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Connie Atkinson
University of New Orleans

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Features
Lee Dorsey ........................................ 12
Earl Palmer ........................................ 15
Kidd Jordan ......................................... 17
Tiptitina's ........................................... 23
Cousin Joe ............................................ 25

Columns
Listings ............................................. 5
August .................................................. 8
Rare Record ......................................... 26
Reissues ............................................. 27
Records ............................................... 29
Reviews ............................................... 31
Classifieds ......................................... 37
Last Page ............................................ 38

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Friday, 6
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Saturday, Sunday, 7, 8
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Sunday, 8
• Foreigner, Loverboy, Ozzy Osbourne, Le Roux, City Park Stadium, 4:30.
• Nuclear Disarmament Concert, RZA, Otrabanda, and speakers, Tipitina’s.

Friday, 13
• Beauty Supply, Killer Bees, Tupelo’s, August 6.

LISTINGS

REPRESENTING:

Neville Brothers
The Blue Riddim Band
The Blue Vipers
Bas Clas
Spencer Bohren
The Cobras
Dirty Dozen Brass Band
French Market Jazz Band
Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets
Jasmine
The Juke Jumpers
Luther Kent & Trick Bag
Killer Bees
Product
John Rankin
New Jazz Quintet
Red Beans & Rice Revue
Zachary Richard Band
Rock-A-Byes
RZA
The Uptight
Woodenhead

CLUBS

• Beat Exchange, 2300 Chartres, 948-6456. Call for listings.
• Blue Room, Fairmont Hotel, 529-7111. Through Sat.: George Shearing Duo. Mon. 9-Sat. 14: Rodney Franklin. Mon. 16-Sat. 28: Jackie Cain and Roy Kral.
• Bounty, 1926 West End Park, 282-9144. Wednesdays through Saturdays: Harvey Jesus and Fyre. Sunday, 5-9: Billy Bell and the Dominoes.

• Bronco’s, 1409 Romain, Gretna, 368-1000. Country and western music. Call for listings.
• Faubourg, 626 Frenchmen St., 944-0110. Call for listings.
• Germaine Wells Lounge, 833 Bienville, 523-9633. Wednesdays through Saturdays: James Drew, Jim Singleton and Jeff Boudreaux.
• Hawgs, 3027 Jean Lafitte, Chalmette, 277-8245. C&W music, with dance lessons Mondays and Wednesdays 7-9 p.m.
• Luigi’s, 6319 Elysian Fields, 283-1592. Call for listings.
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RED ROCKERS AT HOME

After a nine-week tour that covered some 28,000 miles, New Orleans' most successful political punk rock band the Red Rockers were back in town last month. They returned to write some new material for their next album, to get back in touch with the city, and mostly just to relax.

The new album, a follow-up to their highly successful debut, will be on the same 415 label, but since 415 is now a subsidiary of Columbia, the band hopes the new record will receive wider distribution and exposure. Tentative plans are to record the LP in Costa Rica (need some help?). Also in the works is a trip to Cuba in early September for a few pre­studio gigs.

Although it took getting out of New Orleans to California to propel the Red Rockers' career beyond that of now defunct contemporaries like the Normals and the Cold, the guys still see the Crescent City as their home base. Welcome home, boys.

— Keith Twitchell

SHEIK FEAT

Happy Anniversary to the Sheiks, who will celebrate their eleventh year as a band on August 2. This feat of longevity is even more phenomenal when you consider that the band's line-up — Michael O'Hara on vocals and keyboards, Leslie Martin on guitar, Nick Ferber on bass, Rob Sanders on drums — is the same today as it was way back then.

All indications are that the forthcoming year will be the Sheiks' best yet. Their first album, Going Public, on Mystique Records, will be out in mid-September and is slated for nationwide distribution. The record will contain seven songs, all O'Hara-penned originals, including such Sheiks favorites as "99-1/2," "Anybody Seen My Baby," and "Take a Chance." The latter number features horn arrangements by Wardell Quezerque, who assisted the band with production at Sea-Saint.

Also in the immediate future, the band will make a return appearance at the Chicago Fest, appearing before Joan Jett who appears before Frank Sinatra. This Fest is like the Jazz Fest here but is broader in its focus. You'll be able to see the guys here even while they're away, though: they've just completed three station-break jingles for TV-6, which are scheduled to begin appearing in August and should run into mid-autumn.

— Keith Twitchell

BARBARA'S BACK

The new pop-rock band formed by two ex-members of the now-defunct Cold has been rehearsing for three weeks and is planning to play its first gig in mid-September. Former Cold vocalist Barbara Menezdez (coming out of a very brief retirement) and bass guitarist and vocalist Vance Degeneres are heading the new group, which is to be called Apt. B. Other members are Carlo Nuccio, drummer; Scott Godot, guitarist; and Ray Ganicheaux, guitarist (and Barbara's fiancée).

According to sources close to the band, the members want to establish their own pop style and don't plan to play any old Cold songs. It will be interesting to see if the group will stick to that decision when audiences full of former Cold fans begin clamoring for the old favorites. . . apparently the band also plans to write some songs geared for national airplay.

So what inspired Barbara to come out of her musical retirement? The last most of us heard, she was weary of the stresses and strains of performing and rehearsing, and reportedly wanted to take some time off and get married. Some former Cold members say Barbara has wanted to be in a band with her boyfriend Ganicheaux for some time; so when the opportunity came to work with Ganicheaux, Degeneres, Nuccio and Godot, Barbara apparently decided to jump back into the fray.

