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Wavelength (August 1981)

Connie Atkinson
University of New Orleans

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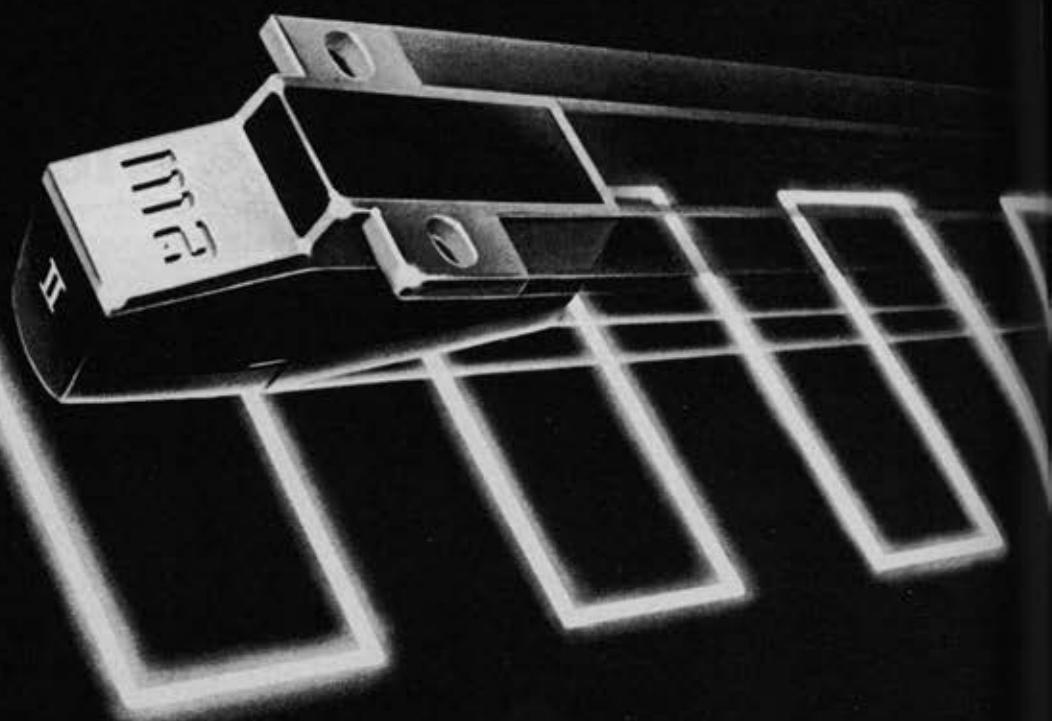
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Wavelength

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AUGUST 1981 VOL. 1 NO. 10

Features

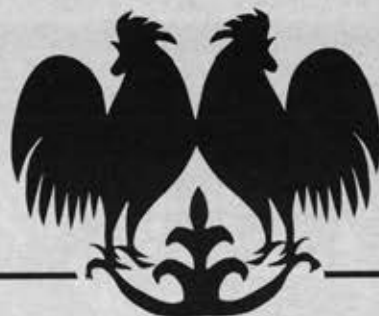
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August

ALLIGATOR SESSION POSTPONED

The much anticipated Alligator Records session that was to result in a three-album anthology of New Orleans has been delayed until the fall.

The session that was to take place this past month had to be delayed until October due to some difficulties, Mindy Giles of Alligator Records reports. Alligator's engineer, Fred Breitberg, would have been unable to engineer the session this month due to prior commitments.

Breitberg was the engineer for Professor Longhair's *Crawfish Fiesta* album, also on Alligator.

It also seems unlikely that Huey "Piano" Smith will participate in the session. Smith is currently involved in a lawsuit with Marshall Sehorn concerning material that he intended to record for Alligator. Clarence "Frogman" Henry is being considered as Smith's replacement.

Giles said, "We at Alligator are as excited as ever about the project and want to assure New Orleans that this is just a slight postponement."

— Almost Slim

GOLDEN MOMENTS IN N.O. ROCK 'N' ROLL

**The ORIGINAL
POPEYE**

...AS DEMONSTRATED BY EDDIE BO

A. Put your right hand on your forehead and your left behind your back, slide right foot slightly forward, then slide left foot behind the right, pointing the toe to your left. Next, put your left hand on your forehead, right behind your back, slide the left foot forward and then the right behind the left, toe pointing to your right. This is done as a 1-2 step alternately.

B. Place both hands behind your back and slide feet in a 1-2 step as described above.

C. Place both hands together behind your head and continue to slide feet in a 1-2 motion.

D. Put your right hand on your shoulder and left behind your back, slide feet in a 1-2 motion again. Do the same alternating the hand and foot motions.

E. Put both hands on the hips, then slide beginning with the right foot & then the left as described above.

RIC RECORDS, INC.
630 1/2 BARONNE ST.
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

II.

October 1961 — Ernie K-Doe is in the process of feeding his young son, Ernie K-Doe Jr., while playing a copy of "Old Time Shuffle" by Lowell Fulson. As he is amusing his son with some fancy dance steps, the younger K-Doe inquires, "Daddy, what 'cha doing? Look like dat old Popeye." To which Ernie senior replies, "Well, maybe it is!" Thus was born a new dance that would soon sweep the nation, "The Popeye."



1 SATURDAY—For more than a decade, Motown's most prolific hit songwriter, and a dynamic performer, **Smokey Robinson** brings his show to the Saenger Theatre tonight only.

2 SUNDAY—Golden-throated **Bobby "Blue" Bland** sings ballads and blues tonight, the final appearance of a two-night engagement at Prout's on North Claiborne.

4 TUESDAY—Cruise-O-Matic, a rock band specializing in the sound of the Sixties, makes its local debut tonight at Jed's, on Oak Street.

6 THURSDAY—Old Man River's presents some flashy rock from the **Raf-fays** tonight preceded by the always entertaining **RZA**, featuring the incomparable **Lenny Zenith**.

7 FRIDAY—The Maple Leaf Bar on Oak Street hosts some powerful contemporary jazz tonight, the **Earl Turbinton Quintet**, including the best rhythm section you'll hear in the barroom, **Jim Singleton** and **Johnny Vidacovich**.

8 SATURDAY—Tonight only **Roberta Flack** graces the concert stage at the N.O. Theatre for the Performing Arts. Tickets are expensive, but this lady can melt your heart with a song.

11 TUESDAY—Here's a midweek treat: the **Psychedelic Furs** bring some bizarre rock into Jed's tonight only.

13 THURSDAY—**Bourre**, a good-time, two-stepping Cajun band plays some grass roots Louisiana music at the Maple Leaf. Bring your dancing shoes along.

15 SATURDAY—**Levon Helm**, drummer, vocalist, mandolin and harmonica player, and a former member of the Band, brings a rock 'n roll party into Jimmy's tonight only preceded by the Fish Head Music of the **Radiators**.

16 SUNDAY—This is the second night of a two-night stand for veteran bluesman **Albert King** at Tipitina's. King's

been playing blues clubs for about 25 years, and he's always a crowd pleaser.

18 TUESDAY—A good night to enjoy the amazing pianistics of **James Booker** at the Maple Leaf. He's there every Tuesday night, and his talents on the 88's are unmatched.

20 THURSDAY—Bluesman **Charlie Musselwhite** returns to Tipitina's tonight only. Musselwhite does most of his picking on the West Coast these days, so this is a rare opportunity to catch him on a local stage.

21 FRIDAY—Tonight and tomorrow night **Mike Doucet**, a student of the ethnic music of Louisiana, brings his band, **Beau Soleil**, into the Maple Leaf for some good time traditional Cajun music.

22 SATURDAY—**Big Walter Horton**, for decades a monster on the blues harmonica, and his band complete a weekend stand at Tipitina's tonight. Big Walter visits our town very rarely, and he is one of the last of a dying breed.

23 SUNDAY—One of the longest running partnerships in blues music, **Sonny Terry** and **Brownie McGhee** make their first appearance at Tipitina's tonight only.

26 WEDNESDAY—**Remedy** will cure the midweek blues at Luigi's on the Lakefront tonight. No cover charge and one of New Orleans' premiere parking lots adds to the attraction.

28 FRIDAY—**The Cold** plays Ole Man River's tonight, one of the few local clubs large enough to accommodate their legions of young fans.

29 SATURDAY—An amazing string quintet known as **Hot Strings**, who knocked me out at the last two Jazz Fests, will be making a rare barroom appearance at the Maple Leaf tonight.

30 SUNDAY—Ballad and blues belter **Etta James** will be choking microphones tonight only at Tipitina's.

— Bill Cat



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Sundays

Taste of New Orleans
Featuring **George Porter**,
David Lastie,
David Torkanowsky &
Herlin Riley

Mondays

David Torkanowsky
& **George French**,
Herlin Riley

Tuesdays

David Torkanowsky,
Herlin Riley,
Leslie Smith

Wednesdays

Willie Tee

Thursdays

David Torkanowsky,
Jim Singleton,
Herlin Riley, **Fred Kemp**,
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Welcome Back...

BEACH MUSIC

Ben Funderburk

The dance floor is packed. Couples move with a smooth roll of the shoulders and a steady six-beat dance to the feet. Willie Tee is his best on the classic "Thank You John" while the dancers work studiously on their shag steps. Willie goes right into his next one, "Teasin' You," and the crowd makes a slight shift in its dance beat.

New Orleans? Guess again. It's Myrtle Beach, South Carolina — the beach music and shag capital of the world. What's beach music? Some of it is New Orleans rhythm and blues (Ernie K-Doe's "Te Ta Te Ta Ta" is a beach classic). But the music has many sources, including the Carolinas, Detroit, and California. Beach music is a phenomenon peculiar to the small resort beaches from Jacksonville, Florida, to Carolina Beach, North Carolina. Myrtle Beach is its capital and "Sixty Minute Man" by the Dominoes its national anthem. Beach music themes usually have something to do with the young, innocent girl-boy type of love, with occasional reference to "shagging," "where's my Johnny Dollar?" and engagement rings.

Beach music goes back over 30 years to the pre-rock 'n' roll days of pure rhythm and blues, to people like Earl Bostic and groups like the Clovers. It's a smooth sound — one that you can glide around to on the dance floor. The

composition is minimal, with rhythmic melodies and simple lyrics. Many songs are a capella, with the only accompaniment a beat provided by a deep sax. But the crucial factor is a "shagable" beat. For the beach music purist, you've got to be able to shag to it before it can be beach.

There is considerable dispute on the origin of the shag dance. Some people say that vacationing white teenagers developed the step after being exposed to the smooth and cool jitterbug-type dancing of coastal area blacks. Others claim that it was worked out by fraternity brothers while partying at Nags Head, North Carolina. Currently there are three people in the Carolinas alone credited, separately, with creating the shag. (One of them has a touring group of professional shaggers that performs and instructs on the art.) But in any case, the shag was so firmly entrenched in the culture by the Fifties that you just didn't step out on the dance floor unless you intended to shag.

The proper shag has a six-beat shuffle, though a three-beat is also popular. Couples must hold one hand each together. (To hold two hands is considered a sign of inexperience on the part of the dancers.) Dancers spin and float out from each other and work out routines such as the "Bogiewalk" and "Bellyroll." In perfect synchroniza-

tion they return to the standard shuffle to begin again a new series of moves.

