

feature by Keith Layton

# Two Nights of the Blues...

...Johnny Shines & Roosevelt Sykes, and

The first of the Jazz Society's "Two Nights of the Blues" presentations gave fans the chance to see two musicians who have played a very important part in the blues. Johnny Shines and Roosevelt Sykes are among the last few performers who play just as they did in the 1920's and '30's during the heyday of country blues.

Johnny Shines is one of the few remaining authentic Mississippi Delta blues guitarists. He also is one of an even smaller group of musicians who have completed the cycle from country to urban blues and back again. Shines recorded in Chicago even before Muddy Waters did, and ten years prior to this he was a contemporary and friend of the legendary Robert Johnson. Certainly Shines is one of the most interesting personalities in blues today.

The music he played Monday night reflected his musical heritage. His style employs moaning, shouted vocals and thumping bass lines accompanied by whining strings echoing the vocals. Though it was one of Shines' best Edmonton performances his guitar playing was less than inspired and not up to the standards of his fine vocals. He did, however, exhibit some good acoustic guitar work.

Shines is one of the finest slide guitarists in the world and his slide work is always appreciated by his audiences. He played such classics as his own "She's a Kind-hearted Woman" and Robert Johnson's "Dust My Broom". His set was filled with the philosophical outlook, the sexual metaphorism, and the immediacy of classic Mississippi

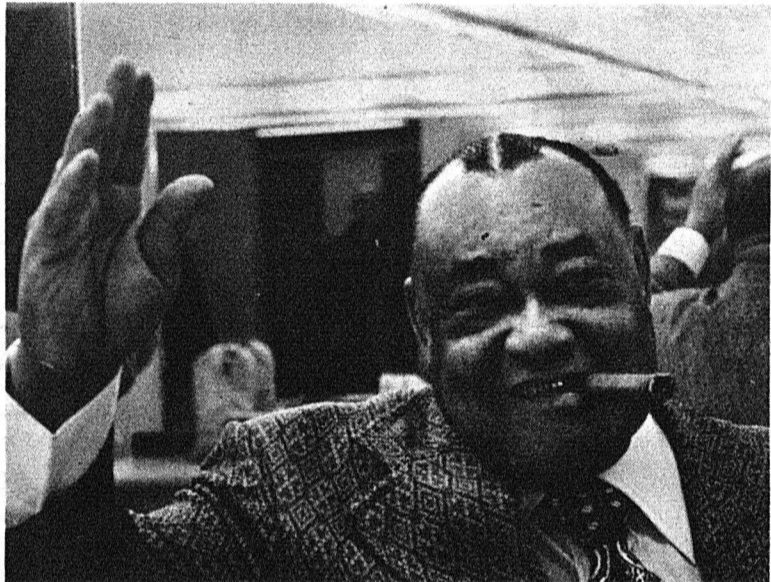
blues work.

Shines' somber tones were greatly contrasted by the work of Roosevelt Sykes in the following set. Sykes is one of the few living barrel-house piano players; the crowd loved his good-natured personality and showmanship. Sykes' specialty for the evening was his "Hokum Blues" - a term used for blues heavily laden with lighthearted sexual metaphors and imagery.

With his varied selection of

music (he even played "The Sunny Side of the Street" and "Up On Blueberry Hill") and his Hokum Blues, Sykes was the favorite of the evening, and was still called back after three encores.

Considering the quality of the evenings' entertainment it is unfortunate that the crowd was dimly small. At best SUB Theatre was filled to half-capacity.



photos by Doug Rygalo.

Roosevelt Sykes combined a hearty personality with good showmanship.

# The arts



Johnny Shines' somber tones reflect his musical heritage.

## ...Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee

Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee played to a packed house in the second of the Jazz Society's "Two Nights of the Blues" productions. The Tuesday night concert saw the folk-blues duo in good spirits, and although the playing was loose it stood up well in most instances.

Sonny Terry's harp-playing was for the most part repetitive but he did a fine solo on the traditional "John Henry". Brownie's guitar was miked through

an amplifier which helped to clear up the sound problems that have marred past performances.

The concert was opened by Bruce Miller from Vancouver who played some diverse and interesting material to a responsive audience.

The execution of both his guitar and fiddle-playing were rough in places, but his choice of songs and his on-stage presence show that he has potential as a fine performer.

## Is RATT soon to be operated as a night club?

Marc Vasey has a new angle on entertainment in RATT. His plans are to "pay more money, get better people, and do it less often."

Marc, the Students' Union Special Events Chairperson, handles the organizing of forums, concerts, special events (such as the recent Jazz

Concert of the Year at the Jubilee Auditorium), and RATT entertainment.

As he sees it, the problem with previous entertainers is that many have not been good enough to play RATT.

"In the past money has been paid to fill a gap, though most of the people who have been playing there haven't been strong enough to control the audience. People just ignore them," says Marc.

In a remedial effort, Marc has slated stronger, more forceful groups whenever possible. They represent a good cross-section of musical genres including jazz-funk, rock, soft-

folk, and country-rock.

Although he hopes to have dancing in RATT on weekends, certain obstacles must be overcome.

"There are some political hassles, even though it's licensed for dancing."

There is also the question of whether dancing is practical considering the limited space available.

Nevertheless, Marc has greater ambitions. "I'd like to see that place operated as a night club. That's against the university policy but that's my own personal view."

"(RATT) is a fairly unique facility. You don't have waiters

and waitresses. The location, the view, the acoustics, everything's in its favour up there."

Next on the list of entertainers is soft-folk artist Peter Mathieson, who will be performing Sept 19 and 20.

Kim St. Clair

## A varied season for Chamber Music

The Edmonton Chamber Music Society will again be presenting a subscription series of concerts at special low rates for full time students. The season will open with a concert by the University of Alberta String Quartet on October 8, in Convocation Hall.

This season is a particularly varied one, with the second concert being given by the renowned Dorian Woodwind Quintet (October 29) and the final concert devoted to music for oboe, bassoon, and piano.

Perhaps the most outstanding ensemble in this year's series is the Guarneri String Quartet. The Guarneri celebrated its tenth anniversary this year with a series of completely sold out concerts in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Centre in New York. They will give the third concert of the Chamber Music Society season this year, on November 26.

The third string quartet concert of the year will be presented on February 4, with the Tel Aviv Quartet from Israel.

Admission to these six concerts is by season membership only, and season tickets are now on sale for \$6 for full time students at Canadiana Gifts on Jasper Avenue, at the Department of Music (Fine Arts 3-82) and at the HUB Box Office.

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