



Blue Chicago lives up to 'best-blues' reputation

By Joeth Zucco
Connie L. Sheehan
and Cristine Romano
Diversions Reporters

The Blue Chicago, 937 N. State St., has a reputation that extends far beyond the clamor of Chicago's Rush Street. In fact, everyone in the front of the bar Saturday night resided in another state: there was our representation from Lincoln; the two uptight women behind us from Omaha; several wealthy, wasted women from Detroit; and the lone, preppy male from Florida.



The bar's reputation is well deserved, not for its decor (or lack thereof), but for its killer line-up of the best blues anywhere.

Saturday was the bar's fourth anniversary and by the time the band hit the stage for sound check, there barely was standing room left.

The percussionist, who was the most energetic on the stage, added bongo drums and other arousing sounds to the regular blues line of guitar, bass, trumpet, alto saxophone and electric keyboard. The band started off the show hard and fast.

As the conversation in the bar turned to whoops and hollers for the band, the blues filled in with improvisations and lyrics. One especially familiar tune stood out: T-Bone Walker's "Call It Stormy Monday."

After the initial warm-up, Joanna Graham approached the tight stage and opened with "Truth of Love." She excited the crowd even more when she told "the

story like it is." She addressed the ladies in the crowd and received even more energy. Then she talked to the men -- who, for some reason, weren't quite as loud or boisterous as the women.

As her set evolved into continual "Yeah" and "Hell yeahs," she highlighted the evening with her animated and sexually symbolic "If You Don't Put It In, You Can't Take It Out," (yes, it's what you're thinking).

During her second set, she repeated the crowd's favorite and scared away two stockbrokertypes in the front row after she promised

to "slap my candied yams all around your face." They left in a flustered huff.

After Graham's exciting and lively show, Charlie Wilson took the stage. Wilson will be playing within the next six months at The Zoo Bar, 136 N 14th St., and fits into the loose mold of Chicago Blues. Wilson grew up in the world of rhythm and blues as nephew to Little Milton, another R&B artist. Wilson recently moved over to the blues circuit on a more permanent basis and has made arrangements to tour the Midwest blues circuit.

Wilson weaved back and forth, following his smoother blues style, but the pace kept building. Wilson continually called for the band to "come down in back" so he could talk to the crowd, calling out for wilder and louder responses from the audience. Wilson proved himself a worthy opener for the upcoming main attraction.

"L.V.! L.V.! L.V.!" With the prodding of Wilson, the crowd chanted

and chanted. Wilson introduced L.V. again and the chanting continued. Finally a man, accompanied by a body guard in dark sunglasses, entered from the back of the bar. The crowd broke into applause as he grabbed the microphone and started his set.

L.V. Johnson, a protege of B.B. King, proved his talent easily. The crowd became as much a part of his show as he was. Dressed in a white suit, red shirt and red and white boots, Johnson seemed the epitome of blues style and music. Three giant diamond rings graced his fingers and a thick gold chain hung around his neck.

Johnson seemed to be having some sort of problem with the bassist, which was only noticeable if you were close to the stage like we were. Johnson sent some evil-looking glances backwards which did a lot to emphasize the perfectionism he has for the art.

The Chicago Reader characterized Johnson's style as a combination of his two greatest strengths, "slick, string-bending blues guitar and smoldering passion on soul

ballads." His voice was reminiscent of Louis Armstrong, a pioneer of the Chicago style, and his guitar playing was soulful and moody.

In his second set, Johnson changed into a white suit and a blue shirt with matching blue and white boots, just like the red ones. His second set was just as invigorating and alive as his first.

The eclectic crowd cheered, clapped and hooted all night. Even the portly businessmen, apparently slumming in their Armani suits, got into the act.


One of the highlights of the

anniversary evening was a raffle of L.V. Johnson albums and Blue Chicago t-shirts. The crowd responded terrifically and had a great time all night.

Perhaps the most refreshing part of the evening was the unbelievably reasonable prices. The cover charge for the 4-hour, 4-act show was only \$6. And while the house requirement is a two-drink minimum, both mixed drinks and beer are cheap. Extra bonus: mixed drinks come in big tumblers with lots of ice and no skimp on the alcohol.