Since Menendez, Degeneres and the rest of Apt. B are currently keeping their plans under wraps, we'll have to wait a few weeks for the real nitty-gritty. Stay tuned.

— Lisa Vaughan

GOLDEN MOMENTS IN NEW ORLEANS ROCK 'N' ROLL XI

August 1955 — Bobby Charles has just finished a tasty dish of his favorite crawfish bisque at a truck stop just outside of Abbeville, Louisiana. Upon leaving the establishment, Charles calls out to the waitress "See you later, alligator." Not to be outdone, the young Cajun girl called back, "After while, crocodile!" Charles decided that this brief exchange might make an interesting lyric for the song he is writing which he hopes to record. Later that night Charles wrote his first and biggest hit, "See You Later Alligator."
BEACH PARTY

The First Annual Beach Dance Party, to be held at Jimmy's on Saturday, August 7, will feature Lenny Zenith from RZA, David Othillo, Stephie from Stephie and the White Sox, Marsha Dead, Carolyn Odell from the Uptights, Katie Caraway and the Surfoids, Carol Emitri, and from Sylvain Sylvain, Danny Reid. We're also promised a surprise guest. Hosted by the one and only Mandeville Mike, the party will start around 11 p.m. Admission is $4 and anyone in a bikini gets in free.

ZEBRA STRIKES

It looks like seven years of playing mostly cover material in clubs throughout Louisiana and the Gulf Coast region is about to pay off for Zebra. The hard rock band is presently negotiating an album contract with Atlantic Records, and has already secured a commitment to produce them from Jack Douglas, the man who produced John Lennon and Yoko Ono's last album, Double Fantasy. The band has been working more and more of their original material (à la Rush, Moody Blues, Journey, and the new industry standard, Foreigner) to their act, so their entire album could consist of their own compositions.

CHECK OUT THE MOTELS

The Motels are finally coming to New Orleans. The Los Angeles-based rock 'n' roll band will appear at Jimmy's on Thursday, August 5, and you can expect a rousing show. Lead singer and founder Martha Davis puts on an electrifying performance that matches her electrifying voice. Davis is backed up by an extremely talented band that possesses real stylistic versatility, and the end product is a good, clean rock sound, more mainstream than punk.

The group released its third album, All Four One, early this summer, and it's their best to date. Davis has written or co-written most of the cuts on the new album, and a few cuts ("Only the Lonely") are receiving heavy airplay around the country. The Motels play good dance music — some fast and gutsy, some slower and more soulful. Davis' rich, bluesy-romantic voice has been touted by music writers as the piece de resistance of the band's sound; but Marty Jourard on keyboard and sax, Guy Perry on guitar, Michael Goodroe on bass and Brian Glascock on drums produce a finely polished sound that cannot be ignored.

— Lisa Vaughan

BACKBEATS

The Backbeats premiered at Jimmy's last month (opening for the new and hot sounding Rockabyes). The 'Beats got favorable notices all 'round. Band members are Paul Sanchez (Godot, Heartbeat), bass; Jack Burk (Del Lords), vocals; John Herbert (Godot, Heartbeat), vocals, harp; Dave Claret (Singles), guitar; Fred LeBlanc, drums.
The Grease is Gone, But the Show Goes On: The name is simply the Valiants now, and the sound is streamlined also. There's fewer members, no sky-blue Style hair gel and very little black leather. The Valiants have laid to rest the slick, swaggering stage persona of the original and are now getting down to business — rock and roll. But the spirit of the early days remains, not so much as an extension of the Avenger's Vincente Vasalini but as an embodiment of all things ripe in the Crescent City.

"Vince Vance and the Valiants couldn't have happened in any other city, cause of the way you're brought up," proclaims Andy Stone, the only original member left having joined in 1971 when he was fifteen as a lakefront boy along with Andy, "I really don't think we are dirty or vulgar, we're honest." But then, Andy was raised in the French Quarter.

Still there is less smuttiness than the original Valiants and more musical talent. Sid insists, "The difference is, they were dirty." Now a Valiant stage show contains more insanity and less lechery. Greater emphasis is placed on instrumental breaks, even if they do occasionally turn lead guitarist Richard Heath upside down during solos. Of course then sometimes Richard climbs on Andy's shoulders and plays guitar when he wants attention.

The Andy Sleaze Show: But what people remember most about the Valiants is their literal interpretation of "Hey! Let's go out and get some girls!" Some clubs post signs at the door warning patrons that those sitting next to the stage may become part of the act. So, Andy discovers a "Diana" in the audience, drags her on stage, and molests her feet. During the height of Sid's dazzling song and dance rendition of "Rio," complete with fatsicles and cigar, he and Andy grab a female from the front and proceed to tango — with the unwitting accomplice sandwiched between them.

What about the Valiant female fans who bear the brunt of the group's jokes? Says Andy, "I'll tell you exactly what they think about it. The girls are a part of the show. It's a little bit of showbiz in their lives." And the ones abducted from their tables? "They're a little embarrassed, but deep down they want to feel what it's like to be on stage." It's plenty enough to satisfy the generally clean-cut Valiant audience who come seeking cheap thrills and good music.

