Spann, Little Walter, Willie Dixon, and Fred Below which "set the standards which still defy today's Bluesmen and Rock performers."

The music of Johnny Littlejohn is that kind which comes out of a man's insides—but not easily. It's the blues that comes out forcibly—harsh, mean, and screaming. It is the blues that results from the combination of country blues pressed into the Procrustean matrix of the Chicago environment and the electronic amplification. Johnny Littlejohn has played with pretty much the same group off and on now for about fifteen years featuring Little Mack Simmons and his wailing harp and frenzied vocals. This set could well be the best live performance of Midwest Blues.

Jimmy Rogers "Chicago Bound": Chess 407

"John Littlejohn's Chicago Blues Stars": Arhoolie

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london howlin' wolf sessions

The man ambles slowly across the room, pulls up a stool and sits down. His manner and dress, yes, even his acoustic guitar seem out of place, even anachronistic, surrounded by the morass of wires and switches that is a recording studio.

The man is Chester Burnett, better known as Howlin' Wolf. Sitting there, he embodies a considerable tradition while remaining a contemporary artist. He is about as out of place as a fish in water. Some other men gather around him; they're the band he's going to play with. They look different; younger and leaner, more flashily dressed. But these are minor differences. Their names are Clapton, Winwood, Wyman and Watts. All gods or demi-gods of the emerging rock culture. More precisely, they are skilled musicians who possess that unique talent of being able to impart not only their music but also the feel of it to an audience. All of them come from blues-based groups. Wyman and Watts from the Stones; Winwood from Traffic; Clapton, from the Cream.

This is where it's at: in a shack by a field near the Mississippi River delta; in a bar on Chicago's southwest side; in a cold-water London tenement. Wherever you find a man who has so much weighing on his soul

that he can't hold it in; wherever you hear those high, sweet notes that come from the heart as surely as the strings, there is where you'll find the blues. There's nothing complicated or esoteric about it: the blues is feeling, pure and simple. The legendary Son House puts it best: "the blues is a cold and a shake and a chill n' if you never had 'em children, I hope you never will."

There are a lot of things that make this album work, not the least of which is the individual talent of the performers, which is considerable. That's a nice little pick-up band the Wolf's got behind him and they sure do cook. Clapton gets in some fine licks on lead guitar while the rest of the band backs him flawlessly. Still, it's the Wolf's hard-edged, sandpaper vocals that are the marrow of these songs. Whether it be a blues-brooder like "The Red Rooster" or the mellow "Sittin' On Top Of The World", he exhibits the style and voice that propelled him to fame in the middle and late fifties. All of those men got their start playing tunes like these, which the older bluesmen worked out. It's really fine to hear them playing with one of the best. Still, the roots remain. As long as the feeling is there, the music will flourish.

—casey pocius

digging

of, different strokes for

a treatise on the variety of places in which and the

Scene: Boston night club; dark but well-ventilated; ample walking room between tables, some tables empty; no dancing; mixed drinks predominate, beer in heavy mugs; audience mostly white and youngish (twenties and thirties); coats and ties.

Time: within the last three years or so, probably a weekend.

Conversations are conducted between songs and between sets. The seating here is more fixed: there is little or no table-hopping. No one, it seems, is allowed to stand except the band and the waitresses; one is politely asked to take a table and place an order. Couples are clearly in evidence as couples; many have come here after a show. The blues band is slicker than those on South Side Chicago, and there is banter by the leader before each song. He's an entertainer here and he knows it. He also knows this audience can be jived. The audience's attention is respectful, its applause is enthusiastic without being demonstrative.

* * * * *

Scene: Washington Hall, Notre Dame; 500 in fixed seating; proscenium stage; no smoking, no drinking; undergraduates, mostly white.

Time: November 1969.

First an off-the-cuff lecture accompanied by taped blues; then two sets by an ancient country blues singer. For the lecturer, more-or-less patient attention; for the blues singer, emphatic approval. Two events alter the formal concert setting. A young black man climbs to the stage, midway in the second set, and presents the blues singer with a larger paper cup of water. The blues singer grins and drinks from it gratefully. At the close of the concert, several young black men rush to the foot of the stage, with upraised clenched fists and shouts of "right on!" The blues singer is startled and appears confused; later he asks whether they were threatening him.

* * * * *

Scene: Stepan Center, Notre Dame; seating both on

blankets (or else simply on cement) and on folding chairs.

Time: Spring, 1971.

