

# Booh-tube

## Blues

Zoo Bar celebrated on series

By CHRISTOPHER HEINE  
Staff writer

Nebraska ETV producer Sue Maryott said she probably wouldn't have done a series on Zoo Bar performances if owner Larry Boehmer were a man of the times.

In a corporate era when most businesses seem to think bigger is better, the Zoo Bar is keeping it real by keeping it small.

"There's a club in Omaha doing blues that is like a big shed," Maryott said.

"I saw James Harman there one night and then at the Zoo the next night. There was hardly any atmosphere at the Omaha show. There wasn't anybody dancing, and the interaction between performer and audience was non-existent.

"Here, the performers are sweating on you."

It is this type of intimate energy that inspired Maryott to produce four blues shows airing this month on NETV that were all taped live at the Zoo Bar.

The series focuses on the Zoo Bar 25th anniversary music festival in June, which was attended by fans from as near as Bennett and as far as Paris. The city of Lincoln cooperated with Boehmer to hold outside performances on 14th Street to accommodate the large crowds.

Still, the most coveted performances were held inside the crowded, summer-hot Zoo Bar.

The hallway-like venue that holds around 125 patrons is obviously a unique treasure for a sparsely populated state such as Nebraska.

Blues experts around the country have certainly been taking notice.

The Zoo Bar won the 1993 "Keeping the Blues Alive/W.C. Handy Award" presented by the Kansas City Blues Society.

NETV first aired a feature on the Zoo Bar in 1983 and has periodically showcased the club since, Maryott said.

Boehmer said the NETV series has been helpful in promoting his club and blues in general. He said an airing of a show in October of 1997 featuring the late Luther Allison received a notable response.

"People see the programs across the country," he said. "I've had a few calls from Texas, California and somewhere down south in response to the Luther show."

This month's series commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Zoo started Jan. 8 with an hour-long presentation of blues harpist Carey Bell's anniversary-bash performance.

This Friday the series continues at 9 p.m. with James Harman belting out his unique style of 1950s and '60s harp-driven blues.

"He's like a crazed 1950s bowling nut," Boehmer said. "He's in the tradition of Muddy Waters or even Sonny Boy Williamson. In other words, you won't be hearing any Stevie Ray Vaughan."

Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials will be the featured act on Jan. 22. And Kenny Neal will bring his Bayou-styled



HARP PLAYER and blues musician James Harman is featured this Friday on NETV's "Zoo Bar Blues" series. The show was taped live at the Zoo Bar 25th anniversary music festival.

blues to the table on Jan. 29. All shows will air at 9 p.m.

Maryott said the biggest challenge to recording the event was effectively incorporating the needed equipment into the tiny venue.

Lighting, sound and camera equipment could easily inhibit the usually smoky and free atmosphere that makes Zoo patrons feel at home, Maryott said.

"We were trying to be invisible," she said. "We didn't want to cut into Larry's (crowd) or disrupt the flow of the evening too much."

"We probably ended up bothering a few of the regulars."

Maryott said the Zoo Bar has created a knowledgeable community of blues fans in Lincoln and Omaha.

"Many of the fans here get to meet the artists first-hand," she said. "The whole blues community is like a family, and I think that goes back to Larry keeping the bar small."

"I had a guy from California call me after seeing our (televised) show with Luther Allison," she said. "He thought he was a pretty big blues fan because he knew who Stevie Ray Vaughan and Taj Mahal were."

"Zoo Bar regulars not only know the big names, but they also know who James Harman and Magic Slim are."

Boehmer said he has thought about moving into a larger space.

"But that would mean we would have to book more commercial acts," he said. "We don't have to do that if we keep the club small."

"Plus all of the old blues joints were real small."

Traveling blues men such as Allison and Harman are a dying breed, Maryott said.

And that might be the most intriguing reason NETV hauls expensive equipment into the tiny, smoke-smelling club.

Maryott believes the worth of these recordings will appreciate with time. And she has good reason for such thinking.

"It turns out we recorded the last show Luther Allison did before he passed away last fall," Maryott said. "That taping has really become invaluable."

Maryott, an admitted blues fan, said the importance of her work with the Zoo has revealed itself when she has traveled to blues festivals elsewhere.