There was a lapse in the popularity of beach music during the early Seventies. Before that lapse, the fever was so high that nightclubs 200 miles inland were pulling out all their chairs and tables and filling the floors with imported gray sand from Myrtle Beach — complete with fossilized sharks' teeth. And that's what's happening today. The fraternity houses at the University of South Carolina now have front yards of Myrtle Beach sand. Party time means putting out the beach chairs and cranking up the juke to the Drifters, Platters, Tams, Tempests, Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs, and the Showmen, among others. Charlotte, North Carolina, conveniently located near the geographic center of the Carolinas, now has six beach music bars. Three feature live music. Chapel Hill and Raleigh are also beach music hot spots. Atlanta has 10 night clubs that are associated in some degree to beach music. Four are fulltime beach.

This interest in the music has resulted in vinyl record production. Beach music fans have a choice of either new pressings of original 45s or six beach music compilation albums (two of these are doubles). The Ocean Drive collec-

tion has sold over 30,000 copies in the nine months since its release.

The shag action is nonetheless intense. Beach clubs like Fat Jack's in Raleigh and Ocean Drive often host contests with prize money in the thousands of dollars.

All of this excitement hasn't gone unnoticed by radio stations in the Carolinas. Stations like WMYB (Myrtle Beach) play exclusively beach music. Others have special afternoon and weekend shows. One such show features a mad doctor (a relative of Morgus?) operating out of his underocean laboratory in the vicinity of Ocean Drive Beach.

There is also a beach music magazine, appropriately named *It Will Stand* (after the Showmen tune of the same name) whose slogan is "Dedicated to the Preservation of Beach Music."

It Will Stand is also a record label specializing in Beach Music.

When you start to feel that shagging fever, you can have your own beach party. Here's a list of the more popular beach music to help you get ready. Many people practice shagging by holding the doorknob in place of a partner's hand.

Beach Music Top 50

1. Sixty Minute Man
2. Ms. Grace
3. Thank You John
4. Summertime's Calling Me
5. 39-21-46
6. Green Eyes
7. A Quiet Place
8. Hello Stranger
9. Nip Sip
10. The Entertainer
11. With This Ring
12. Stay
13. One Mint Julep
14. Just One Look
15. I've Been Hurt
16. Walkin' Up A One Way Street
17. Washed Ashore
18. Far Away Places
19. Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy
20. I Got The Fever
21. My Girl
22. Across The Street
23. Hey Baby
24. Stubborn Kind Of Fellow
25. I Love Beach Music

- Billy Ward & The Dominoes
Tymes
Willie Tee
Catalinas
Showmen
Ravens
Garnet Mimms & The Enchanters
Barbara Lewis
Clovers
Tony Clarke
Platters
Maurice Williams & Zodiacs
Clovers
Doris Troy
Tams
Willie Tee
Platters
Embers
Tams
Georgia Prophets
Temptations
Lenny O'Henry
Bruce Channel
Marvin Gaye
Embers

26. Hold Back The Night
27. I Do Love You
28. Under The Boardwalk
29. Dancin' On A String
30. I Love You 1000 Times
31. California
32. I'm Gonna Miss You
33. Sand In My Shoes
34. Zing! Went The Strings
35. Higher & Higher
36. White Cliffs Of Dover
37. Ain't No Big Thing
38. It Will Stand
39. Love Makes The World Go Round
40. My Guy
41. Rainy Day Bells
42. Sitting In The Park
43. Everything's Tuesday
44. Good Rockin' Tonight
45. May I
46. Work With Me Annie
47. Just Can't Get You Out Of My Mind
48. Think
49. I Can't Stop Dancin'
50. Fat Boy

- Trammps
Billy Stewart
Drifters
Chairmen Of The Board
Platters
Georgia Prophets
Artistics
Drifters
Coasters
Jackie Wilson
Checkers
Radiants
Showmen
Dean Jackson
Mary Wells
Globetrotters
Billy Stewart
Chairmen Of The Board
Wynonie Harris
Maurice Williams & Zodiacs
Midnighters
Four Tops
Five Royales
Archie Bell & Drells
Billy Stewart

Real Cheap. Real Components. Real High Fidelity. \$450.

You can go to your favorite department store, or appliance store and get an all-in-one stereo system. It might cost you \$400 or \$500. It might also cost you \$700. And department stores even sell things called stereos for \$69.95, but they are really designed for small children.

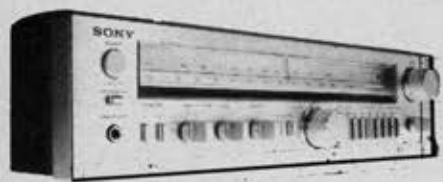
Then of course you have your local hi-fi salesman who takes the attitude that you are wasting his time, and your money, trying to buy a stereo system for under \$500.

Well, the people at Alterman Audio are not like that. They know most people are not experts in hi-fi and they try to explain all those technical terms and concepts in easy to understand plain English. They know everyone doesn't have, or necessarily want to, spend a fortune on hi-fi components. They also know how good Alterman Audio's recommended \$450 stereo system sounds—they decided on the components after listening to many possibilities.



The Turntable: JVC LA-11....

The JVC LA-11 is a simple, belt driven, semi-automatic turntable. It is not very expensive. In fact, it is just about the lowest priced quality turntable we can get our hands on. Yet it is plenty good. It can be hooked up with a good cartridge to the finest component systems at any price and sound good.



The Receiver: Sony STR-V15

The SONY STR-V15 Stereo receiver has enough power to play this system very loud. Yet it has very low distortion. It has excellent FM tuner

specifications. And as we said, even has preset FM stations for ultimate ease of station selection. Yet it is just about the lowest priced receiver on the market.

It's low price, despite its power, low distortion, and advanced tuning are the result of integrated circuitry, (IC's). This technology uses photochemical means to manufacture entire circuits, sometimes with the equivalent of hundreds of transistors on one semiconductor chip. Once designed, actual manufacturing cost is nil. This also increases reliability. Sony was a pioneer in IC technology making the first all IC AM radio back in 1966.

The STR-V15 is rated to produce, with both channels driven into 8 ohm loads, over the FULL audio range, 20 to 20,000 Hertz (cycles per second), 22 watts RMS, with no more than 0.08% Total Harmonic Distortion (THD). Many receivers in this low price range won't produce full power at the very low frequencies. This Sony does.

Sony's unique "program sensor" tuning system makes selecting FM stations a breeze. You simply hold a button in, and move the station presets. When set, this receiver has six buttons to push, each representing your favorite, pretuned station.

This receiver is direct coupled. This means there are no capacitors between the output transistors and the speakers. This means solid, tighter bass.



The Speaker: Sony SSU-45....

This speaker is not expensive. In fact, it is really cheap. It is not impressively made, even the wire terminals are as cheap as possible.

But it sure sounds good.

When we judge a speaker at Alterman Audio we judge it by the accuracy of sound it reproduces. A speaker should reproduce music so it sounds real.

No matter how different two people hear, if the same physical stimulus, the same vibrations of the air are created by the speaker as by the music, the live sound will sound the same as the music. This is not a matter of taste. It is a matter of having the original sound to compare with the speaker's reproduced sound.

And that's exactly what we do at Alterman Audio. We make live vs. recorded comparisons of musical instruments and playback via speaker.

The SONY SSU-45 is a three way system. It has a special Sony designed and manufactured balanced drive Titanium dome tweeter. The driving force is equal distant from all parts of the cone and so it is called balanced drive. The Titanium is very lightweight metal. This means the tweeter is lightweight, so it has low inertia and can respond to the input signal quickly and accurately.

The system is a rather large bass reflex system. It is fairly efficient, usable with 10 watt amps. But unlike most lower priced speaker systems this system does NOT have a big hump in the mid bass to make up for a lack of low bass. Sure this speaker doesn't reproduce the extreme low bass you get with more expensive speakers. But its low bass response is very good. Its 6 inch woofer means it is light, so it has very good transient response, for quick tight bass. Not boomy, sloppy bass. Voices are quite good also.

Thanks to this new speaker system we can offer a hi-fi system that will play as loud as you probably would like, with good bass, very good clear detailed highs and natural voice reproduction and only charge \$450 complete. And if you thought you would have to suffer though mediocre sound due to lack of funds, make sure you sound out this fantastic, very realistic sounding, \$450 system

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ROY • BROWN

HARD • LUCK • BLUES

I'm not fond of writing posthumous articles about anybody. But this one really stings. It seems like just yesterday, I was listening to Roy Brown's voice at this year's Jazz Fest. And what a voice! He sounded like a woman had just torn out his heart and kicked it across the room! He just looked and sounded so good. I was going to press him for an interview, but I figured he probably wanted to enjoy himself, since he hadn't been back home in twenty years. Besides, he was to return in June to play Tipitina's with "Room Full Of Blues." I'll get him then, I thought.

But a couple of weeks later, a friend

called and said, "Have you heard the news? Roy Brown is dead."

I'm sure many *Wavelength* readers were just as stunned as I was by Roy's death on May 25. Now two months later we can reflect on just how much we, the fans, and the music have lost.

Brown was born in New Orleans in September 1925. While still a youngster he moved with his family to Eunice, Louisiana, where his father found work as a bricklayer. His mother was a choir director and encouraged Roy to organize a spiritual quartet, for whom he wrote original songs when he was 13.

Brown completed high school in

Houston, and upon graduation moved to Los Angeles where he became a pro boxer! As a welterweight Roy won 16 of 18 bouts, before hanging up his gloves because he hated the sight of blood.

While in Los Angeles, Roy entered an amateur singing contest at the Million Dollar Theatre. Imitating his favorite singer, Bing Crosby, Roy won first prize for singing "I Got Spurs That Jingle, Jangle, Jingle."

Brown returned to Houston where he was to be inducted into the army, but was rejected because he had flat feet. While there, he came to the attention of a Shreveport club owner who

b y • a | m o s t • s | i m

hired Roy as a novelty because he sounded white!

It was during this nine-month stand at "Billy Riley's Palace" that he first began singing blues. During a 1975 interview he told John Broven, "The first blues songs I ever learned was Billy Eckstine's 'Jelly, Jelly.' I started singing those songs because the other singers on the show were doing blues and the people were throwin' money! So my buddy says, 'Look man, you got a voice, why don't you do some blues?'" I said, "I don't like the blues."

The Shreveport club burnt down and Roy began working with Joe Colman's group out of Galveston, Texas. This job lasted four months until Brown formed his own combo.

Galveston pianist "Candy" Green remembers Brown from those days. "Roy wasn't singing no blues; strictly ballads and Sinatra stuff."

Brown managed to get his small combo on the air at KGBC, in Galveston, until then an unheard-of accomplishment for a black group. During this time Roy wrote perhaps his best known number, "Good Rockin' Tonight," which he claims he wrote for his trumpet player. However Green claims the tune was penned by a school teacher, Joel Harris, who moonlighted as Brown's piano player. Whatever the circumstances, the tune was a hit on the air.

However Roy left Galveston not long after for New Orleans. Candy Green laughed when he recalled the matter: "Roy had to leave town fast 'cause he got caught fooling around with a club owner's girl. He owed a lot of people money, but when he came back a couple of years later a star, he had a big line of people come backstage, and there he was with a big roll of money paying everybody!"

