

CAROLINA!

BLUES

with a feeling

Professor teaches expression through music

By **JOHNNA GOODWIN**
Staff Writer

USC — After 20 years of blues experience, professor Walter Liniger has brought some of that history to USC in his "Echoes in the Blues" course.

Originally from Bern, Switzerland, Liniger came to the United States 11 years ago because he was "tired of teaching and needed a break." Liniger has taught German, French, English and history while also working on his musical talents.

"I always liked music, but I never actually played," said Liniger, who taught himself how to play the harmonica at 20 by listening to others.

"I learned from the artists, and it is good for students to approach my course in the same way by listening and trying."

Liniger approached Walter Edgar, director of the Institute of Southern Studies, in 1992 and gave him a presentation of what the course would be about.

"He immediately gave a positive response," Liniger said, "and then it was decided that the course would be included in the South Carolina Honors College. Those were the two departments that brought me here to USC."

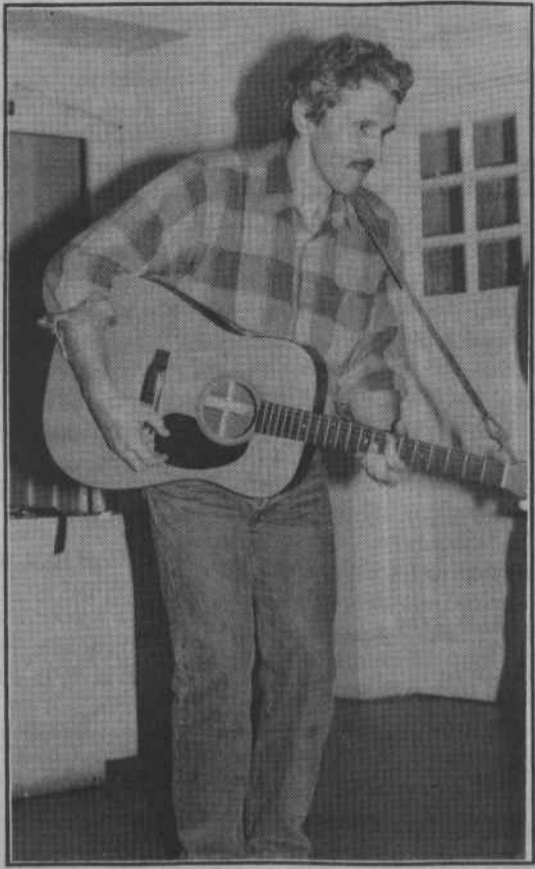
Liniger has an extensive blues history, having played with Etta Baker, Eugene Powell, John Jackson and James Son Thomas. It was with Son Thomas that Liniger co-produced the album "Gateway to the Delta," which won the 1987 Handy Award for the Best Traditional Blues Album of the Year.

The course is taught at McMaster College, where the worn wooden floors and dusty atmosphere seem fitting to discuss the history of the blues. Liniger, dressed in casual attire and sporting an acoustic guitar and harmonica, brings to the class what he has learned of the blues culture.

There is a set curriculum of assignments students must complete.

"They are required to do two graded writing assignments, two book reviews and they are graded on their discussion participation," Liniger said. "Only about 30 percent of their grade is harmonica playing."

Assignments are taken from some required readings such as "Blues People," "Rage for Order," "Black Boy" and "Light in August" and articles and short stories related to creative writing.



Eric Glenn/The Gamecock

USC professor Walter Liniger teaches the "Echoes in the Blues" class in the South Carolina Honors College. The class teaches rhythm through the use of the blues harmonica.

"The course came about by looking at the blues as more of a language than just as music," Liniger said.

Liniger said this may be the first musical experience for some of his students.

"Most students don't have any experience, but no musical knowledge other than time is required," he said. "You cannot cram for the harmonica. I am a firm believer that if you practice every day, you will be able to pick it up."

"I am a pretty good judge of how often they practice and of individual skill. Some students practice every day, others give up, but playing the harmonica is skill and attempt."

"I don't expect students to play on a professional level, but I do expect them to play me

some rhythm and a few melodies that we learn."

Liniger said because the course is taught through the Honors College, it can be an escape for the students who are traditionally taught to only think with their minds.

"The emphasis of the course is not on harmonica playing or on the assignments," he said. "I want the students to learn to rely more on their emotions and feelings when confronted with problems."