Not all their humor is so physical. Andy frequently conducts sing-alongs to slightly raunchy tunes like "I Caught It at the Movies" by Little Peter and the Splatters, looking like a madcap maestro leading an orchestra of inebriates. These humorous escapades actually serve a purpose, explains Sid. "We did being funny, but the reason it's there is to keep the audience's attention on stage." During these insane segues, band members switch instruments, change costumes and prepare themselves for the next onslaught of Valiant madness. Like them or not, you can't ignore this band. Even during songs, the stage is alive with choreographed movements, spins and jumps. They grab your attention, quite literally. It's all a part of the tradition, of gaudy Mardi Gras gaity.

Professor Longhair's Legacy: But there is another tradition to the Valiants, one that is evident when you close your eyes and listen — Chopper's bluesy saxophone, the percussive keyboards, Andy's Jimmy Clanton style vocals. While the Valiants musically absorbed everything the wide-open atmosphere of New Orleans had to offer, Professor Longhair was something they paid particular attention to. Sid feels, "Everbody learned from the Professor, he laid down the foundations of so much rock and roll music." Yet, Andy adds, "Professor Longhair went unnoticed practically until he was an octogenarian."

That touches on why the Valiants left New Orleans three years ago. Sid laments, "We're still homesick. We just wish that New Orleans musicians could make decent enough money to be able to live and play there." But you can take it with you, and the Valiants no-so-subtly infiltrate audiences across America with the music of New Orleans favorites like Dr. John Larry Williams, Johnny Sansone. It helps to have a true inspiration and for that Andy turns to a classic subject. "I think Ernie K-Doe is one of the greatest guys who never made it. To me he is a symbol of New Orleans music, how good it can get, how fun it can be."

The New Orleanians in Exile: The Valiants are having fun, no doubt about it. But there's still pangs of homesickness. Together Andy and Sid elaborate, "We miss French bread, gumbo, shrimp creole, all the fine seafood, beautiful girls, the French Quarter, saying (in accent) 'Hey y'all, come down.'" Then Andy waxes poetically for a moment, "Brother Matt and I as kids, would peek through black iron lace balconies of a grey mansion in the Vieux Carre and sense quick ticking from the rushing metamorphosis below ... a sometime crescendo indicating only the fervor of routine celebration."

In this New Orleans outpost, the home of Andy, Sid and Chopper off the shores of White Rock Lake, signs of Crescent City culture abound. The New Orleans Saints poster, a pantry full of French and Cajun spices, a Bam Phillips cap on the couch, notes to pick up fresh seafood flown in by Chopper's dad. Andy feels, "It's impossible to ignore it, you've got that muddy Mississippi in your blood." He sums up the feelings of all three when he offers quietly at the interview's end, "Yes, it's a very hard city to leave."

Amy Martin

CHRISTINA PATZER

VALIANTS

underwear. Sometimes Sid reveals much more, like when he moons the audience after the tune "Wipe Out." Crude, lewd, and insulting? Not so, says Andy, "I don't really think we are dirty or vulgar, we're honest." But then, Andy was raised in the French Quarter.
A few days ago at Jimmy's, on the night of the premiere of the new Rockabyes, a select mob was treated to a reunion of Sexdog, one of the first of New Orleans new wave bands. Back in 1974, before the Sex Pistols was even a twinkle in Sid 'Vicious' eye, this unlikely crew decided, in the middle of a birthday party, to start a band. Publicity for the band consisted mostly of graffiti on the Piggly Wiggly on St. Charles Avenue, on Broadway (remember 'EAT Sexdog'?). Though the name may conjure up images of greased hair and safety pins in noses, these band members were none of that. What's more, their music dealt (and deals) with the more positive aspects of the human condition. As lyricist Rick Wigginton commented; "Our songs are really kind to people. We're very human and so are our songs. They're all about life and what people are going through, no matter if you're in Hanoi, or Glenbrook, Rhode Island. Our songs are about people and how they should be nice, which generally they're not."

The backgrounds of the individual 'Dogs are about as diverse as could be. Bassist Charlie Franklin preceded his 'Dog days as an R&B bassist. Cranston and David Clements have been in and out of various rock 'n' roll bands since they were 13; drummer Nick Sanzenbach had an extensive background in Dixieland and rock 'n' roll, with a musical family tradition (his grandfather toured with Mickey Rooney's U.S.O. band) and he's now an accomplished cinematographer for WYES-TV; guitarist Oley Sassone has been seriously established in the film business since his teens, boasting such credentials as TV movies for NBC and ABC and worked with celluloid artists such as Sergio Leone, Paul Schrader, and Sven Nykvist; Rick Wigginton has served as a model for beer commercials and has had his digits displayed in several Budweiser and Dixie ads. So what brought this seeming hodgepodge of creative energy together? Sanzenbach explains: "Oley and Rick came over for my birthday party down at 'Nicky's Boom Boom Room' a few years back, and after a little jamming the music came naturally. We wrote 45 tunes in six months and had enough material for two sets. It was a happening compilation of creative energy."

Today's band seems to have as much promise as it's predecessor. "We have songs about everyone," says Wigginton. "Letters from Hanoi' was about the boat people. Some people say it's outdated but it's not, because the same thing's happening in Haiti right now." At present the new Sexdog band has no definite engagement planned, but it is still a force to be reckoned with. In short, if you hear of a Sexdog show, forget about the name and listen to the music.