Brown was broke when he got back to New Orleans. He saw that Wynonie Harris was down at the Rainbow Room, and thought he'd try to interest him in "Good Rockin' Tonight." Harris wasn't interested; however one of Harris's musicians was impressed, and he suggested Roy go down to the Dew Drop Inn to see Cecil Gant.

Gant let Brown do the song and was so impressed he called Jules Braun, the owner of DeLuxe Records, at two-thirty in the morning and made Brown sing over the telephone! Braun told Gant to give Brown \$50, and keep his eye on him, because he was going to be

coming down to New Orleans from New Jersey to record Paul Gayten and Annie Laurie.

A few days later Braun came to town and asked Brown to get three more songs together. That afternoon Roy went back to his room at the Dew Drop and wrote "Lollipop Mama," "Miss Fanny Brown," and "Long About Midnight." Later that afternoon he called Braun, who was amazed, but told Roy to meet him the next day at the J&M studio on Rampart Street.

Bob Ogden's band was used on Brown's first session and they did the arrangement on "Good Rockin'." In

'Roy was so popular there was even a guy making a living impersonating him.'

the meantime, Roy was singing as part of a duo, The Blues Twins, with Clarence Samuels. They worked the Downbeat Club on Rampart Street; Roy's cut was \$4 a night. Little did he know what was immediately in store for him.

Brown later related what happened then. "The fellas came to pick me up and took me to Rampart Street, and I could hear this sound. They kept looking at me and said, 'Man don't you hear the record?'" I said, "Yeah, it sounds good." I didn't know it was me!

Brown was suddenly a very hot item; the owner of the Downbeat gave Roy a raise and a place to stay. "I was getting \$10, my own room, I was a big shot. All the girls I need, and my blackberry wine!"

With the record gathering a head of steam, Roy was lured away from The Downbeat with a \$50-a-night guarantee from The Starlight Club, in Carrollton.

At the Starlight, Brown formed his own band. The group was lead by Teddy Riley, trumpet; Frank Parker, drums; Tommy Shelvin, bass; Edward Santino, piano; and LeRoy Rankin, sax.

Ironically, Wynonie Harris did "Good Rockin'" and it went "haywire," and really popularized it in the East. Roy was no one-hit artist. Between 1948, and 1951, 12 Roy Brown records made the Top Ten on R&B charts. Brown's impassioned style caught the attention of the public.

With Roy Brown 78s selling fast and furious, Brown and "The Mighty Mighty Men" hit the road to cash in. Teddy Riley picks up the story: "We played to nothing but packed houses. Roy was so popular there was even a guy out there making a living impersonating Roy. (AUTHOR'S NOTE: possibly Clarence Samuels). Sometimes we played 30 nights in a month. We drove all over the country in a Cadillac limousine. But it wasn't like work. Roy was a lot of fun, but Roy worked harder than anybody."

"Talented? Roy probably wrote a thousand songs that were never published. Man, we played on a lot of big records, 'Who's Hat Is That,' 'Boogie At Midnight,' 'Brown Angel,' lots of 'em. We played all the big theatres, The Apollo in New York, The Howard in Washington, all up in California, and Wrigley Field in Chicago. For awhile George Weinberg booked us in a package with Roy Milton calling it The Battle of The Blues. After 1947 until I left Roy over a misunderstanding in 1954, we were steady on the road. New Orleans was just a base."

In 1951, Brown's contract was bought out by King, then the largest R&B record concern in America. Unfortunately despite the continued success of his recordings, Roy's stay at King was not a pleasant one. Although King could do more to promote an R&B record than anybody, owner Syd Nathan had a reputation for not paying royalties. Brown got some performance royalties but not what he should; in fact, Roy claimed he was not even registered with B.M.I. until 1957.

His records on King were of his expected high quality. "Laughing but Crying," "Queen Of Diamonds," and the tour de force "Mr. Hound Dog's In Town" were some of his best records, selling heavily in California, Texas, New Orleans and most of the Deep South.

By the mid-Fifties record sales began to slump, partially due to the advent of rock 'n' roll and, according

to Brown, because the musician's union blackballed him. It was also at this time that a young, white "hillbilly singer" Elvis Presley successfully covered "Good Rockin' Tonight."

By 1956, Brown obtained his release from King and then Imperial came in to the picture. Dave Bartholomew recently reminisced on Brown's Imperial days. "Roy was doing pretty bad when rock 'n' roll came in. See, Roy was more or less an older type blues singer and that was dying out. I was living back off St. Bernard, and Roy lived 'round the corner. So Roy came by my house and said, 'Man, can you get me on Imperial?'"

"We did a cover on 'Party Doll,' we got the word from California to cover it. After that, we did 'Let The Four Winds Blow.' It was just an audition tape, we were just in the studio foolin' around. Anyway, Chudd put the goddamn record out. It was all out of time and tempo, the record just wasn't right, but it still sold 100,000 on it. It wasn't hittin' on shit. There was another thing I cut on him, 'Saturday Night,' but nothin' after that. I'd have to say I got Roy on the tail end of his career. It wasn't long after that he

had those run-ins with the law and moved to California."

With Brown's Imperial hits going strong in the late Fifties, popularity was rekindled, and he began working package shows with Roy Charles, Nappy Brown, Larry Williams, Etta James and Joe Turner. Universal booked him and he worked in just about every little town between Texas and Virginia.

Brown's real problem was in the form of the IRS which jumped him for back taxes in the late Fifties. For a short time Roy went back to King for one session in 1959 that produced the haunting, "Ain't Got No Blues Today," but as far as major companies were concerned that was it for Roy.

An obscure, but excellent session was done in Memphis in 1960. The subsequent records on *Home Of The Blues* were truly excellent and are much-sought-after collectors' items. But other than in Memphis, the records didn't move simply because of the public's changing taste and because of poor national distribution.

Not long after this, Brown moved to California where he shied away from performing, instead seeking employ-

ment as a door-to-door salesman. There were some obscure but good releases in the early Sixties on DRA and Connie, but they just sold in California. Brown was just tired of hassling with record companies and was disappointed that his popularity had waned.

Teddy Riley commented, "I guess things just came too fast for him." Dave Bartholomew added, "Roy thought he was broke. But you see Roy had a good wife, she knew how to get things done. She had a nursery and they were doing very well. She was the kind of woman who knew how to hold on to a dollar. Roy lived very well, he wasn't hurtin'."

After a chance meeting with former Savoy rep Lee Magid, Brown agreed to cut an album for Bluesway, an ABC subsidiary, in 1967. This was a time when a full-scale blues revival was going on among young white listeners. Lots of long-forgotten blues singers suddenly had albums on the market. Unfortunately for Brown, the public was interested in the rougher school of blues of the variety of Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, and Howlin' Wolf vintage. Roy's smooth, sophisticated

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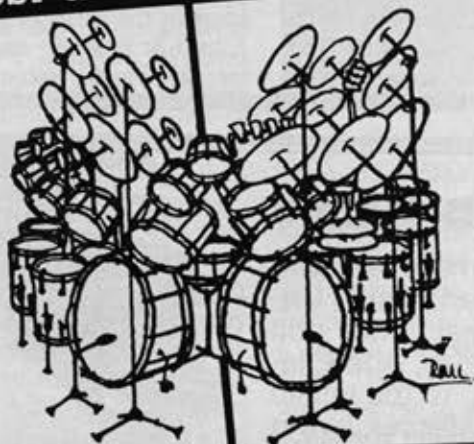
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blues singing wasn't "gut bucket" enough for the younger public's taste. Brown was in tremendous form on this recording, screaming and bellowing with great enthusiasm and delight. However the album didn't see the light of day until 1973.

Things started to turn around for Brown when he was chosen to close the 1970 Monterey Jazz Festival with Johnny Otis's Orchestra. The performance, which was recorded on Epic, proved that Roy was not spent, and the crowd really went for him.

Brown was so exhilarated by the crowd's warm response that he decided to record some new songs on his own label. One tune, "Love For Sale," was leased to Mercury and became a national hit. The record became the biggest seller since "Party Doll." The follow up, "Mail Man Blues," did almost as well.

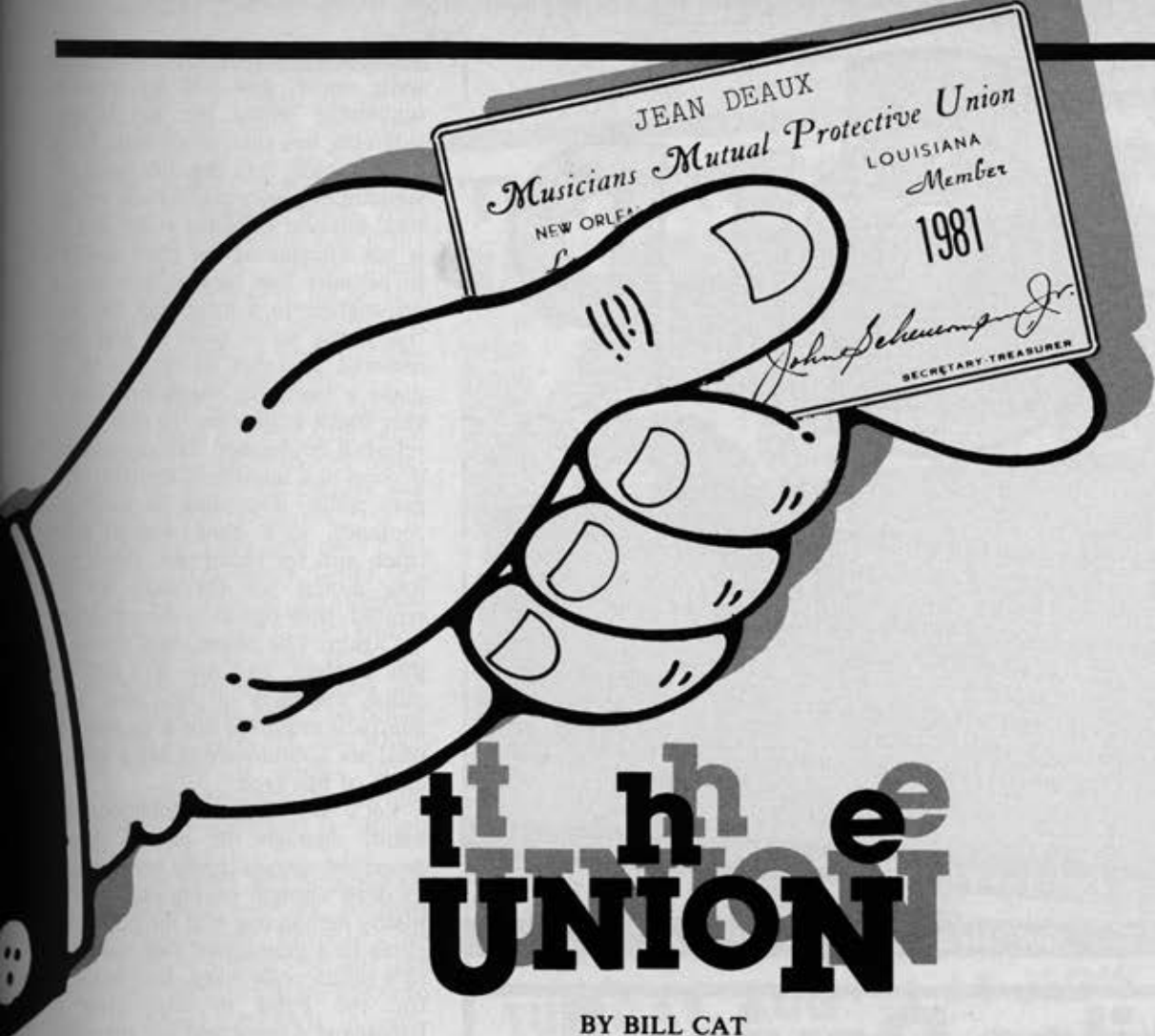
Undoubtably the high point of his return to the music business was his highly acclaimed European tour of 1978. European audiences had rediscovered the suave blues shouters of the Forties and Fifties and "Good Rockin'" Brown was their idol. Two albums of Roy's early material were released on Route 66; the first actually made the Top 10 in Sweden. New recordings were made during his tour and also here in America.

