

arts/entertainment

Bus ride is a real trip for independent commuter

By Peg Sheldrick

I have been acquainted with the bus. Not by choice, of course. I mean, who in their right mind is? But there I was—stuck. With the battery dead and the garage closed for the weekend, I had no other choice but to take my chances in the seamy world of mass transit. It was humiliating, but I was desperate.

I called the contact at a number I had gotten from a friend of mine who knows about these things. Her voice was soft, tentative. "Yes. . . May I . . . help you?"

"Uh, yeah. I wanted to, uh, you know, take a bus."

"Oh. . . I . . . see. . . And where. . . did you want to. . . take it?"

"From uh, my place to, uh, the shopping center."

"Oh. . . I . . . see. . . Then you'll want . . . Gateway."

The voice went on quietly detailing what the bus would do for me, and how much it would cost, and where we could meet. I took it all down and headed for the rendezvous, secretly glad that my driver's education instructor couldn't see what I was doing.

humor

I waited on the corner, hoping the passing cars couldn't guess what I was up to. But peering in through their dirty windshields, I could tell that the drivers knew, and I could see the scorn in their eyes.

Big and blue

After what seemed an age, I spotted it down the block. It was big and blue, like they all are. It looked dirty. I shuddered. The thing lurched up, opened its door, and swallowed me. I tried not to think about my car as I slid my money into the coin slot and slunk to the back of the bus.

I plopped into one of the garish vinyl seats, hiding my face in my muffler. What if someone I know sees me, I thought. How will I live this down?

"Do you ride often?"

I nearly jumped out of my skin. I pulled the muffler down to see who was talking to me.

"I don't believe I've seen you on this run before." The voice belonged to a snowy-haired woman in a green corduroy coat. She looked harmless enough.

I decided I had nothing to lose. "No, this is my first time. I—uh—don't usually get into this kind of thing."

"Really?" she purred, seeming surprised. "I've been riding the bus for years."

Really hardcore

I was shocked. I mean, to admit to that kind of thing—and even seem proud of it. She was really hardcore. My curiosity got the better of me. I had to ask. "Why?" I whispered. "I mean, didn't you have a car?"

"No, never have and never will."

I could hardly master my amazement.

"Never?"

"Why no. What do I need with a car? I have the buses and I have my own two feet—"

So she walked too. I should have known. "—and frankly I've just never seen the point in it."

"But—but that's unAmerican! doesn't it mean anything to you? Don't you want independence? Are you totally immune to the romance of the auto? Good God, woman, have you no decency?"

She only stared at me in an amused, patronizing way.

"You mean to tell me you honestly don't want a car at all?"

She shook her head.

"Why?"

"Just look out the window, and maybe you'll understand."

I turned to gaze out. We were stopped for a light beside a guy digging his car out. He was chipping away at the ice on the back window, and stopping every few minutes to try the starter. The engine wasn't turning over.

Minor inconvenience

"A minor inconvenience," I sniffed. "And look over there." She pointed to the other side of the bus. Out the window I could see a tow truck dragging an expensive-looking foreign car with a front end smashed in like a Pekingese's face. It would never scream around another curve.

I looked away. "I still can't see how you would willingly submit yourself to the bus system," I spat the words out. "Don't you realize you're completely at their mercy? Have you no pride? My car is my freedom! I'm my own master!"

"That's why you're riding the bus, I suppose?"

I was quiet for a moment.

"Dear, I don't mean to be cruel, but what about garage mechanics and parking meters and oil companies? Do you really consider yourself free? Don't you want to conserve energy? Isn't it cozy to let someone else do your warming up and scraping off, and then to have someone to

chat with instead the traffic to curse at?"

I couldn't stand it anymore. I reached up and yanked the signal cord for all I was worth. The bus screamed to a halt, and, bursting from the doors I made a run for it.

You know it's time to flee when a dangerous philosophy like that starts to make sense.



Bromberg safe as 'musical schizophrenic'

By Michael Zangari

If there is room for schizophrenia in rock 'n' roll, then David Bromberg's place is certainly secure. Although Bromberg's father—a well known New York psychologist—might disagree with my definition of schizophrenia, I would wager that he too would be at a loss to classify his son in any kind of musical framework.

backtracks

Bromberg's legendary studio guitar work had garnered him a fine reputation while he was still in his teens. Playing with the likes of Bob Dylan and Jerry Jeff Walker he became one of the most sought-out session men in New York City.

His solo outings find him indulging in an equal split between rock 'n' roll, blues, bluegrass and Irish fiddle music. And he manages to carry off each.

