

## STREET SCENE

## Bluesman Volin makes a living doing what he loves



CHRISTINA FUOCO

can be downright devastating. "The women in there are intoxicating."

Despite playing since 1972, Volin still has a child-like passion about music.

"I'm a young cat at heart." This weekend, Volin will be playing with some of the coolest cats at the "Anti-Freeze Blues Festival" at the Magic Bag in Ferndale.

"I like playing Jeremy's place," he said of owner Jeremy Haberman. "It's a concert hall. As much as I like playing the clubs, I love playing there. I punch the sky as hard as I can. I shoot for the heavens trying to hit Albert King. If I miss, I still try. It's a

great place." Volin grew up in Oak Park but "got all my worldly experience in Farmington." After his parents divorced, he bounced around from city to city attending Harrison High School in Farmington Hills and graduating from Seaholm High School in Birmingham.

Volin began his career filling in for a sick member of a friend's rock band during a gig at O.E. Dunckel Middle School, then junior high, in Farmington Hills in 1972. Soon thereafter, he joined the band.

"I was always a blues guy. I used to go to Ethel's Lounge in Detroit. When I was 12 I went to see Albert King, and I was the only white cat there. When I was 16, I had 25-year-old girlfriends so I looked older. When I was 12, I probably looked like I was 18," Volin explained.

"I had a good time." The Grande Ballroom was another of Volin's loves. He watched legends in the making Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix and Fleetwood Mac back when Peter Green was still a part of the band.

"I was really determined," Volin said about having a career in music. "Unfortunately, my mom wasn't happy about it. I was kind of a 'you can't tell me what to do' kind of a kid. I love my mom dearly. I probably helped a couple gray hairs on her head. I'm sure, but I never got in trouble."

There was one problem with achieving his dream, however. "I didn't know how to go about it." So he relentlessly played bars and clubs.

"When I got in my first band at 15 everybody else was 24. They were schlepping me in bars, playing until 2:30 in the morning and sleeping through first, second and third hours in school. It was the smartest thing to do."

In 1977, he formed The Look with Dave Edwards as one of the main songwriters.

"I've done some pretty cool things with The Look. We were on MTV. We had lots of airplay. But I bolted out, and I mean bolted in 1986." After working in retail for six months at Radio Shack, Volin decided to return to

what he loved the most—music. "I was playing in cover bands—top 40 radio bands. I hated that as much as I hated playing in Radio Shack. I was playing for the suits who were putting their index fingers up in the air during these stupid dances," Volin explained.

"I really hated it. I hated it so much that it started making me take it out on the music. If I didn't do something, I was in trouble. I bailed out of that."

To curb his cravings, he worked for a couple music stores, while selling and buying old guitars on the side. "I decided, I'm going to do something I like so I went back to what I knew."

Volin opened Rockin' Daddy's guitar shop at 12 S. Broadway in Lake Orion, and gathered some friends together and formed the Sonic Blues. He released his debut "Used Guitars" in 1995 and this year put out his second effort "Waking Up With Wood."

"I went in there with 20 songs and knocked them all out in two nights," he said of the recording of "Waking Up With Wood." He returned to the studio three to

four months later to wrap up the vocals.

"I finally was able to put it out. I was really in debt. But I found out a long time ago that when somebody else feels the bill, you get no control, period. I know how I can beat suit myself, I think," he said.

"I'm 40 something years old, I've been playing professionally more than half my life. I may not know best in how to deal with relationships because I don't but I'm always trying. When it comes to music, that's what I know."

The Anti-Freeze Blues Festival features Larry McCray, Johnnie Bassett and Blues Insurgents, Thoretta Davis and Black Beauty, Big Dave and the Ultrasonics, and Robert Jones at 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 1, and Johnnie Johnson, Jim McCarty and Willie D. Warren with Mystery Train, the Butler Twins with Jeff Grand, the Corners, and Randy Volin and Sonic Blues at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2, at the Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Tickets are \$15 per day, or \$25 for a two-day

pass. The shows are open to those 18 and older. For more information, call (248) 544-3030 or visit <http://www.themagicbag.com>.

## Laser spectacular

The Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular is coming to the State Theatre for two shows, 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 15. Tickets, which go on sale at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 2, are \$17 in advance, \$19 day of show, or \$22 for reserved seating. But the first 101 people who buy their tickets from 10-11 a.m. Jan. 2, can purchase a second ticket for \$1.01. For more information, call (313) 961-5451 or (248) 645-6666.

Christina Fuoco is the pop music reporter for The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. If you have a question or comment for her, you can leave her a message at (734) 953-2047, mailbox No. 2130, or write to her at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, Mich., 48150, or [cfuoco@homecomm.net](mailto:cfuoco@homecomm.net).