It was ironic that Brown's last public appearance should take place in the city where he started. Everyone raved about Roy. Even Dave Bartholomew's staunch demeanor broke down recalling the last performance. "He sounded real good! Better than he did 20 years ago." For the first time in 26 years Roy was reunited with his old bandleader Teddy Riley, who concurred with Bartholomew.

Brown returned to San Fernando, to his wife and daughter, of whom he was most fond. Joe Jones, who now resides in California, spoke of his last days: "Roy was so proud of his daughter. She was the joy of his life, and getting her through college was the biggest thing for Roy. She graduated on Friday night, and Roy passed on Sunday evening. He must have died happy."

Roy Brown's Available Recordings

<i>Hard Luck Blues</i>	Gusto 5036
<i>Laughing But Crying</i>	Route 66 2
<i>Good Rockin' Tonight</i>	Route 66 6



BY BILL CAT

The American Federation of Musicians is the national labor organization for bandleaders, musicians, orchestrators, and arrangers of instrumental music. It is composed of hundreds of local unions throughout the United States and Canada. The strength and degree of dominance of the federation varies from one jurisdiction to another. As is the case in other labor unions, the organization is stronger in states that do not have "right to work" laws, since union membership is a requirement to find work in the reputable clubs and recording studios in those states.

Local 174-496, located at 2401 Esplanade here in New Orleans, is the result of a 1969 merger of the predominately white Local 174 with the all-black Local 496. Its jurisdiction stretches over fourteen parishes in Louisiana and two counties in Mississippi. There are about 1,600 members of the local union, despite the fact that it exists in a "right to work" state.

Depending on whom you talk to, the musicians' union is a figurative

knight in shining armor ready to go to bat for a musician who has been stiffed by an unscrupulous employer, a nuisance that takes a musician's dues and offers little or nothing in the way of support, or simply a necessary evil in the business of music.

For a formally trained "serious" musician interested in finding legitimate, steady work with the symphony or large working bands that play to hotel, convention, and Mardi Gras audiences, the union is a necessity. Contractors who put together orchestras of this type strictly adhere to the rule: no union card, no work. The union sets minimum "scale" wages for leaders and sidemen working these types of engagements, as well as for rehearsals that precede them. The union forbids its members to work alongside non-members, and fines are

levied by the unions's board of directors against those members who violate this rule.

Dave Weinstein, a distinguished, patriarchal figure, who has been a working musician and union member all of his adult life, is the president of Local 174-496.

"When my music teacher thought I was ready to begin working professionally, he sent me down to join the union," Weinstein recalled. "That was the way a musical career was started in those days. I was soon working with a band and earning decent wages.

"At that time musicians were mass-produced, and a band was made up of interchangeable parts," Weinstein continued. "Nowadays popular bands are custom-built; they write, arrange, and play their own music, and there is less movement of musicians from one working band to another."

Since "right to work" became law in the mid-Sixties, union membership is no longer a requirement for a young musician who wants to work. Pop bands are formed in garages by players who are usually not able to read and



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write music, and jobs are found in nightclubs where the pay is considerably less than union-scale. For a band starting out, the club owner will sometimes guarantee nothing but the total amount collected at the door. It is not uncommon for band members to actually lose money by playing a one-nighter in a local club, but they risk doing so in order to play their material in front of people, try to make a name for themselves, and, if they make money for the club owner, return to do it again. Repetition of this process in a number of different clubs may result, depending on public acceptance, in a band working more often and for better pay. Bands that lose money for the clubs are not rehired; they return to the garage and try again. The union plays no role in this process, and you will not find union members on this level, since contracts requiring that scale wages be paid are a hindrance to being hired in clubs of this type.

Let's say that an ambitious pop band, through the painful process described above, finally becomes able to draw enough paying customers to justify demanding that the club owner agree to a guaranteed sum equivalent to a union scale wage. It is then time for the band to trot down to Esplanade Avenue and join the union, right?

Wrong.

Because when the band attempts to reach out into another market, say Houston, it finds competition from the young local bands of that area willing to play for peanuts. Once again, union membership, and its attendant obligation to work for not less than scale, is a handicap to getting work.

In short, the union is no help to any musician who takes the approach of sacrificing dollars today in order to get the exposure necessary to make bigger bucks tomorrow.

Weinstein asserts that a good nightclub should draw customers on its own, and thus be able to pay even an unknown band union scale wages. However, as those of us who frequent New Orleans nightclubs know, with few exceptions, the band, not the club, is the attraction. The exceptions exist mostly within the narrow boundaries of the French Quarter, due to the preponderance of tourist business.

It is no surprise, then, that the union is very active in the French Quarter music scene. Nearly all the traditional

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jazz and dixieland players are union members since they work clubs that are always full of tourists for club owners that are accustomed to paying scale. Jobs are frequently steady, five-night-a-week engagements, and if the trumpet player is ill, another union trumpet player is called to fill in. It is quite different from the business of a band trying to find a receptive audience for their original music.

For musicians who are dues-paying members in good standing, the union does indeed use its resources (principally Louis Dillon, its diligent and aggressive business representative) to pursue payment when they have been defaulted by a club owner. Dillon will also give prior warning to members who contract to work for known shady operators. In cases in which member musicians are defaulted and the union is unable to collect on behalf of the offended band, the club which refused to pay is added to a "defaulters list," which is kept current by means of bulletins to union members.

Work dues, which members pay for every engagement they work, are used to run the local union. There is a national pension fund called the Employers' Pension Welfare Fund, to which employers contribute in addition to paying scale wages. The bandleader collects this pension contribution from the employer on behalf of the members of his band and turns this sum over to the AF of M's main office in New York. This pension is collected by members at age sixty in an amount in accordance with their accumulated contributions over the years of their membership.

Playing music for money is a multifaceted business populated by a diverse cross-section of musicians. The local union functions, as well as its resources will allow, in the interest of its membership. On the other hand, most young bands that you will find advertised in this magazine have not seen fit to join the union. Moreover, many of these bands contain young, inexperienced musicians who are out hustling for one-nighters, and need some type of organization behind them. The union, by failing to address some of the very real problems faced by these young musicians, seems headed toward representing an older and decreasing fraction of the total number of local wage-earning musicians.

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LARRY THE PUNK

Record company magnate • Fanzine publisher • Punk band member

— Steve Allen

Do it yourself. This was perhaps the basic philosophy of the original punk movement. In other words, if no one is performing the kind of music you want to hear, then form your own band to play that music. Anyone can do it.

Larry Holmes decided to put that philosophy into practice. Holmes, who has a regular job as an accountant, evolved into the persona of "Larry the Punk." He formed a band, decided to put out a magazine called *Final Solution* ("The New Orleans Magazine with an Answer to Musical Boredom") in order to promote and document the local new wave scene, and eventually went on to start his own record label, Vinyl Solution Records. The most recent release on

Vinyl Solution is *No Questions, No Answers*, a compilation album featuring a variety of New Orleans bands.

Neither the record nor the magazine has made Larry rich, and he doesn't expect them to. He got involved because he liked the new music and he wanted to see local bands get more exposure. He says, "I wanted to do an album for a while, since about the time the *N.O. Experience Necessary* record was done, because there were a lot of good bands that just didn't make that record. The whole premise for me was to try and get as many bands on it as possible, because the more bands you put on it, the more chance that some record buyer or reviewer will like at least one of them a whole lot. Everybody wanted to be on the record, so obviously the people I was friends with got first choice, and then the people that sent me tapes that I liked made it."

Being an amateur in the record business may have given Holmes a fresh perspective, but it also meant having to deal with a variety of unforeseen problems. The project turned out to be not only time consuming but costly. To augment the original financing, a series of benefits had to be held at Jimmy's which, besides providing additional funds, continued to promote the projected album during the long delays when it seemed it might never be released. According to Holmes, "We started recording last June, and that and the mixing were finished by fall. The record should have been out by Christmas, but it took until this summer. You don't know how tough it is to do an album until you try it. They screwed up the original test pressing, the artwork was wrong, the typesetting had to be done over in Baton Rouge. It was endless. I'm just now starting to



also recorded their own single and put it out on my label. You see, I have a registered label, Vinyl Solution, and if bands want to use it it's there. But I don't want to finance their recording, and I don't want to get their profits if they should make money. There's no one in town now, other than my own band, that I'd want to finance." The other records on this label, by the way, are an EP by the Manic Depressives, "Silence on the Radio," and a just-issued single by the Red Rockers, "Guns of Revolution."

Some of the tracks are not even by regular bands. "A Little Too Much," listed as being by the Cheaters, was actually put together by Charlie Wehr, who's one of the new members of RZA, and Buzzy "Beano" Langford, who was the engineer and owner of the studio where the recording was done. This song is more pop than most of the rest of the album, and its Byrd-style guitars and vocals make it one of the record's high points.

Holmes thinks it will appeal "more to the crowd that likes Nick Lowe, the more melodic stuff." The Swinging Millionaires is actually a pseudonym for the mysterious Carlos Boll, and his song "The Cannibals Next Door" has some of the best lyrics on the record. Both this song and David Otilio's "Preparation X" are currently performed by their band, the Driveways. The song that's been getting the most attention is Mandeville Mike's "Me,"

which has been getting airplay on WTUL. Holmes says, "Mandeville is always in the process of getting a band together, and it's a shame because he's got the best voice of anyone I've heard in town. He's just an incredible singer, and he can do anything from fast punk songs like I do to the song he did on the album, which is just a kind of slower rock song with three-part harmony whistling."

Holmes is apparently resigned to the fact that this music will never reach a mass audience. He says, "We probably won't ever really broaden our audience, but we can try to spread the word to as many people as possible. That's why I do the *Final Solution* magazine. I started it about a year and a half ago because I thought something needed to be said about the local scene. If someone didn't do it, years down the road you'd look back on it and wonder what it was like, and you'd never know. I guess I should be a little more energetic and bring it all over town, but there's really not that much appreciation. I mean, my friends want it, and the punk crowd reads it, but you're not going to see people at Tulane pick it up to find out what it's all about. Sometimes I lose a little money, sometimes I make a little, but never very much. There's always a few left over, but it gives you the incentive to keep going when you get a few positive comments about it, and

send out copies to magazines to be reviewed. I think I'll sell enough to get my investment back. Systematic is a big distributor on the West Coast; they're going to pick up a couple hundred. If JEM (the biggest national import distributor) picks up a bunch, I'll break even right there, and I'll have to press more records."

