

IN CONCERT

- **ANNE DE DAVIS**
Anne De Davis will perform on Monday, Aug. 21, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 998-2747.
- **DOUGH BOYS**
Dough Boys will perform with special guests, Skully Squad, at Elondies, Seven Mile Road, east of Telegraph Road, Detroit. For information, call 535-8108.
- **DIFFERENCE**
The Difference will perform on Tuesday, Aug. 22, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 998-2747.
- **VANGOGH**
Ash Can VanGogh will perform on Wednesday, Aug. 23, in the Farmington Hills Community Center Outdoor Concert Series, 24705 Farmington, north of 10 Mile. Admission is free and open to all ages. Picnic grounds open at 4 p.m. and Ash Can VanGogh takes the stage at 7 p.m. For information, call 477-8104.
The group also performs on Sunday, Aug. 27, at the Jockey, 4616 N. Woodward, south of 14 Mile, Royal Oak. For information, call 549-2233.
- **J.D. LAMB**
J.D. Lamb will perform on Wednesday, Aug. 23, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 998-2747.
- **ROBB ROY**
Robb Roy will perform on Thursday, Aug. 24, at 3-D Dance Club, 1615 N. Main, north of 12 Mile, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3344. The group will also perform on Saturday, Aug. 26, at the Hamtramck Pub, Caniff Road, off I-75.
- **LIL' REUBEN**
Lil' Reuben & The Motor City Players will perform Thursday through Saturday, Aug. 24-26, at Walch's on the Border, 20116 W. Warren, west of Evergreen. For information, call 441-6190.
- **RONNIE EARL**
Ronnie Earl and The Broadcasters will perform on Thursday, Aug. 24, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.
- **YESTERDAYS NEWS**
Yesterdays News will perform on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 25-26, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 998-2747.
- **THE SUSPECTS**
The Suspects will perform Friday and Saturday, Aug. 25-26, at Rick's Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 998-2747.
- **TRASH BRATS**
Trash Brats, along with special guests Abuse and Broken Toys, will perform on Friday, Aug. 25, at Elondies, Seven Mile Road, east of Telegraph Road, Detroit. For information, call 535-8108.
- **SCREAMING SAVAGE**
Screaming Savage and the Cavemen will perform on Friday, Aug. 25, at Hamtramck Pub, Caniff Avenue, off I-75.
- **DETROIT BLUES**
Detroit Blues Band will perform on Friday, Aug. 25, on the Bohlo Moonlight Cruise, which departs at 11 p.m. from the Detroit Dock. Tickets are \$10.95 (\$9.95 for groups of 10 or more with advance reservations). For information, call 843-0700.
- **MADCAT**
Madcat's Pressure Cooker will perform on Friday, Aug. 25, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.
- **MARINER**
Mariner will perform on Saturday, Aug. 26, on the Bohlo Moonlight Cruise, which departs at 11 p.m. from the Detroit Dock. Tickets are \$10.95 (\$9.95 for groups of 10 or more with advance reservations). For information, call 843-0700.
- **DUKE ROBILLARD**
Duke Robillard will perform on Saturday, Aug. 26, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.
- **LOVE & ROCKETS**
Love & Rockets will perform with special guests, The Platters, on Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. Tickets are \$18.50. For information, call 587-6000.



Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters play Thursday at Sully's in support of their new album, "Soul Searchin'" on Black Top Records.

Soul searchin' by guitar

Ronnie Earl comes clean to play passionate blues

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

He didn't play guitar until he was 23, was single until a year ago and has been looking at life through unblurred eyes for only the last six months.

Ronnie Earl's story has been one of late starts. Onstage, though, the blues notes that pour through his Fender Stratocaster are quick and pointed.

"I got straight in your city," said Earl, who will perform his guitar-slinging style of blues Thursday at Sully's in Dearborn. "Years of being on the road, I got to be an abuser of certain things. In Detroit, I woke up. Detroit is a special place for me."

Earl won't elaborate too much on the actual circumstances that led him to see the light in the Motor City. "It's personal, man," he said.

Those who've seen Earl perform usually have been treated to a personal show of passion and sincerity. Unquestionably, the New York City native loves the blues.