This is a free concert; the band is a white, blues-type band from Chicago. There are a few blues buffs in the audience but not many, and some of them leave early. There are bottles of wine and smoke of different kinds, and many are more preoccupied with consumption of these than of the music. Mostly it is a good-time crowd, out for a diversion. There's a lot of unison clapping (at times one has the sensation he's been caught in the collision of a hoe-down and a pep rally). There's an inordinate amount of leaping to the feet.

* * * * *

Scene: Ann Arbor Blues Festival; outdoors, all day and half of the night; 6000 or so in a field enclosed by chain-link fence; ninety-five per cent white crowd, mostly under twenty-five sprawled on blankets; an aromatic blue haze hangs over the field.

Time: August 1969 or 1970; Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

A large, covered bandstand constructed of raw lumber; towers of scaffolding for spotlights and the P.A. system. At the back of the field, several hundred yards from the stage, booths selling: hot dogs, ice cream bars, chicken, oranges, soft drinks, handicrafts, record albums. Also at the back: rows of portable johns and a first-aid station (a rumor passes through the crowd that a baby has been delivered in the first-aid station; apparently it is only a rumor).

There's a fair proportion of people merely making the scene, being pointedly hip and/or obstrusive; but there's a much greater proportion of pure blues freaks. The crowd, though, is so large that it is difficult to generalize about; instead, a few vignettes:

□ an infant breast-feeding, as oblivious to the crowd as its mother, intent upon the music, is to the infant's ardent nursing.

□ a blind old bluesman waiting for his turn on

blues

different folks /being

variety of ways in which people + blues come together

stage, seated on a blanket and proposing marriage (or something) to a lady reporter from the *Chicago Tribune*.

□ a young man, bent double and groaning, and his friend trying to talk him down.

□ a child of two or three riding his tricycle up and down what serves for an aisle.

□ a serious-looking man frowning and fussing over a portable tape recorder, and never applauding.

□ a man sitting serenely and cross-legged on a blanket with an assortment of sand-cast candles spread out before him.

□ two Japanese men wearing what appear to be identical sandals, black trousers, and short-sleeved white shirts.

□ a buckskinned black photographer endlessly moving leaning, crouching, twisting—seeking the perfect angle, the perfect shot.

□ a fat girl with no shirt on dancing by herself.

Besides the particular vignettes, a blur of images: lots of couples and other assortments of people sharing bottles and food and bug-spray; people sleeping and/or (at the afternoon sessions) sunbathing; a number of families having picnics; people playing frisbee on the fringes of the crowd. But above all, thousands of people listen intently to blues; intent and yet relaxed, if you can dig that. Few if any serious hassles. But a seemingly endless fund of interest and attention; and, for the bluesmen, applause which is homage.

* * * * *

Scene: jammed South Side Chicago bar/night club; dark and smoky; tables crowded close together; perhaps some dancing; a beer crowd (bottles on every table); an all-black audience, not very many young people (mostly forties and up).

Time: any Saturday night in the last twenty-five years.

This is where blues lives; this is, at least in the North, its native soil. The din is deafening. The band's

amplification is loud but cannot drown out, can only compete with, the clink of bottles, the scrape of chairs, and the patrons' shouted conversations. To an outsider, the customers' apparent inattention may be puzzling. This crowd will seldom give its undivided attention to the performers; applause is often perfunctory. There's no such thing as a standing ovation. But apparent inattention is by no means indifference; and acceptance here is, after all, acceptance by the most knowledgeable blues audience extant. Not knowledgeable in a technical sense, necessarily; for here blues is not an art form (and it's certainly not merely a type of entertainment) but part of a way of life shared by customers and musicians.

—richard bizot



blues

I would imagine that everyone at the Notre Dame Blues Festival has a blues record collection of some kind. Perhaps it's just a few albums of bluesmen that you have seen in person. Many others, however, have collections that include rare 45s, albums only available overseas or re-issues that have very limited pressings.

Because blues records are pouring onto the market in an ever-increasing number, I have compiled a basic library of recommended albums. The labels range from the biggest in the world to some that are virtually unknown. This list is not intended to be a measure of sales success but rather as a guideline to discs that have captured the artist at his best. Bear in mind that this list is just one person's opinion and everything from that point on is all Caveat Emptor.

