

arts

Sonny Terry and
Brownie McGhee...

Blues artists won't play unless asked

by Brent Kostyniuk

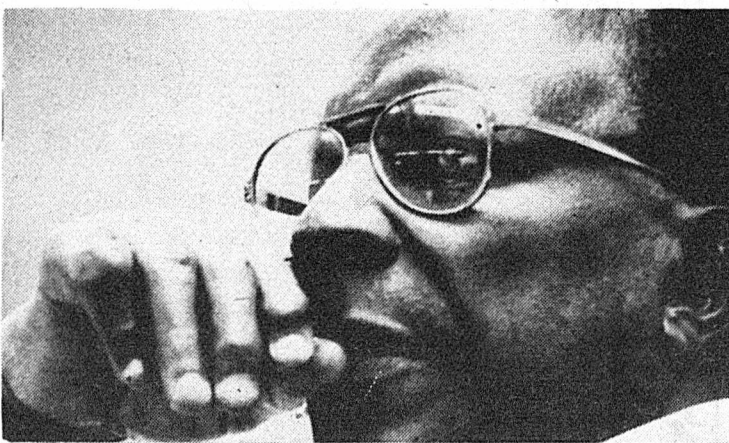
For those of you who are unsure, blues is certainly alive and well and living in Edmonton. This fact was never more in evidence than last Thursday at the Students' Union Theatre. Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee have a combined total of over 80 years of experience



Brownie McGhee

playing the blues. Their experience proved to be everything for the two, standing room only, audiences.

Sonny, who is 68 plays the best mouth harp ever heard in Edmonton, while his partner Brownie, 61, is a master of the 6 string guitar. They did such numbers as *My Baby Chained the Lock on the Door*, Sonny's tale about being locked out of the house by his woman after staying out late. It is a typical hard luck blues story. Sonny also did *Good God Man, Do It Again* which he performed daily in a Broadway play for 2½ years. The number



Sonny Terry

gave him a chance to display his incredible talent and versatility on the mouth harp.

During the intermission of the second show Sonny and Brownie talked about what its like to have been together for 38 years. They travel across the continent for 11 months of the year, occasionally touring overseas and keeping a month for a holiday. The two men agreed the reason they have been together so long is that they don't hang on to each other when they're not playing. Brownie lives in California while Sonny lives in New York.

Brownie commented on their success. "After we get off stage Sonny can go to hell if he wants, just as long as he comes back so we can work together. We're doing our job and when we're finished we go our separate ways. We don't travel in the same car and don't sleep in the same room. That's why the Beatles broke up. They stayed on each others neck all the time and got on each others nerves. They got too close. Ask other artists why they don't travel and stay together."

"People ask what kind of audiences we play to. I don't know who is in the audience, I don't care but I'm having a good time." "We play for anyone," Sonny added.