-Sam Owen
Consider the following question in your next round of New Orleans music trivia:

Irving Lee Dorsey is:

1. A former undefeated lightweight boxing contender.
2. One of the best body and fender repairman in New Orleans.
3. One of New Orleans' most energetic and successful rhythm and blues singers.
4. All of the above.

If your answer was 4, you're an A+ student and can go to the top of your class. Yes it's true, Lee Dorsey is a man of many talents. He developed into a contend­ing lightweight boxing protege who never lost a bout. As a body and fender repairman, his work is unsurpassed and he's a much sought-after tradesman.

Of course, we know him best from his energetic performances that earned him the label "Mr. TNT" and his string of infectious hit records, surpassed among New Orleans artists only by his childhood pal, Fats Domino.

Lee Dorsey's major asset is talent, but nobody puts more of themselves into their work. His love for making people feel good drives him to work long and hard. Hard work seems to revive him. Recently, he spent a full day working at his shop, did a full set opening for the Clash at the Warehouse, and then sped out to Kenner to do a full evening's performance at Pap­py's Lounge.

Obviously Lee Dorsey is a hard man to pin down for a few hours to talk about himself. But when he opens up he is as interesting and vibrant as his music.

Born December 4, 1926, Dorsey has been mistakenly reported to have been born in Portland, Oregon. "I never did bother to clear that up," began the compact singer. "I was raised up right up here in the Ninth Ward."

Music always was part of his surroundings, as Dorsey doesn't recall when his mother wasn't singing. One of his best pals as a kid turned out to be rather musical, too. "I was brought up with Fats. I was a couple of years older than Fats, but he was one of my closest friends. We use to tease him 'cause he couldn't play after school. His mom made him come home and practice on that raggedy piano. We always called him Fats 'cause he was just a little ole fat kid. Everybody had a nickname then, Bum Bum, Te Neg, fact they called me Bubba."
When Dorsey was 10, Lee, his parents, and his two brothers moved to Portland, Oregon, where his father found work. Lee took it in stride, growing up like any other kid. During this period he developed an interest in country music. He was an avid listener of The Grand Ole Opry, and learned to yodel like Jimmie Rodgers!

Before Lee could decide what he wanted to do for a living, World War II took over and he found himself in the Navy, serving as a gunner on a destroyer in the Pacific. Lee's most vivid recollection of this period was when he was shot in the leg as he tried to dive through a port hole as a Zero sprayed the deck.

After the war, Lee returned to Portland, and knocked around until he got interested in prize fighting. "I knew some guys who were going to gym," Lee recalls, "so I just started going with 'em. Once I saw I could wipe some of these guys, I started getting fights.

"I liked boxing. I never got whipped. I fought featherweight and lightweight, 128 to 131 pounds. I was a dirty fighter," chuckles Dorsey behind his ever-present sunglasses. "I been knocked out on my feet, and guys hit me again and brought me back. The biggest fight I had was on an Ezzard Charles card."

Interestingly enough a number of other R&B singers were boxers before they turned to entertaining. Among them are James Brown, Jackie Wilson, Jimmy McCracklin, and, of course, Lee.

Lee threw his last punch in 1955. "I just got cocky and quit," laments Dorsey. "I packed my things in the car and drove straight to New Orleans. My manager tried to get me back, but I just told him to sue me, and that was that."

Once back in his hometown, Lee had to find a job, so he studied body and fender work repair on the G.I. Bill. "I always liked to tinker and work on cars so I thought I'd try it."

Although he had no intentions of being a singer, Lee began hanging around the Dew Drop Inn and on Rampart Street. "...that's where the action was." Lee began working for local deejay Ernie the Whip, who owned a body shop as a sideline. By 1957 Lee's ambition was to save enough money to open his own shop. But fate had other plans, at least for the time being.

"I used to sing to make my work easier. I wasn't thinkin' of no records. But one day this guy came in to get his car fixed — Reynauld Richards [local talent scout]. I was up under a car hammerin' and singin' away, and he said, 'You want to make a record?'

"'Sure,' I said. I didn't think he was serious. But he was. That evening he left $50, and told me to come down to Cosimo's studio on Governor Nicholls Street.

"I went down that evening. I didn't have any songs but he asked me if I could write a poem.

"I said, 'Sure I can come up with that.' So I wrote 'Rock Pretty Baby,' and 'Lonely Evening.' It made a little bit of noise."

The record appeared on Rex 1005, Cosimo Matassa's label distributed by Ace. Up-to-date for 1957, the single sold moderately well in New Orleans, and Lee was invited by Richards back to the studio a month later.

"That's when I cut 'Lottie-Mo.' That put me on American Bandstand," laughs Dorsey. Issued originally on Joe Banashak's Valiant label (later to become Instant), the record did so well on the local charts that ABC-Paramount picked it up for national distribution. The bubbly single didn't manage to crack the Hot 100, but ABC gave it enough push to get Dorsey's name around.

Besides being Dorsey's first hit, it also initiated his association with Allen Toussaint (who produced the single) that lasts to this day. It also meant that the demure body and fender wis was going to have to appear on stage. Poor Lee had never sang in front of an audience before! "I was always pretty shy about performing," admits Dorsey. "If I was sitting in a club and they introduced me, I'd head for the door. Before they got my name out I'd be out the door. It took me awhile to get over that."

