

Arts & Entertainment

Man and harp

Preview By Stew Magnuson
Staff Reporter

One only has to see Charlie Musselwhite once to know what the blues is all about. Yes, the blues is music about the blues, about being sad when "your baby left you for another man," but it's joyous music, too, a celebration of life. Last year, when Musselwhite played the Zoo Bar, every one was happy. Musselwhite would look up at the crowd, grinning cheek to cheek between ripping harmonica solos.

Concert Preview

Musselwhite returns to the Zoo tonight to play his bittersweet harp again. This is a chance to see a "living legend," the man they call Mr. Boss Harp. Musselwhite, just returning from a four-month tour of Europe, should be as sharp as ever.

From his home in California, Musselwhite talked about his European experiences, especially about playing behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany. Do the East Germans know about the blues?

"I guess they would!" Musselwhite said, in his slow Southern drawl.

Even in East Germany, where Western records are hard to come by, Musselwhite said all the people knew all his works, the dates of albums, names of guest musicians, they knew as much as any American blues fan.

"They took a real scholarly approach," he said.

Even though, Musselwhite travelled in Europe for four months, the only sites he saw were from train windows as he travelled between gigs. Trains are conducive to blues music, though.

"It's the rhythm," he said.

And trains are especially conducive to the harmonica. Musselwhite's solos can sometimes sound like the

lone train whistles at 3 a.m. down in West Lincoln, Tenn., the kind of trains Musselwhite used to hop in Memphis, Tenn., where he grew up.

That's the blues, taking the "City of New Orleans" from Memphis to Durrant, Miss., in an empty boxcar. Or moving with his parents from Mississippi to Memphis in a borrowed dumptruck. Musselwhite was only 3 years old, but he remembers riding in the front of the dumptruck like it was yesterday. These aren't sad experiences, necessarily, they're just experiences, the images transferred from the back of a musician's mind through his harmonica in a dark blues bar like the Zoo.

Not all of Musselwhite's time is spent on the road, though. When you're a "living legend," people want to get you recorded. Musselwhite already has 11 solo LPs and has guested on nearly twice as many with such artists as John Lee Hooker, Doc and Merle Watson, The Dynatoners and Big Joe Williams.

Musselwhite's last LP was 1984's with some New York City jazz musicians and explore a big band approach to the blues.

"In blues, you're always inventing something new, a new way to say something. Some young musicians leave the blues for rock 'n' roll. They don't think the blues are challenging. But it's really endless all the things you do with it," he said.

For now, a German record Musselwhite made with a group called Mellow Dee will be released on Rounder Records. He also plans to tour Europe again, but this time solo — just him, his harp and an acoustic guitar.

"I'm more comfortable with the harp, of course, but I've been playing the guitar all along," he said.

But for now, Musselwhite is going to do a long overdue tour of the states, starting tonight at the best blues bar west of Chicago, Lincoln's own Zoo Bar. The show starts at 9 p.m., and it ends down the railroad line somewhere in Mississippi.



Charlie Musselwhite

Courtesy of Airborne Talent

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State of the Arts
what's happening in arts and entertainment

Compiled by Stew Magnuson
Staff Reporter

HOMECOMING:

Homecoming week celebrations continue with the big talent show at 7 p.m. in the Nebraska Union's Centennial Room. The show will include lots of jugglers, maybe some sword swallowers and some funny skits. Door prizes will be given throughout the evening.

Singer/comedian Tim Cavanaugh will be the host. He's widely known for his parodies of songs on the Dr. Demento Show. He's sort of a poor man's Weird Al Yankovic. Now, that's entertainment.

ON TV:

It's an Elvis festival!
This week's Elvis movies both fall on the same day. And what a coincidence! They're both on the Superstation, WTBS. Cut classes to see Elvis in "G.I. Blues"

at 9:05 a.m. Not more than 12 hours later, Elvis shakes his pelvis again in "Roustabout" with Barbara Stanwyk.

Mankind does not deserve so many Elvis movies in the span of one short day.

ON KZUM:

The big marathon continues tonight on Radio Free Lincoln with a Paul Weller festival, "Weller from the Jam to Style Council." Radio Free Lincoln goes from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. and is hosted by long-time KZUM programmer Jeff Tangeman. KZUM needs financial support, and now is the time to contribute in amounts great or small. Listeners who pledge \$35 or more will get a KZUM T-shirt or an album of their choice and a coffee mug. Pledges of \$20 will get the mug and a 12-inch REM single. But best of all, you get the chance to support the only radio station that matters in Lincoln, KZUM.



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