

Tip of the Tongue

Cafe Central

I had a Slovenian Mushroom Pastry, so-called, at the new and fashionable Cafe Central a few days ago, which brought back to mind the last time I ate anything that passed for "Slovenian."

I was in a neighborhood bar in the South Side of Chicago.

This corner bar was not what you'd call a genteel place, but after a long drive, my friend suggested the local.

I don't remember much, except that after the Reuben and beers took hold, I do remember staring at the guys at the bar digging into big fresh pickles, pig's knuckles and ghostly-white hardboiled eggs, while munching on some kind of steaming dumplings that my friend called "standard Slovakian" fare.

From the way these 50 year-old-guys were putting the little blimps away, "standard Slovakian" looked popular. As a matter of fact, the whole place had a nice at-home feeling about it, the kind of place a man could stop off for a beer, a few laughs, and then head back to work with a new attitude.

That's the kind of place —

very roughly — that Eugene's Cafe Central seems to want to be.

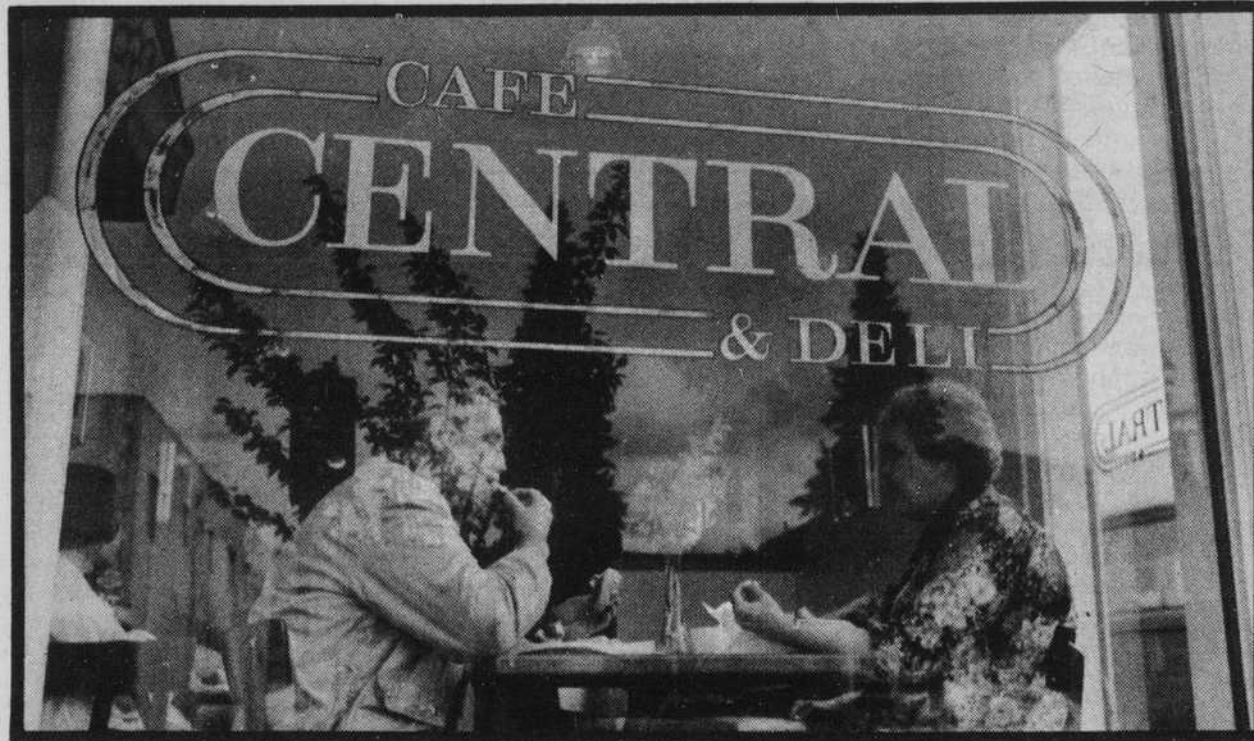
It was started a short time ago by a couple of the men who own the Wagon Works auto repair shop next door at 13th Avenue and Lincoln Street because, Dick says, they wanted some place nearby for a good beer, and a good sandwich.

Good beer they have in abundance — just about any kind you could want. Sandwiches they have, too, and a pedigreed selection that includes both a Quarter Pound Reuben and Veal Liverwurst.

But the special interest of the place is the items that fit more into the image of an up-town cafe than a neighborhood bar.

The Slovenian Mushroom Pastry, for instance, is one of their three "Select" items; Finnish Meat Pie and Dilled Ricotta Quiche are the others (\$2.90 to \$3.20). They are all stylish preparations: I mean, making a quiche with ricotta cheese is not your most obvious choice, and seasoning it with nutmeg, lemon rind and dill is positively *outré*.

