6/The Daily Tar Heel/Thursday, February 25, 1988

## - feature -

# Veteran blues guitarist keeps his past in perspective

### By RHYS WILLIAMS Staff Writer

Bob Margolin has reached heights of success, both commercially and critically, that many of the bands profiled do not even dream about. As guitar player for Muddy Waters between 1973 and 1980, he played on the critically acclaimed albums King Bee, I'm Ready, Muddy Mississippi Waters, Live and the stunning Hard Again. He toured with Johnny Winter in the band and played with Eric Clapton. He even appeared at the Band's farewell concert, immortalized on film and record in "The Last Waltz.

The 38-year-old native of Boston

and plays regularly around the region, most recently at the Cave last Wednesday. One might expect somebody with such an illustrious past either to remain living in it. or to be bitter that he has not maintained his former high public profile — but this is simply not the case with Margolin.

Despite the material rewards that his work has brought him, he remains friendly, polite and open, yet he has no plans to release a record under his own name, being content simply to play the music. "I've talked with various friends about the idea of making a record," he says, "but most

has settled in Virginia in recent years of them seem to agree that to get caught up in it (the music business) involves a series of compromises and conflicts. Even blues labels such as Alligator are in the business to make money.'

Idealistic? Certainly. Naive? Perhaps, but not even the increased name recognition that would result from the release of a record can sway his feelings at the moment. "I like the idea of expressing myself on a real good record, but to do so before I'm ready would be pointless." he believes. "As for the audiences, blues has never been that popular, but the people that love it do love it - like tonight — and I enjoy that."

Because he played for so long with perhaps the greatest electric bluesman of all time, Margolin is in an ideal position to appraise the present blues scene. Does he agree with critics who feel the blues have never been the same since the original electric bluesmen, such as Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Little Walter, died? "No. There is a lot of talent out there, but not all of it has finished development. Bands such as the Fabulous Thunderbirds have been around for a long time without getting proper recognition, and other bands are coming up. Blues always waxes and wanes a little bit. and it's never going to be a big mainstream thing, but there is the talent out there.

Being based in Virginia, most of Margolin's 100-plus concerts a year take place up and down the East Coast. Again, this is due to his desire to play the blues, rather than to make money. "I like to play, not to drive," he laughs. "so I tend to stay in this area pretty much. Every once in a while I take the band out, but I'm happy here."

The Waters influence is, not surprisingly, heavily evident in Margolin's music, and he still performs Waters classics such as "Got My Mojo Working," "I Just Want To Make Love To You" and "Rollin' and Tumblin' at concerts. His guitar style is also indebted to Waters, for he uses a thumb pick and two fingers, rather than the more common approach of utilizing a single flat pick. This allows him to strike the bass strings with his thumb while playing the higher strings with his fingers, producing a full sound, while retaining echoes of the original Delta musicians who influenced Waters. Was he playing this way before he began playing with Waters? "Yes, but I learned a whole lot more while I was playing with him," he says. "Muddy has always been my major influence, along with Robert Johnson and Jimmy Rogers (the other guitar player in the original Muddy Waters Band during the 1950s and 1960s). but playing with him taught me a whole lot more than I could have learned off records."



#### Bob Margolin will perform at Cat's Cradle Friday night

Perhaps the big danger of such a close association with the original Hoochie Coochie Man is that Waters' name could become a proverbial albatross around Margolin's neck. Does he ever find it frustrating still to be known as Waters' guitar-player. despite having left the band almost eight years ago? "No," he says with typical humility, "I'm very proud of the time that I spent in his band, and I consider it an honor to have been associated with him."

streets of Chicago, it was Waters who fed him and found him a job. When Clapton was sruggling to recover from alcohol and drug abuse, it was Waters who helped him rediscover a

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Waters is a legendary figure. His influence, through groups such as the Rolling Stones and The Jimi Hendrix Experience, is still felt in music today. Popular rumor has it that it was Waters who devised the recentlynotorious sexual act known as the 'Venus Butterfly.'

But he was also known for his generosity and philanthropy. When Buddy Guy was starving on the

direction for his music, and a purpose for his life.

A similar generosity is to be found in Margolin — for example, in his encouragement of local bands. He has produced a tape for the Chapel Hill band Blue Note Special, and at his recent gig at the Cave, he gave the stage over to two of the Five Guys Named Moe for one song, before joining Danny Morris of Blue Note Special for a lively rendition of 'Kansas City."

To talk to the man is a learning experience and to watch him is good entertainment, but listen to Margolin play his music and you know that this is a man who, to paraphrase Lightnin' Hopkins, was "born with the blues."

#### After resolving their differences from the Jason fiasco, Paige and Meg vow never to let another guy come between them.

After Jack catches Trisha going through his clothes and kicks her out, she calls his best friend Billy to come over and "comfort" her. Jason finally returns to UNC. determined to make things right. Joseph is finally forced to admit his fling with Chris to Sarah, who agrees to stand by him only until he is cleared of sexual harassment

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charges.

Ken tries once more to rekindle the flame with Meg. who doesn't waste time in telling him to hit the road.

After boyfriend Darrell dumps Courtney, she accepts Anne's invitation to drug dealer Tessa's next party. Meanwhile, Tessa learns from her sister Trisha that when Billy arrives, he'll find that the newly-available Trisha has eyes only for him.

After finding a song Paige

wrote. Kirk asks her to join Lower East Side, his band, with Billy and Jack. Soon after, Meg bursts into the room with a fervent "Men are slime!" much to Kirk's dismay.

After being seduced by Trisha, Billy recounts the incident to roommate Brendan. They also discuss Brendan's options on how to deal with Mary Catherine's pregnancy, as Sarah and the expectant co-ed have the same discussion and the second second