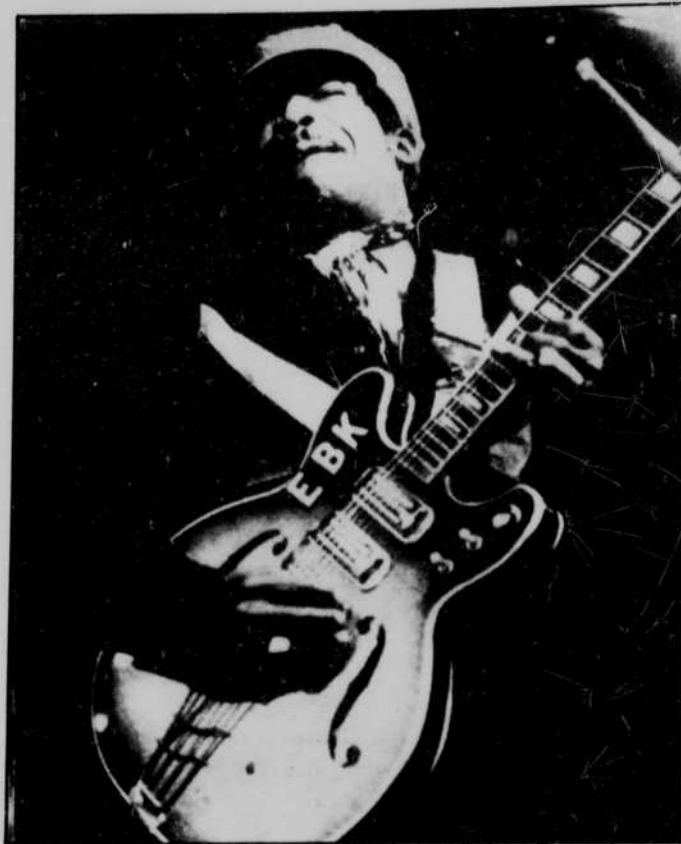




Courtesy Rhythm Kings

Rhythm Kings



Courtesy of Deluge Entertainment

Eddie Kirkland



Courtesy of Phil Guy

Phil Guy

First Mid-Week Blues Festival begins at Zoo tonight

By Ken Havlat
Staff Reporter

The Zoo Bar is having a Mid-Week Blues Festival with the Rhythm Kings from Lawrence, Kan., tonight; Eddie Kirkland from New York Wednesday; and Phil Guy from Chicago Thursday.

Walter "Wolfman" Washington was originally scheduled to perform tonight, but canceled because he didn't have enough dates for a tour.

The Rhythm Kings, a five-piece group with a Memphis style of the mid-'60s, played at the Zoo last month to a responsive audience.

Eddie Kirkland tore up the Kansas City Blues Festival last fall and will be making his first visit to the Zoo. During the 1950s he toured for seven years with John Lee Hooker. In the 1960s he played three years with Otis Redding. He made a pair of outstanding recordings for Trix during the '70s. In 1981 he won the W.C. Handy

award for "Pick Up the Pieces," on JSP Records.

At 62, Kirkland isn't about to stop performing. He is well-known for high-energy, high-octane blues, offering lots of inventiveness.

Phil Guy may be the younger brother of Buddy Guy, but that

doesn't mean he is treading in his famous brother's footsteps. He is often in demand as a guitarist for his sweetly flowing blues guitar. In the past six years he has established himself in his own right.

The Mid-Week Blues Festival at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., begins at about 9 p.m. each night.

AC/DC's new album best one in a while



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

me feel the way I do when the band plays live, both of us getting sweaty and drinking beer, it would have my loud approval. Instead, applause is quiet and reserved.

— Ken Havlat



Courtesy of Atlantic Records

AC/DC, "Blow Up Your Video" (Atlantic Records)

OK, OK. So AC/DC is not the most versatile band in the world. Who ever said it was?

The boys from Australia have finally released a new album, "Blow Up Your Video." The album cover shows Angus Young getting wild — just like the last zillion albums — but the record itself is different. It's good. It's not the commercialized "Fly on the Wall." It's not the computerized "Who Made Who." This album has power.

Granted, all AC/DC sounds about the same, no matter how it is produced. But true AC/DC fans will know what I mean when I say that a few songs on this album have a little extra voltage — the kind that makes your pets run out of the room even when you're listening on headphones.