ROBERT JOHNSON, KING OF THE DELTA BLUES SINGERS, VOL. I & II (Columbia)

If you don't have at least one of these albums then you have no business being here in the first place. These represent the best of the best. They were originally recorded in 1936 and 1937 (for A.R.C.) and Johnson was dead under mysterious circumstances less than a year later. This is the zenith of Country Blues with all of the anguish and torment of the great Delta bluesmen. An absolute essential to every collection.



McKINLEY MORGANFIELD A/K/A MUDDY WATERS (Chess)

The definitive collection of Muddy with early tracks of him backed by Jimmy Rogers, Little Walter and countless others. It traces his career from the first Post War recordings. This two-disc set can easily forgive a lot of previous mediocre efforts by Muddy and ghastly production ideas by Chess.

BLIND WILLIE McTELL (Yazoo)

A great re-issue record by this legendary Georgia bluesman. His "Statesboro Blues" has since become a classic. Avoid the Library of Congress record and buy this one.

B. B. KING, LIVE AT THE REGAL (ABC Paramount)

This has been around for some years but ABC Paramount has repackaged it for fans who have just recently jumped on the King bandwagon. It rates as one of the best live recordings ever made and the band really cooks behind some superlative singing. There are many King albums out on the market now but this 1964 recording remains the one to have.

CHARLIE PATTON, FOUNDER OF THE DELTA BLUES (Yazoo)

Patton loomed as a giant among bluesmen in the late 1920s and early 1930s (he died in 1934) and was a wellspring for dozens who followed him. This is a two-disc set with the material arranged chronologically. Listen before you buy it because this is not for the casual listener. Don't lose the enclosed sheet of lyrics because you'll need it.

LIGHTNING HOPKINS, EARLY RECORDING, VOL. 2 (Arhoolie)

Lightning has probably 50 albums out on various labels so it's nearly impossible to choose a "best." This one comes the closest to capturing his charisma. No tricks here and nothing fancy but it's a masterpiece of the Texas style.

HOWLIN' WOLF, EVIL (Chess)

Bypass the London sessions (would you believe 150,000 sales!) and get this essential album of Wolf at his gravelly best. Hubert Sumlin's guitar work

collections

is so subtle that there is a tendency to forget how important he is to Wolf. All of the material is excellent.

THE LEGEND OF ELMORE JAMES (Kent)

There are a multitude of Elmore's records now available so I suggest that you listen to several before making a decision. This one captures all of the intensity of that incredible voice. An absolute must for slide guitar freaks.

BLUES AT NEWPORT, 1964, VOL. 2 (Vanguard)

No one who was at that festival will ever forget the newly rediscovered Skip James soaring that falsetto voice into the first note of "Devil Got My Woman." Some fine cuts by Mississippi John Hart and an epic version of "Prodigal Son" by Rev. Robert Wilkins but the four Skip James songs alone are worth the price of the album.

SLIM HARPO, RAINING IN MY HEART (Excello)

Bypass his later (more commercial) recordings and get this one. Louisiana blues may be an acquired taste but the title song and "King Bee" (later recorded by the Stones) make this the very best in its style.

MAGIC SAM, WEST SIDE SOUL (Delmark)

This is a great album by a brilliant bluesman who died in 1969 at the age of 32. The recording is a rarity, capturing the excitement of a live performance in a recording studio session.

MISSISSIPPI BLUES, 1927-41 (Origin)

When this album first appeared in 1962, it contained original recordings by inactive musicians, but in only two years no less than five of them (Son House, Skip James, Booker White, Robert Wilkins, John Hurt) had been rediscovered and were active performers again. This small label may be hard to find but it's worth the search. Ignore the erroneous lyric sheet and biographical notes. The fidelity on some of the cuts is poor but the music is outstanding.

OTIS RUSH, THIS UN'S A GOOD 'UN (Polydor)

This is a re-issue of a re-issue anthology if you get what I mean. It's a collection of Otis' Cobra singles from 1958-59 and was released in England



on Blue Horizon and recently issued here on Polydor. Otis deserves a good album for the here and now but this one will do in the meantime.

ARTHUR CRUDUP, VINTAGE SERIES (RCA Victor)

Sixteen magnificent tracks including the original versions of "Rock Me, Mama," "My Baby Left Me," "Mean Ol' Frisco" and 13 more. These recordings were made over the 1941-1956 period and represent a perfect fusion of Country Blues with basic R&B. Bypass the later Delmark recordings to buy this new re-issue and hear him at his best.

BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON (RBF, Folkways)

The music and singing here are brooding and intense to an almost painful degree. This is gospel material and not blues. It's definitely not for beginners. Don't worry about not being able to decipher the lyrics because no one else can either.