Earl speaks in the tone of awe when mentioning names like Muddy Waters, Earl King, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson and Walter Horton — all blues greats he's either recorded with or produced.

EARL GARNERED a reputation as blues guitarist in his own right. He performed for eight years with club favorites Roomful of Blues before venturing out on his own with Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters.

With three solo albums already, Earl recently released another installment on Black Top Records "Soul Searchin'." An apt title for a man who is still searching for some of the pieces of life's puzzle.

Onstage, though, the package is complete. Earl's style of guitar

playing is straight-forward blues. He's backed by a tight outfit that includes harmonica player Johnny Sansone (formerly with Jumpin' Johnny & the Blues Party), bassist Steve Gomez (formerly with John Lee Hooker's band), keyboard player Dickie Reed (former Roomful of Blues members) and drummer Per Hanson.

On his latest LP, Earl also enlists the services of well-known guitarist Duke Robillard and harmonica player Jerry Portnoy.

One of the biggest names in blues, Muddy Waters, set Earl on his way. As Earl tells it, he was with a friend at a Waters show when he felt something of a spiritual awakening.

"I looked at my friend and said, 'We're missing something in our lives here,'" Earl said.

One of those things, in Earl's case, was a guitar. At 23, he picked up an acoustic guitar first time and started by playing Lightnin' Hopkins material.

EARL SOON soon gave up his career teaching mentally disabled children in Boston and began performing in clubs.

"The advantage when you start playing anything late in life is that you're more focused, you're more grown up," Earl said. "You know what you want. I said I want to play the blues. . . I don't play the blues because I'm limited but because I want to."

That commitment has inspired numerous raves, including those from many guitar greats such as Eric Clapton, Robert Cray and B.B. King. Earl said he's continually evolving as a guitarist.

Earl's biggest growth has perhaps come since he went solo in 1988. He said likes the control that comes with being on your own, such as turning down certain club dates.

More importantly, though, Earl enjoys being able to play his own music.

"My philosophy about guitar playing is basically to play with soul and from the heart," he said. "I don't consider myself a great guitarist — other people do, bless their hearts — but I play with soul and sincerity."

Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters will perform Thursday, Aug. 24, at Sully's, 4758 Greenfield, north of Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. For information, call 846-5377.



Love & Rockets, whose single "I'm Alive" is receiving a large amount of air play on commercial radio, will perform on Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Fox Theatre in Detroit.

COUNTRY LOCAL

Here are the top-10 songs on WWWW-FM 106.7.

1. "Timber, I'm Falling in Love," Patty Loveless.
2. "One Good Well," Don Williams.
3. "Promises," Randy Travis.
4. "Reba McEntire," Coby's Crown.
5. "I Wonder Do You Think of Me," Keith Whitley.
6. "Heaven Only Knows," Emmylou Harris.
7. "Why'd You Come Here Looking Like That?," Dolly Parton.
8. "Lovin' Only Me," Ricky Skaggs.
9. "Love Has No Right," Billy Joe Royal.
10. "Sunday in the South," Shenandoah.

Here are the top-10 songs receiving airplay on "Detroit Music Scene," which is heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays (5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDR-FM 90.9.

1. "Mortal Men," Nemesis.
2. "Sky Towers," Namling Mary.
3. "Factory Line," The Rogues.
4. "We Room to Swing the Cat," Rubber.
5. "The Edge," Civilians.
6. "All the Heroes," Generals.
7. "Muscles and Diamonds," Dancing Scoundrels.
8. "Only You," Idiots.
9. "Living in Ohio," Peter G.
10. "Industrial Noise," Funhouse.

REVIEWS

IT'S REAL — James Ingram



"It's Real," James Ingram's recent piece of work, is an excellent example of how an album should be put together. Side one of the release is dubbed "It's Real Hard," and side two is dubbed "It's Real Soft."

So this simply means one side is fast beat R&B dance music and side two is slow ballads. This well thought-out album lets the listener build up with the mood of the music by keeping the tempos in order.

Production on the album is superb. Ingram's powerful voice is well heard through the loud drumming, upbeat songs. Dancing comes automatic when those tunes are heard. The title track "It's Real" has pizzazz. It's one of those songs you can hear over and over again without getting tired of it right away.