## MOVIES

Unexpected meeting: Joe Fox (Tom Hanks, left to right), Frank Navasky (Greg Kinnear) and Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan) meet at a party in "You've Got Mail."



BRIAN HAMILL/WESTER IMAGE

## 'You've Got Mail' is funny

BY KEELY WYGONIK  
STAFF WRITER  
[keelywyg@homecomm.net](mailto:keelywyg@homecomm.net)

Love is blind so they say, and if you need proof, go see "You've Got Mail," starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

Boy meets girl in a chatroom via the Internet. Girl and boy begin to fall in love, and begin finding fault with their current lovers, without ever knowing each other's true identity.

Kathleen Kennedy, also known as Shoppgirl, (Meg Ryan) owns The Shop Around the Corner, a children's bookstore started by her mother.

Joe Fox, NY152, (Tom Hanks) is opening Fox Books, a super bookstore, a few blocks near Kennedy's store. The superstore, with its low prices and extra amenities such as a coffee bar, is a threat to Kennedy's small bookstore.

When Kennedy and Fox do meet, without knowing their true internet identities, sparks fly and a war begins.

Based on the Ernst Lubitsch comedy, "The Shop Around the Corner," "You've Got Mail," is a believable love story for our Internet Age.

Directed by Nora Ephron.

"You've Got Mail" also stars Parker Posey, Jean Stapleton, Dave Chappelle, Steve Zahn and Greg Kinnear.

It's a pretty film, shot in the Upper West Side of New York, a neighborhood of small shops where owners know their customers by name. Kennedy and Fox frequently bump into each other. They both buy groceries at Zabar's and pick up their coffee at the same Starbucks.

Fox lives with a brilliant, Type A personality book editor, Patricia Eden (Parker Posey). Kennedy dates newspaper columnist Frank Navasky (Greg Kinnear), a nerdy, wordy kind of guy who prefers his old typewriter to a computer. Kennedy secretly logs on to the Internet after he leaves her apartment.

"You've Got Mail" is funny and romantic. "I love New York in the fall," writes Fox to Kennedy. "It makes me want to buy school supplies—make a bouquet of sharpened pencils."

Stapleton (Birdie) works in Kennedy's shop and is like a mother to her. Kennedy's mother died. Birdie's kind of an Edith Duncker character, except more worldly than the role she played on the popular 1970s TV show, "All in the Family."

"I tried to have cybersex once," she says. "But all I got was a busy signal."

When Kennedy and Fox aren't bumping into each other and fighting the battle of bookstores—"she's beautiful," says Fox, "she's a pill," they can be quite philosophical. "I lead a small life," writes Kennedy to NY152. "I'm not brave."

Plugged into their modems, and safe in the anonymity of e-mail, Kennedy and Fox share their thoughts and weaknesses, learning about, and bringing out the best in each other.

Love triumphs in the end, and identities are revealed. There's a happy ending, but not what you might expect.

BY HUGH GALLAGHER  
STAFF WRITER  
[hgallagher@homecomm.net](mailto:hgallagher@homecomm.net)

"Waking Ned Devine" is an amusing bit of blarney that puts wonderful character actors at center stage with often hilarious results.

Poor Ned Devine is one of our poor souls who each week puts down some money in hopes of hitting the lottery jackpot, in his case the National Irish Lottery. Finally, all the balls fall into place and his numbers come in. The excitement is too much for Ned and he dies a happy man with a smile on his face.

Meanwhile, two old schemers in the small town of Tully More (pop. 53) have discovered that someone in town purchased a winning lottery ticket. Jackie O'Shea (Ian Bannen) tries to discover who in town is acting like a lottery winner so he can ingratiate himself. His friend Michael O'Sullivan (David Kelly) has his own ideas who the winner might be.

When Ned doesn't show up for a chicken dinner hosted by Jackie and his long-suffering wife Annie (Fionnula Flanagan),

Jackie goes calling. He finds Ned and the ticket, which unfortunately Ned has signed.

The antics that Jackie and Michael use to convince a lottery official that Michael is Ned are just part of this comic portrait of a small Irish village in the throes of lottery fever. There is also the story of smelly pig farmer Finn (James Nesbitt), who would easily win the hand of sexy Maggie (Susan Lynch) except for his pronounced odor. Maggie is mother to the wise-beyond-his-years Maurice, who gives counsel to a young novice parish priest. There is also the singing postmistress, the jovial pub keeper and the miserable Lizzy Quinn, a female Irish version of Mr. Potter and Ebenezer Scrooge.

American Kirk Jones, an award-winning commercial director, has created a loving portrait of small town life that moves quickly and nicely balances some outlandish slapstick visual comedy with touching wit and charm.