JUNIOR WELLS, HOODOO MAN (Delmark)

This was his first album and remains the best by a wide margin. The gutsy trio behind him (Buddy Guy, guitar; Jack Meyer, bass; Fred Below, drums) show what Chicago Blues is all about. Wells has often neglected his harmonica playing in recent years but his work on this album shows that he can be a master if and when he wants to be.

EARL HOOKER, TWO BUGS AND A ROACH (Arhoolie)

Hooker is regarded by many as the greatest electric-guitar player of all time. He could play blues, ragtime, bluegrass and anything else. This one may have too much wah-wah pedal for the purists but it's a fine record and recommended over the Cuca and Blue Thumb.

THE BEST OF MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT (Vanguard)

This two-disc set is a live recording (Oberlin College, 1965) that captures all of the warmth and gentle charisma by the best blues-songster of all time. Some incredibly complex guitar work and, my oh my, he makes it sound so easy. This album would be an excellent gift for someone not into blues.

—Richard A. Waterman

blues in east texas



Although I have all too frequently regaled my Notre Dame students with anecdotes of my two years (1963-5) as an instructor at Texas A & M University, there were a few really memorable moments there and the appearance of Mance Lipscomb was one of them.

Folk singing—both authentic and Kingston Trio-ish—was a popular recreation around the A & M campus and one of my friends who was interested in the authentic Texas genre had arranged a series of concerts to be climaxed by the performance of Mance Lipscomb—a figure about whom I knew nothing. Then approaching 70 (and now in his mid-70's), Lipscomb had grown up near Navosta, Texas, a small town about 50 miles northwest of Houston. Until 1960 he had never been recorded, although he had travelled during his younger days singing in Dallas and Houston. But Navosta had remained his home where he sharecropped and until World War II had been singing for a dollar-and-a-half a night in the rough black bars and clubs around Navosta. War time prosperity had driven his price up to seven dollars a night, although he was living in a weathered two-room cabin in Navosta and making a living cutting grass on the shoulders of the state highways when he was “discovered” in 1960.

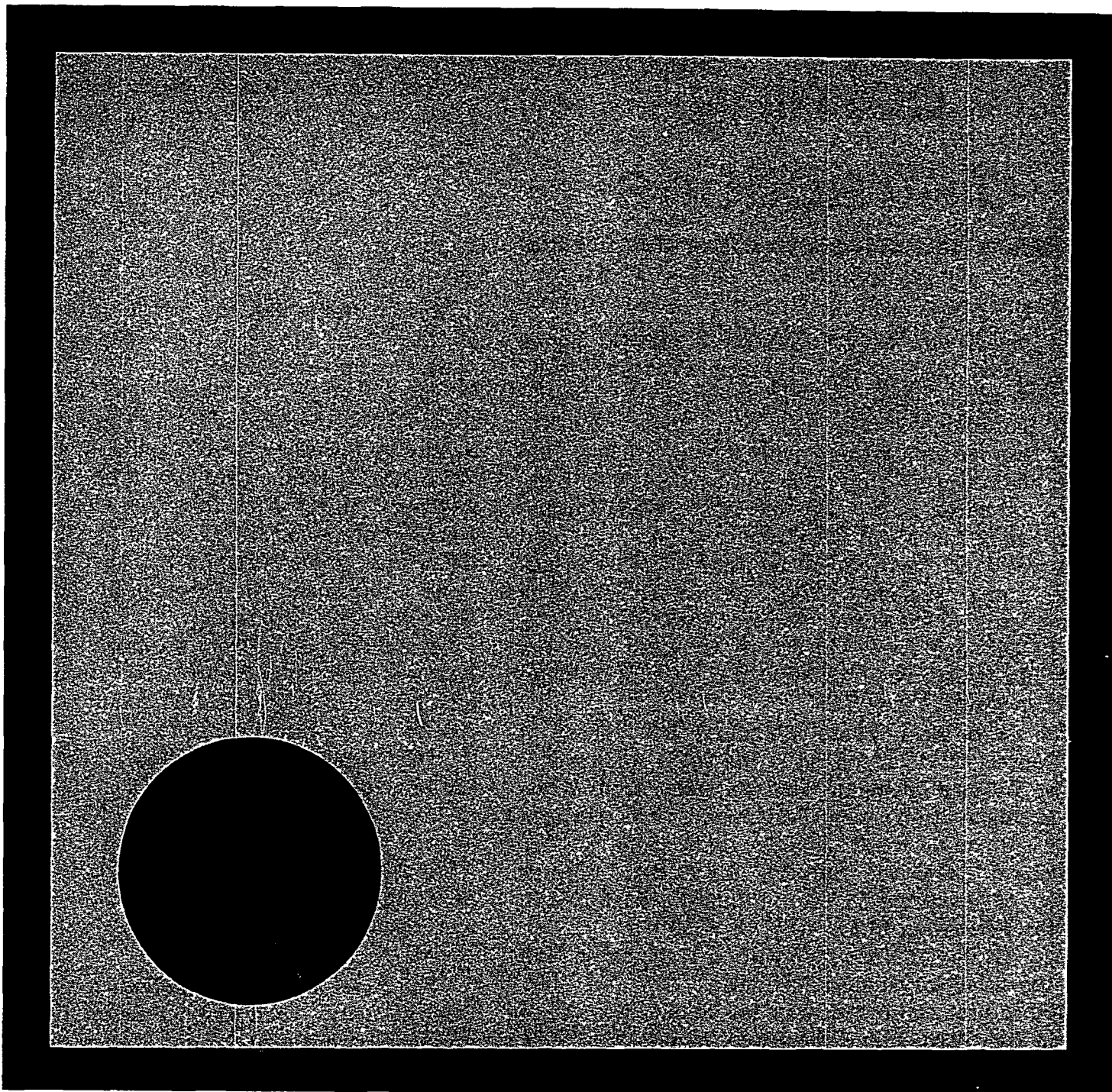
Then came a successful and much publicized appearance at Newport and he began to make the university folk-blues circuit.