According to Allen Toussaint, it didn't take Lee long to get accustomed to the role of performer as the duo began sitting in at the Dew Drop. After the American Bandstand appearance, Lee began working with Hosea Hill's band out of Thibodaux, working opposite the great Guitar Slim.

As it turned out, the only real money Lee saw from "Lottie-Mo" was through personal appearances, as he had signed his publishing of the song over to Richard.

"He just paid me $50 a wop," exclaims Dorsey, "I didn't know any better! After I told Allen about it he told me, 'Lee, don't make no more records for that man for $50.' So Lee let his contract with Richard expire. Besides, he felt more comfortable with a hammer in his hand than a microphone; after his brief brush with stardom, Lee went back to straightening fenders during the week and picking up the odd gig weekends at least for the time being.

Then in 1961, Marshall Sehorn, who was working for Fire/Fury Records at the time, happened to hear "Lottie Mo" while in New Orleans on a promotion trip. At first Sehorn thought Lee Dorsey was an alias for Ray Charles, but he found out Dorsey worked for an auto wrecker, and told his boss, Bobby Robinson, back in New York.

Robinson stopped over in New Orleans on his way back from a convention in Miami, and he and Dorsey agreed to terms. Robinson wanted to record Dorsey right away but Lee didn't have any original material. Then like magic Dorsey and Robinson wrote Lee's biggest hit while they sat on Lee's porch. Lee picks up the story:

"I was living next door to a grocery store, and the kids used to play the dozens in the front. They'd sing, "Sittin' on the slop jar, waitin' for my bowels to move," and it was catchy the way they were singin' it. So that night I just jotted it down. 'Sittin' in my Ya-Ya, waitin' on my La-La..' Robinson arranged for Dorsey and Allen Toussaint to go over the tune but because Toussaint was under contract to Minit, he couldn't play on the session. With Robinson.

Robinson then took "Ya-Ya" to the charts open, reaching number one on the R&B charts, and number seven on the Hot 100 in late 1961, and earned him a gold record.

So Lee had to pack his bags again, and put his fender hammers in storage. "I really got in on the theatre circuit after 'Ya-Ya,'" recalls Lee.

Dorsey also formed his first group, and worked with the likes of Big Joe Turner, Chuck Berry, Pigmeat Markham, T-Bone Walker, and sixty-one consecutive one-nighters with James Brown.

Dorsey still has mixed feelings about the road. "Oh, you make a lot of money, but you spend a lot of money. You got to
worry about your transportation, clean clothes, the band. I got ripped off by club owners, who’d take off with the money from a full house. Man, I had to watch the door and sing at the same time. It was rough.”

Dorsey’s next Fury release, “Do-Re-Me,” followed “Ya-Ya” into the chart, and incorporated the same nursery rhyme approach that would soon become the Dorsey-Toussaint style. Fury followed with three more singles and the excellent Ya-Ya album, but they didn’t catch on like Lee’s first Fury singles.

By 1963, Fury had folded and Toussaint had gotten a call from Uncle Sam. None of this fazed our hero, as he was just as happy under cars as under the spotlight. “I was just a regular guy,” shrugs Lee. “I didn’t know much about show business. I’d come in off the road and do a little body and fender work in shops around town. See, I went through a few bucks,” he winks.

“I never had any trouble getting work. I had the tools and I knew the work. I loved it. I never knew if I was a better body and fender man or a singer.”

Lee didn’t totally abandon music, as Marshall Sehorn arranged a session for Smash and Constellation, which Harold Battiste produced. Good records, but they stayed on the distributors’ shelves.

This didn’t bother Lee, but Marshall Sehorn decided it was time to take things into his own hands. He produced his own Lee Dorsey session down at Cosimo’s Studio in 1965. The session produced “Ride Your Pony.”

Sehorn eventually leased the session to Amy-Bell, and Lee rode “Pony” back into the charts for the first time in four years, once again putting his tools away as he became a full-time recording artist/performer yet again.

“Ride Your Pony” kicked off an impressive string of hit records. It also marked the beginning of the Sehorn-Toussaint partnership, with Dorsey being their vehicle to the charts. The year 1966 proved to be the trio’s best year. The bluesy “Get Out Of My Life” was followed by “Workin’ In A Coal Mine” (Dorsey’s second gold record) and “Holy Cow.” Even with the British music invasion in full swing, the delightful Dorsey was able to sound vigorously fresh and alive.

Besides hitting the theatre/club circuit, Lee made his first trip overseas where he was an unqualified smash, spending three months in England, which included stints with the Beatles.

With Dorsey’s records on the charts, Sehorn and Toussaint had enough money pouring in to work on other projects. During this time they set up a number of house labels and recorded a number of local singers who otherwise wouldn’t have been recorded.

Lee’s gravy days lasted into 1967 with “My Old Car” (originally a Coke commercial) and “Go-Go Girl” making the charts. He continued to tour vigorously in between recording sessions. Ebony magazine even photographed him in a smoking jacket, smiling between his black and white poodles!

Even though Lee managed to build a brick house and drive a Cadillac, the perpetual smile disappears from his face when he explains how the extended touring put a strain on his family life, and he and his wife eventually split up.

