

Brothers bring blues to pop

By Geoff Hackett

Battalion Reporter

Things have been rough lately for Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi. Oh, not that they're headed for the poorhouse or anything like that. The problem is that no one seems to like them anymore.

Granted, they did make a terrible movie, "1941," but that wasn't as much their fault as it was director Steven Spielberg's. The problem is not with John and Dan, but with their pork-pie hatted altered egos, Joliet Jake and Elwood Blues.

The critics of today's music scene are bent on destroying the Blues Brothers. Maybe that's a little harsh, but at least they're looking down on the boys from Rock Island, Ill. and their All Star Rhythm and Blues Revue.

So what if they started as a parody on late night television. They aren't Blues purists and I don't think they claim to be. They are out to have fun and make a little money and isn't that what pop music is all about?

"Made in America" is the Blues Brothers' third album, including their movie soundtrack.

RECORDS

It is much of the same fare that was found on their platinum album "Briefcase Full of Blues." Their band is tops and reads like a Who's Who of R&B. Steve Cropper, Dick Dunne, Matt Murphy and Tom Malone are just a few of the cats that play behind the actor/musicians.

Let's face it, no matter what you say about the Blues Brothers, you can't knock their band.

On "Made in America," the boys run through some of the

great blues numbers of days gone by. Most notable is the version of Booker T. and the MG's "Green Onions." MG alumni Cropper and Dunne make this one all the more enjoyable. We're talking about the BLOOZE here. However, in the middle of an enjoyable song, Elwood begins to expound on the virtues of life in the U.S.A.

Sure, I'm all for nationalism, but right in the middle of "Green Onions?"

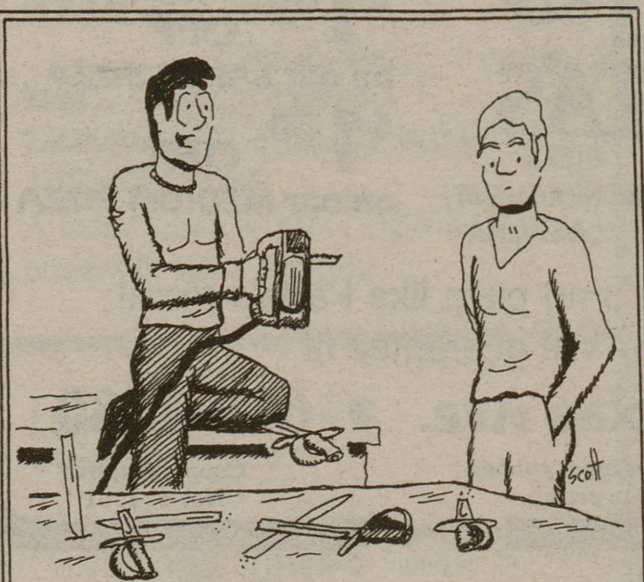
More goodies include Wayne Cochran's "Back to Miami," "Who's Making Love" and Randy Newman's "Guilty." The Newman cut is particularly enjoyable. Belushi's voice is comparable to Newman's in that they both have the same husky, throaty delivery that makes anyplace sound like a smoky barroom. "Guilty" is probably what the Blues Brothers do best. There is a hint of a grin, but not enough to make the whole thing a joke.

The horn section (Malone — saxes and trombone; Tom Scott — saxes; Lou Marini — saxes and Alan Rubin — trumpet) shines throughout. Particularly on "Do You Love Me" and "I Ain't Got You." There is a fabulous shuffle beat reminiscent of Junior Welles' "Messin' With the Kid."

Cover versions of "The Perry Mason Theme" and "Riot in Cell Block Number Nine" round out "Made in America." It's good stuff. The Blues Brothers are an enjoyable act. Besides being popular comedians, Aykroyd and Belushi also have a knack for picking the right tunes.

I think the Blues Brothers have gone a long way in making the big-band blues sound part of the mainstream of pop music again. Remember, Jake said, "I suggest that you buy as many blues albums as you can ..."

That's blues, not Blues Brothers.



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