

The Las Vegas Blues Society conquers the blues

An alternative to the usual

by Roy Theiss
Staff Reporter

Looking for a different alternative in music?

Try something home grown - the Blues. The music is making a resurgence in America and its popularity in Las Vegas is testimony to that.

The Las Vegas Blues Society (LVBS) was created to salvage a dying blues society. Bill Cherry, president of the LVBS, said, "I didn't see anything happening."

As a result, LVBS started having weekly jam sessions and became more visible. In the beginning, only one blues band, the Blues Kings, was playing in town.

A membership drive was initiated during a LVBS jam session on April 1, 1989. "Within two months, it was standing room only by 10 p.m. People were dying to find a place like this," Cherry stated.

The purpose of the LVBS is to preserve and support blues music as an art form in Las Vegas. "Our interest is to form bands out of 'Blues night' and create a 'Blues Circuit,'" Dennis "Monk" Andriaccio, Vice President, said. This can be experienced at any Monday night Jam Session at Chateau Vegas between 8 p.m. and midnight.

During last Monday's jam session, 32 blues players signed

up to participate. Everyone was eager to do a little networking - blues style. Numerous players were huddled in the hallway drinking beer and exchanging phone numbers while others competed on stage for time in the spotlight. The action was virtually non-stop except for short interruptions to allow new players to stand in.

It is not only local blues players that sit in and jam. In the past, members from Albert Collins' band, George Holmes (of the Ink Spots), the Righteous Brothers' guitar player, members from Savoy Brown, and band members from Doug Kershaw have graced the stage.

It hasn't been an easy path for the blues society. As with blues music, the road for the LVBS's Jam Session has been a rocky one. The 19 Hole Bar, where the first jam sessions took place, shut down. The jam sessions moved to Calamity Jayne's, then to Senor Bull's, but that fizzled. The jam sessions relocated to Tanner's, then moved over to the Peace Pipe, which was closed shortly after the move. "It was ironic because the last night was a party after the LVBS picnic. We packed the place

to the gills. He (the owner) could have paid his bills from that night alone," Monk said.

The LVBS has now found a home at Chateau Vegas, 605 Desert Inn Road, on Monday nights.

The LVBS has also spawned another blues show on the radio for the Vegas valley. "Nothing but the blues" is joined by Blues Legacy. Both shows air on KUNV from midnight to 2 a.m. on Thursday, and Sunday from noon to 2 p.m. respectively.

University Theatre offers rare originals by UNLV playwrights

Theatre audiences in Las Vegas will have the opportunity to sample the best in original short works this fall. UNLV Master of Fine Arts (MFA) playwrights Rand Higbee, Red Shuttleworth, John Newsom and Tami Silver will have one-act plays produced in the Grant Hall Little Theatre October 5 and 6 at 8 p.m. with a matinee at 2 p.m. on October 7.

Subjects range from a dark comedy about Vietnam to an unsparing vision of small town life in Nevada.

Rand Higbee's, "I'd Rather be in Pittsburgh" is under the direction of Todd Espeland, a theatre arts student at UNLV. The play is a dark satire on Vietnam and follows the story of Sergeant Joe Mills and his attempts to lead a misfit team of soldiers into battle.

Set in Tonopah, Nevada, John Newsom's "Rites of War" looks at the relationship between a father and son the evening before the boy leaves for college. Brian Scott Curtis, who has worked on other plays with Newsom such as "A Walking Shadow," will be directing. The play pursues mature themes and parental discretion is advised.

"Farewell the Catastrophe Works" by Red Shuttleworth is a

contemporary comedy set in Las Vegas. It is the story of a mother and daughter who "seek moral high ground in a queen-of-the-hill battle," to quote Shuttleworth. This play which examines youthful irresponsibility is being directed by Maggie Winn-Jones.

Tami Silver's "Oh, Harry, How I Love You," satirizes two young women's fascination with their college professor. Ed Humphries will direct this play.

The playwrights seem eager to see their shows produced in the Grant Hall Little Theatre. John Newsom was quoted as saying that the space "allows us (the authors) to see our work in the kindest and most instructive possible context." Red Shuttleworth believes that this format is "more realistic in terms of small professional theatre and learning to work in those spaces."

The One-Act Play Festival is being entered in the American College Theatre Festival Short Awards Program and will be adjudicated by regional judges for both the regional and national competition. The shows will run Oct. 5 and 6 at 8 p.m. with a matinee at 2 p.m. on Oct. 7. The shows are free to the public but seating is limited. Don't miss this exciting event!

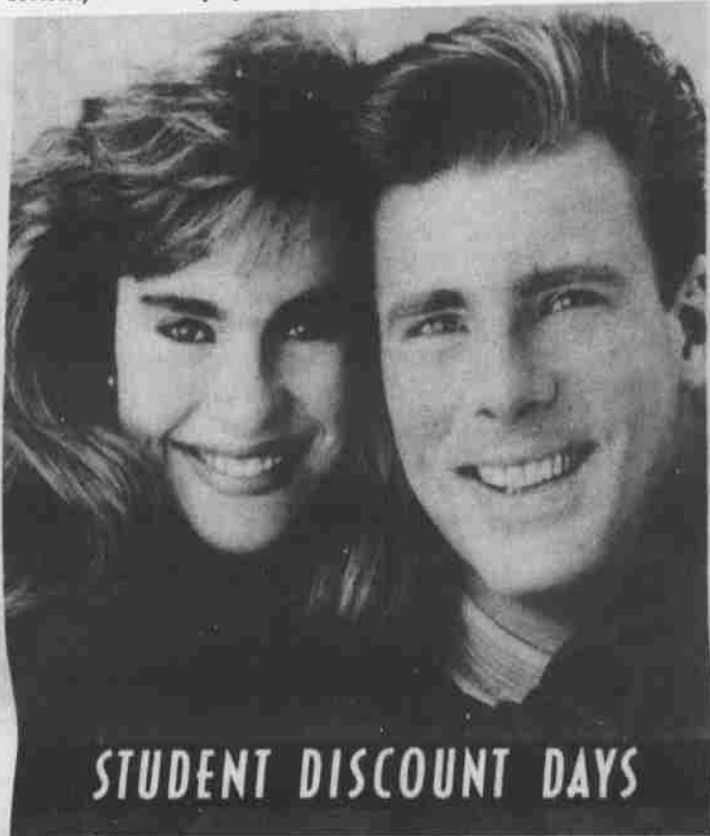
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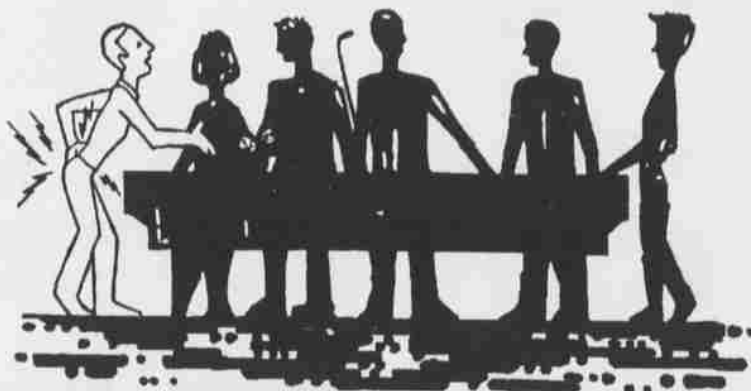
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