"It doesn't matter if you are young or old, but when you take out a harmonica and play a train song, there is something invigorating about the music. Harmonica music breaks down barriers quickly and allows communication to flow."

Through this philosophy, Liniger has also developed a good rapport with his students.

"They come to talk to me, and sometimes, I have as many as 45 students in my office," Liniger said. "Some come in to just discuss a creative writing assignment while others come to review a rhythm we learned in class."

"I hardly have but one or two students absent because of being sick. I'm really amazed at how they come out and participate."

Liniger's students share his enthusiasm for the course.

"I'm an accounting major, and all of my classes are pretty dry," sophomore Joshua Elliott said. "But this class is a lot more challenging. It takes more effort than memorization and punching in numbers on a calculator."

Elliott said he also appreciates Liniger's talent.

"My favorite part of the course is in the teaching of the music, harmony and rhythm and listening to the instructor," Elliott said. "He's tremendous and puts a lot of feeling into his playing."

Liniger has shared his teaching with others as well.

"I was contacted by Blues in the Schools, which is a very vibrant organization that uses blues to get kids to focus on school work and on staying in school," Liniger said. "I will be working with them as a consultant for curriculum for Charleston public schools."

While Liniger is teaching, he is also a performer as well. He can be seen Nov. 9 at 8:30 p.m. in the Belk Auditorium as part of a three-day conference of international scholars. His program, entitled "Blues, the Song of the Soul," is open to the public.

Sistercare offers chance for abuse victims to recover

By **ALISON KLINAKIS**
Staff Writer

COLUMBIA — Three million to four million women suffer abuse at the hands of their husbands or partners each year in America.

Also, 4,000 women are killed each year by their husbands or partners in domestic violence disputes. One in every two women are victims of abuse at least once in their life, with 25 percent of them being battered for years upon years.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and local shelter Sistercare is working to recognize the millions of women who suffer each year.

Sistercare was founded in 1981 by the Midlands YMCA and the Junior League of Columbia. Through domestic violence shelters and programs such as Columbia's Sistercare, women and their children are able to seek a safe place to go when living at home becomes dangerous.

Sistercare offers several programs including a 24 hour crisis line at 765-9428, a free shelter for women and children, community support groups for battered women not already in the shelter and a legal advocacy program for women explaining their rights and choices in dealing with the legal system.

Sistercare staff member Nancy Barton said "domestic violence is an issue of power and control. So for a woman to leave a man is for him to lose all of his power and control."

Seventy-five percent of all women killed each year by their husbands are killed during the divorce or separation process. There are more women injured by attacks from their husbands or partners each year than women injured by rapes, muggings and automobile accidents combined.

If a woman is in a violent situation, she must first admit she is being battered.

"The key to leaving a bad situation is to admit they are being battered and facing their problems," said Barton, who added that women should also find a trained counselor to talk to.

This process is called "breaking the silence" and is a major part of getting out of an abusive relationship. Women should also join a battered women's support group and realize it is not their fault.

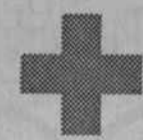
Sistercare will hold a speakout for battered women and formerly battered women from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Oct. 23. The women will speak against domestic violence and detail how society plays a large role in the victimization of women.

For more information about the speakout or to volunteer at Sistercare, call 799-5477.

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We would welcome any of USC's sororities, fraternities, clubs, religious groups, professional societies and other organizations to walk with thousands of caring individuals in support of this state's 50,000 persons with severe mental illness.

**Mental Illness Awareness Walk
Saturday, October 30
State House Grounds**

8:30 am Registration begins (groups may turn in advance registration sheets up to 9:30)
9:15 am Music by 282nd Army Band, Fort Jackson
10:00 am Opening ceremony on State House steps
10:30 am Walk along Main and Calhoun streets to State Hospital. Food, entertainment by Atlantic Coastline, and exhibits.

Plaque to college group with the largest number of walkers. Each group is asked to bring a sign or banner. Information and advance registration sheets by calling 734-6897.

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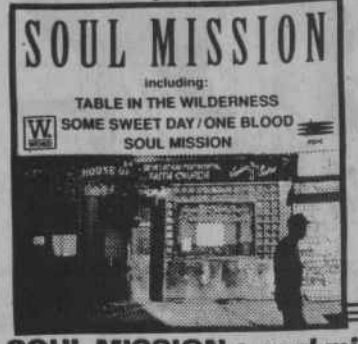
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