Actually my appreciation for blues was limited to a strong admiration for Leadbelly and a lukewarm reaction to Lightning Hopkins and Blind Lemon Jefferson. But Lipscomb's concert in the intimate surroundings of a basement on the A & M campus was powerful. Not being a music critic and with seven years having passed, I will not attempt to describe his style. He was not intimidated by his all-white audience and for about two solid hours he sang a variety of songs with a rich voice that put my stereo to shame. Seemingly frail, he handled his guitar with an unexpected strength. Everything he did was direct and honest with no attempt at any phony showmanship.

After the concert, at my friend's house, amid a cauldron of Mexican barbecue goat and cold Lone Star beer, Lipscomb sat with his hat in front of him continuing to alternately sing and recall what it was like during the 1930s and 40s. If anything, he was perhaps a little excessively polite, as blacks of his age in east Texas have learned to be with whites. But the comment I remember most vividly came at the end of a long series of anecdotes about his life of playing unappreciated in the taverns of east Texas, being shot at by drunks, and so forth. He mused, “I sure wish I knew about these university concerts before.” A lifetime of playing for pennies because the black blues were not appreciated in a society such as east Texas' had limited his mobility—had kept him sharecropping and mowing the highway grass. Thus Lipscomb's style and purity have really been preserved for today's audiences by the system which kept him down. Now he appears as one of the few authentic glimpses we have of black east Texas during the 1930s and 40s.

When you listen to his music, try to picture him during the depression singing these same songs to an all-black (except perhaps for the owner) roadhouse audience and one can begin to sense what has shaped this persevering man's artistry. The fact that he is now enjoying some popularity has changed little in his music. The hard years made him his own man.

—michael j. francis



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like spiders
we spin out from ourselves the
airy structures*

— john hessler

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MUSIC

Happiness with the **Midwest Blues Festival** begins Friday, Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. featuring Fred McDowell; Homesick James, Carey Bell and Eddie Taylor, Howlin' Wolf; Saturday, Nov. 13, 7:30 p.m., Shirley Griffith, Little Brother Montgomery with Sippie Wallace, Otis Rush, and Muddy Waters; Sunday, Nov. 14, 2:00 p.m., Mance Lipscomb, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells (acoustic), Johnny Littlejohn with Jimmy Rogers, Guy and Wells (electric). A weekend of Blues is \$6.00 in advance, single sessions, \$2.50. Remember, there is limited space in the cosmic Stepan Center.

Up! Up! and Away! or Never My Love with the **Fifth Dimension**, Nov. 13, 8:30 p.m. in the Athletic and Convocation Center.

The **South Bend Youth Symphony** will appear in Fall Concert Nov. 14, 4 p.m., in the IUSB Auditorium.

