

Band's folksy blend no Small Potatoes

By Melissa Dunne
Staff Reporter

Small Potatoes will fry up tunes from Celtic to cowboy-style Friday at the Walton Trail Co., 118th and A streets.

The 7:30 p.m. concert will be sponsored by the Lincoln Association for Traditional Arts Inc. Admission is \$5.

The Chicago-based duo of Jacquie Manning and Rich Prezioso began touring within the last year.

Manning is a vocalist who, among other things, enjoys music from the British Isles and yodeling. As a guitar player, Prezioso is especially fond of swing and jazz.

"They could never settle on one type of music," said Bill Behmer, LAFTA president, "so they do them all."

However, Behmer said, all their music has a folk, acoustic feel.

Their performance should also include many potato jokes, he said.

"They have a definite sense of humor."

Small Potatoes is the first of a three-concert series sponsored by LAFTA. Curtis Teague and Loretta Simonette will perform at the Walton Trail Co. March 11, and Lou and Peter Berryman will perform April 28.

Small Potatoes is also the first LAFTA-sponsored concert to be held at the Walton Trail Co.

"We were trying to find a new

place to do concerts, and we stumbled across the place," Behmer said. "The Walton folks are really interested."

The Walton Trail Co., a bicycle and accessories shop located on the MoPac East Trail, offers gourmet coffee, espresso, soft drinks and sandwiches. It also offers a warm, inviting atmosphere, Behmer said.

The location's only disadvantage is convincing people it's not that far away, he said. The Walton Trail Co. is only four paved minutes from 84th and A streets.

In addition to the concert series, LAFTA offers acoustic music throughout the year, featuring both local and national performers.

Behmer said LAFTA's goal was to provide a type of music that was traditionally overlooked in Lincoln, a comfortable atmosphere and an affordable price.

"We're a small organization that, because no other venue in town does folk music, decided to take it upon ourselves to do it," he said.

Unlike the traditional bar scene, he said, music is the primary focus of LAFTA-sponsored events.

"People are there to listen," he said.

A more personal atmosphere also makes it possible to meet and talk to the performers, he said.

"It's a different concert experience."



Photo courtesy of New Line Cinema

Susan Sarandon and Sam Shepard star in "Safe Passage."

Film portrays harsh realities

By Joel Strauch
Film Critic

"Safe Passage" isn't carried by an action-filled plot, but the story line packs a powerful punch.

The story revolves around Mag Singer (Susan Sarandon), the mother of seven boys. Most of the boys have grown up and are living away from home, leading Mag to have a mid-life crisis about a possible career.

As she faces this dilemma and thoughts of separating from her husband Patrick (Sam Shepard), her most troubled son, Percival—who left the family to join the Marines and enter the Gulf War, may be among the dead in a bombed barracks.

The rest of the sons arrive one by one to help their mother through this trial. Each remembers Percival in his own way and feels guilty in his role in Percival's decision to leave the family and flee to the service.

Mag relives her younger days through her talks with the girlfriend of her son, Alfred (Robert Sean Leonard). Alfred's girlfriend, Cynthia (Marcia Gay Harden), is older and wiser than him and gives Mag someone with whom she can share her feelings of disparity and motherhood.

The Facts

"Safe Passage"

Rating: R

Grade: B+

Stars: Susan Sarandon, Sam Shepard

Director: Robert Allan Ackerman

Five Words: Family bond can't be broken.

ing worry and guilt about her sons' safety.

Sarandon once again brings to life the story of a powerful woman. Mag is a strict and overprotective mother, but she would die without a thought (and almost does) for any of her children.

Shepard is also great as a husband who is confused by the many changes his wife is going through. He is also afflicted by temporary episodes of blindness.

Most of the sons have superficial roles, but Alfred plays a substantial part in the film.

His no-nonsense attitude, learned from his mother, is compromised by the rest of the family. Leonard does a great job portraying a young man who is trying to enter adulthood on both feet.

