

THE DAYTON VOICE

Dayton's Independent News & Entertainment Weekly

Nov. 11-17

V.1 N. 7

Free



Some regulars on the blues scene:

From left to right: Tim Arnold and Bobby Rock, Snapper Mitchum and Jose Higgins of Low Rent Blues.

Captured Live/Randy Jennings photos.



In search of Dayton's blues

By Jeff Epton

I don't know beans about the blues, but we're a small paper and we think somebody ought to write about local blues musicians and bars. I said I would do it.

I talked to Gilly's owner Jerry Gillotti and he told me a number of places to go and people to see if I really wanted to learn something. But before I started off, Jerry gave me a graduate school paper written by one, Kathy Gillotti.

Kathy knows more than I do. "The blues may have emerged from black secular music of the early 1890s as a distinct expression of culture," writes Gillotti in the paper that she wrote earlier this year, "but it has transcended race and time to become an ongoing narrative for the troubles of humanity."

Okay, I'll buy that. And, if you want to argue

that local humanity, Dayton humanity, has enough troubles to justify playing the blues, I'll buy that, too. Now, with a little theory under my belt, I'm off to find the practitioners, to find those blues.

The Thirsty I

First stop is the Thirsty I on Gettysburg on Wednesday nights. The crumbling pavement in the parking lot and shuttered buildings nearby provide a silent blues prologue for the I.

Inside, it's different. Still funky, but different. The Thirsty I bills itself a sports bar. Indeed, Bobby Rock, bass player, and Jimmy Rogers, one of the two leaders of Rock 'n Rogers, are bracketed on the tiny stage by two television sets showing baseball's National League Championship Series.

Actually, one set hangs from the wall in front of Rock and the other, hanging on the wall opposite him, is reflected in the mirror to his left and behind

him. So Bobby sings, and a member of the Philadelphia Phillies runs bases first to third on Bobby's right, while the mirror image of the guy runs the bases backward to Bobby's left. This must be one of the most unique blues venues in town.

But blues venue it is — a true live blues jam, and Bobby walks on and off the stage, inviting other musicians up and leading the applause. Everybody in the tiny bar seems to know everybody else and the feeling of party and collective appreciation is strong.

James Parish gets up there to sing a Robert Ward song. While Parish describes himself as a struggling musician, behind him and in front of him one can watch the championship series. And while Parish plays, Pete Incaviglia high-fives his teammates, making Parish look like the musical meat squished between million dollar ballplayer

(Cont. on page eight)

Dayton's blues

Listening to Slim and the Headhunters, I begin to think that not knowing the blues is a lucky break. What I'm hearing sounds a little jazzy and maybe way too mellow for blues, but it sure is soothing. The band keeps the volume pretty low and then Slim adds a harmonica, and what was jazz slides over into blues. Slim can sing, too, and I can hear the words pretty clearly and I think enough, now, I'm done, I'll just write this and write that, at the very least, this little effort was good for me.

As the show continues, Slim's harmonica starts to sound cajun, but the beat of the music is definitely rock. The range of this band is impressive.

During a slide from one tune to the next, Slim introduces Andy Broom on the guitar and Marrienne says, "I really appreciate a young guy who can play guitar without banging on it." Let me tell you, Andy Broom is young (18) and he does not bang, but, like others before him, he, too, can make his guitar talk. Whisper even.

Together with Slim's voice — the most flexible, varied, controlled voice encountered on this little blues tour — and with the support of an amplified acoustic bass, the Headhunters make nice music. The bass player fills the sound out nicely, and you can feel the bass as easily as you can hear it.

The crowd likes the band plenty

and applauds with enough enthusiasm to make Slim crack a smile, which is not something he is willing to do much of — he is definitely musician cool and aloof. And, showing a little restraint of our own, we conclude that is enough for this night, and we are out of the Trolley.

Concluding the tour

Review, I say to myself, what we have learned here and what we want to convey: Hurry out and see Sharon Lane before the gods get her. Catch the blues on WDAO on Saturday mornings. Demand the return of the Crossroads Blues Festival. Don't miss Shake 'n the Senders like I did. Hear Piney Brown at the Ivory Coast on weekends.

The blues is universal music — remember Kathy Gillotti's words "(the blues) has transcended race and time" and even if we don't need much time transcendence here in Dayton, we could use some race transcendence. So come out Dayton, there is unity in the blues. Support your local blues bar and share the "troubles of humanity."

"When I come here in the evening,
my days work is never through ..."
Now close your eyes and listen.

In Search of

(Cont. from page one)

bread. And when Parish sings “nobody does something for nothin,” it’s plain that he is doing something for nothin’ and the ballplayers surrounding him are getting away with his share and more.

