

Arts & Entertainment

Cray brings blues to Lincoln

By Christopher Hamel



Robert Cray

David Trouba/Daily Nebraskan

Somewhere between Tacoma, Wash., and Europe lies a blues guitarist by the name of Robert Cray. Somewhere between last week and this week Cray visited Lincoln via the Zoo Bar. Within that visit lies an interview with Cray, during which he smoked filterless Camel cigarettes and reflected on his life as a musician.

"Nothin's ever easy," mused Cray, "and I knew that playing this kind of music wasn't going to be an easy thing."

Cray, who is best described as a blues artist in search of a home in a top 40 world, said that finding success has been a real struggle. "There were times when all the money we had went into the gas tank, and if there was any left we divided it up for dinner."

"We used to sleep on the amps in the back of the van, or on the floor of the bars we played at, but now I can see a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Indeed, somewhere between restless nights spent on speakers and the abstraction of a light at the end of a tunnel lies success for Robert Cray. Cray has released two albums in the U.S.; "Who's Been Talkin'" and "Bad Influence." "Bad Influence" was ranked as the number 3 album of 1983 by High Fidelity Magazine, and is getting heavy airplay in England.

"I like 'Bad Influence' the best, but the challenge is to make the next record better," said Cray.

Cray expects his next LP, which remains unnamed, to be out in January. Until then, he will travel with blues master John Lee Hooker on a summer European tour.

Somewhere between the day of his birth and his European tour, Cray was influenced. Cray said that he spent a lot of time listening to his dad's Freddy King records, and that he initiated

himself to the guitar early on in life.

"Everybody in my neighborhood got guitars when the Beatles came out, and I got one too. I played in rock 'n' roll bands and stuff like that 'til the end of high school," he said.

After high school, Cray started getting into rhythm and blues and in 1974 he started the band he is still with.

"When a guy plays with the same band for a long time you really get to know where each other is going. It leaves lots of room for improvisation," he said. "You need that chance to express yourself, and every night the solo is different."

Cray's devotion to improvisational performing has left him as one who refuses to conform to any "commercial thing." He said that he likes not having to do any music that he doesn't like. "It's the only way to really be happy," he said.

Although Cray is billed as a rhythm and blues artist he doesn't feel that he can actually be categorized. "Who knows, maybe some day I'll do a country tune. You can expect anything."

Words spoken in truth. Cray exemplified the traits of his versatility when he played the Zoo Bar Tuesday evening. His reverberating guitar felt itself beyond the perimeters of traditional rhythm and blues, almost to the point that one notices the Beatle influence.

Slightly hunched over his Stratocaster, Cray resembled a Van Goghian painter in the midst of an expressionistic piece, save one point; the palette from which Robert Cray drew his blues and grays was his own soul.

Somewhere between a pensive drag on a cigarette and the final swallow of a bottle of beer, lie a few simple words spoken by Robert Cray which, in essence, sum up his existence as a musician. "I'm a guy," Cray said, "who's just having fun. That's all."

New Star Trek movie will please Trekkies

Review by Lisa Renner

Soft-core Star Trek fans or occasional re-run watchers will like the new Star Trek III movie "The Search for Spock." Others, who don't fall into these categories will more than likely turn up their noses in lack of appreciation. The real hard-core Trekkies may even feel betrayed, simply because this movie is really nothing more than a high budget, high tech continuation of the original TV episodes.

When Spock died in the last Star Trek movie, making another Star Trek movie seemed impossible. Things just wouldn't be the same around the Enterprise without his pointy ears and logic. The creators of Star Trek III must have felt the same way, because Spock makes a grand resurrection with a little help from his friends and some Vulcan mysticism.

The new movie picks up where the last one left off: the Enterprise is coming home to Earth after saving the Genesis project. Kirk, Scotty, Uhura, Sulu, Chekov and Bones are all a little older, and a lot more cantankerous than they used to be. Some of the film's best moments are the one-liners that are so typical of the crew's personalities. The plot and the character interactions still depend on the criticism of Kirk's human emotions and the calculation of Vulcan logic just like they used to in the old TV series. The characters have always been the strength in Star Trek, and this movie is no exception.

Remembering the series is what makes Spock's final mind meld to Bones so outrageous and wonderful.

Bones finally gets what he deserves after all his dramatic moral and ethical speeches that were directed at everyone but himself.

Everyone, including Bones, thinks that he is losing his mind when little signs of Spock's thoughts and mannerisms begin to show through. McCoy starts to think logically, and occasionally he speaks in Spock's voice. He even gives the Vulcan pinch a try in a very clumsy, human way.

Kirk makes incredible sacrifices in order to reunite Spock with his body. He does a few things that seem out of character for the old captain of the Enterprise.

It seems as if the whole crew has adopted some "bad" habits just to draw the movie crowds in. Like using profanity and rebelling against the Federation at every turn. There is a bar scene similar to that of "Star Wars" and an "American Werewolf in London"

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effect when Spock's face crackles and changes, but enough of the characters' conviction carries the movie through.

The ending is a bit of a letdown. I had higher expectations after remembering some of the great clingers from the real Star Trek shows. But it was

worth a bad ending just to see the whole gang together one more time. The possibility of a Star Trek IV is indicated with "The adventure continues..." but let's hope that Star Trek fans can remember the adventure in their own minds and not on the screen.