And Harden is also very solid as a contrasting mother figure to that of Mag.

Director Robert Allan Ackerman shows that a movie doesn't have to be filled with violence and nudity to make it on the big screen.

If you want to catch a movie that deals with the harsh realities of everyday life, take a trip to see "Safe Passage."

First-time director succeeds in 'Fresh'

Chad Johnson
Film Critic

It is rare for directors to make a powerful impact on their first attempt, but Boaz Yakin has done just that. His gritty, realistic film contains an almost living energy that he skillfully marshals and guides.

His film and title character is "Fresh." Fresh is a 12-year-old kid trying to grow up on the tough streets of Brooklyn. Like most twelve-year-olds, he has to worry about getting to school on time, his 11 live-in cousins and his interest in Rosie, the girl he has a crush on. Unlike most kids his age, he also has to worry about being a runner for rival neighborhood drug kingpins.

After a henchman of one of the dealers guns down two kids on the playground over a basketball game, Fresh decides he's got to do something about it. Fresh arranges a complex series of events as intricate as the moves he learns from his estranged, speed-chess playing father (Samuel L. Jackson). He sets out to bring down the drug lords Corky and Esteban (Ron Brice, Giancarlo Esposito) and rescue his sister, Nichole (N'Bushe Wright) from Esteban and addiction.

The cast is excellent. Sean Nelson makes his debut as Fresh and holds his own with heavyweights Jackson and Esposito.

The Facts

Film: "Fresh"

Rating: R

Stars: Sean Nelson, Giancarlo Esposito, Samuel L. Jackson

Director: Boaz Yakin

Grade: A-

Five words: Resourceful kid outsmarts drug bosses.

Jackson is his usual commanding presence, drawing the viewer in regardless of how savory the character is.

Yakin is the best young director out of New York since Spike Lee. While Yakin has a way to go to match Lee's inventiveness, Yakin takes a page from New York "old school" directors like Martin Scorsese, and conveys a definite "Mean Streets" flavor to his film with a bit of the old ultraviolence.

"Fresh" is an interesting, complex film about a good kid in bad circumstances. The refreshing aspect of the film is that the kid uses his head to get out of the situation, even if he has to sacrifice the pieces he likes best in order to capture the opponent's king.

Zoo reels in blues great Catfish

Iowa bluesman Catfish Keith back at the Zoo

By Jeff Randall
Staff Reporter

Lincoln resident Charlie Phillips is hoping to catch a pretty good catfish tonight. But he won't be visiting the usual local fishing spots.

He will be sitting in the Zoo Bar at 9 p.m., listening to Iowa-based bluesman Catfish Keith. Tonight's \$4 show will be Keith's third appearance at Lincoln's Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14 St.

"I've seen him every time he's come to town," said Phillips, a

full-time sales representative and part-time amateur blues guitarist. "He puts on a hell of a show."

Many others seem to agree with Phillips' sentiment. At the ripe old age of 32, Keith has toured the United Kingdom and Europe and has appeared on the covers of major European blues magazines, including "Blueprint" (United Kingdom) and "Blues Life" (Germany/Austria).

Keith's album "Jitterbug Swing" was nominated for a W.C. Handy Award, the blues world's equivalent of a Grammy, in the Best Country/Acoustic Blues Album category.

His reputation as a world-class acoustic blues musician is well-

deserved, Phillips said.

"He is definitely one of the best," he said.

Born in East Chicago, Ind., Keith began playing guitar at age 15. He has been earning a living as a solo blues musician since age 18, after he graduated from high school in Davenport, Iowa.

"Cherry Ball," Catfish's fourth and latest album, is being touted by many critics as his finest work to date. It is a solo effort, recorded in one night into a two-track recorder with just his voice, guitar and tapping feet.

"That album is one of the reasons I'm excited to see Catfish again," Phillips said. "I want to hear these songs live, the way they're meant to be heard."