An unquestionably fine multi-instrumentalist, Bromberg's acoustic blues and fiddle work far outshine most of his contemporaries.

Only Dave Van Ronk of all the white blues singer-players can hold a candle to his acoustic blues. Bromberg's wrenching acoustic leads are the most tastefully done on record. He does things on acoustic guitar that would give 20-year pros a heart attack. When he interprets blues from the 1920s, it is with a clarity of emotion and a purity of form that rival any on record, and that includes many of the originals.

"Delia" and "Walking Blues" on his self-titled album establish the format. Bromberg records his blues live—no overall of Bromberg's albums, and is slightly more subdued and mellow. It contains quite a few of Bromberg's ventures into Irish fiddle music, and the trip proves to be delightful at every turn. Of the songs he sings, "What a Wonderful World It Would Be" makes Art Garfunkel's version sound impossibly saccharin. Tremendous backround vocals by Bonnie Raitt, among others, make his version of "Don't Put That Thing on Me" both fun and gently rhythmic.

dubs—and in front of a live audience. He plays impeccable guitar under strained and emotional vocals. This format runs true throughout his catalogue, but most effectively on his *Wanted Dead or Alive*

album on the second side.

He runs through such nuggets from the 1920s as "Send me to the 'Lectric Chair" and "Statesboro Blues/Wedding Bell Blues" (done up nice and slow so you won't miss anything). He also does a version of "Kansas City" that has no rivals as far as energy output goes. His additional lyrics on "Kansas City" should have been incorporated into many of the tired versions of this long ago.

Wanted Dead or Alive is flawed, as are most of Bromberg's albums, by poor material.

One of the most enjoyable of all of Bromberg's albums is *Midnight On the Water*. It has the cleanest production of

Demon in Disguise needs to be mentioned if only for the version of "Mr. Bojangles," that it contains. His ode to a power stripper, "Sharon," is one of his few successful rockers.

Of the later albums, *Bandit in a Bathing Suit* is about the best. Side one rocks very hard in a blues mold, with high-powered guitars and crisp production. Side two mellows a bit with a nice version of "Mr. Blue" and several other ballads.

Most Lincoln bars allow access to handicapped

By Mary Kay Wayman

Most people, when deciding where to for an evening's entertainment and a few drinks, need not consider the architecture of the bars they frequent. But for the handicapped, confined to wheelchairs, entering a bar or using its restroom could be almost impossible.

Of 17 downtown bars checked, most have entrances allowing wheelchairs, because the doors are located directly off the sidewalks, but restrooms were almost totally inaccessible.

State law requires accessibility, but only in new buildings, Accessibility Specialist for the League of Human Dignity Renee Kreishauser said.

Kreishauser said state law requires buildings built after 1977 to be accessible. There are no requirements for older buildings unless remodeling occurs, she said; then the remodeled part must be accessible. If more than 50 percent of a building is remodeled, all of it must be accessible.

"It's really too bad they don't do it on their own," she said. "It irritates me a little bit that they don't take that into consideration."

Kreishauser said the fact that many Lincoln buildings are older is a factor in their accessibility.

Old buildings inaccessible

"Buildings that have character and appeal because of their uniqueness" are old and inaccessible, she said.

Bars like the Waterhole and Zoo Bar are just a part of a larger building and any remodeling that occurs would not be close to the required 50 percent, she said.

Bars and restaurants checked were Brannigan's, Horsefeathers, Godfather's, Sweep Left Restaurant and Lounge, Barrymore's, the Starship Enterprise, The Brass Rail, Duffy's Tavern, the Zoo Bar, the Waterhole, Cliff's Lounge, Sandy's Lounge, Chesterfield, Bottomsley and Potts, McGuffey's, O.G. Kelly's, Fanny's, the Underground Restaurant and Bar and the Green Frog Lounge.

The amount of space needed in doors, aisles and restrooms is determined by the size and shape of a wheelchair, according to design criteria listed in a state handbook of provision for the handicapped.

Imagine being encased in a vehicle with average dimensions of 42 inches in length and 25 inches in width. The average space required to turn around completely is a square 60 by 60 inches, and the same width is needed for two chairs to pass each other.

Fanny's the only bar checked that offered no barriers, was accessible from the Hilton ramps and elevator. Hilton restrooms used by Fanny's customers also were accessible.

Problem stairs

Inaccessible bars were those with stairs or steps at the entrance. These include Cliff's, Godfather's, Horsefeathers, Brannigan's, and the upstairs Sweep Left

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