

'Big Daddy' Kinsey promises blues treat



Big Daddy Kinsey

Courtesy of Blind Pig

By Julie Naughton
Senior Reporter

The Blind Pig Blues Revue tour began in January, with blues legends Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin and Snooky Pryor making up the bill.

At the end of January, Pryor was replaced by Lester "Big Daddy" Kinsey on the tour. Since Kinsey's addition, the band has traveled to New York City, Boston, Canada, Upstate New York, New England and Cleveland.

Now the show is coming to Lincoln, and they are bringing Big Daddy with them.

Kinsey joined the tour, he said, after Pryor became ill. Kinsey originally had hoped to be with the show, but due to booking conflicts, it was impossible. When Pryor became sick, Kinsey was contacted and joined the tour. Kinsey said he was excited at the way things had turned out.

Kinsey, patriarch of the Kinsey Report group, is well-known for his deep-chested baritone and his incomparable slide guitar delivery. He describes his blues as traditional blues that "I sharpen up a little bit."

Kinsey's style of blues, which he calls "Gary Blues" after his hometown of Gary, Ind., includes influences from musicians Muddy Waters and Jimmy Reed.

The release of Kinsey's "Bad Situation" (Rooster Records) in 1986 helped to propel Kinsey and his group, the Kinsey Report, from a regional act to a sought-after national band.

Kinsey said that he worked a day job (at U.S. Steel in Gary) for 27 years while also pursuing a music career, but his career "really took off" when

he began working at his music full time.

"My wife encouraged me to give up my day job for a year to do music 100 percent," Kinsey said. "That's when it really started to take off for us. I owe it to her."

"I haven't regretted it (his decision to pursue music full time) one day."

"We're not rich by any means, but I'm making a decent living doing what I love to do."

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Kinsey's latest release is "Can't Let Go," which features Kinsey and his sons. Kinsey began performing in Gary with his three sons, Albert, Don and Kenneth, before the boys were 10 years old.

"The boys have been performing with me ever since I've been working commercially," Kinsey said. "We would tour in the summer and on the weekends, when they weren't in school."

He was nicknamed "Big Daddy" about that time. He explains.

"I'm a big man, and I was on stage in my hometown with a group of kids that the audience knew belonged to me. Somebody yelled 'Hey, Big Daddy!' and it kind of stuck. I liked it, and then I began to use it professionally."

Kinsey and his sons originally performed as Big Daddy Kinsey and Soul Satisfaction. After local performances and an appearance on TV's "Soul Train," the group broke up because of Kinsey's poor health.

In 1983, Kinsey had recovered and he and his sons regrouped as Big Daddy Kinsey and The Kinsey Report. This was after Kinsey's son, Don, had come off associations and tours with musical luminaries such as the Rolling Stones and had finished recording with artists such as reggae legends Peter Tosh and Bob Marley.

Kinsey has appeared once before in Lincoln, at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.

However, once the band started to grow and play bigger markets, smaller bars like the Zoo Bar couldn't afford to pay what Kinsey's group was charging.

The Blind Pig Blues Revue, featuring artists off the Blind Pig Records label, will continue through mid-March, with appearances in the Midwest, the Rocky Mountain states, Washington and California.

According to Blind Pig Records, each performance of the Blind Pig Blues Revue will showcase the performers individually before the grand finale. The veterans will share the stage with "one of the most promising young blues bands around," Little Mike and the Tornados.

Perkins, Sumlin and Kinsey will appear tonight at Bourbon Street, 200 N. 70th St. Cover is \$10.

Kinsey believes that Lincolmites will enjoy his show.

"I'm looking forward to meeting the people of Lincoln," Kinsey said, "and I hope that they'll come out and see the show. If not, they'll miss a treat. For blues lovers, this show will be a definite treat."

"This last leg of the tour should be dynamite."

Violinist Stern gives captivating performance

By Lisa Stankus
Staff Reporter

Violinist Isaac Stern has been called "the best known classical violinist in the world," "the world's greatest violinist" and "one of the most distinguished musicians in the world." And with good reason, as he demonstrated in Wednesday evening's performance at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Playing to a sold-out crowd, Stern and pianist Robert McDonald brought a level of world-class excellence and artistry to the stage. And considering that the evening's performance was

the first visiting artist to play at the Lied, who could have asked for a finer christening?

At 70, Stern's credentials include Originating Member of the National Endowment of the Arts, the 1987 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, literally hundreds of classical recordings, a performance career that has lasted more than 50 years and other dubious distinctions given only to the elite. Stern is the proverbial big fish in a little pond.