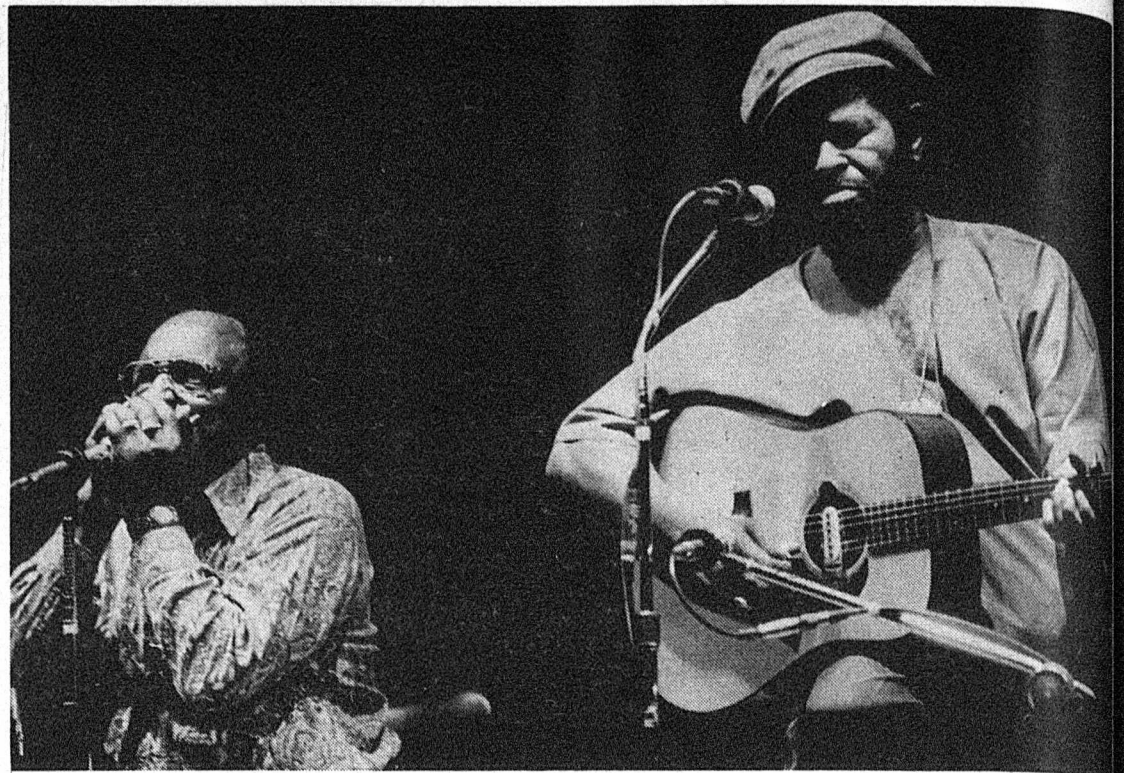
Brownie continued, "We teach the audiences of tomorrow so that blues singers will have somebody to play for in the future. In Norway and Finland we played for 9 to 16 year olds. Another reason why we are liked is that we don't go anywhere

unless we're asked. That way the audience benefits because they want us, and we benefit too."

The concert was spontaneous, changing with the increasing response and excitement of the audience. The music grows on you and many times the audience was singing along to familiar tunes. "We don't plan anything in advance. I know about 200 songs so I should be able to do a show out of the blue. When I'm walking on stage I decide what song to open with," Sonny explained.

The two blues giants shared the concert, taking turns doing the singing. One of the few songs they sang together was *Midnight Special* which they did after receiving a standing ovation. The rest of the time, when not singing, each entertainer played just enough to keep things going, looking very bored. Perhaps it comes with experience. The evening was very casual, but was a casualness which relaxed both performer and audience and did not detract from the music.

photo Brent Kostyniuk



photos Gary Van Overloop

MP reflects public ethic

by Wayne Kondro

The Human Side of Politics, by Douglas Roche M.P., Clarke Irwin, 1976, \$10.95.

Before charges of political blasphemy are made against me, (this, after all, being PC country) I lay claim to literary impunity. *The Human Side of Politics* begins by reviewing the humanistic beliefs that mankind needs to establish an ethical base on which it may create a new society insuring the basic human rights.

From here the work launches into Roche's political rise, discoveries, triumphs and disappointments. The insights into the workings of parliament and such events as the PC leadership convention, (in which he supported Wagner) cover roughly the first third of the book. Roche's initial opinions of the political system suggest a legislature of a nonsensical nature, characterized by political power-plays and a relative absence of legislative ethics. Before you think Roche is cutting his own throat, I would point out that the invectives are delivered towards a Liberal legislature.

Eventually, Roche becomes a political survivor, and adopts a stance on legislative ethics paralleling one of public ethics. Both, apparently, are situational. The underlying comment is that

the public must first attain higher human ideals and morals and that the government would inevitably reflect this social change. Basic intonation — clean up your own backyard. The next few chapters are devoted to explanations of his political stance on some basic life and death issues. Roche is an anti-abortionist on the 'right-to-life' philosophy. He renounces active euthanasia yet is pro-passive euthanasia asserting any who choose death over mechanistic survival should be allowed to do so.