"One time I was at a festival in New Orleans, and I was wearing a Zoo Bar T-shirt," she said. "People were coming up to me and asking me, 'What is (the bar) like? I've always wanted to go there.'"

"All serious blues fans have at least heard of the Zoo."

Maryott believes Boehmer's contribution to the local, national and international blues community is admirable.

"Everything he does with the bar goes back to his love of the blues," Maryott said.

"You know he isn't doing any of it for money."

Sounds like a real blues man if there ever was one.



CHARLTON HESTON AND JANET LEIGH star in Orson Welles' "A Touch of Evil," which Welles claimed was butchered by Universal Studios back in 1958. The Ross screening features a re-cut version based on a written directive left behind by the late director.

## Eclectic films lead Ross spring season

Lineup includes John Waters, Orson Welles

By JEFF RANDALL  
Senior staff writer

Poetry, pedophilia and "Pecker."

The Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater has that and more in store for unsuspecting audiences this semester, and theater director Danny Lee Ladely has compiled one of the Ross' strongest seasons to date.

Amid the white-bread consumerism of the majority of Lincoln's movie theaters and the sheep-like qualities of its audiences, the Ross has always presented films that are more experimental, audacious and genuinely creative than typical big-screen fare.

"A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries," which opened the Winter/Spring 1999 schedule last

Thursday, is another in the long line of Merchant-Ivory dramas, this time focusing on American novelist Bill Willis and his family. Although such films are somewhat commonplace in bigger theaters, 1998's "Soldier's Daughter" never made it to Lincoln before now.

In the season's second film, the Ross will — depending on one's point of view — take a simultaneous downward and upward turn. The latest film from John Waters, the king of trashy fetishes, opens Jan. 21. "Pecker" stars Edward Furlong and tells the tale of a small-town photographer who becomes the toast of the New York art scene. Filled to the brim with Waters' usual gallery of offbeat characters and unnatural acts, "Pecker" should draw as many

Please see ROSS on 13

### Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater Winter/Spring 1999 schedule

**"A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries"**  
By James Ivory (USA, 1998, 127 minutes)  
Thursday, Jan. 7 — Sunday, Jan. 10  
Thursday, Jan. 14 — Sunday, Jan. 17

**"Pecker"**  
By John Waters (USA, 1998, 87 minutes)  
Thursday, Jan. 21 — Sunday, Jan. 24  
Thursday, Jan. 28 — Sunday, Jan. 30

**"The Governess"**  
By Sandra Goldbacher (UK, 1998, 114 minutes)  
Sunday, Jan. 31

**"Touch of Evil"**  
By Orson Welles (USA, 1958/Resorted 1998, 110 minutes)  
Thursday, Feb. 4 — Sunday, Feb. 7

**"Western"**  
By Manuel Poirier (France, 1998, 121 minutes)  
Sunday, Feb. 14

**"Slam"**  
By Marc Levin (USA, 1998, 110 minutes)  
Thursday, Feb. 18 — Sunday, Feb. 21  
Thursday, Feb. 25 — Saturday, Feb. 27

**"Marius and Jeannette"**  
By Robert Guediguian (France, 1998, 102 minutes)  
Sunday, Feb. 28

**"Happiness"**  
By Todd Solondz (USA, 1998, 135 minutes)  
Thursday, March 4 — Sunday, March 7  
Thursday, March 11 — Sunday, March 14

**"Gods and Monsters"**  
By Bill Condon (UK, 1998, 105 minutes)  
Thursday, March 18 — Sunday, March 21  
Thursday, March 25 — Saturday, March 27

**"The Eel"**  
By Shohei Imamura (Japan, 1998, 117 minutes)  
Sunday, March 28

**26th Annual Student Academy Awards**  
Thursday, April 1 — Sunday, April 4

**"The Inheritors"**  
By Stefan Ruzowitzky (Austria, 1998, 90 minutes)  
Sunday, April 11

**"Affliction"**  
By Paul Schrader (USA, 1998, 114 minutes)  
Thursday, April 15 — Sunday, April 18  
Thursday, April 22 — Sunday, April 24

**"Nights of Cabiria"**  
By Federico Fellini (Italy, 1957/Restored 1998, 117 minutes)  
Sunday, April 25