Musically, the Dorsey-Toussaint sound matured on record as the Meters were added to Dorsey’s sessions. Their funky rhythm section was the perfect foil for Lee as his 1969 hit “Everything I Do Gonna Be Funky” so aptly illustrates.

In 1970, Sansu negotiated a deal with Spring-Polydor for the latest batch of Dorsey recordings. The result was the excellent though moderate-selling Yes We Can album, and three excellent singles. The album featured such underground classics as “Freedom For The Stallion,” “Sneakin’ Sally Thru The Alley,” and “Tears Tears And More Tears,” spotlighting Allen Toussaint’s songwriting abilities as much as Lee’s sparkling voice.

It seems that Lee is the perfect medium for Toussaint’s writing and arranging. “I guess Allen saves his best material for me,” says Dorsey. “He knows what he’s doing. It seems like he can write a song to suit just about any style.”

Musically Lee slowed up during the early Seventies, as Toussaint and Sehorn concentrated on building Sea-Saint Studio, and attracting outside talent. He made a couple of sessions in 1971 and 1972, but otherwise he was more than content to go back to banging out fenders and making a few local gigs in his gold Cadillac. In 1977, Lee crawled out from under his business long enough to record the break-up-to-date Night People album. “I thought it sounded great,” commented Dorsey. “It was today’s thing.”

Leased to ABC, the single and the album did well locally but didn’t get very far out of the city. “It just needed a little boost,” says Lee with a trace of frustration. “The kids were singing it in the streets, and the words were catchy. I haven’t gotten any money from that one. Every time I ask Marshall about it he says, ‘Well, Lee, that one got away.’”

Not long after, Lee began working with his present group, “my funky lil’ white band,” SKOR, that had been doing some sessions out at Sea-Saint.

All of Lee’s careers came to an abrupt halt in 1979. Lee was driving his son’s motorcycle one evening when he was hit by a car that was being chased by the police. “I broke both my legs,” shutters Dorsey. “He just got out of his car and ran away, and they never caught the guy. The doctor said I might never walk again, but I didn’t believe that. I guess I’m a lucky son of a gun, I’ve used up nine lives; hope I’ve got nine more left!”

Incredibly, from a wheelchair, Lee worked the 1980 Jazz Fest, to the delight of all those present. By the fall, Lee was back on his feet, if just barely, because he was about to embark on one of the most bizarre tours since Jimi Hendrix opened for the Monkees. Lee was invited to open for the Clash on their first American tour.

“I was surprised, but it worked out real well ‘cause that’s a real hard rock crowd.”

Lee was still somewhat taken aback by the rather novel way the new wave audience showed their appreciation. “They spit on ya, yeah!” howls Lee incredulously.

“I got angry at first. I thought, what the heck, I’m tryin’ as hard as I can. I had a $200 suit on and they had spit all on it.”

“I said, ‘What the hell’s wrong with these people?’”

The Clash said, they love ya.

“They love me?” The Clash, they had spit all over ’em. I’m not lyin’.”

“I like ’em, I get along real well with ’em. The English are real straightforward people.”

Today Lee still does what he enjoys the best, splitting his time between helping his son with repair work, and singing on the side. His primary musical goal right now is to finish up a country-western album with Allen Toussaint.

“Yeah, it’s something I’ve always wanted to do. I think I can do it, I listen to country and western all day; the songs all have a down-to-earth story. That music the kids are listening to on the radio today that they play so loud, I don’t see how they can appreciate it.”

Dorsey is also more selective these days about where and when he plays. “I’ve probably worked less in New Orleans than any place else. I like to work before a crowd. I don’t like to work for tables and chairs. If I can make you feel like you’ve enjoyed yourself, then I feel like I’ve done something.”

The future? “I got this attitude from workin’ body and fender. If they can do it, I can do it.”
Earl Palmer

Best remembered for his work with Fats Domino in the Fifties and since accepted as the best studio drummer on the West Coast, Palmer is perhaps the most widely recorded drummer in the history of recorded music.

There is a man, woman or child in America who hasn't heard the work of Earl Palmer, not only once, but thousands of times? It would not be outlandish to suggest that Palmer, who came to fame here with the Dave Bartholomew band before migrating to Los Angeles in 1957, is the most widely recorded drummer in the history of recorded music. Certainly no other drummer - or any other New Orleans musician - has recorded in such a remarkable variety of contexts.

Among aficionados of the local recording scene, Palmer is remembered as THE studio drummer between 1951-57, when it was generally known that he had virtually every studio date tied up. When he became part of the vanguard of local music talent that travelled to the West Coast, he proceeded to become that scene's most in-demand drummer, and has maintained that spot ever since.

Is Palmer the unacknowledged king of the big beat? Consider the slamming seven-note beat break on Fats Domino's

"So Long," the tom tom volleys on Don & Dewey's "Justine," the big bass drum thumping at the beginning of Jan and Dean's "Sidewalk Surfin'." With his impecably intoned ride cymbal, the authority of his piston-like tom tom strokes (which are either tapped or walloped), his playing has made mediocre records memorable and good ones outstanding.

The most tastefully dynamic drummers performing today - Pete Thomas, Howard Grimes, Terry Williams - all have styles based on Palmer effects.