KIWANIS Pancake Festival

32nd ANNUAL
Thurs. Nov. 2nd at
Pershing Auditorium
6:30 A.M. to 8 P.M.
CONTRIBUTION
\$2.50
For an extra 25¢ get a Scoop of
Blueberries, Strawberries or Apples
Children Under 6 Free
Tickets available from Kiwanis Club members
or at the door.
Net Proceeds To Youth Programs



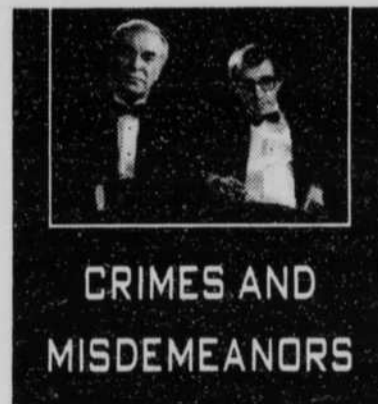
"TWO THUMBS UP!" —SISKEL & EBERT

"★★★★★ GREAT FILMMAKING. NO FILM THIS YEAR HAS KEPT ME MORE GLUED TO MY SEAT." —MIKE CLARK / USA TODAY

"'CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS' HITS THE BULL'S-EYE... A MEMORABLE FILM." —VINCENT CANBY / NEW YORK TIMES

"THIS IS A GREAT FILM." —JOEL SIEGEL / GOOD MORNING AMERICA

"AN ASTONISHING ACCOMPLISHMENT. A MOVIE OF SURPASSING POWER AND HUMANITY...OFTEN PROFOUND, AND CONSTANTLY ENTERTAINING."
—GENE SHALIT / TODAY SHOW



CAROLINE AARON ALAN ALDA WOODY ALLEN CLAIRE BLOOM MIA FARROW

JOANNA GLEASON ANJELICA HUSTON MARTIN LANDAU JENNY NICHOLS JERRY ORBACH SAM WATERSTON

A JACK ROLLINS AND CHARLES H. JOFFE PRODUCTION "CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS" CASTING BY JULIET TAYLOR COSTUME DESIGNER JEFFREY KURLAND EDITOR SUSAN E. MORSE A.C.E.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER SANTO LOQUASTO DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SVEN NYKVIST A.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JACK ROLLINS AND CHARLES H. JOFFE PRODUCED BY ROBERT GREENHUT WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY WOODY ALLEN Prints by DeLuxe

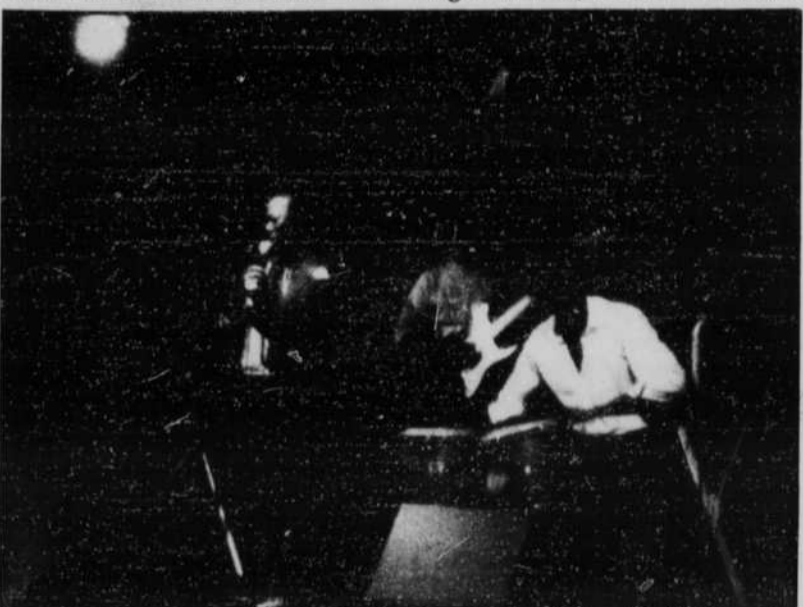
AN ORION PICTURES Release

© 1989 ORION PICTURES CORPORATION ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13

**STARTS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3
AT A SELECTED THEATRE NEAR YOU**



Connie Sheehan / Daily Nebraskan

L.V. Johnson and his band perform at Blue Chicago Saturday night for the bar's fourth anniversary. Performers and customers agree that the bar is one of the best places for blues in Chicago.