

# Arts & Entertainment

## Tablerockers play blues from the heart

By Donna Sisson

The blues is a tradition that has been around almost as long as America. Cocktail Shorty and the Tablerockers helps keep the tradition alive in Lincoln. Like the blues they play, they are a band that refuses to die.

The Tablerockers are four musicians that are becoming part of the Lincoln blues legacy. They have played together in some capacity for more than seven years.

These musicians are: Sean Benjamin (guitar, vocals), Larry Boehmer (bass), Doug Rosekrans (guitar, vocals), and Marc Wilson (drums).

Their initial effort was as the Heart Murmurs, a six-piece band that began on Valentine's Day of 1977. The Heart Murmurs did some recording and a lot of traveling, which was one of the reasons for its demise.

"It was a real band that was a full-time situation," Boehmer said. "I had to get out because of business and family." Others quit because of commitments to other bands, he said.

The remaining four musicians eventually grouped under the name Cocktail Shorty and the Tablerockers which, Boehmer said, was kind of a throw-together thing. Cocktail Shorty is one of Benjamin's nicknames and Tablerock, Neb., was one of the first places they ever played together, he said.

The Tablerockers, which began in July 1981, was always meant to be a part-time thing, Boehmer said. If it builds to the point that it is almost full-time, they just quit for awhile, he said.

"It's a situation where we all have a real good time playing together. When Sean and Mark (who play full-time with the Backbeats) have the evening off and we can fill in some dates, we do



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Larry Boehmer of the Tablerockers. Boehmer also owns the Zoo Bar, where the Tablerockers perform.

it," he said.

One reason Boehmer said the four musicians continue to play together is because they all feel comfortable together.

"There's probably nobody else in town that I would feel comfortable playing with, and I think they feel the same way," Boehmer said.

Because they have played together

so long, said Rosekrans, "Everybody knows what everybody else is going to be doing. We never rehearse — except on stage. That's what's real fun about it because it's all real spontaneous," he said.

"We have an understanding about the music we play," Boehmer said. "We don't have a song format, we have no idea when we hit the stage what we're

gonna' play, but because we've played this stuff for so long and we've all listened to the same kind of music for years, we have a feel for it," he said.

"We feel like we play blues in the real blues tradition, like Magic Slim, or some of the Chicago blues bands," Boehmer said. "Slim doesn't rehearse, they learn new stuff by hearing songs on a jukebox at clubs or just working them out on stage," he said.

The Tablerockers play 90 to 95 percent straight blues, Boehmer said. Some '50s style rock and roll might be thrown in during the evening or they might do a swing tune, but basically, they do blues, he said.

Boehmer, owner of the Zoo Bar, said that at times there are distractions when playing in his own bar. "Here, I have to think about if the lights are too bright or if somebody's getting too rowdy. At somebody else's bar, I don't care," he said.

Though it does distract him, the Zoo is a good place to play blues. That overpowers any other strings attached to playing there, Boehmer said.

There's always an appreciative audience at the Zoo, Rosekrans said, whether there are two people or 200.

One of the main attractions in the blues is the soloing, said Boehmer. It's a very simple structure, limited to a degree, but blues allows players to solo while rock and roll is pretty well pat, he said.

With somebody out there soloing, every night he plays it's going to be different, depending on how he's feeling that night, Boehmer said. "To me, that's real interesting because you get down to the real nitty-gritty of what a musician is doing. Blues gives them a chance to really play from the heart," he said.

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## 'Magic Flute' performance delightful

By Mary C. Reilly

Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, currently being presented at Kimball Hall by the UNL Music Theatre, is a fantastical, thrilling performance to behold.

This "fantasy opera sung in English," as it is billed, is quite easy to understand, unlike most operas. The characters carrying out the magical story-

### Review

line are delightful and the drama is spellbinding.

Viewing *The Magic Flute*, one feels a bit like a child immersed in a live fairy tale. The effect is tickling.

Often the word "opera" sets forth a stereotyped concept: a drama with a lot of vikings in flowing gowns singing unbearably high pitched, loud walls in a foreign language. The *Magic Flute* shatters this concept.

The performance is wondrous. Anyone can understand the story and feel for the characters. While some of the sung verses and dialogue are hard to understand, the actors' and actresses' display of emotion completes the picture. The program contains a synopsis of the opera story line, which helps a great deal.