In the past 30 years, Palmer has recorded and/or played with the following: Fats Domino, Phil Spector, Barbara Streisand, Shirley and Lee, Frank Sinatra, Sonny and Cher, Count Basie, Percy Faith, Jan and Dean, Smiley Lewis, Sarah Vaughan, the Temptations, Dean Martin, the Monkees, Sam Cooke, the Spiders, Stan Kenton, Nancy Wilson, Marvin Gaye, Lou Rawls, Oliver Nelson, Les Brown, Quincy Jones, Lloyd Price, Carmen McRae, Joni Mitchell, Diana Ross, Larry Williams, Lesley Gore, Vikki Carr and Henry Mancini.

That's only a partial list, of course, since even Palmer himself can't recall the thousands of studio dates he has taken part in. Speaking over the phone in between L.A. studio dates, Palmer is slightly amused at the suggestion that his presence on many of his uncredited record dates can be detected by his ride cymbal alone.

"Years ago it was the bass drum," he said. "Nowadays I have six kits - Rogers, Premier, Ludwig, Canco, Yamaha. There are only three I actually use, mainly the Yamaha.''

Palmer got his start in show business as a tap dancer with his mother and aunt in vaudeville. "We worked at the old Lyric Theater quite a bit," he said. "We also worked at the Palace at Burgundy and Iberville, the Tuxedo and the Doghouse at Rampart and Iberville. I also did my share of tap dancing for tips on Bourbon Street."
It was saxophonist Red Tyler, though, who suggested that Palmer study music. "I was on the GI Bill at the time, and I couldn't make up my mind about what I wanted to do. I thought about going to tailoring school or refrigeration school. Red said, 'Why don't you study music, you dummy?' Thanks to Red, I'll always be grateful for that suggestion, except for the dummy part.

"I had no brothers, but I always considered Red my brother. So I studied music at Grunewald's, on Magazine Street. Willie Humphrey taught me theory there. He also got me interested in playing tenor.

"My early influence on drums was a guy named Big Bill Phillips. 'Big Foot' Bill we called him. Also, Paul Barbarin and his brother taught me drums at Grunewald. Later in life, I met Big Sid Catlett, who made quite an impression on me. He was a huge man who played so gentle. The local drummers I listened to were Vernell Fournier, Ed Blackwell. I also was influenced by Max Roach and Art Blakey. But Blackwell was unique. I liked Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson and Shelley Manne."

Of his long-time partner Bartholomew, he said, "I have that album he cut with Willie Humphrey and the Preservation Hall Band. Dave is still as strong as an ox. I was talking once to Gerald Wilson, who was in one of Dave's bands. He looked at an arrangement and said, 'How do I play this, Dave?' Dave said 'Hey, man, it's on the paper. Play it — you get paid.'

"It was quite a surprise, the party Dave threw for me when I was down there a few weeks ago. He had most of the guys that I was close to. I missed Edward Frank and Freddy Kohlmann, but I got to see June Gardner and Ellyna Tatum."

Regarding his uncredited status on many dates, he seemed unconcerned. "There were a lot of groups that came out with records that made me say, man, that sounds like me. That's what happened with the Ventures. I did a lot of stuff with them on Liberty, then when they got popular they changed their name. I also did the first Julie London sessions on Liberty. I did the arrangement on the first Jan and Dean record, 'Baby Talk.' Until the Seventies, when Motown was still in Detroit, I did stuff out here for them — Diana Ross, Smokey, the Four Tops, about 90% of what they cut out here I played on."

Palmer, who still does make the occasional trip home, is somewhat baffled by the fact that he never has appeared at the Jazz and Heritage Festival. "Do you know why I haven't appeared there?" he said. "It's because no one has ever asked me. I've talked to Dave about it. Maybe I could bring a couple of guys with me, or better yet, put together a group of New Orleans guys who live out here — Harold Battiste, Ernest McLean, Lee Allen, Plas Johnson. I just missed the festival on my last trip. Couldn't they put together a few bucks and ask me? I'd love to play at home."

Aug 13—Lee Dorsey, The A.F.B.'s, and The Rock a Byes
14—Exuma and The John Mooney Band
19—The Radiators
20—RZA and The Backbeats
21—The Red Rockers
26—Johnny Adams and Walter Washington w/The Solar System Band
27—Exuma
28—James "Blood" Ulmer tentative

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By David Delegator

Kidd Jordan

He's played his saxophone with Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder, but the high-energy jazz that Jordan composes and loves has echoes of Coltrane, Shepp, Ayler and Coleman.

Albert Ayler's dictum that "Music is the healing force of the universe" expressed the simple power and complex truth of his metier, and the joy of a spirit at peace. Music is the language of humanity, but it speaks in many dialects, and in New Orleans, no sound that explodes out of the thin, green room. It sounds like a tenor sax, but . . . "It's a C-melody sax. I started playing it at 10 or 11. It was my first instrument," Kidd Jordan tells me as we sit in his office at Southern. He's been teaching saxophone and band here for nine years, and is now chairman of the music department. He also has an alto, tenor, soprano and bass sax in his office. "The saxophone is easy to play but difficult to master. There's not enough time to practice everything." It is a problem going back a number of years.

When Kidd left his hometown of Crowley, Louisiana, to attend Southern University at Baton Rouge, he found himself forced to major in clarinet. "They didn't have a saxophone major because not enough classical music had parts written for it so I had to learn clarinet from the beginning. It took away a lot from my sax playing." While at Southern, he learned alto and occasionally baritone with, among others, the George Williams Society Band, and the Tabby Thomas Blues Band.