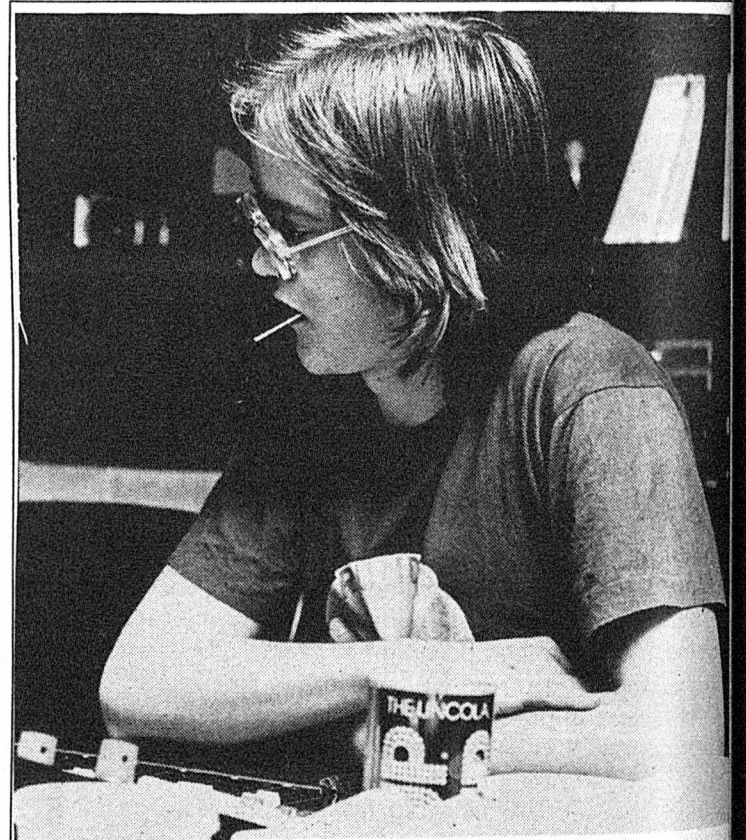
He professes to be an abolitionist, in the capital punishment issue, yet voted for retention by claiming society would not be ready for such a measure till they have been cured of their ills. The ideal of humanist morality is somehow superceded by a belief in moral justice. However, in fairness to Roche, I would suggest that this ambiguous rationale and morality is not a display of situational ethics, for the issues are clouded by their complex ethicality.

The remainder of the book is devoted to addressing society on the need for establishing a human value system on a global scale in order to alleviate social ills. If, (unbelievably) you are unaware of the problems of the world, I would suggest you read the book, along with others, for it

contains a reasonable account of the basic humanist philosophy. Although Roche maintains we should strive towards higher human values, his opinion would seem to deny that any ethicality exists within us.

This opinion blurs his political assessment of our public responsibilities. On the one hand we are told that we bind the political abilities of the politician and are asked to clean up our mental backyards. On the other, our basic propensity for self-concern, reflected in such movements as nationalism, prevents the leaders of humanity from establishing 'the global village.' Forget your backyards and look to the world. From herein can be inferred Roche's basic political ideology. Legislative ethics being what they are, because of the nature of the democratic system itself, will reflect only the situational ethicality of the populace itself. He feels we cannot expect our leaders to initiate humanistic measures if we ourselves are not humanistic.

If anything, the book will serve as a realization of the ethical complexity of the issues of humanity and politics and will result in an awareness of political and social moral responsibilities. That, in itself would be some change from the social apathy we display.



Bim comes to town

Bim, the 23 year old songwriter composer will be giving a performance at SUB Theatre on Dec. 8 at 8 p.m. Bim (Roy Forbes), from Dawson Creek made it big with the release of his first album *Kid Full of Dreams* which sold well all across the country. Bim is a unique figure who has been described as many things by confounded critics (A Vancouver writer described him as

someone whose face has been knocked in by a shovel). One thing for certain, he is not your usual rock star. He wears thick glasses and sings refreshingly simple ballads in his unique tenor-falsetto voice. He has just finished releasing a second album: *Raincheck on Misery*. Tickets are \$3 and are available at the HUB Box Office, Keen Kraft, Sam the Record Man, and Mike's. Tickets are \$4 at the door.