The **Western Michigan Wind Ensemble** from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, will perform Nov. 17, 8 p.m. in the O'Laughlin Auditorium.

Richard Showalter, formerly Sir Richard, brings rhythm of drum music to the Library Auditorium, with his **Percussion Clinic**, Nov. 18, 4:30 p.m.

Nov. 21, the **ND Glee Club** will fill Washington Hall with the universal language of music.

Gather around for **Music in the Round**, Nov. 22, 8 p.m. in the O'Laughlin Auditorium Foyer.

The **South Bend Symphony** will present **Arturo Sergi**, performing arias from Verdi, Puccini, Bizet, and Beethoven, Nov. 28, 4 p.m.

Butler Ballet from Butler University, a concert company of nine dancers with a classical repertoire, will appear in the O'Laughlin Auditorium, Dec. 1, 8 p.m.

Arthur Follows, cellist, will perform in the ND Memorial Library Auditorium, Dec. 2, 8:15 p.m.

Experience the **Washington-Maryland-Virginia Club Concert**, Dec. 2, in the Stepan Center

The Cultural Arts Performing Art Series will sponsor the **Toronto Dance Company**, Dec 3, 8:30 p.m. in the O'Laughlin Auditorium.

The **Christmas Concert** in the SMC Church of Loretto, Dec. 5, 8 p.m.

Jordan River Quartet, sponsored by the South Bend Chamber Music Society and the IUSB Division of Music, will perform in the Public Library Auditorium, Dec. 8, 8 p.m.

LECTURES

Learn of the **Experiences of a Black Attorney**. Come to the Memorial Library Auditorium to hear Black Attorney **Bobby Hill**. This Black American Law Students Association sponsored event will be held on November 12, from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m.

New York Attorney **Hugh Fitzgerald** comes to Notre Dame. The International Society will sponsor his November 12 talk in Room 102 of the Law School at 4:00 p.m.

The Notre Dame Cultural Arts Commission goes international. The CAC will present **British poet John Silkin** November 14 at 8:00 p.m. in the Library Auditorium.

Prison rights and the South Bend Public Library: Do they mix? Come to **Dean Thomas Shaffer's** panel discussion on November 17 at 7:30 p.m. and find out.

China, Africa, California, and Notre Dame: Put them all together and what do you come out with? A lecture by **Professor Bruce Larkin**, of the University of California at Santa Cruz, on "**China's Foreign Policy in Africa**" in the Area Program Reading Room of the Notre Dame Memorial Library. It all comes together under the co-direction of the Institute for International Studies and the Program of African Studies on November 17 at 8:00 p.m.

Whether you are from the farm or the city, **Doctor Enrico Plati's "Systems in Urban Design"** will interest all. This FREE UNIVERSITY talk will begin at 8:00 p.m. in the Library Lounge.

"**The Diplomatic Revolution of the 1970's**" will be the topic of **Robert F. Byrnes**, Distinguished Professor of history of the University of Indiana, November 18 at 8:00 p.m. in the Architecture Auditorium.

South Bend Psychiatrist **Doctor R. Charles Eades**, in conjunction with Hoynes Forum, will head an 11:15 a.m. open discussion on psychiatric problems November 18.

The **Notre Dame Law Students** hereby subpoena the Student Body. Their three **Practice Courts** will be in session November 20, 27, and December 1. The judges' gavels will drop in both the U.S. and Superior Courts at 9:00 p.m.

Dorm life got you down? Maybe **Doctor William Liu's "Patterns of Friendship in an Urban Setting"** will get you up. Check up with FREE UNIVERSITY. Your appointment is November 22, in Flanner Lounge at 8:00 p.m.

Tired of looking at four walls? Take a breath of fresh air December 1 with **Mr. Pat Horsbrugh** and his "**Highway Aesthetics**." One whiff of this FREE UNIVERSITY 8:00 p.m. experience and you will soon forget Grace Lounge's four walls.

"**Three Approaches to Psychotherapy**" will be viewed in three films in the CCE at 8:00 a.m. as part of Dean Shaffer's Legal Counseling Class on December 1.

Mr. Douglas G. McConnell will speak on "**POLIS '76**": Proposals submitted for official consideration of the 1976 National Bicentennial Committee. The lecture, presented by the Department of Architecture, will be held in the Architecture Auditorium on December 1 at 2:30 p.m.

Do you understand **Picasso**? If you are the one of a hundred who does, then you do not have to come to **Harold Zisla's** December 5 lecture at 3:00 p.m. in the Main Gallery of the South Bend Art Gallery.

