

arts/entertainment

Edell performance displays style variety

By Jerry Fairbanks

Feminist folk singer Therese Edell said she created a recording company when she couldn't find one to record her first album.

"What we wanted to do first is have a record," she said. But, according to Edell, it became apparent that no established record company was willing to record her.

"Then it became apparent that all you had to do was get stationery and you had a recording company," Edell said. So she and Teresa Boykin, sound and lights engineer on the current tour, began Sea Friends Records out of their Cincinnati home and recorded Edell's first album, *From Women's Faces*.

The names Sea Friends comes from Edell's and Boykin's sympathy with sea

mammals—whales and dolphins—and their efforts to preserve them.

Edell said the album had already sold out its first press of 5,000 copies and that current sales were close to 8,000. The album is distributed by the Women's Independent Label Distributor's Network.

Edell said she met Betsy Lippitt, who accompanies Edell on violin and vocals, in a production of *Godspell* in 1972. Lippitt also played and sang on *From Women's Faces*.

PERFORMING FOR a crowd of about 100 at the Unitarian Church Friday night, Edell and Lippitt showed a variety of musical styles and drew material from several sources. The crowd, mostly women,

was enthusiastic and the applause was loud and sustained.

Edell sings with a throaty, breathy voice while Lippitt's is lighter and more melodic. Several times during the program both women's voices became rough, probably the result of their long tour. Edell said they had been on the road since Sept. 26 and had sung in Iowa City, Kansas City, Dallas, Houston and Phoenix before appearing in Lincoln.

There were a few flaws in playing their instruments, mostly attempts at guitar picking, but all the songs were written with clarity and had imaginative chord changes. The lyrics ranged from feminist political statements, such as in a medley of "Jesse," "Freest Fancy" and "A Woman's Love" to semi-surrealistic poetry of "Blue Night/Focus," which Lippitt wrote and performed.

Edell said she began performing when

she was 12, singing and playing accordion for social clubs and fraternal organizations in her home town of Sharon, Pa.

"I WASN'T PAID for that," Edell said. "But I did receive this little silver bracelet with all the places I played engraved on it."

She learned to play the guitar as a teenager and gave her first concert at Baldwin-Wallace College in 1967.

"I've been playing coffeehouse stuff since 1968," Edell said, "and feminist music since '75.'" She said her style changed when a mutual friend introduced her to Meg Christian, another feminist singer.

Besides her own material, Edell said she "picks up songs that speak to me."

Edell also lists herself as a comedienne.

"I've always been able to talk from the stage, but it's real recent telling things in story form," she said.

Band merges blues, rock audience receptive to style

By Michael Wiest

Few emerging white rhythm-and-blues bands have received the critical acclaim and universal reception accorded the Nighthawks.

Interestingly enough, this Washington D.C. based band has earned its reputation among both traditional blues and rock fans not only for their ability to play each, but also for their successful merger of these two styles in what some critics have termed "Blue Wave" music.

review

What "Blue Wave" has in common with the more familiar "New Wave" movement is a return to basics in rhythm and harmonic structure, but most of all, an energy. This was evident in the Nighthawks' performance at the Zoo Bar Thursday night.

Playing to a sell-out crowd, the Nighthawks quickly won their audience with music ranging from classic blues to Chuck Berry-style get-down boogie rock. By closing time the crowd was on its feet and the floor shook.

The band featured the lead guitar and vocals of Jim Thackery, joined by Mark Wenner on chromatic and straight blues harmonica, and vocals, also, displaying diverse musical influences. Backing them was the tight bass drums combination of Jan Zukowski and Peter Ragusa. Zukowski also shared in the vocals.

The Nighthawks spent several years playing clubs in and around the Washington, D.C. area, earning a reputation for showmanship and a strong following of fans. In 1978, they cut an album with members of Muddy Waters' and James Cottons' back-up bands titled, *Jacks and*

Kings, which earned them a number 10 rating in the Boston Globe's list of 15 best pop albums of 1978. They were also mentioned in *Down Beat* magazine's International Jazz Critic's Poll in both 1977 and 1978.

With *Jacks and Kings*, the Nighthawks pay homage to the classic blues which are the roots of their music. They have proven themselves in this area, sharing gigs with such legendary bluesmen as Muddy Waters and B.B. King, but have gone on to show their range of talent by writing their own material and performing with artists such as Bonnie Raitt and Gregg Allman. Allman, it is said, offered the Nighthawks a job as his back-up band, but they turned it down.

Midway into the last set of their performance Thursday evening, the Nighthawks were joined onstage by Sean Benjamin and Madison Slim of the Heartmurmurs. Benjamin, playing Thackery's flying-arrow Gibson, showed himself to be well within the range of the Nighthawks with his classic blues guitar style, and delivered perhaps the best vocal performances of the evening. Slim, playing blues harp, was slightly circumscribed by the material and had less opportunity to show his talent, but sounded right on par.

It is a credit to the Zoo Bar as one of the live music institutions of the Midwest to have booked a band of the caliber and popularity of the Nighthawks. It is also a credit that its stage, which has seen so much blues talent in recent years, can be used as a measuring stick of classic blues style.

Seen in this context, it seems unlikely that the Nighthawks will ever break the blues race barrier, primarily because of their vocals. But the Nighthawks have their own direction, and their own style, and judging from the popularity of what this produced Thursday night, "Blue Wave" may be a musical movement to contend with in the future.