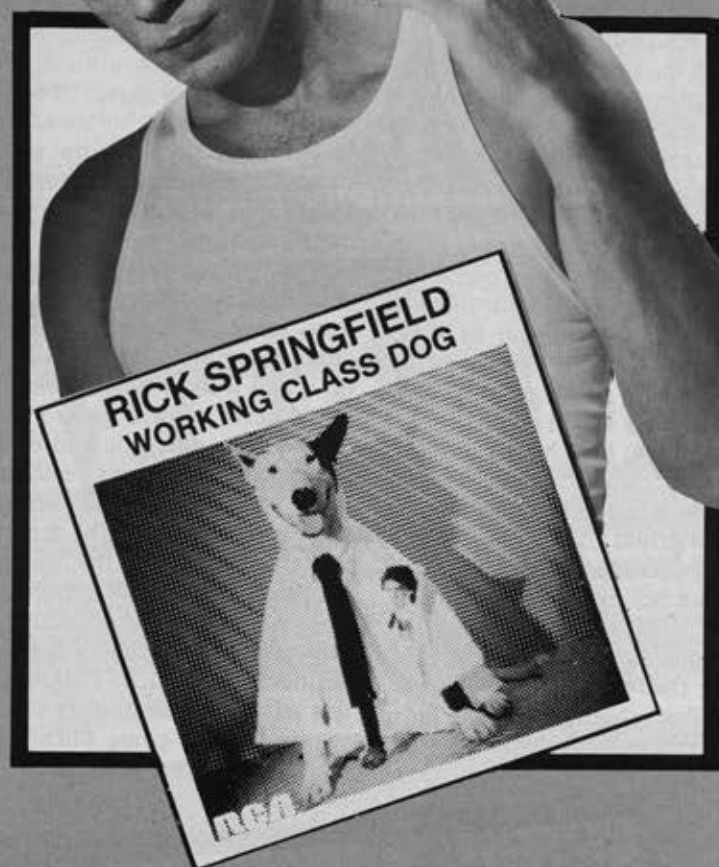
How well the record sells locally may depend, strangely enough, on a kind of nostalgia. The record already seems like a historical document, even though the period it documents is only a little over a year ago. But, as anyone who has followed New Orleans new wave knows, things evolve rapidly. So much so that many of the groups on the record have either disbanded or changed considerably. The Fugitives and the Hostages are no more. Aces 88 has become more of a hard rock band and are now based in Austin. Holmes' own band, the Manic Depressives, has split up, and RZA has recently undergone some personnel changes. The Red Rockers and the Models, both of whom are represented by two songs each, are conspicuously intact and have even spent some time touring out of state.

The Wayward Youth has disbanded as well. Holmes recalled that they were "the easiest to record. They were in and out in an evening, and I think they got the best mix, too. That's my favorite song on the album, 'Thinkin' Bout You.' We do that one in my new band, 30 Second Flash. The Youth



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I've gotten some from England and from the West Coast."

For those of you who have never seen it, *Final Solution* belongs to the subspecies of journalism known as the "fanzine," a contraction of fan magazine. It's published irregularly, written by a handful of amateurs, and consists of a mishmash of articles, reviews, commentary, and interviews, erratically typed and assembled as a collage with photos and bizarre graphics, photocopied on loose sheets of paper, and hand stapled. A great deal of actual information manages to get through the informal format, and the tendency of the writers toward scurrility makes it a lot of fun to read.



Holmes also thinks that the way the local music clubs are set up fosters a kind of "in crowd" mentality, so that it often seems that you're seeing the same faces at all the shows. He feels that the club owners could meet the ordinary music fan halfway. "I try to see all the new bands, but I just can't go during the week and still get up and go to work in the morning. I'm a CPA, and I've got to be alert at work. I've always said that if we moved the weeknight gigs up to 8:30 or 9 you'd get people coming out during the week. I don't know why nobody's tried that. On the West Coast they do early gigs, and in London, where I went last year, the trains stop at around midnight, so the gigs have to be over. Another great thing about London is that even little kids can get in, but you have to have an ID to get a drink. Here they can't even get in the door, and I know there are a lot of high school kids who'd like to come out and see bands, but they can't unless it's outdoors or something, and that rarely happens because it's not a real moneymaking deal."

No Questions, No Answers will not solve these problems, but it will give the uninitiated an idea of the variety of bands to be found on the local scene. Although it's obvious from the sound quality that it wasn't recorded in a slick studio, the performances are energetic and the material is often excellent. This record may even make you want to go out and see some of these bands perform. And people from out of town who hear it will find out that there's more to New Orleans music than jazz and rhythm and blues.

Whatever happened to



LARRY WILLIAMS

BY VINCENT FUMAR

"Bony Moronie got sick, and I thought she was dead."

— Larry Williams
"The Hootchy Koo."

It is a matter of journalistic routine to accord more than a perfunctory obituary space to a celebrity upon his death, no matter how brief his spell in the public eye, or now long his fall into obscurity.

When Larry Williams died in Los Angeles over a year ago, there were no notices in the dailies, and the news eluded even some trade papers. Instead, news of his death, which was presumed to be a suicide, came mostly by word of mouth.

While Williams might not have had an enduring show business career, he did manage to break into the record charts ten times between 1957 and 1960, having particularly good luck with "Short Fat Fannie," "Bony Moronie" and "Dizzy Miss Lizzy." Though a native New Orleanian, he recorded on the West Coast for Art Rupe's Specialty label, where he worked with fellow transplanted Orleanians such as Earl Palmer, Plas Johnson and Rene Hall.

The comparisons between Williams and Little Richard were inevitable, since they were label-mates, used the same band and made commercial inroads with similar intense styles. One

can find as many similarities Williams had with Don & Dewey (also on Specialty) and Lenny Capello, whose "Cotton Candy" surely was the closest anyone ever came to making a Larry Williams sound-alike record. Williams, then, did have his own style, and there is proof of it having been copied.

However, little is known of Williams' activities between the demise of his hit-making period and his death. He did record for Fantasy in recent years, his last LP being "That Larry Williams" in 1978. It was a contemporary, commercial effort (a sample title: "Bony Moronie (Disco Queen)" that included snapshots from his career — the young Williams with Jackie Wilson, the recent Williams with Redd Foxx and Stevie Wonder.

Inquiries about Williams' death were largely fruitless, so the exact date and cause of death can't be reported here. It is known, though, that some believed his death wasn't a suicide. Such speculation is only natural, considering that Williams was known to be armed, had a bodyguard and apparently associated with underworld elements.

Locally, Williams is remembered for his early years and his willingness to help young talent. During a 1959 concert tour, he took along the young Aaron Neville.

Says Neville: "He was one of a kind. Sometimes I'd be on a gig with

him when he was booked in two places at the same time. So I'd be him. I'd fix my hair like him and the audience never suspected because I knew all his tunes. I was like his little brother. I idolized him. One time we drove all the way from L.A. to Frisco. He talked all the way and never repeated a thing.

"The last time I saw him," continues Neville, "was when we played the Roxy in L.A. I think he had everything to live for. He had a house down the street from Glen Campbell, and he just bought a yacht with Johnny Guitar Watson. I think they had a suspect. If I were you, I wouldn't go too deep into it."

"Short Fat Fannie" will probably continue to be regarded as Williams' greatest accomplishment (though "Just Because" and "Dizzy Miss Lizzy" certainly can't be considered lesser works). In it, Williams managed to make references to 14 other songs. Of Williams and "Short Fat Fannie," critic Charlie Gillett wrote: "The world of rock 'n' roll, as Williams understood, was on its own now, separate from other events and with its own characters, relationships, and standards of behavior. In it, people cared, but tended to behave aggressively, hiding their insecurity behind a tough front."

Whatever Williams' fate was, it can't be ignored that he made some of the best rock 'n' roll of the period.




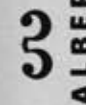
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Rivers explains: "We're not playing better jazz-wise than any other jazz group; we're not playing rock-wise better than any other rock group; we're not playing better than the Muddy Waters blues-type situation. What we have is we're a combination of all of them. Very few groups even think about getting into that. The edge that we have on popularity is that we're pleasing a majority of the public, not just one segment."

James Rivers need not be so

modest. Very few groups could manage the breadth of his material, much less match the depth of feeling he brings to it.

The audience knows. This past weekend, at Tyler's, his usual SRO crowd was clapping, snapping, bobbing, and yelling, "Play! Blow! Kick it, James!" He is a master at contact and control. He literally led the audience through a set of jazz originals, jazz standards, and material borrowed from Bill Withers, The Meters, and Stevie Wonder. He finished the set with a medley of Jimmy Reed, the high point of which came when he broke the chorus up into a virtuoso dialogue between harmonica and

flute, almost as though it were a male-female call and response. He had them pounding on the bar and tables.

Sure, you can hear the gospel in the blues, and the blues in the rock, and he sneaks jazz lessons in between the pop, but how the connections are made, where the circles really come together is in James's feeling for pleasing people.

"What I try to do now, before I put the horn in my mouth, I go on the bandstand, and I'll just look at the audience, man, and try to psyche 'em out. You can just about tell what they want to hear before you play anything. You can tell from the mood that they be in, you know, how they sit, how they talk, how they drink. If I got a fired up audience, I don't start with

By Ron Cuccia

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jazz, 'cause they're fired up. Or maybe they want to hear blues. I start my set any kind of way.

"Normally, I start it off jazz, and when they think I'm gonna play another jazz tune, I drop down in the alley to Muddy Waters. When they think I'm going into that bag, I go to one of the rock tunes, maybe a Stevie Wonder tune. Then I'm playing the bagpipes, too, that adds another dimension. I've always been into variety, not only with my music, but with the instruments, too.

"I prefer playing jazz on them. Jazz is my number one music. If I had a preference where I could survive, and make me a decent living, I'd play jazz all night. But I do what I have to do to survive. Survival to club owners means packed houses, and if you keep anybody's nightclub packed, you don't worry about a gig, and that's what it all boils down to economically.

"With that in mind, I'll play anything I think the public wants to hear, and then I'll be enjoying it while I'm playing it. You can't say 'Aw, man, this is a drag,' and then play it, 'cause then it won't sound good, and John Public will know that. They're not as dumb as some of us musicians think they are. I try to reach my audience, man. I been thinking about getting into some country and western because you never can tell. If you're not versatile, the game is over."

The versatile Mr. Rivers started off playing clarinet in the school band at Booker T., which was the alma mater of Alvin Batiste, Art and Charles Neville, Allen Toussaint, Willie Tee, and Earl Turbinton, all about the same time. Right out of high school, Rivers refused music scholarships to Grambling, Southern, and Florida A&M, and hit the road.

"I was tired of hitting the books. I wanted to get out there and get on somebody's bandstand. I was tired of playing 'Stars and Stripes Forever.' I wanted to play some blues. I was brainwashed, man; the cat said 'We're gonna be millionaires, we're gonna be on the Big Time, we're going to Florida.' Man, it was bad, wasn't nothing but starvation out there, but I had too much pride to come back. Hung out 'til I found a gig playing behind a snake dancer and a faggot fire eater. At least I was getting a hamburger a day."

