

Arts & Entertainment

Zoo Bar continues its basic blues tradition

By Kathy Glenn

Without a doubt, the place to go for blues music in Lincoln is the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St. Owner Larry Boehmer said he enjoys the positive energy generated at the Zoo and says the bar has become well established by providing a constant supply of good, basic music.

"People search out the blues for many reasons," Boehmer said, and a wide group of listeners have patronized the bar the last 11 years.

After opening in 1972, the Zoo operated without music until the summer of 1973, Boehmer said. Live music became a regular feature the following year and the establishment booked its first national act in September 1974. At first the entertainment consisted mostly of local performers, he said.

Later, as Lincoln became a viable market for national acts, the Zoo worked towards a steady mix of both local and national acts, Boehmer said.

Today the Zoo is well-known internationally as a blues club and Boehmer said the goal has been to perpetuate the blues music as it was during its peak in the '50s.

He said there has been no attempt to alter the decor or atmosphere of the Zoo. He said the smallness of the club creates ideal setting for listening to music. The Lincoln community also has proven to be a healthy environment for this particular genre of music, he said.

"I guess I'm continually amazed that we can run as much blues as we can in this small of a city," Boehmer said.

A 1969 UNL graduate, Boehmer said he became involved with the Zoo while he was working toward a master's degree.

"I started coming down here, putting songs on the jukebox, bringing friends in to sit around and hear those blues tunes," he said. "I guess I always had an interest in music as well as art. I had no idea when I started here what it was going to develop into."

The Zoo's regulars tend to be somewhat older than the usual college-age crowd, Boehmer said. The club doesn't aim exclusively for college student business and Boehmer said that his establishment is there for anyone who has the desire to listen to blues, as well as '50s-'60s roots type rock 'n' roll. The Zoo experiences very little drop-off of business during the summer months, and on the whole serves a wide age group.

These days the Zoo's reputation makes it very easy to schedule popular bands and performers, and Boehmer said he gets a number of calls from various acts, but admits he's rather choosy when he goes through the process of booking bands. Boehmer said he works hard to treat bands fairly and that most acts enjoy working in Lincoln's receptive atmosphere.

Boehmer's other business interests have included Larry's Showcase, which is now for sale due to

financial difficulties, he said. Although the Showcase lost money, an effort is being made to recoup the losses and go from there, he said. Boehmer said the present situation won't affect the Zoo in any way, unless the Showcase isn't sold.

Boehmer is now in the midst of working on his newest venture, Blue Dog Records. Magic Slim, a regular performer at the Zoo, recorded a live album at the club a year ago which was recently released on the new record label. The new company has also recently agreed upon a video contract with the Nebraska ETV Network.

The first video of Magic Slim will be released Nov. 19, Boehmer said, and is expected to be shown across the United States and most of Europe. Boehmer said he intends to have Blue Dog Records produce several recordings at the Zoo and said he later hopes to go into booking and managing.

Last spring, the Zoo was pulled into the spotlight when People magazine reported that Gov. Bob Kerrey took actress Debra Winger to the club. Boehmer said he thought the article was "rather amusing." The Zoo has been a favorite of Kerrey's for several years, he said.

For many, the Zoo is an important source of the type of music they enjoy. For Boehmer, it's definitely more than just a bar. "I can't go very long at all without hearing blues," he said. "It's like bread and butter, and I'd really miss it."

'Lavender Moonlight': A Mannequin Romance



By Pat Clark

Last week: In an unprecedented flurry of activity, April May June and Walker Treadmill made it all the way from the hotel elevator to the taxi in only one episode. The reason for this breakneck pace was April's slowly growing realization that she really enjoyed the company of Walker Treadmill.

The beach at Cape Town sprawled as big and uniformly white as the government employees who frolicked there. "Gosh, it looks just like Cream of Wheat!" squealed April in delight, as she and Walker exited the taxi.

"No time for sightseeing," Walker said, his all-business manner both halting April and endearing him to her still more. "If we're going to find Mr. Lavender's yacht, we've got to start looking now. They won't be docked long."

April looked along the harbor at the hundreds of ships of every size and description. "There are so many. What if the one we want isn't here?"

"Then it's somewhere else," Walker said.