*The Magic Flute*, composed in 1791 during Mozart's months, has historical importance as a humanistic opera and as one of Mozart's unique masterpieces. The opera is a distinguishable work of Mozart's because of the quality and complexity of its music and because of the serious meanings that lay beneath the surface. *The Magic Flute* has been termed "fantasy about enlightenment" by Gregg Tallman, stage director-conductor at the UNL School of Music.

The opera tells the tale of a prince, Tamini, (John David De Haan) and of a bird catcher, Papageno, (Brian Leeper) who are both seeking love and fulfillment. The plot thickens as the two young gentlemen endure suffering and hardship on their path to

the realization that they are in control of their own destiny.

One must be patient while experiencing *The Magic Flute*, just relax and allow the music to flow in and soothe the mind. At two and a half hours in length, the performance is divided into two acts with a 20-minute intermission.

DeHaan as Tamino, the young golden-haired prince, is dazzling, convincing and handsome. Laeper, the warm-hearted, humorous, ordinary bird catcher, draws continual chuckles from the audience with his quick wit, dramatic facial expressions and flip-pant feather ruffling.

The three ladies, attendants to the Queen of the Night (Tracy Jordan, Ammia D. Hardner and Laurie Martinez) garner attention through their sexy-sweet wicked enticements in unison.

All of the cast members have beautiful voices — strong, pure, sweet, clear and perfectly in pitch. Lila Olson, playing the Queen of the Night, has an exceptionally awesome voice. Audience members gasp and cock their ears in disbelief as Olson strikes soprano notes one would believe no human could hit.

Pamino, (Constance Rock) the beautiful blonde daughter of the Queen of the Night, presents a simply pure and pretty performance. Rock, as the helpless, sought-after, virtuous princess, floats around the stage looking light and airy like cotton candy in a delicate pink gown.

Monostatos (Paul Eschlman) plays the devious, clever slave of Sarastro, the high priest, Eschlman, the mischievous little devil after Pamino, is cunning and humorous.

Kelly Ellenwood, the pretty, perky little Papagena, plays the perfect match for Papageno, plays the perfect match for Papageno. Ellenwood absolutely flutters around the stage, gingerly dancing in delight as Papageno's new wife.

Mark Pearson sings the role of Sarastro, the high priest. Person is obviously a polished professional. His bass voice fills Kimball Hall, resonating throughout each corner.

The UNL Music Theatre's production of *The Magic Flute* is the fantastical blend of fairy tale and music, a credit to the respected history of the dramatic opera.

## HOTSPOTS

### Television

- *Frontline*, PBS' weekly news digest, will feature filmmaker Ofra Bikel's *Captive in El Salvador*. The documentary examines the politics and the people the U.S. government is supporting there.

### Radio

- The Lincoln Symphony Orchestra will be featured tonight on Lincoln in Concert, broadcast at 8 p.m. weekly on KUCV, 90.9 FM. Featured soloist is soprano Kristine Ciesinski.

### At the Sheldon

- Emile de Antonio's *In the Year of the Pig* will be shown today in the Film Theatre. This 1969 documentary explores America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Screenings are at 3:30, 7 and 9:15 p.m. Admission is by donation.

### At the Kimball

- The final performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* will be at 8 p.m. tonight. Tickets are \$3 and \$5 for students, \$5 and \$7 for the general public. A review appears elsewhere on this page.

### On Campus

- A saxophone ensemble from UNL's School of Music will perform at 3:30 p.m. on the plaza, north of the Nebraska Union. In case of rain, the concert will be moved to the Union's main lounge.

- Two films will be screened in the Rostrum of the Nebraska Union tonight, in conjunction with Women's Week. *We Dig Coal: A Portrait of Three Women* is a documentary which tells the story of Marilyn McCusker, who was killed in a 1979 mine accident in central Pennsylvania. *The Amazing Equal Pay Show* is a political burlesque, incorporating elements from the musical, horror film and comedy genres. It examines the issue of equal pay, women's participation in the unions and the status of women's work under capitalism. The film is adapted from a play first performed in 1972 by the Women's Street Theatre Group. Admission to the two films is by donation. Screenings begin at 8 p.m.