Stern and McDonald presented a performance of varied classical pieces. Compositions by Bach, Dvorak, Faure, Janacek, Kreisler and Szymanowski

provided an eclectic appeal of the distinctive classical standards to a variation on the Viennese waltz. Selection choice allowed the audience

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to experience the range that Stern commands as well as hearing a veritable progression in the time line of classical composers.

The program could have been divided into two halves; the first being the serene eloquence of Bach and Faure and the second a combination

of frenzied bravado and quickened tempos.

The folk flavor of Janacek's Moravian peasant music had a marvelously uplifting nature, as was demonstrated in Sonata for Violin and Piano. Stern's violin-turned-fiddle had a down-home appeal, as did McDonald's piano playing.

But perhaps the best received compositions were the collaborations by Kreisler and Dvorak. Slavonic Dance No. 1 in G Minor and Slavonic Dance No. 2 in E Minor featured a combination and alteration of tempos. Both performers exhibited a preciseness in following the fluctuat-

ing tempo, all the while maintaining a grace and verve of presence. Stern and McDonald were as captivating to watch as they were to listen to.

McDonald, a masterful and world renowned pianist by his own efforts, matched musical emotion with Stern's control. This marriage of violin and piano sounded, as perhaps, the original composers would have done it themselves.

What the audience heard was an evening of exciting and intriguing musicianship from what there are so few of these days: true musicians with an unflinching dedication to the arts and its sustenance.

Musical groups galore fill bars this week

By Mick Dyer
Senior Editor

Zydeco, reggae, blues, pop, alternative, R&B -- except for country, there's a little bit of every musical style in Lincoln this week.

Alternative:

Sunday, Victim Nation and Sawhorse will play at Duffy's, 1412 O St.



Victim Nation, a local psycho-industrial band influenced by bands such as Chrome, Ministry and Metallica, will make its stage debut.

Sawhorse is one of Lincoln's finest alternative-core bands, featuring loud noises, perversion and intimidation.

Wednesday, Trip Akimbo, an Omaha-based, college, pop rock band, will play at Duffy's.

Jazz/Blues:

Tonight, Pine Top Perkins, Hubert Sumlin and Big Daddy Kinsey will perform with Little Mike and the Tornados all together for the Blind Pig Blues Revue at Bourbon Street, 200 N. 70th St.

Little Mike and the Tornados is a New York City powerhouse blues band. Putting these three big names on the same stage with a tight, East Coast blues band guarantees to be one of the best blues shows of the year.

Tonight and Saturday, the Tony Brown Band will perform at the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.

Known for mixing a little funk and soul into its jammin', jammin', jammin' reggae, the Tony Brown Band has been intoxicating Lincoln audiences with its music for several years now.

Tonight, Silent Partners will play at 9th Street Blues, 421 S. 9th St.

Saturday, Joanna Connor will play at Bourbon Street.

Monday, Zachary Richard will play at the Zoo Bar.

Zachary Richard plays a rough and tumble, grinning, accordion squeezing and guitar picking blend of zydeco and rock. Good stuff.

Tuesday, Mr. Peabody will play at

the Zoo Bar.

Wednesday, The C Street Gypsies, one of Lincoln's best '60s-style electric blues bands, will play at Bourbon Street.

Wednesday, The Tablerockers, featuring Annette Murrell, will play at the Zoo Bar.

Thursday, Too Smooth will play at Bourbon Street.

Thursday, Preston Love will play jazz at Julio's, 132 S. 13th St.

Connor brings modern Chicago blues sound to Lincoln

By Julie Naughton
Senior Reporter

In 1984, musician Joanna Connor packed everything she could fit in a suitcase and boarded a bus from Worcester, Mass., to Chicago.

She stepped off that Greyhound bus in Chicago, ready to seek her fortune in the highly competitive Chicago blues scene.

And now, Connor, complete with band and personal van, will be performing in Lincoln on Saturday.

Connor's distinctive vocals and peerless lead guitar work set her apart from the many musicians

struggling to make a living in the Chicago blues scene. She began to work with slide guitarist Johnny Littlejohn and playing the club circuit.

In 1985, guitarist Dion Payton invited Connor to join his 43rd Street Blues Band. The band then featured Connor and played top Chicago clubs such as the Checkerboard Lounge and Kingston Mines. Connor and the band also played at the 1987 Chicago Blues Festival.

By late 1987, Connor decided she was ready to move out on her own and began to put together her

own band. Connor's band consists of Brian "BJ" Jones, who she describes as a "powerhouse drummer," guitarist Anthony Palmer and bassist Stan Mixon.

Connor describes her style of blues as a style that "combines funk-rhythm blues with rock and roll overtones. It's a modern Chicago blues sound."

Her debut album is "Believe It!" and Connor is at work on a new album, to be out next winter.

Connor and the band will perform Saturday night at Lincoln's Bourbon Street, 200 N. 70th St. Cover is \$4.