

Nighthawks keep roots music fresh

By ALLISON PIKE
Staff Writer

One of the country's most popular rock and blues bands will be flying in to play the ArtsCenter Friday night.

The Nighthawks, who are Washington, D.C., natives, have been rocking for more than a decade. They've released 14 albums and have earned the praise of everyone from blues fans to blues legends including Muddy Waters and B.B. King.

Harmonica player Mark Wenner, who is known for his tattoo-covered arms, formed The Nighthawks in 1972. Aside from drummer Pete Ragusa and bassist Jan Zukowski, the band's lineup has shifted often over the years. Presently, the Nighthawks have joined forces with two well-known musicians. Former Wet Willie and Jeff Beck vocalist Jimmy Hall has taken over the sax and vocals, and former D.C. Dog and Sea Level member, Jimmy Nalls, is handling the guitar. Wenner says this musical union sprang from the Nighthawks' respect for Nalls' and Hall's music. The Hawks were fans of Wet Willie and stayed in touch with Hall after they met him in 1976. Wenner has been a fan of Nalls also.

"We always thought D.C. Dog was the band that was going to put D.C. on the map for us all. It was a pretty phenomenal band. He (Nalls) has always been a player to my taste, and when we finally got together to play, it was just like what I thought it would be in my head. It really clicked."

What the Nighthawks do best is play a mixture of jazz, rock, blues and country, but they never abandon their sense of traditional "true roots" jazz.

"I think we're moving in the right direction with material that's in a classic mold," Wenner



Veteran rockers, The Nighthawks, bring their danceable sound to ArtsCenter Friday night.

says. "The best compliment we've been given by critics is that the songs sound like B-sides of records from 30 years ago. They're not, but that's what we're looking to do. We try not to be slaves to any single style or approach, because we like to do whatever strikes our fancy, and we've established wide enough boundaries to do what we want without freaking people out."

The Nighthawks have certainly had time to season their musical style. Nearly a decade ago they spent most days on the road. Ragusa said that for a period of five years the band played at least 300 shows per year. "Now we've

built up an audience such that the last two years we've been down to 200 nights. It's afforded us more time to be creative."

Zukowski said the fact that the band still spent a lot of time traveling was not discouraging. "After 10 years, some things get to be old, but you have to do things to keep you fresh, keep you enthused. We do that pretty well, I think — we always have new things going on."

Because the Nighthawks' music is similar to that of bands like George Thorogood and the Destroyers and The Fabulous Thunderbirds, critics have tended to put the Hawks in the "white blues"

category — and the band has never been fond of this title. Ragusa says he is proud of the Hawks' fresh sound.

"Our first album was a stepping-stone for the future," he said. "We became a melting pot of blues, R&B, Memphis soul, rockabilly, country. It's hard to pigeonhole us as a blues band because we draw from so many sources. The common ground with us and what's happening in contemporary radio is rooted in the beat. We're a real dance band."

So, be sure to bring your dancing shoes to the ArtsCenter for the 9:30 show Friday night — the dance floor will definitely be open.

GRAFFITI

By ANNE-RENEE RICE
Staff Writer

It's better than TV, much better than studying, and conceivably better even than pizza. Sleep. Those elusive eight hours that we college students never seem to achieve. It's one of the great underrated pleasures of life. Unfortunately, the rest of the world can't always be counted on to aid our pursuit of those precious few hours between the sheets.

Roommates, garbage trucks and telephones are bad, but the real experts at sleep-deprivation are even closer to home. You guessed it, good old Mom and Dad.

I worked 9 to 5 this summer. If I wasn't up at 7:30 a.m. my mom would try several tactics like...

■ **The Great Light Attack:** Mom bursts through the door. She turns on the overhead light and says loudly, "What would you like for breakfast?" Who even wants breakfast? Talk about a rude awakening.

■ **The Rock Star:** Shrieking sounds screaming from my radio at very high decibals awakening me from the depths of dream world. I must have died and come back as a rock star. Fat chance — my mom has secretly turned up the volume on my clock radio alarm.

The weekends are just as bad. My mom and dad claim to let me sleep as long as I want to, but, you know, it's funny that I NEVER DO! Could it be because...

■ **The Great Debate** begins. There's a lot of noise in front of my bedroom door...

"The windows have got to be washed today," Mom says loudly.

"No, no, we really need to clean the garage before winter," Dad says even louder.

"Maybe Arne-Renee (very

loudly) can do the windows and we'll do the attic," Mom shouts into my room.

What?! Me do the windows? I'm awake now but they'll never know it!

Now that I'm back at school I still have problems with my nocturnal life.

I get in bed and get comfy under the blankets. Just as I'm on the brink of sleep, something always happens...

■ **Motor Mind:** I start thinking. "I hope I did well on the poli sci test... how am I going to finish this paper in history in three days... I wonder what time it is in Antarctica right now... maybe I should buy the purple dress instead of the blue one... HELP! Anxiety attacks!

■ **The Garbage Collector:** BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! The garbage truck. It's backing up to empty the dumpster. Couldn't they just beep it once? NO — it beeps for a half an hour while I'm trying to fall asleep.

Can't this wait until morning?

Much later in the morning?

■ **The telephone:** Okay. This one is really nerve-racking. Rrrrring... Rrrrring... Rrrring!

"Hello?"
SILENCE.
"HELLO?!"
CLICK.

What kind of idiot would have the nerve not to say anything (at least an apology) after getting me up at 2:30 in the morning! Nice manners, dude!

This plague didn't stop even over Fall Break. Friday morning I was sound asleep and it happened. The phone was ringing incessantly. I finally woke up to answer it.

"Hello?"

"Did we wake you?" Dad asks. I had to laugh. My parents were in Germany. No joke. I hadn't talked to them for three weeks and then they decide to ring me at 8 a.m. on my first day of Fall Break to see how it's going.

Even halfway around the world they still get me out of bed!

IS THIS
FUNNY
OR
WHAT?



He's political.

He's bizarre. He's bold.
He's funny.

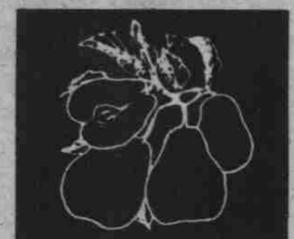
But what do you expect from a pinhead?

Zippy The Pinhead.

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