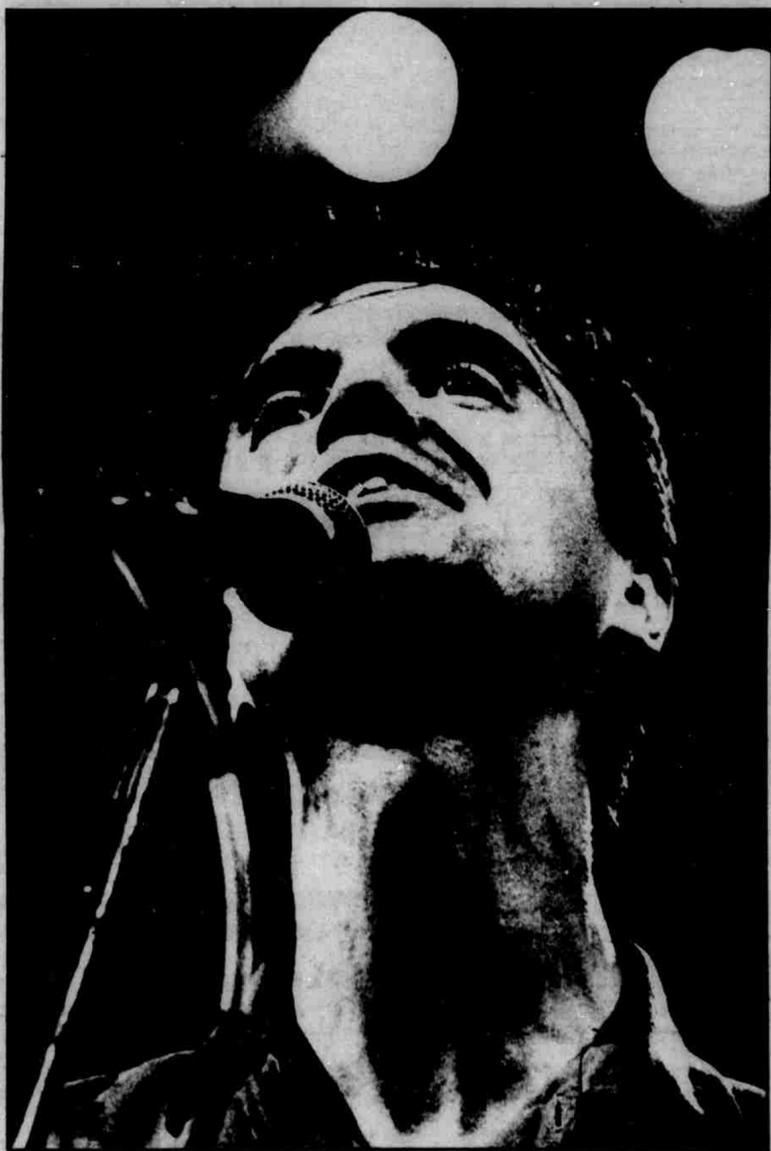


Photo by R. K. Hahn

Hot Heads

David Bysine, lead singer of the Talking Heads, performs under the hot lights of Omaha's Music Box. The group was in Omaha Saturday night.

'The Dead Zone' confuses as well as frightens reader

By Scott Kleager

Good novels and bad novels sit upon the bookshelves these days. Then there are books that one can't really pass judgment on; you know, the kind that leaves you lukewarm at the end. One of those is *The Dead Zone*, a new horror story by Stephen King that is confusing, yet at the same time, interesting.

book review

It is confusing because it will sell like wildfire and it shouldn't be that popular. Anyone who has read the likes of Kurt Vonnegut will agree. And in a way, King is similar to John Irving (*The World According to Garp*) in that both seem to prey on passing fancies, although admittedly, both represent the phobias of our times quite well.

Irving, currently changing sexual roles; King, the current occult craze.

One finds it curious to see a book so popular—are Americans searching for something to scare them?

The novel is interesting, though, because the author makes it so authentic. It begins in 1970 and ends in 1979. The characters are surrounded by an environment that hits home to all college-age folks. The main character attends a country fair at the beginning of the story, for instance, and King's description nearly paints a picture of a county fair in western Nebraska:

"You parked your car in a dirt parking lot and paid your two bucks at the gate, and when you were barely inside the fairgrounds you could smell hot dogs, frying peppers and onions, bacon, cotton candy, sawdust, and sweet aromatic horseshit. You heard the heavy, chain-driven rumble of the baby roller coaster, the one they called The White Mouse. You heard the popping of .22s in the shooting galleries, . . ." Remind you of home?

This seems to be King's strong point. Logically so, be-

cause if one were to tell a story to scare one's friends while camping around a fire, the most important thing to do is to make it acceptable.

The author not only appeals to our timorousness, but he consistently jumps at the chance to comment on American society in the 70s. During Christmas, as an example, Johnny observes his family tree: "There were only a few things you could hang onto. A few books, maybe, or a lucky coin, or a stamp collection that had been preserved and improved upon. Add to that the Christmas tree ornaments in your parents' house."

All of King's works feature the same theme of good against evil. *The Dead Zone* is not unusual in this respect. In one way or another, he always deals with this and he can be respected for it. Too often in literature today no one is right and no one is wrong. That's not the case in this book. From the beginning, characters exemplify by their actions whether or not they are good or bad. King makes that perfectly clear.

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