Parish picks very carefully; he can make the guitar cry a little though he’s no Roy Buchanan or even a Tim Arnold, the guitarist up there with him. But the crowd seems big in the little bar and they approve — the woman at the table next to me is on her feet, arms in the air.

At a break, Arnold, a guitar player of some note around town, goes to the bathroom, something that can’t be done anonymously at the Thirsty I. Musicians have to move out of the way to permit access to the loo. As Arnold returns, the crowd urges him to pick up his pace, they are ready for more. “Look out y’all, here come some blues,” announces Rock from offstage.

I’ll have to ask somebody who knows better than I do if Roy Buchanan was a blues guitarist, because Tim plays in a way that reminds me of Buchanan — the first guitarist I ever heard who could make a guitar sound to me like it was crying.

Buddy Ace at Gilly’s

Two nights later, Marianne and I go to see Buddy Ace, a nationally known blues singer, at Gilly’s. Gilly’s is a special place to local blues fans and to local blues players.

one at the Thirsty I. It’s big enough, in fact, to permit Rogers an opportunity to show what he can do. He pounds his electric keyboard and bounces his compact body around as he plays. And the sound he makes along with Tim Arnold and Bobby Rock fills Gilly’s and turns the crowd on some.

But, this crowd is not here for Rock or for Rogers or for Arnold. Even when one of the local musicians makes a move, cuts loose on a solo, or attracts attention with some vigorous bobbin’ and bouncin,’ the crowd expresses appreciation and then withdraws again. The message is clear —you ain’t no Buddy Ace.

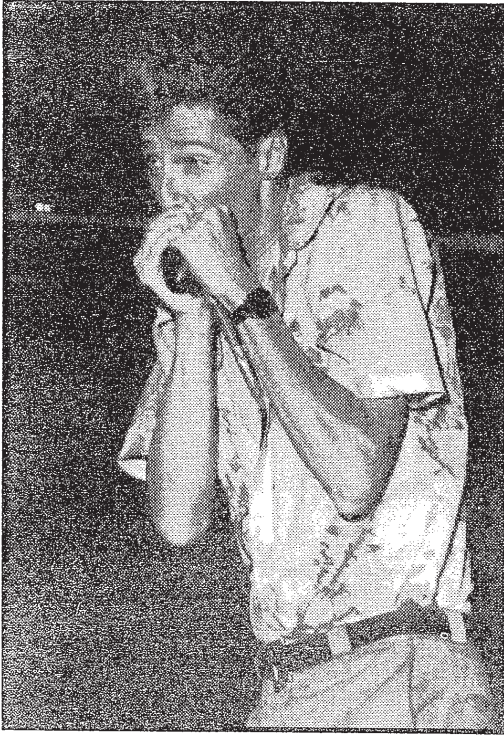
Still, the appreciation of even a small portion of this large audience matches the full enthusiasm of the little house at the Thirsty I. Except a big, half-noisy crowd is not as much fun as a small all-noisy crowd.

As Rock ‘n Rogers play on, the audience begins to get more restive — the mood is approaching not-only-

VOICE

are-you-not-Buddy-Ace-but-we-didn’t-come-to-see-you-at-all. But Rock ‘n Rogers bucks the mood. Jimmy says “we got a tune you all will recognize,” and

M
U
S
I
C



From left to right: Cincinnati Slim of Cincinnati Slim & The Headhunters, Snapper Mitchum Blues Jam at theNite Owl, and Sharon Lane. Photos by Randy Jennings.

the where's-Buddy-Ace-feelings circulating through the house.

Ignoring the undercurrent and basking in the afterglow of enthusiastic response, Jimmy Rogers begins to tell the crowd about the song they're about to hear next. A voice, sounding an awful lot like God talking to Bill Cosby's Noah, interrupts.

"Jimmy ... Jimmy Rogers," says the amplified voice and Jimmy looks up at the ceiling. "Jimmy, we got the band from Fort Worth here and some set-up to do and so, as much as we want to keep listening, why don't you do just one more," finishes the voice. Not God, after all, but Jerry Gillotti.

Jimmy turns to the crowd and says, "Y'all look a little sick, but we got the blues doctor here for one more," and the crowd gives an "okay, Jimmy" cheer and some of the tension goes out. Soon Buddy Ace will be on.

Rock 'n Rogers finishes and the "band from Fort Worth" comes on — they have a trombone and a trumpet and a sax and I'm thinking, okay, this is the traveling, get-down, real thing blues. But, though I don't know it yet, I am about to be revealed to myself as blues-dumber-still.

Right away we get to a sax solo and I think I must be deep into the blues now. Just as quick though, we're out of it and a new guy is up on the stage —

looks like a band leader to me — except that he's got on an all-red outfit and the jacket looks like something out of Sgt. Pepper. But the music is pretty good — lots of energy, lots of horns, but can't be blues really. Sounds like some R & B and maybe even just some regular old rock. The guy I think looks like a band leader and whom I also think is Buddy Ace gives the crowd permission to get to their feet ... no, orders them to their feet ... and yells "party" and the crowd yells back "party."