The softer tunes of side two again display slick ballad style Ingram is known for. Ingram's remake of the Gettlin/King song "You Make Me Feel Like A Natural Man" is sung with pure pride as his voice bellows out each word.

Working on the production of the album with Ingram are some of the well-known talents in the industry. On the list are Gene Griffin, Geria Levert, Marc Gordon (the Levert/Gordon team), Michael J. Powell, Dennis Matkowsky, Thom Bell (known for his work with The Spinners), Benny Medina and Barry Hankerson.

The album is a good sounding piece of work because it contains a little bit of funk, a lot of hard drum dancing tunes and a entire side of soft ballads. The formula is there.

After three long years since his last release, this solo album shows that Ingram has worked hard in co-producing, co-writing and being involved in many aspects of making the album, which is a credit to Ingram as an artist.

— Gail O'Connor

THE SWAMP BOOGIE QUEEN — Katie Webster



Granted, swamp boogie is a musical strain not native to our high and dry suburbs. Katie Webster's brand of boogie comes from Louisiana, via Texas, having been well-seasoned through the years.

But even we highlanders can pick up on swamp boogie real quick. That's good because Webster's bluesy singing and piano styles, at times pounding, like some rollicking roadhouse, and at times sweet, like a sentimental mood, deserves some attention.

She is not a household name, though arguably should be. Houston-born, she is the daughter of pianists. She was spotted by soul great Otis Redding and played with the Redding band 1964-67, until the singer's untimely death.

"The Swamp Boogie Queen" (Alligator) features two wonderful versions of Redding tunes, one he co-wrote ("Fa-la-fa-fa") and one he made famous ("Try a Little Tenderness").

Here too is Webster's rendition of "Sea of Love." She played piano on the original hit version by Phil Phil-

lips. Another standard, "Who's Making Love?," seems to sum up Webster as a staunch realist when it comes to love.

"Now listen fellas . . ." she sings on another song before launching into a melodic pitch for treating women right. It's a message she tells the ladies as well.

She shows off her rich boogie woogie style on a song she wrote called "Black Satin."

Katie has a pretty good group of guests passing through. These include guitarists Robert Cray and Bonnie Hailt, and Fabulous Thunderbirds harpist Elvin Wilton.

But Webster is the star, and on one number she sings "Lord I wonder how much longer I'll have to sing the blues."

She's been at it 35 years so far. Let's hope for many more.

— Brian Lyraught

BLIND JUSTICE — Figure 4



Jeff (or is it Jefferson?) Shoemaker fancies himself as a man with message. And with a voice that sounds like he gargles with Listerine and broken glass in the morning, the lead singer of Figure 4 articulates what's on his mind in the hardest of rock'n'roll fashion.

Figure 4's first release, the five-song cassette "Blind Justice" (Nebula), is nothing less than what we've come to expect from this neo-political outfit.

Shoemaker is a student of Objectivism. The philosophy touts the virtues of selfishness and, indeed, is quite different than the liberal bent of today's social conscious rockers.

What Shoemaker has to say is backed up by a potent blast of industrial rock'n'roll. 10,000 Maniacs this isn't, folks.

No new musical ground is broken here. But what the Figure 4 crew does, it does very well. Most duly noted is the deft guitar work of Fred Schaller, who provides some scorching lines that elevates numbers like the title track "Blind Justice" to a loftier plateau.

The sound fits the lyrics. Shoemaker writes what might be described as crude poetry. There's no fat or gristle on these lines.

From "Deadline" comes this entry: "All along on the road to perfection/I'm not afraid of hate and rejection/I eat punk like you for lunch/You ain't so bad, is that your best punch?"

Or this sample from "This Is John Galt Speaking," a rant about a character in the Ayn Rand novel "Atlas Shrugged." "Punishment for his who wins/You've taken life and called it sin/To wait for me but not for all/This will be society's fall."

Fortunately, lyrics are included with the package. Otherwise, the hard rock sound tends to block out the words. Which, incidentally, isn't that the whole point of being a band with a message?

— Larry O'Connor