FILMS:

Nov. 12, Last Gasp Cinema will show "If" for those who want to learn a way to avoid finals. Showings are 3:30, 7, 9 p.m. in the SMC Little Theatre.

Nov. 15-10 the Cultural Arts Commission will present the Eastern European Film Festival; **Sign of the Virgin**, Nov. 15; **Love Affair**, Nov. 16; **The Peach Thief**, Nov. 17; **Intimate Lightning**, Nov. 18; **Cranes Are Flying**, Nov. 19. All films will be showing in the Engineering Auditorium, 7 and 9 p.m.

Nov. 16, the Performing Art Series of the Cultural Arts Commission will show **Open Theatre** in the O'Laughlin Auditorium, 8:30 p.m.

Nov. 19, Last Gasp Cinema will show **Shop on Main Street**, one of the greatest Czechoslovakian films, which manages to translate the apocalyptic tragedy of our century, genocide, into human terms. Showings are 3:30, 7, 9 p.m. in the SMC Little Theatre.

Nov. 19 the South Bend Art Center will show **The Shop on Main Street** in the South Bend Public Library, in the Schuyler Colfax Auditorium, at 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 19, Indiana University, South Bend, will show **The Committee**, 9 p.m., Room 126, Northside Hall.

Nov. 20-21, stay in tune for a **Fund Raising Film** sponsored by the Cultural Arts Commission, 7 and 9 p.m. in the Engineering Auditorium.

Nov. 26, the Travelogue Series sponsored by the Lions Club of South Bend will show **Norwegian Panorama** by Joe Adair, 8 p.m. in the O'Laughlin Auditorium.

Dec. 1, Indiana University's Civilisation film series will show **Grandeur and Obedience**, 4 and 7:30 p.m., Room 126, Northside Hall.

Dec. 3, Indiana University's Student film series will terrify the audience with **The Boston Strangler**, 9 p.m., Room 126, Northside Hall.

Dec. 3, Last Gasp Cinema will show one of the most profound emotional experiences in the history of the Cinema, **Diary of a Country Priest**, 3:30, 7, 9 p.m., in the SMC Little Theatre.

Dec. 4, the Performing Art Series of Cultural Arts Commission will sponsor **Workshop**, 11 a.m. in O'Laughlin Auditorium.

Dec. 4 & 5, Cultural Arts Commission will show **Midnight Cowboy** in Washington Hall, 2 and 8 p.m.

Dec. 5, the Youngstown Club will horrify the audience with psychopathic murders. See **Psycho**, 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. in the Engineering Auditorium.

Dec. 10-11, Cinema '72 will show **Mandabi**, 7 and 9 p.m. in the Engineering Auditorium.

Dec. 13, the Travelogue Series sponsored by the Scottish Rite of South Bend will show **The New Korea** with Ken Armstrong in the O'Laughlin Auditorium, 8 p.m.

Dec. 15, the Indiana University Civilisation film series will show **The Light of Experience**, 4 and 7:30 p.m., Faculty Lounge, Northside Hall.

ART

The Notre Dame Art Gallery will exhibit **An Impressionist View on Paper**, an extraordinary group of

19th-century graphics from the Lessing Rosenwald Collection of the National Gallery, Washington, D.C., until Dec. 12. **Dean A. Porter: Woodcuts**, a comprehensive showing of prints by the Notre Dame curator, which exhibits a traditional approach to media and yet a contemporary commitment in expression, will be on display Nov. 7-Dec. 19. A retrospective of paintings and prints by the internationally known contemporary French artist, **Alfred Manessier**, will be exhibited Nov. 10-Dec. 27.

Works by **Sister Blanche Marie** from Mundelein College will be exhibited in the **Moreau-Hammes Galleries** at SMC through November. Moreover, SMC Art Department presents a Fall Seminar and Field Study, "Sense and Insense; Genuine Fakes," Nov. 10.

The ND Architecture Gallery will display architecture of **Bernard Ralph Maybreck**, a sampling of the many buildings he designed and crafted to a unique level of aesthetic refinement, Nov. 28 to Dec. 20.

The South Bend Art Center, 121 Lafayette, will exhibit recent works by **Abner Hershberger**, Nov. 14-Dec. 5; and **Harlem Portfolio and African Art**, Dec. 12-Dec. 30, in the Main Gallery. The Local Artist Gallery will display new paintings by **Edward E. Herrmann**, Nov. 21-Dec. 12.