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way. His style is so attractive, it makes you want to assimilate him. The secret of this friendly seduction is his modesty, which, like Rivers, is real, and comfortable, and light-hearted.

"Lemme tell ya a thing, man. This gonna go back to when I came out of high school. See, I was a clarinet player, and I went to Booker T. Washington. They had all kinds of great players there, and I was serious, man. I had always been told I was good. My head was as big as this room, big as this house. I go on the road, here I come from playing 'March of the Champions,' and all them kinda high school marches, and I go into a joint in Pensacola, Florida, a little wino joint, and some guy's drinking some wine, a wino, man, talking about he's playing some saxophone.

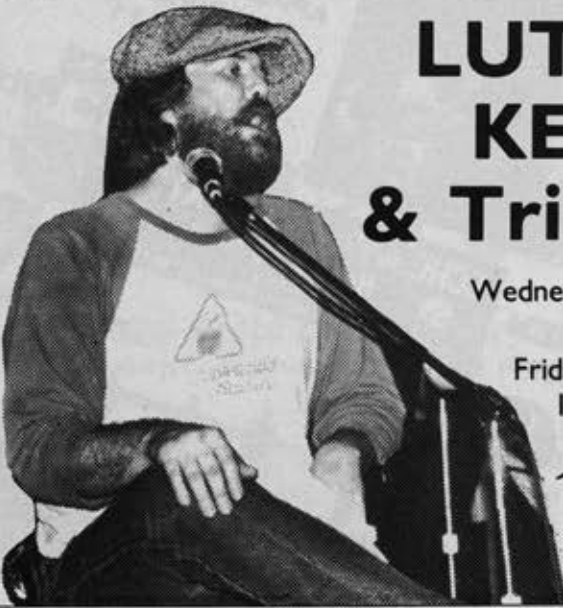
"I said, 'Man, you ever heard of me?' Cat said, 'No, who's you?' Said, 'I'm James Rivers, man,' said, 'I played four years at Booker T.!' Cat said, 'Where's Booker T.?'

"Man, I'm getting high. I'm young, I'm wired, keep in mind I'm out there at seventeen years old, green, no kinda experience about nothing, man, you know, so I started making him feel bad in front of his friends, like 'Here comes this young cat,' I'm bringing him through the wringer.

"So he tells me to come on around by his house. Here goes crazy James Rivers, anything can happen around there. I'm gonna clean him out in front of his boys. I told him, 'Let's go, man.' We go around by some flat there. This cat be playing a horn, man, it's green. All the lacquer was off from playing so long. This cat started playing some things on that horn, I felt like this big. He said, 'Lemme hear how you play, man, all that talking you been doing.' I said, 'Oh, no, man, I ain't got my mouthpiece.'

"He taught me maturity. That's a lesson I've lived with ever since. I know what I'm about. I'm confident, not cocky. I respect other musicians. It's not going out there doing a whole lotta talking, but a whole lotta practicing. That's the thing that I commit myself to. Don't want to be the best, or the greatest, or another Trane, ain't too many cats gonna get into that. I just want to keep being better than myself. If my career ended for some reason or another, I would like them to say, 'You know, ol' J.R. wasn't a bad horn player.' "


Not bad at all, to put it modestly.



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Reissues

Motown Looks To Past For The Future

BY ALMOST SLIM

There probably exists no individual with even a casual interest in records or music that is not familiar with "The Motown Sound," the glorious rhythm that dominated the airwaves throughout the Sixties. In its heyday Motown had no peer. If any record company could claim it revolutionized popular music, it would have to be Motown.

Just remember that instantly recognizable "Motown Sound." You could tell a Motown record by the second bar of the song. It didn't matter if it was Marvin Gaye, Junior Walker, The Supremes, the Temptations, Mary Wells, Smokey Robinson or Stevie Wonder, they all had the distinct sound that yanked your ear and told you just where it was from.

Now they're all available again! And at a decent price to boot. In what has to be the major reissue of the decade, Motown has reissued *sixty* of the albums from the "Golden Decade" of Motown. Tacky as they may have been, Motown thankfully decided not to repackage these treasures, but issued them in their original jackets. Now that's the way it should be done!

The concept of the series serves as a tribute to Motown founder Berry Gordy Jr., the man with the best ears in the business. Nearly 60% of his releases reached the national charts during the Sixties, an unmatched feat.

The Motown myth goes like this: Gordy was a songwriter who struggled through the Fifties before penning hits for Jackie Wilson ("Reet Petite" and "Lonely Teardrops") and Marv Johnson ("Come To Me"). By 1960 Gordy was near perfecting his gospel-pop fusion, adding hits like "Money" by Barret Strong and "You Got What It Takes" by Marv Johnson to his string of impressive hits leased to other companies.

These successes convinced Gordy that he should form his own label,



Tammie, soon changed to Tamla/Motown. Gordy started humbly enough in a small bungalow on West Grand, a black suburb of Detroit. Almost overnight, this makeshift operation truly did become "Hitsville, U.S.A." By the end of the Sixties, Gordy's company became one of the largest black-owned corporations in America, as well as the most successful independent recording concern ever.

The reason? Gordy's philosophy: "Keep It Simple." Each record that came out of that two-story building on West Grand was custom-made; it underwent Gordy's stringent scrutiny for perfection.

What glorious records they were! Who can forget Martha Reeves' impassioned "Heatwave," the anthem during the summer of 1963; the pulsating, "Where Did Our Love Go," by an adolescent Diana Ross and the Supremes; the ultimate soul ballad, "You Really Got A Hold On Me," by Smokey Robinson and The Miracles. And of course I must mention the haunting "Heard It Through The Grapevine" by Marvin Gaye. Motown lived up to its motto, "Sound Of Young America," (black and white I might add).

Perhaps not the "Sound of Young America" in 1981, but this stuff still hits home. Just a glance at what

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PHOTO BY MARC LEWIS

Motown has made available will set off an explosion of memories: playing hookey to feed the jukebox nickels so you could do "Mickey's Monkey," or getting locked in the trunk of the car while your big brother smooched with his girl friend at the drive-in watching the T.A.M.I show.

Motown has priced these discs at under \$5, which should make your wallet happy, too. If you want a taste here's what I'd suggest.

Stevie Wonder
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M5-176V1

Five of Stevie's old albums have been rereleased. All are excellent featuring many of his early hits. This album dates from 1970, and is his first self-produced effort that really brings his genius into focus. Besides the title track, this platter also contains "We Can Work It Out," "Never Had A Dream Come True" and others.

Marvin Gaye Tammi Terrell
You're All I Need
M5-142V1

This is a very underrated album. I picked it up a few years ago in the cut-out bin and it blew my mind. These are mainly majestically orchestrated love songs that define what a love song should be. Contains the unforgettable, "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing."

Jr. Walker The All Stars
Shotgun
M5-141V1

You can reel off the titles of dance records until you're blue in the face, but frankly this one is on top of the heap. Just look what this record contains beside the title track. "Road Runner," "Cleo's Back," "Do The Boomerang," and "Shoot Your Shot." This album and a six pack of beer (Stroh's if you can get it) should guarantee anyone a good time.

As long as you're at it and you're in the mood to buy records, you also might want to pick up the Jackson Five's first record, or maybe the Supremes' *A-Go-Go*. And what? Did I forget Martha and the Vandellas' *Heat Wave*?

If you missed these the first time around here is your second chance. Now if Atlantic would start dusting off the Solomon Burke, Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Percy Sledge albums, I could die happy.

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Caribbean Reggae Got Soul!

BY GENE SCARAMUZZO

Dennis Brown
Ole Man River's
July 9, 1981

In the spirit of many great American soul bands, Dennis Brown and his band brought high energy dance music and a sense of humor to Ole Man River's on July 9. These musicians obviously enjoy playing together, and they played with a light-heartedness that quickly carried over to the audience.

One of the nicest things about the concert was that the band was having a great time. The sax player, "Mean Dean" Frazer, was laughing and carrying on the whole evening, and during a song in which they featured each musician on a solo there was a hilarious moment involving the rhythm guitarist, Winston "BoPeep" Bowen. Being the man responsible for playing the choppy reggae guitar chords that are so essential to reggae, he continued chopping away in the spotlight for an extremely tedious solo while the rest of the band looked on and laughed.

Many of the musicians in the nine-piece band have played on Dennis Brown's albums (in fact, except for the lead guitarist, they all appear on his *Words of Wisdom* album), which explains why they were musically so tight and so comfortable with the sometimes complex song arrangements. There were no famous names among the band members, but they were an excellent back-up band, several of them being outstanding musicians. I was amazed at the creativity of drummer Devon Richardson and keyboardist Franklin "Bubbler" Waul. And Connecticut-born lead guitarist, Andy Basford, did a fine job as well.

That these musicians were allowed to display their creativity points out the main characteristic of Dennis Brown's reggae. He's not into the kind of reggae where simplicity, sparseness, and repetition is the



game. His band charged forward filling every space in the music. Most responsible for this was bassist Lloyd Parks who played through everything, never leaving a gap. The difference between this band's treatment of reggae and that of Burning Spear (who appeared at Ole Man River's last May) was dramatic. Although Burning Spear (Winston Rodney) brought seven musicians with him, five of them (bass, lead and rhythm guitars, horns, and keyboard) were restricted to playing the same thing over and over again, creating that hypnotic reggae groove. This formed the perfect foundation for the drummers and vocal to express themselves rhythmically and melodically, creating that reggae that

Continued on next page

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Dave Bartholomew On His Own

BY ALMOST SLIM

"My Ding-A-Ling"
Dave Bartholomew
King

Nobody could write songs like Dave Bartholomew. Ironically, under his own name he had only one hit, "Country Boy," which was a moderate seller chalking up about 100,000 in sales in 1949 for De Luxe. Bartholomew's forte was in penning hits for the likes of Fats Domino, Smiley Lewis, and the rest of the Imperial gang. But most are familiar with that story.

This cute little ditty has Bartholomew vocalizing over a swinging big band arrangement. The catchy lyrics were ideally suited to Bartholomew's lithe voice. Sadly, this novelty didn't hit when it was waxed in 1951. However it became a surprise hit 22 years later for Chuck Berry who



turned his version to gold. Berry's version doesn't credit Bartholomew but we know better, don't we? The flip, "Bad Habit," is worth mention, too — a very strong New Orleans city blues.

(Thanks to Leo Zuperku, who said he paid \$35 for this copy.)

Continued from page 29

is so akin to N.O. funk. The band left spaces in the music everywhere, but the groove was so strong that the listener could feel it even when no one was playing. Dennis Brown's band, on the other hand, was almost all free-form within the structure of the song arrangements. The reggae it created was not a hypnotic groove; rather it was driving, music-filled, and frenetic.

Leading it all was Dennis Brown, the self-proclaimed Crown Prince of Reggae, jerking his body spasmodically, sending his dreadlocks flying in all directions. His performance had many of the earmarks of American soul acts of the Sixties. And sure enough, Dennis Brown credits such artists as the Temptations, Impressions, Drifters and Professor Longhair (!) as the main influences on his music. These influences perfectly suited his love songs. But strangely enough, even

though his albums consist primarily of love songs, he concentrated here mostly on his rasta/political songs. Anyone listening to the lyrics of the songs might have felt that the seriousness of the words didn't fit with the lightness and humor of the performance. But I doubt anyone in the audience was being so critical.

