

enterprise

Arts Rising young ballet star returns to his Davis roots with Applegate's 'Cinderella'

Bluesman aims to kick up some dust

SPECIAL TO THE ENTERPRISE

The Michael Robinson Band will conclude this season's weekly downtown concert series with a performance from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday at the E Street Plaza, between Second and Third streets, Davis.

This event is part of Davis' free "Friday Night Music" concert series, which will continue through June 29.

The band, armed with a new CD, appeared earlier this month at Bistro 33; the group also performed in downtown Davis last October.

Robinson describes his music as a blend of retro rock and contemporary blues. The band performs originals from his CD, "Playing in the Dark," along with a wide range of classic covers like "Hey Joe," "Bad to the Bone" and "Got My Mojo Working."

Robinson began his music career rather explosively; he knew the minute he met Bay Area blues legend Johnny Nitro that his life was about to change.

What started as a 10-week blues workshop several years ago turned into a musical odyssey, the result of which is "Playing in the Dark," which fea-

tures five tracks co-written with his mentor.

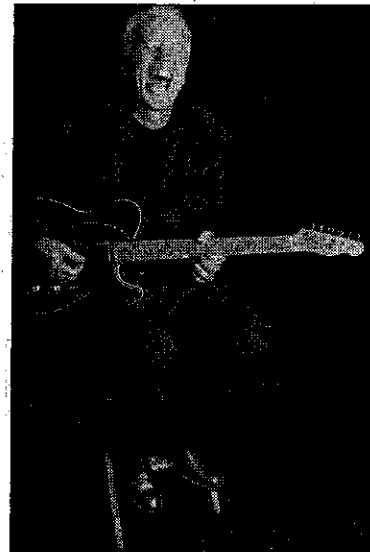
Though the disc stays true to roots music, it features a wide range of styles and rhythms, from the Chicago-flavored "Full Time Lover" to the Bo Diddley beat of "Wishful Thinking," and from the Chuck Berry-driven "If I Could Marry My Guitar" to the BB King-inspired "Even Jesus Had the Blues."

The album also showcases Robinson's gift for clever lyrics and honest stories. He has come a long way since fronting the rock group the Tabloids, which started off playing alternative rock but wound up performing an extensive list of classic blues covers as the band barnstormed Northern California clubs.

The former newspaper reporter and author has spent the last five years honing his writing, playing and singing into a distinctive style he calls "roadhouse blues and roots rock."

"If you flip a blues coin with Muddy Waters on one side," he said, "it'll have Chuck Berry on the other."

Robinson's other major influences include Albert King, Billy Gibbons, Freddie King, George Thorogood, Tommy Castro, Jimmie Vaughn and Howlin Wolf.



COURTESY PHOTO

Michael Robinson kicked off his blues career just three weeks before his 44th birthday, when his former band — the Tabloids — opened for Johnny Nitro at the infamous Saloon in North Beach. It all came full circle in late July 2006, when Robinson brought his new band to open for Nitro at the same venue.

Robinson and his band will return to Bistro 33 for a show at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, July 28.

Limited seating will be provided for Friday's performance, but listeners are encouraged to bring lawn chairs. For further information, call 756-8763 or visit www.davisdowntown.com.