But that's why it's often hard to get inside the Cafe Central



these days. The place is just a sliver of a storefront anyway, with only space for four tables, a counter and a short bar. But the decor is trim and modish with soft edges on the cabinetry and fluted glass lampshades, and it seems to draw people who are attracted to diamonds in the rough.

I have yet to go when there isn't a line of people waiting

happily for a Smoked Salmon Pate, Marinated Steak Salad or one of the indecent liqueur-flavored Truffles handmade by Bob the mechanic, who otherwise likes to think of himself as Euphoria Chocolate.

The cafe and deli menu favors a mid-day business, but in fact the Central is also open for breakfast, supper and starting recently, for special

"theme" dinners on Tuesday evenings. This Tuesday looks especially amusing: A "1968 Revisited — Come As You Were" Party, featuring a prize for the "most authentic costume." Look for me in the blue blazer, tab collar, white Levi's and penny loafers. Hey, this is no ordinary neighborhood bar.

— Joe Cone

LPs

THE PLIMSOULS The Plimsouls Planet P-13

Tongue Twister Shoes Elektra 6E 3

The Plimsouls and Shoes both play pop music for which the main inspiration is the music of the Beatles.

Not exactly a new concept — the British Invasion was built to no small degree upon bands which took their cue from the

Fab Ones.

The Plimsouls could be accused of trying to cash in on a trend, having been together since 1979, but Shoes, on the other hand, recorded its first LP nearly seven years ago.

The word on *Tongue Twister* seems to be that Shoes has "consolidated" its sound. In simple terms, this means that while John Murphy, Jeff Murphy, Skip Meyer, and Gary Klebe are playing pretty much the same kind of music they've

played on previous disks, they are in some way doing it better, or more distinctively, or more intelligently, or something.

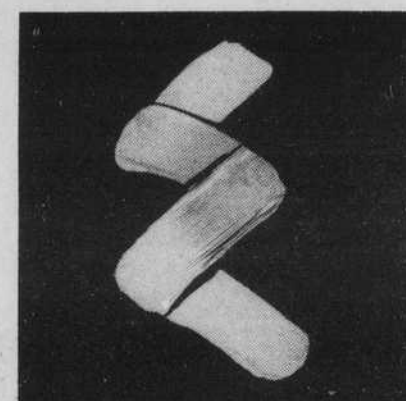
Tongue Twister is a strong album, but there's nothing on it to match *Present Tense's* "Tomorrow Night," "Somebody Has What I Had" or "Now and Then." Shoes may have run into a dead end.

The Plimsouls (their name is a play on the British slang for "sneaker") is a Los Angeles-based quintet whose debut album manages to succeed in



spite of the fact that there's absolutely nothing distinctive about it.

Singer-songwriter-guitarist Peter Case, an ex-Nerve (the Nerves are most often remembered as the originators of "Hanging on the Telephone") is a good pop-rock craftsman and an emotional John Lennon-style shouter, and he leads a band



which owes every note they play to someone else.

Eddie Munoz' guitar imitation of a divebomber on "Lost Time" has been done to death before (the Jam's Paul Weller even reversed it to imitate a car engine), but Munoz seems to have just figured out that he could make his guitar sound like that, and his thrill is contagious.

In fact, everything about THE PLIMSOULS is secondhand, and could probably be found on albums which could have come from the past decade or two, but in the past six months, done by other bands intent on resurrecting the same sounds.

With the group's next album or two, the Plimsouls may grow to the point where they actually make a contribution of their own to the music, or they may fall into the trap which may or may not have snagged Shoes.

The Plimsouls sounds wonderful regardless.

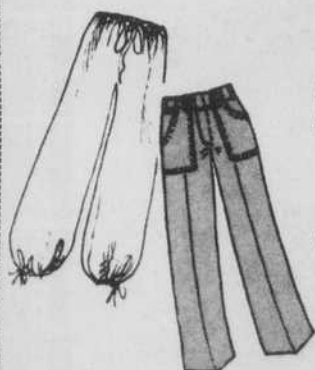
— Phil Bernstein



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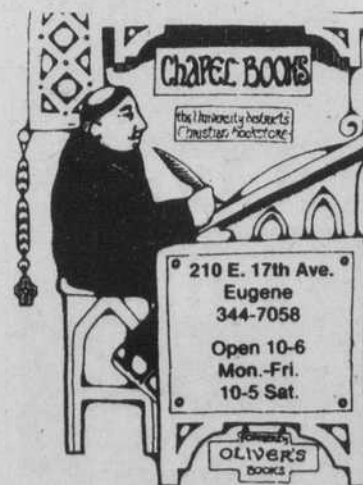
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