Later, Kidd studied with Gene Northrup at Milliken and Fred Hemphkin at Northwestern. And all the time, he was listening and developing his own conception of composition and improvisation.

"My first great favorite record was Illinois Jacquet's Live At The Philharmonic. His honking and screaming were the first "out" playing that I'd heard. Charlie Parker could play out too. When Bird died, everyone was standing around hollering about where to go." It was about that time that Kidd met Ornette Coleman. They talked about composition, played together, and over the years, each has developed his own system of harmelodic charts: the improvisational melding of harmony and melody. It is a key to his theories of composition. "Jazz is an improvised music. It is in constant change."

The high-energy music that Kidd composes and plays has echoes of Archie Shepp, John Coltrane, Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, and Sun Ra. It has kept him from performing but not from working. From 1955 on, he played in a number of blues and R&B groups including Ray Charles, the Coasters, Larry Williams, Percy Mayfield, Charles Brown, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder and the Hawkettes. He's also worked with a variety of Motown studio bands for Marvin Gaye, the Supremes, and Martha and the Vandellas, and many other recording sessions. He works a variety of gigs in New Orleans, including the Herb Tassin dance band, and occasionally plays with Dixieland bands where he "always has fun, and can stretch out and get loose."

His last club date in New Orleans as a leader, though, was at the late Lu and Charlie's club. There aren't many clubs that will take a chance on what they consider to be "avant-garde" music. Kidd has found a wider regional acceptance of his music playing college dates and social functions in Mississippi with drummer Alvin Fielder. Recently, he was artist-in-residence in Lafayette Parish where he played a series of seven concerts for kids in elementary and high schools and who dug it immensely, their tastes perhaps less provincial and prejudiced than the ears of New Orleans. Kidd says: "New Orleans wants to be a museum. The Jazz Festival didn't have enough modern music, creative music. In Europe, they associate us only with Dixieland." So when Kidd was invited to play in Europe this spring, he jumped at the chance.

"I wanted to show Europeans that there is a 'New New Orleans music'; that there are improvisers here playing creative American music. The first time that I was treated as an artist was in Europe." He took his group, the Improvisational Arts Ensemble, to the Groningen Jazz Marathon in Holland, and to the New Jazz Festival at Moers, Germany. These are two of the highly significant new music festivals, and there's a good chance that an album will come out of the Moers
date. The band consists of Kidd Jordan on alto, tenor and soprano sax, Kent Jordan on piccolo and flute, Elton Heron on piano and bass, Clyde Kerr Jr. on trumpet and Alvin Fielder, drums. The quintet, which started as a trio with Kidd, Alvin Fielder, and London Branch on bass, has an album in the works; the product of a concert given recently at Southern. It may include some of the performances of the late tenor player, Alvin Thomas, a great favorite of Kidd's. "I want to record Alvin's work for historical purposes. The only document we have of modern New Orleans jazz is The Original American Jazz Quintet." (This group consisted of Fielder, Harold Battiste, Ellis Marsalis, Ed Blackwell, Richie Payne and William Swanson, recorded at Cosimo's Studio on New Orleans Jazz: 1956-1966 on the opus 43 N.O. Heritage Series.)

Last summer, "New New Orleans Music" was introduced to Africa. Kidd went to Sierra Leone, Senegal and Mali with a number of music educators on a curriculum design program. The educational street was a two-way avenue. "I'm standing on a street corner in Sierra Leone following Ramadan, the Moslem feast, and here comes fourteen or fifteen kids marching down the street playing these handmade quarter-tone instruments that sounded like an electronic big band. I'd never heard anything like it before and it blew me away. I got to play tenor and flute for a performance of the Sierra Leone National Dance Group, and in Senegal, I stopped in clubs, played and listened. I made two television documentaries there, playing flute underneath Senegalese poets. I also played in the streets, where the people are. I'm walking down this road in Mali, and began playing my flute, and all of a sudden, I have a hundred kids following me like I was the Pied Piper. And the music's universal. In that part of Africa, they play a lot of blues and modal music. In Senegal, I was standing in a cafe, listening to a blind Kora player. (The Kora is a huge, gourd-shaped African string instrument.) I had my flute along and got to play with this remarkable musician. Neither of us spoke the other's language, but we played until the cafe closed, went out into the street and played till 3:00 a.m. when a storm came. All we could do was nod, hug one another and go off on our own paths into the rain. I'm looking forward to going back."

Here at home, one of Kidd's great loves is the creation of experimental music. On one of his favorite pieces, he overdubs his tenor on the sounds of breaking glass, and has used the same technique on top of Stockhausen. He uses phase shifters and tape loops, drums, bass clarinet and feedback from his soprano sax on other works, many of which are on tape. They've caused his friend, Ornette Coleman, to wonder, "How can you do that shit out in the country?" The thing is, Ornette, that the universe is Kidd's country. The people of New Orleans should open their ears to the cosmos.
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**Coming:**
Sunday, Sept. 5—BETO AND THE FAIRLANES
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Fri. & Sat., Sept. 17 & 18—TIPITINA'S MARATHON
36 straight hours of music

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501 Napoleon Ave, corner-Tchoupitoulas — Phone 899-9114
Earl King. James Booker. Huey Smith. Jessie Hill. Art and Aaron Neville. What do these men have in common? