



Albert Collins

'Master of the Telecaster' opens University blues fest

Albert Collins.

He's been called "The Master of the Telecaster," "The Houston Twister," and "The Razor Blade." Well known in Europe, he's been playing electric blues for over 25 years. His latest album, "Frozen Alive," has been nominated for a Grammy. And he's coming to the University Thursday to headline the opening of the Sixth Annual Oregon Blues Festival.

The Thursday night performance with The Icebreakers is one of the first stops on a 45-day tour that will take him around the U.S. and through Canada. Collins usually tours ten months out of the year, and his electric stage presence has been called "one of the most exciting visual acts in the blues."

"I like this area," Collins said last week from Los Angeles. One reason, he says, is that he usually has the Robert Cray band back him up. "I call them all my kids."

Collins says he enjoys the music of Charlie Musslewhite, Johnny Winters, and Eric Clapton, who he would "love to do an album with."

Originally from Texas, Collins grew up listening to blues players like Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown (who will appear Friday at the Festival), B.B. King, T-Bone Walker, John Lee Hooker, and Collins' distant cousin, Lightnin' Hopkins, who died last week.

Collins says Hopkins left a great legacy to the blues world. "He lived his life through. I mean, when a man lives his life the way he wants to, he leaves something behind him."

For Collins, the blues are changing. Rock and roll has influenced the blues greatly, and now his brand of electric blues is accepted by rock and rollers as well as traditional blues fans. Collins plans to incorporate even more rock into his music in the future.

"On the next LP, we'll be trying to do it mostly like a rock group. We'll go in to the studio and bring in other musicians who can really rock. In this next tour, I'll be playing in four or five strictly rock and roll clubs. That makes me feel real good, 'cause I'll be at places that won't even play blues."

In spite of his increased acceptance, Collins says America's interest in the blues is "real up and down. The Europeans have been standing by the blues for a long time. Hopefully it'll stay that way."

Also on the bill for Thursday night's concert are The Mighty Flyers with Rod Piazza and the Paul DeLay Band. Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Pee Wee Crayton and Little Charlie and the Nightcats will perform Friday evening.

In addition, the festival will feature a sale of blues paraphernalia and a Les Blank film about Lightnin' Hopkins.

Evening tickets are \$6 for University students, \$7.50 for general admission, or festival tickets for \$10 (students) and \$13 (general). Tickets are available at the EMU Main Desk, Earth River Records and Everybody's Records. The doors open at 7:30 both nights.

by mark pynes and matt meyer

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