The first single released from the album, "Heatseeker," is a taste of the bone-shaking that is going on. Brian Johnson still sounds as if he gargles with sulfuric acid. Angus Young still wreaks havoc with the pentatonic scale when he plays his leads. But that's the whole point.

Most of the songs on this album are simpler than those on their last few.

They remind me of the days of Bon Scott. But don't get the wrong idea. Brian Johnson still sounds like Brian Johnson. It's just that many of the songs are based on simple riffs instead of chords. Of course, the choruses are still typical AC/DC three-chord progressions, but everybody expects that. It wouldn't be AC/DC without them.

Strong tracks on the album include "Meanstreak," "Kissin' Dynamite," "This Means War" and "Some Sin For Nuthin'." Angus is still kicking out original-sounding leads and is finally changing with the times by slowly becoming a bit more of a speed guitarist. Even when he does this, though, he still sticks to the blues.

Brian Johnson's vocals are fairly typical, as are the lyrics, which always maintain at least a junior-high-school level of complexity. But what else can Brian do? He already does a good job screaming.

Basically, it's the music that makes this album better than the last couple AC/DC has turned out. Angus and Malcolm Young's songwriting comes through, the production comes through, and thus the album comes through with some pretty decent sounds.

AC/DC has always been a guitar-oriented band. When the band members decide to push this to its full extent, they always succeed in making a fired-up album. If you've forgotten why you hate Bon Jovi, listen to this album. You'll remember.

— Michael Deeds



Courtesy Twin/Tone Records

Blue Hippos, "Forty Forty" (Twin/Tone Records)

After an excellent debut EP last year, the Blue Hippos' first full-length album shows the Minneapolis band's confused identity brought on by the direction it's leaning toward.

They should start over. While "Forty Forty" isn't without its moments, the Hippos waste too much space on it trying its darnedest to move in the direction of white funk, which the band seems to feel is an innovative style. It isn't.

It wasn't innovative or all that interesting when the Red Hot Chili Peppers started doing it. It wasn't innovative or even interesting when Parliament was doing it 15 years ago, before the word "white" was added.

It definitely isn't what the Hippos do best. When the band plays it straight, as it occasionally does here, the Hippos can be one of the most passionate and endearing bands alternative music has to offer.

On their first record, the funk dabbings seemed like a typical EP excursion — a way to have fun on a record you don't want to commit your best songs to.

It's now becoming painfully obvious that funk was the direction they were leaning toward all along.

It's unfortunate because the Hippos' first record, the brilliant self-titled first EP, showed remarkable promise, especially in Paul Osby's (ex-Otto's Chemical Lounge) songwriting and vocals. "My Shoes," from that EP, remains one of the decade's classics.

This over-reliance on a style that doesn't fit the band is too much. While two songs sound like they belong there, the rest sound skittish and strained, especially on vocals. Osby is one of the great deadpan throated whiners of our day but also one of the worst funk moaners of all time. After listening to the whole album, there may be a dozen questions, but the one that stands out is: "Can you say 'Schizophrenic'?"

— Geoff McMurtry



Courtesy of Rhino Records

James Harman Band, "Those Dangerous Gentlemen" (Rhino)

San Francisco's James Harman Band has always been popular when it's played in Lincoln. The band's next Lincoln appearance will be in June at the Zoo Bar. In the meantime, we'll have to be content with their second album, "Those Dangerous Gentlemen" — their first effort in four years.

Since their first LP, "Thank You Baby," they have been putting in more than 300 performances a year. Naturally, their delivery has become smoother.

Many of the songs were recorded before or during 1986, when Hollywood Fats (Michael Mann) was still the lead guitarist. Fats left the band in fall 1986 to replace Dave Alvin in the Blasters. Thus only two of the seven songs on the album were recorded by the current band.

The band seems to be drifting toward a rhythm and blues sound reminiscent of the Blasters and the Dynatoners.

Judging from the (rhythm and) blues renaissance of the moment, this would be a nice trend as long as the band doesn't get too bland and start sounding like the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

The songs on the album with Bonnie Bramlett (of Delancy and Bonnie fame) hold up the best. They are "Find You A Love" and "I've Been Lovin' You." The latter offers sizzling rhythm and blues and some wonderful multilayered vocals that are a consistent source of energy. It makes me curious as to how the band would sound with a female vocalist backing Harman up.

This album leaves me indifferent. While the band has its act together, the album is too clean for the working-man's band it really is. If it had a singing blues guitar that could make