FUN

One day only! **Shrine Circus** travels to ND Athletic & Convocation Center, Saturday, Dec. 4. The ACC will be converted into a veritable "Big-Top" for the matinee at 2 p.m. and evening performance at 7:30 p.m. For info, call 288-3883

SPORTS

"**Diggers Debut**" on November 22 at 8:00 in the ACC pits the freshmen against the varsity in the only public pre-season basketball scrimmage. Admission is by way of donations of canned goods, used clothing, toys or 50 cents with the first item preferred. Take time out on the pre-Thanksgiving Monday to enjoy Digger's antics, and help by contributing needed goods and clothing.

The Fighting Irish will close the 1971 home football season against **Tulane** on November 13.

The Notre Dame Hockey team debuts November 19 in the ACC. The Irish skaters will be unveiled opposite **Colorado College**.

LSU and Notre Dame mix it up in the deep South at Baton Rouge on November 20, rounding out the 1971 gridiron season.

The eyes of November 26 and 27 will see **Michigan Tech** and Notre Dame drawing sticks and skates.

The basketball season gets under way December 1. New Coach **Digger Phelps** sends the ND Hoopsters against **Michigan** in a regional battle.

Michigan team number two tests its basketball luck against the Irish, when **Western Michigan** plays here on December 6.

St. Louis and Notre Dame clash in a December 11 basketball game.

—kevin cassidy and cheri weismantel

movies

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY

Stanley Kubrick's sci-fi-special-effects extravaganza delights the eye and poses a few worthwhile questions about the future of intellectual Man. However, the film is flawed by too many potentially boring sequences of objects in space drifting slowly together or apart. It is also unfortunate that further knowledge of either the original book or Kubrick's own statements of purpose would seem to be necessary to render the film entirely intelligible. Nevertheless, *Odyssey* stands on the overall success of its visual-musical fusion which well warrants a second (though we think not a third) viewing.

THE TOUCH

The twice-turned tale of a seemingly content housewife whose eminently predictable existence shatters under the strain of what begins as a casual affair. Bibi Andersson is the Swedish wife, Karen, attracted to an American archaeologist (Elliot Gould) by his admission that he loves her. And, although the script provides an inadequate basis for their relationship, Bergman nevertheless presents an expectedly artistic, but sometimes disappointing portrait of its development. What results is a penetrating character study delving within the fragile network of relations which constitute a family or a love triangle. The treatment is realistic, yet most notable for its sensitivity.

The film's major problem rests in Elliot Gould's erratic creation of the archaeologist, David. The character is a complex bundle of contradictory impulses and actions. But we are never quite sure whether his inconsistencies are inherent in the script

or are merely attributable to Gould's acting deficiencies. In any event we fail to find in David the subtlety of portrayal which Bergman's direction so regularly evokes. By contrast Bibi Andersson gives a most credible Karen. We experience no difficulty discovering empathy with her painful emergence from the wifely image she so long embraced. Fine performance also by Sheila Reid and Max Von Sydow.

WHO IS HARRY KELLERMAN AND WHY IS HE SAYING THOSE TERRIBLE THINGS ABOUT ME?

A rock song writer who has made it to the top finds it has been easier to produce marketable lyrics than it is to live with his successful self. Dustin Hoffman is strong as the neurotic George Solloway, but the film really belongs to director-producer Ulu Grosbard. Grosbard leads us lightly through George's paranoid states in which his music and his madness become one. The tragedy is that of an aging man who has never been able to face the fact of time. But we are shown all of this in such a beautifully comic manner that deeper emotions are saved until the end. Certainly one of the year's most original releases, *Harry Kellerman* might also be one of the year's best.

THEATRES

COLFAX: 2001: A Space Odyssey, Nov. 11-17 (G)

Gone With the Wind, Nov. 18-25 (G)

RIVER PARK: The Touch, Nov. 12-17 (R)

On Any Sunday, Nov. 18-25 (G)

STATE: See no Evil, Nov. 12-17 (GP)

TOWN & COUNTRY: The Skin Game, Nov. 12-17 (GP)

—Phil & Marie Glotzbach

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Howlin' Wolf

Saturday Nov. 13, 7:30 pm

Shirley Griffith

Little Brother Montgomery with Dippie Wallace

Otis Rush

Muddy Waters

Sunday Nov. 14, 2:00 pm

Mance Lipscomb

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