"Oh yeah, I suppose so," April said, her voice trailing off into a little tremor. Why was Walker suddenly in such a hurry to continue the quest? Especially now that she... no, she just couldn't abandon Randall for this stranger. But could she live her whole life wondering what she missed out on by not taking the chance?

In any case, she couldn't tip her hand right now, so she tried to hide her feelings and play along. At least I'll know for sure when I see Randall again how I feel, she concluded firmly. When I see Randall again...

"Look, there it is!" shouted Walker,

pointing along what to April looked like a row of nearly indistinguishable pleasure yachts. "And is that Mr. Hitler about to go aboard?" April squinted to get a better look. She couldn't say for sure, but — yes, that had to be him. Nobody else had that endearing, characteristic goose-step. "That's him!"

With that exclamation, they were off, sprinting like thoroughbreds for the wire. April could see Randall on the deck of the yacht, and a person she presumed to be a crew member preparing to pull the yacht out of port.

She did not know yet how she felt about Walker Treadmill, but she knew she wanted to see Randall. Yes, Randall would set everything right again, just as he did whenever life got confusing. Life got confusing so frequently these days, too.

Even as she ran, though, she started to sense she could not run fast enough. We're not going to make it, she thought to herself. Sure enough, the yacht was already pulling out of the dock when April and Walker were still yards away.

Standing at the dock, April waved at the ship. No one waved back. Suddenly she felt so very foolish; for wanting to come to South Africa, for deciding to find Randall, for getting Walker involved and maybe losing him his job; it was enough to make a girl cry. As if on cue, the first tear dropped from her eyes only to be lost in the salt water of the harbor.

Walker stopped at her side. "It's not that bad," he said, with surprising cheer. "We know where he is anyway."

April couldn't stand that he was so cheerful, so helpful. Not now. Why couldn't he be a jerk? Just enough of a jerk that she could get rid of these... thoughts.

"I wish I were Iphigenia," she said suddenly.

"Who?"

"Iphigenia. Randall told me about her. The Greeks sacrificed her so they could go to Troy and win the war. Sometimes letting yourself be thrown into the sea for everyone's good seems like the best thing to do."

She could feel Walker's firm, soothing grip on her shoulder. Then instantly he had picked her up. Carrying her as one might a bride across a threshold, he said, "If it's any consolation, I think you make the perfect human sacrifice," and lobbed her into the South Atlantic.

Next Week: Won't You Let Me Take You on a Sea Cruise?

HOTSPOTS



The St. Croix Philharmonic Steel Orchestra

Television

• With the 20th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy less than a month away, a number of TV specials honoring the late president will be aired in the coming weeks. The first is "Being With John F. Kennedy," which airs tonight at 8 p.m. on KMTV, channel 3. This documentary examines Kennedy's 1960 campaign and his 1,000-day term in office. It is narrated by reporter Nancy Dickerson.

• The first of a six-part mini-series dramatizing the life of Giuseppe Verdi airs tonight at 9 p.m. on KUON, channel 12. "The Life of Verdi," which is being shown as part of the PBS "Great Performances" series, is narrated by Burt Lancaster and stars Ronald Pickup as Verdi.

Radio

• KZUM (89.5 FM) — "Another Blue Monday" is typical of what alternative radio is all about. Where else could you hear five hours of contemporary blues music? The show, hosted by Jim Heydt and Jim Anderson, airs today at 1 p.m.

At the Sheldon

• "The Long Good Friday," is a Brit-

ish film done in the classic film noir style. The film is shown at the Sheldon as part of UPC's Foreign Film Series. Admission is \$3 for students, \$3.50 for general admission.

Around Town

• Joe DiMaggio may be Mr. Coffee, but around the world, Roger Williams is known as Mr. Piano. Williams, or Mr. Piano, whichever you prefer, will appear at Pershing Auditorium at 8 p.m. today as part of Union College's Family Entertainment Series. The concert was postponed last month.

Certainly one of the more unique outfits to play Lincoln will be featured at The Zoo bar, 136 N. 14th St. tonight and Tuesday. The St. Croix Philharmonic Steel Orchestra's nine members specialize in producing cello, guitar, saxophone and piano sounds with instruments made from 55-gallon oil drums. The group's repertoire consists largely of authentic West Indian music and reggae. They also have appeared in the motion picture "The Greatest American Hero." The cover charge is \$3.