Somehow I doubt it's blues, but it sure is interactive.

Between them the trumpet player and the sax player must weigh almost 600 pounds. They are really big and they're dancing in sync while they play. This is a spectacle, for sure. Now the guy that I imagine to be Buddy Ace is inviting women onto the stage and he's calling them "baby" and giving them a mike and telling them to follow his lead

and sing a few notes. Almost none of them can sing very well, but there is something special about their effort anyway. The audience yells encouragement, and the guy I imagine to be Buddy Ace closes each solo by inviting them to "shake that booty" and they do — a little solo dance display up there in front of everyone. While the audience seems to like it, I don't, and I'm getting tired of the spectacle and finally the song winds down.

When it does, a DJ from WDAO gets up on stage and says, "I'm sorry folks, but we still don't know where Buddy Ace is. We hope you've been having a good time and want to stay, but if you don't, we can give you half your money back. Just line up right now and we'll give you five dollars each at the door."

Blues-dumb. But I'm getting smarter. Really. Ask me now who Buddy Ace is.

The Trolley Stop

CANAL STREET TAVERN
308 E. FIRST ST. (AT PATTERSON)
DOWNTOWN DAYTON, OH 45406-9440



.... Dayton's Blues

Ace, but they won't make it bigtime because Bobby Rock doesn't write his own stuff.

I was going to go to the Crossroads Blues Festival on Saturday morning (Oct. 16). Once there, I would hear Sharon Lane, Rock 'n Rogers, Cincinnati Slim and the Headhunters, Shake n' the Senders and the Low Rent Blues Band. That done, I would be, instantly, an expert. Alas, it rained. Dripped. Thundered. Occasionally poured. A blue Saturday. Only Sharon Lane played and then the concert was cancelled.

I missed Sharon, but it was said by those who heard her that she did a wonderful set and got enthusiastic response from a wet and tiny crowd. "She really belted it out," I was told, "and almost got electrocuted." (It was, someone else alleged, like feedback from the gods jammin' back, albeit with a little too much enthusiasm.) Anyway, Sharon and the gods closed down the Crossroads Blues Festival — "The first

annual Crossroads Blues Festival," said Ruth Yellowhawk, from festival-sponsor WYSO.

The Nite Owl and the Trolley Stop

Because of the rainout I had to extend my search for a glib and shallow expertise and went, two days later, to the regular Monday night event at the Nite Owl called Snapper's Blues Jam.

The Nite Owl isn't as small as the Thirsty I — the upscale word for small is "intimate," but we are not talking upscale here — and the jammin' is not quite as informal, but the scene is just as gritty. There are horns here, too, sax and trombone and the musicians seem to hit most of the notes they're going for. It's not a party like the Thirsty I, but the larger stage permits more musicians and instruments, and a succession of sax-trombone-blues harp solos are pretty satisfying.

There's a guitarist here who, like
(Cont. on page 10)

The little blues festival that didn't

Later, much later, sometime after the very soggy Crossroads Blues Festival that didn't happen, Jerry Gillotti will tell me that he gave back around \$500 to people who left and that Rock 'n Rogers is as good as Buddy

For continuing education ...

To catch the blues in Dayton, check with these clubs and bars:

Canal Street Tavern
308 E. First, 461-9343
Gilly's
132 S. Jefferson, 228-8414
Ivory Coast
5350 W. Third, 268-2320
Nite Owl
430 E. Fifth, 223-0540
Thirsty I
2170 N. Gettysburg, 274-1867
Trolley Stop

530 E. Fifth, 461-1101

To stay home and catch the blues, tune in these radio stations:

- WDAO, 1210 AM, Saturday mornings, 6:45 to 11 a.m.
- WYSO, 91.3 FM, Monday through Thursday evenings, 7 to 11 p.m.

To talk blues, try these people:

Jerry Gillotti at Gilly's, Dave Housong at Dayton Band and Dave Barber at CityFolk.

To read blues, start with this man and his book: LeRoi Jones, *Blues*

People, Morrow, 1971.

To buy used blues recordings (according to one observer) try Omega Music on North Main. But according to Omega owner Gary Staiger, nobody has a good used blues selection anymore. Recordings are now collectibles and hard to obtain.

To comment on this sidebar:

Do not get angry if you were left out. We will run this little guide at least one more time. Just notify the *Voice* and we will include your additional information.

—J.E.

Local Music

Coming to the Palace Club



2346 Grand Hall Road at Main



Gilly's

Fifth & Jefferson

(513) 228-8414

Gilly's

NOV 19 1971