Jan Bannen's scamming Jackie is the biggest charmer of all. Bannen gives Jackie a glinting eye, a gift of gab and a real heart

behind all the conniving. The well-known character actor finally gets to take the lead and he's more than up to the task. A funeral scene is particularly winning.

The emaciated David Kelly, with his long, hawklike red nose and rheumy eyes, is a howl just to look at, especially when he's racing nude on a motorcycle. He is Jackie's more gentle and considerably more nervous partner in near crime. It is Kelly that draws the belly laughs. Together these two make a wonderful Gleason-Carney match.

Holding things together is Flanagan's Annie, who gives Jackie her support only up to a point. Flanagan is a wonderful actress who gives the film a certain moral balance.

Though you probably wouldn't want to live in Tully More, writer-director Jones and photographer Henry Brubaker (who actually shot on the Isle of Man), have created a wonderful place to visit—an idyll of thatched roofs, winding roads, majestic cliffs, pub snugs and warm, good-hearted people.

**"THE SEASON'S MUST-SEE ADVENTURE!"**  
-BOBBIE WYCAW, NBC-TV

**"THE BEST FAMILY MOVIE OF THE YEAR."**  
-JIM SCATILLA, KCM-TV (KCM)

**"AN AWESOME ADVENTURE."**  
-PAUL WINKEL, WJLA RADIO

**"THE FAMILY MOVIE PARENTS WILL WANT TO SEE TWICE."**  
-JOE CHAPMAN, GLOBAL TELEVISION, TORONTO

**"A PERFECT HOLIDAY TREAT."**  
-JIMMY JAY MALLORY, ABC-TV

Win a trip to Hawaii at [www.MightyJoeYoung.com](http://www.MightyJoeYoung.com)  
Sponsored by MIGHTY JOE YOUNG PICTURES INC. ©1998 ENTERTAINMENT INC.

**Now Playing**

AMC EASTLAND 2	AMC LAUREL PARK	AMC LIVONIA 20
AMC SOUTHWEST CITY	AMC STERLING CTR.	AMC WOODLAND
AMC CANTON	QUO VADIS	SHOWCASE 10
SHOWCASE 10	SHOWCASE 10	SHOWCASE 10
STAR GRANDVIEW AT 15 MI.	STAR LINCOLN PARK 8	STAR SOUTHWEST
STAR OAKLAND	STAR WINDSOR 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14
STAR OAKLAND	STAR WINDSOR 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14

FOR MOVIES & SHOWTIMES CALL 447-1111

**yule love it!**

**Disney & PIXAR**

**a bug's life**

Best animated film  
Golden globe nomination  
Best original score

If you've only seen it once, you haven't seen it all.

**Now Playing**

AMC AMERICAN WEST	AMC BEL AIR 10	AMC EASTLAND 5
AMC LIVONIA 20	AMC LIVONIA 20	AMC SOUTHWEST CITY
AMC LAUREL PARK	AMC SOUTHWEST CITY	AMC WOODLAND
AMC SOUTHLAND 4	AMC STERLING CENTER	AMC BIRMINGHAM 8
AMC CANTON	STAR SOUTHWEST 20	QUO VADIS
SHOWCASE 10	SHOWCASE 10	SHOWCASE 10
SHOWCASE 10	STAR GRANDVIEW AT 15 MI.	STAR SOUTHWEST
STAR WINDSOR 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14
STAR WINDSOR 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14

FLORIDA VISIT [www.FloridaVisit.com](http://www.FloridaVisit.com) Disney World

**"THE YEAR'S BEST ROMANTIC COMEDY!"**

**"Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan Are Magic!"**  
-JOE SIKEL, ABC-TV, GOOD MORNING AMERICA

**"Two Thumbs Up!"**  
-SCOTT BERRY

**"★★★★★"**  
-AM DICK, ABC RADIO NETWORK

**"A Pitch-Perfect Romantic Comedy."**  
-LEAH ROSEN, PEOPLE

**"A Sure-Fire Hit!"**  
-GENE SHANK, THE TODAY SHOW

**"You'll Love It!"**  
-NEIL ROSEN, NIT NEWS

**You've Got Mail**

**Now Showing**

AMC AMERICAN WEST	AMC LAUREL PARK	AMC BEL AIR
AMC LIVONIA 20	AMC WOODLAND	AMC SOUTHWEST
AMC STERLING CTR.	GCC NOV. TOWN CTR.	SHOWCASE 10
AMC SOUTHLAND 4	SHOWCASE 10	SHOWCASE 10
STAR GRANDVIEW AT 15 MI.	STAR GRANDVIEW AT 15 MI.	STAR SOUTHWEST
STAR OAKLAND	STAR WINDSOR 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14
STAR OAKLAND	STAR WINDSOR 14	STAR COMMERCIAL TRW 14