For those interested in hearing a Dennis Brown album that resembles his live performance, try *Words of Wisdom* or *Foul Play*. For another sound altogether, try one of the great reggae albums of all time... *Wolf and Leopards* (preferably the Jamaican import). This album, recorded when Dennis Brown was only 20 years old, is reggae music of the older, funkier style that he quickly abandoned. The album contains the beautiful, haunting songs "Wolf & Leopards" and "Emanuel," and is one of the records that sold me on reggae. I'm willing to bet it will do the same for you.

Reviews

Talk Talk Talk The Psychedelic Furs Columbia 37339

It seems that the face of pop music is again changing expressions, from unabashed narcissistic rage to an almost dour, calculated smirk. Several new groups have offered us songs of dadaistic reportage, often embracing themes of perfect absurdity, entrapment, meaninglessness. The Gang of Four, Japan, Echo & the Bunnymen, and The Psychedelic Furs are among the most disturbing and powerful of these artists. Their music so correctly mirrors the dangerous state of our society that we are forced to regard their work as something other than singing and backbeat. Unlike The Clash, these groups lead us away from the newspapers and into their lives. If we do not identify with them, we have at least come to know something about their feelings, their relationships with others. If these artists are as disillusioned as society, their art is indeed worthy of our attention.

Aside from music business rhetoric, little has been written about The Psychedelic Furs in particular. They've released two albums to date: *The Psychedelic Furs* and *Talk Talk Talk*, these having established their thick, dreamlike approach to the rock idiom. The debut album was recognized by some critics as a break in the continuum of solipsistic neo-punk records being produced in the U.K. Songs such as "India" and "Imitation of Christ" succeeded in exposing the lunacy that permeates our lives. If these songs were expressions of anger, then that feeling became entangled in a labyrinth of almost psychotic imagery. Though craziness is a form of defense, the Furs seemed quite in control of it, seeking even to master it as an ideal method of showing us our own psychosis in all its ugliness and disgrace. It is no secret that great musicians are also great actors.

With the release of the new album, *Talk Talk Talk*, the Furs present us with enigmas of a more personal nature. Singer/lyricist Richard Butler all but abandons the collective tone of the previous album and sets most of the songs in the first person. The libretto is significantly less cluttered

THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS •



with commercial images, yet it lacks the desperate wails and passionate appeals for satiation. If any common theme emerges from these songs, it is one man's perception of his personal relationships. Moreover, a vision of the world *through* those relationships appears. *Talk Talk Talk* does retain the directness established in the first record, particularly in *I Wanna Sleep With You*.

Musically, the Furs function together in near-perfect synchronization, as if all the instruments were played by a single musician. Each individual sound, from guitar to bass to sax to Butler's reedy voice, blends with the others to produce the eerie reverberating mix that is the Furs' sonic trademark. That The Psychedelic Furs have a distinctive sound is noteworthy when taken in comparison to the number of groups currently recording that sound so very much alike.

The Psychedelic Furs are near the forefront of musicians who have forged a sound sufficiently new and disturbing to bring us an additional step beyond the ethereal hacking of current pop-rock. Music, as any art, does not necessarily bring our attention to new thoughts or feelings, as many believe. More often it suggests new ways of solving old problems, new ways of coping with the ancient human plagues of anger, boredom, pain. It's been said that blues music can heal a broken heart, if only for a short while. In some ways, the music of groups such as the Furs might, in like fashion, heal a broken spirit.

Note: The Psychedelic Furs will appear live at Jed's on Oak Street, on Tuesday, August 11th, 1981. This will

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be the band's first performance in New Orleans, and if it's anything like their sold-out shows at the Ritz in New York, their reputation will succeed them.

— Dan Groya

The Stranglers The Meninblack Stiff America

The Stranglers first came to prominence during the English punk explosion, but they were never really punk. They were too old, for one thing, and they didn't sound like any other band you could think of. On this their latest release, *The Meninblack*, they don't even sound much like the Stranglers anymore. Like other recent English bands, they seem to be trying to stretch the boundaries of the rock idiom. In this case this means the abandonment of traditional drumming styles and an increased reliance on synthesized sound. Theoretically there should be nothing wrong with this tendency. Experimentation is usually admirable, and it's only right that keyboardist Dave Greenfield should come to dominate the group's sound since he was always their most interesting instrumentalist. They even seem to have eliminated the aggressive misogyny of singer Hugh Cornwall that so marred their early albums. But none of this can disguise the fact that it was the overall sound of those first records that made the Stranglers so compelling and that their new sound with its layer upon layer of whirring and bleeping synths is less than fascinating.

Part of the problem here is that *The Meninblack* presents itself as a "concept" album, which again should theoretically be all right (though I know many would disagree), but I can't for the life of me figure out what the hell the concept is. It's apparently supposed to be religious, since the cover announces "The Gospel according to The Meninblack" and the record contains a rather dubious rewrite of the Lord's Prayer, but all I could gather after repeated listenings is that these men are somehow up above and that their return is eagerly awaited. Who they are is never specified or even suggested (though I



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don't think it has anything to do with a defunct local band that went by the name of the Men in Black). And it doesn't help that the sides are filled out with extended instrumentals. In the end it seems that only a few of the songs have anything to do with the very ill-fitting concept and that a number of heterogeneous pieces have been thrown together to flesh it out.

I don't mean to suggest that this is a worthless record. The Stranglers are actually quite accomplished, and some of the songs hint at the old fire. On a purely sonic level it can be quite arresting at times, but overall the attention seems to wander. A clearer grasp of their strengths and weaknesses could lead to a great step forward on the next Stranglers album.

— Steve Alleman

El Rayo-X David Lindley Asylum SE 524

El Rayo-X marks David Lindley's debut as a solo artist, an effort which has been in the making for well over a decade. Back in the glory days of San Francisco in the late Sixties, his band, Kaleidoscope, fused the unlikely combination of country, blues and Middle Eastern music into a somewhat bizarre yet unique sound documented on three albums recorded for Epic. On the records, and in live performances at the legendary Avalon Ballroom and The Family Dog, Lindley proved to be a virtuoso of the stringed instrument, primarily guitar, violin and banjo. Since that time, his instrumental capabilities have become his bread and butter.

I first saw Lindley perform with Jackson Browne in 1972, and the two have been inseparable since that time, with Lindley leading Browne's touring bands and appearing on every album with the exception of *Saturate Before Using*. On the early records, Lindley was largely responsible for rendering Browne's visions of romance and apocalypse into music; his violin on the whole of *Late For The Sky* remains nearly as potent and evocative as Browne's lyrics themselves. His slide guitar playing has been equally successful in Jackson's first attempts at rock 'n' roll, giving them the backbone they lacked otherwise. In between his work with Browne,

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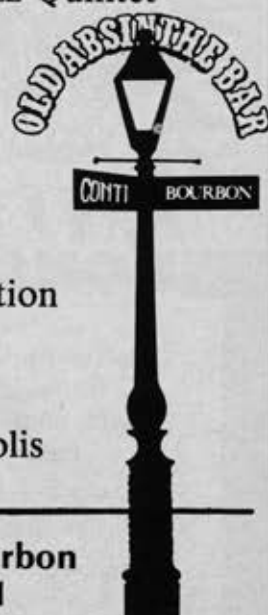
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Lindley has toured with backup bands for both James Taylor and Crosby and Nash. He is also responsible for providing much of the instrumental juice to be found on Ry Cooder's fine *Bop 'Til You Drop*.

All of this brings us, of course, to Lindley's own *El Rayo-X*, an album that bears similarity to and seems a logical extension of his work with both Jackson Browne and Ry Cooder. Browne co-produced the LP with L.A. wonderkid Greg Ladanyi for his own Asylum label, and the music contained therein has the same space, traditionally inspired sound to be found on Cooder's most recent releases.

Side One opens with "She Took Off My Romeos," one of three songs contributed by Bob "Frizz" Fuller. The song's Caribbean rhythms and bobbing bass line set the mood for the rest of the music to follow. Also revealed is one of the album's strongest assets, Lindley's voice. It is severely limited in range, frequently shrill, hopelessly nasal, and totally delightful. Much like Ry Cooder, Lindley offers his singing simply and without pretense or benefit of studio voodoo. He also has wisely handpicked material well suited to his voice.

"Bye Bye Love" and "Twist and Shout" are two of this side's better-known covers, and both are given passable but uninspired reggae treatments. More successful is "Quarter Of A Man," a sinister little ditty once again written by "Frizz" Fuller. (This guy, whoever he is, has a wonderfully perverse sense of humor.) Also a standout is "Mercury Blues," fueled by pounding drums and Lindley's turbo-charged slide guitar. Play this one as loud as your zoning ordinance will tolerate.

The title cut kicks off the second side, sung in Spanish and featuring neat Tex-Mex "horns" courtesy of retired Band alumni Garth Hudson. Following is the Sixties nugget "Your Old Lady," done here lowdown and slinky. Two songs appear back-to-back which pay tribute to Louisiana. The first, "Petit Fleur," is a Cajun-styled ballad sung in French which was written for and first recorded by Kaleidoscope on their debut album. (I prefer the earlier version for its joyfully ragged and authentic feeling.) Next in line is Huey Smith's little-known "Tu-bu-cu-lucas And The Sinus Blues." Though nothing too special, this song gets a much fairer West



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Coast treatment than did Ernie K-Doe's "A Certain Girl" at the hands of Warren Zevon.

My only complaint is directed to the album's production; at times it is so clean and precise it borders upon antiseptic. Lindley recorded "live in the studio," and the spontaneity of this procedure seems at odds with the technically excellent yet clinical production. Some rough edges and a little more grit wouldn't have hurt. All in all, *El Rayo-X* is an unexpected pleasure and a thoroughly enjoyable record to spend the summer with. I just hope we don't have to wait another ten years for Lindley's next one.

— Steve Graves

Reckoning

The Grateful Dead
Arista A2L 8604

Jack O' Roses

Robert Hunter
Dark Star DSLP 8001

The Dead's *Reckoning* leads off with "Dire Wolf," a song about a wolf: "Six hundred pounds of sin/Was grinning at my window/All I said was 'Please come in.'" The Grateful Dead play with fate, chance — they seem to invite trouble. Last year's *Go To Heaven* was the first decent studio album they had made since 1977's *Terrapin Station*. And that had some real losers like "Dancing in the Streets" and "Sunrise." Everybody's expecting some kind of breakthrough like *Mars Hotel* or *American Beauty* and the Dead decide on reassessment, an acoustic album with no really new material on it.

The last live album, *Steal Your Face* was pretty dismal. Their gigantic Alembic sound system spit like a mad dragon, and the performances were lackluster. Where were the peaks, the jams? The dynamics ran from low-key to lower-key.

The *Reckoning* acoustic double is very low-key, but there's an unmistakable buoyancy, an integral lightness which allows the material to rise above its familiarity. The only way to describe Garcia's guitar solos is uplifting. The ideas that flow so fluidly on electric guitar have an earthy tautness on the acoustic. "It Must Have Been The Roses" is such an old

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warhorse, but Garcia's lyrical fingers transform it, make it new.

