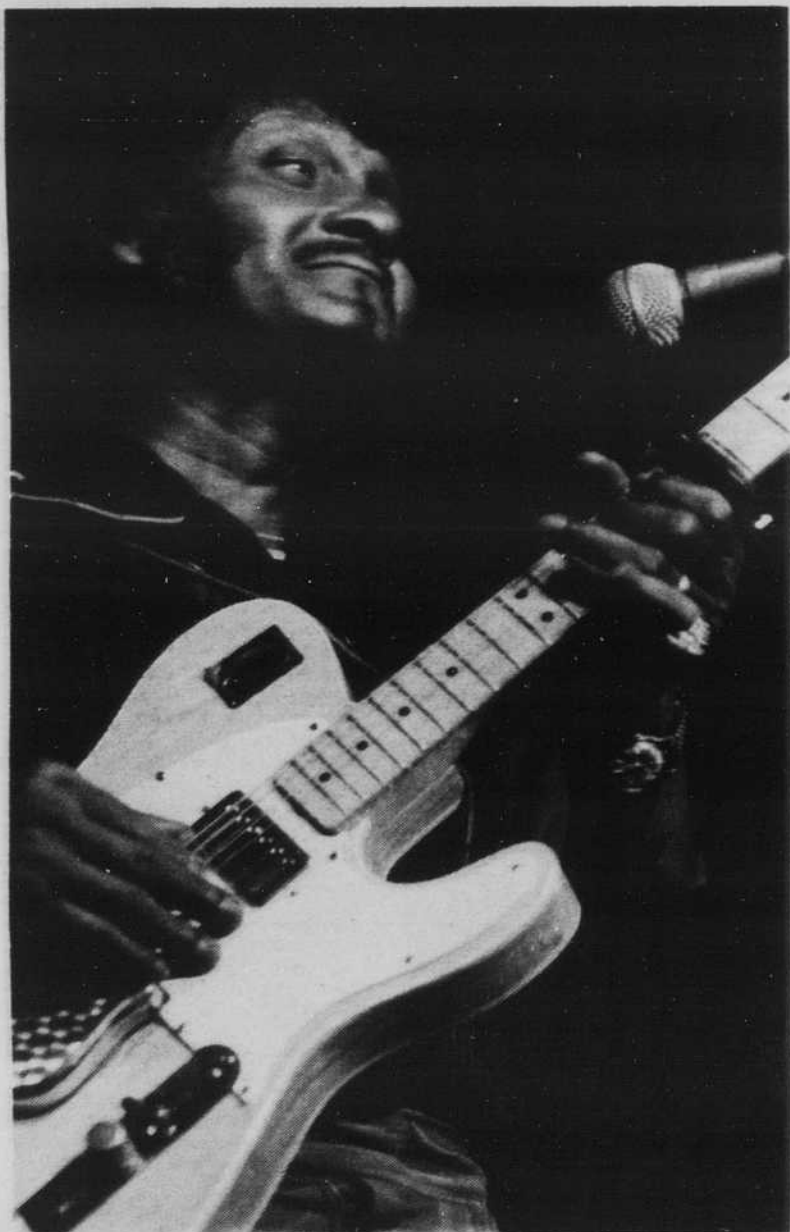


Listenin' to the blues



Albert Collins was anything but cold Thursday night, as he and The Icebreakers heated up the EMU Ballroom as part of the sixth annual Oregon Blues Festival.

The Paul DeLay Band, from Portland, opened the festival by packing the dance floor — which remained jammed for the rest of the night.

The Mighty Flyers kept things hopping, and like the Paul DeLay Band, they have a hot front man — harmonica player Rod Piazza.

The Flyers have a high energy stage presence which was enhanced by their snow-white suits and bright red shirts. They look like a cross between a rockabilly and a new wave band, with a stand-up bass

and super thin new wave ties.

But they can play. They did blues standards such as "She's Tough, Five Long Years" and an excellent version of "Rockin' Robin" with a good guitar solo by Junior "Guitar" Watson.

Piazza jumped to the dance floor during the closing number and wound his way through the crowd playing his harp through a wireless mic.

The Icebreakers, with A.C. Reed — the brother of Jimmy Reed, an internationally-known blues musician — on tenor sax, Casey Jones on drums, Johnny Gayden on bass, Dino Spells on alto sax and flute and Marvin Jackson on guitar, came on at 11 p.m. and fired

things up with "Dust My Broom," "Sweet Home Chicago," "Mojo," among others, before Collins joined them on stage.

He makes playing his Fender Telecaster look effortless, and even when he broke a string he continued to play as if it were no problem.

Brown will be headlining the festival tonight, which also includes Pee Wee Crayton, another Texan guitarist, Little Charlie and The Nightcats, from the Bay Area and a Les Blank film "The Blues Accordin' To Lightin' Hopkins," about the late bluesman Sam "Lightin'" Hopkins.

**Photos and story
by Mark Pynes**

Albert Collins, at top, performed Thursday night at the sixth annual Oregon Blues Festival. He was preceded by Rod Piazza and Junior "Guitar" Watson from the Mighty Flyers.