Some songs are given a much more definitive treatment. The LP, *Bear's Choice* from 1971, contained both "Dark Hollow" and "Been All Around The World." These 1980 versions display a maturity and sensitivity absent from the earlier ones. The interplay, the tonality, the totality of what the musicians are doing comes shining through — perhaps even more than the playing on a classic studio album like *American Beauty* where a certain amount of the sound is muffled.

"Lady Of Carlisle," on Robert Hunter's English import, *Jack O' Roses*, concerns a "Jack O' Roses," but the song bears little resemblance to the "Jack-a-Roe" on the Dead's *Reckoning*. The latter is credited "traditional;" Hunter's is credited "traditional, arranged by Hunter." Hunter's sounds like a cross between an English ballad and an old black gospel tune — the Dead's like a bluegrass song. Hunter's "Jack" deals with a "man of war" like the Dead's, but Hunter's is much more complex. Check out this verse: "When at last she did recover/She threw her fan in the lion's den/Saying, 'Which of you to gain a lady/Will return my fan again?'" "Lady With a Fan" is a theme running through *Terrapin* a more verbose version which is featured on side two of Hunter's *Jack O' Roses*.

All through the LP Hunter mixes the mythology from Dead songs with the mythology of traditional English and American songs. His "Reuben and Cherise" contains an extra verse that wasn't on Garcia's "Reuben" from 1978's *Cats Under the Stars*. Does Garcia edit Hunter, or is Hunter revising himself? (Perhaps both.)

Jack O' Roses doesn't hide Robert Hunter like his two previous albums. Just his voice against his guitar. His guitar sings full and moving (surprise). His voice sounded like a psychedelic Johnny Cash on his other records; his talking/singing holds its own here. Without the hysterical edge he sounds more like a wandering (if somewhat lost) minstrel.

One line I could never make out from *Terrapin* on the Dead's LP comes through loud and clear: "Faced with mysteries dark and vast/Statements just seem vain at last."

— Zeke Fishhead

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Becky Kury and **Earl King** are now being featured with the **Mystery Monitors** . . . Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York are venues the **The Neville Brothers**, who are promoting their new album. The album is reportedly selling very well in town and has gotten great attention nationwide.

Arhoolie Records plans a **Cajun Fiddle Anthology**, a **Michael Doucet** album, and an **Octa Clark & Hector Duhon** record.

Lawsuits are the big news on the New Orleans scene this past month. **Huey Smith** is launching a suit against **Marshall Sehorn**. There's a disagreement over a session Smith recorded at **Seasaint** in 1979 that was sold to **Charly Records** in England . . . **Allison Kaslow**, former manager of **Professor Longhair**, is suing **JSP Records** in England. She claims the company's latest release, *The London Concert*, by **Professor Longhair**, was bootlegged and no money is, or was paid to Fess's family.

Godot has had personnel changes. **Fred LeBlanc** is the new drummer for the band, and other band members have taken over keyboard duties . . . **Leslie Smith**, daughter of premier photographer **Michael P. Smith**, has debuted as vocalist with several top local jazz musicians at Tyler's lately.

The Cold are on tour "back East" this month, with the **Paradise** in Boston, **Tracks** in New York, and **The Ritz** in the Big Apple on the agenda . . . **The Singles** is a hot new band which includes as a member, **Chuckie Menendez**, [the] brother of the **Cold's Barbara Menendez**.

The legendary (so the ad goes) **Boxcar Willie** of television offer fame is playing at the **Happy Cajun** in Buras, Louisiana, these days and, according to our Cajun connection in those parts, is packing them in . . .

The **Day of Rock and Roll** was a huge success. Estimates are that 66,000 people showed up to make it the second largest crowd ever (after the **Rolling Stones**) at a Superdome concert. Like the song says, "Don't rename it/ You might as well claim it."

Studio in the Country will host **Tony Dagradi** (as he records his second album) and **The Meters** this



PHOTO BY DONN YOUNG

Earl King

month . . . **Knight Studios** has just received its first gold record with "Love Vibrations" recorded by **Joe Simon**. **Sam & Dave** have recently been at **Knight** and **Isaac Hayes** is scheduled to be there in the fall.

Our thoughts are with **Jerry Lee Lewis** as he battles for his life after a serious bout with ulcers . . . **Mike Lord**, who's represented by the irrepressible **Sandy** of **C&S Talent**, has a new single out, "I Died Today," written by **Chuck Howard** on the **Wolftrich** label. Mike played at **Gilley's** back when it was called **Shelley's**.

Royal Orleans has adopted a new name. From now on, the rock 'n' roll group will answer only to the name "Persia."

Our Los Angeles summer correspondent, **Nancy Weldon**, reports that the **Nevilles** will play the **Roxy** in L.A. August 7 and 8, and she'll be there! . . . Louisiana's own **Julie Didier** reports that **Bonnie Bramlett** has just recorded one of Didier's songs, "Take All of my Heart" at **Muscle Shoals** for release on a new **Bramlett** album.

Lee Dorsey's "Working In the Coal Mine" is featured on the new **Devo** album, the **Heavy Metal** soundtrack . . . **Ford's** on **Laurel street** has just opened under new management. The bowling machine is highly recom-

mended. Free oysters on Friday, 25¢ drafts all nite. Sat-Thurs 25¢ drafts til 6 pm.

Starting in October, the **Urban Spaces Jazz Orchestra** will perform every second Sunday in each month at the **Contemporary Arts Center** . . . Lots of good poems by local folks in the new poetry magazine **Red** edited by **Nan Murray**, **Steve Singerman** and **S.W. Taylor**.

Notorious uptown musical personage, "Little Buddy," has ascended to the **Mushroom** throne after umpteenth years of tutelage. Congratulations from his idol and us all . . . The new **Peaches** store is now open at **Riverbend**.

David Richmond, who organized entertainment at the **Toulouse Theatre**, is leaving the theatre. He plans to package some New Orleans talent and promote it nationally . . . **Booker T. Glass** died this past month in New Orleans. He was a well-known bass drummer in brass bands in the city for years. The **T.P.S.I.** printed his age as 101, but according to the **New Orleans Family Album** he was 96.

A **Ronnie Barron** disc was released in Japan with import price \$14.95. Ouch!!! New **Rockin' Dopsie**, & **Clifton Chenier** albums are due in soon on import . . . **Chenier** also was honored by the city of Houston: June 20 was declared **Clifton Chenier** day.

Blues lovers should check out **Robert Palmer's** new book **Deep Blues** . . . **Flyright** recently reissued some **J.D. Miller** material on a Louisiana Rockabilly collection . . . Funk Dept: **Maze's** new album was recorded live in New Orleans . . . **Jimmy Newman & Al Terry** album with **Doug Kershaw** on fiddle now available on **Flyright** . . . **Red Tyler** was featured on **Gatemouth Brown's** album that features an 11-piece big band.

The original **Soul Clan**, with **Baton Rouge's Joe Tex** is to be reunited for a three-month tour beginning in September . . . "You're Draining Me," a three-year-old **Lee Dorsey** recording, is getting unexpected push from the **Black Pope**.

Warren Hildebrand plans to reactivate **Watch Records**. Look for a reissue of "The Best Of Watch" . . . **Senator Jones** at **Hep Me** also considering a "Best Of," collection.

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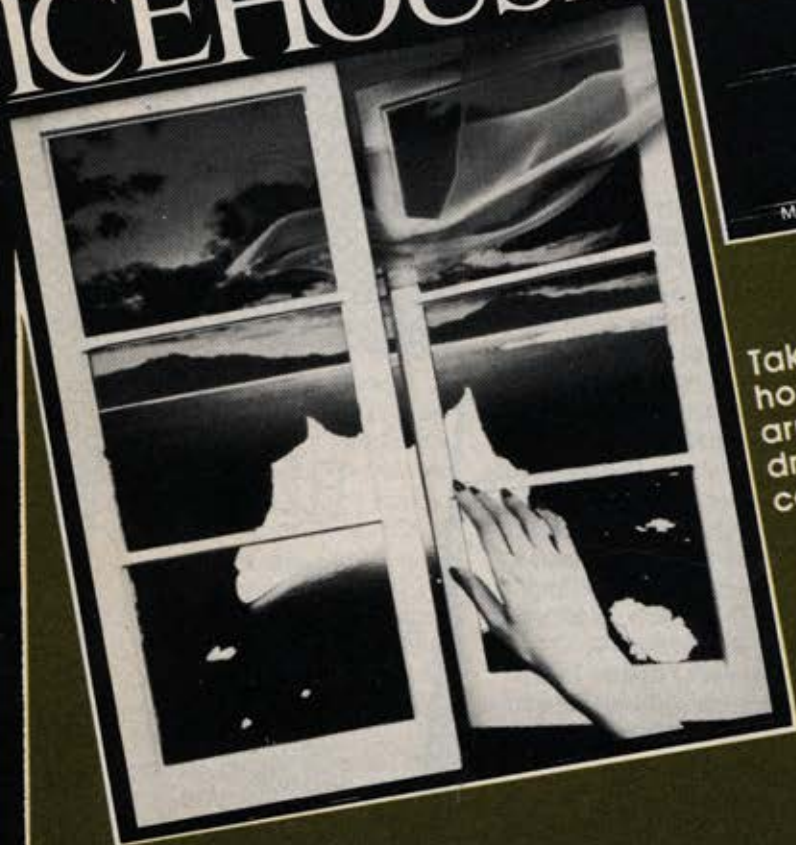
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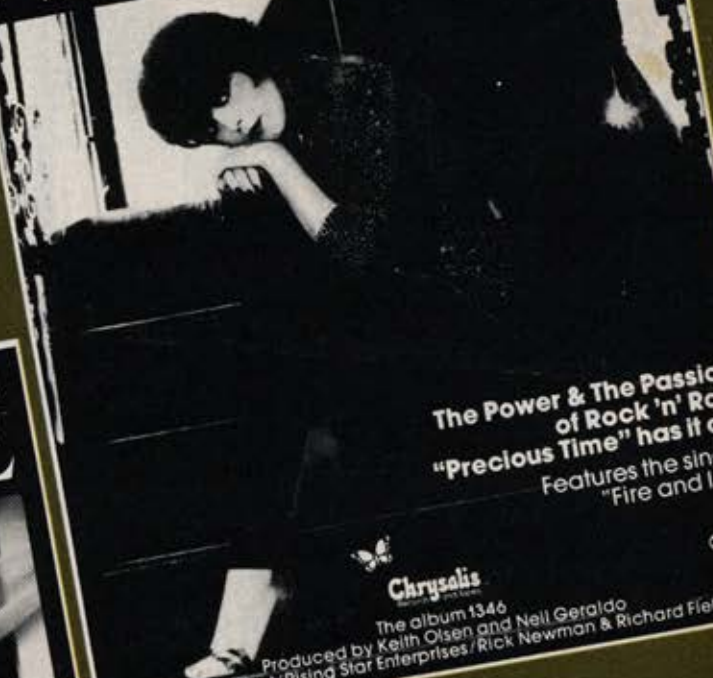
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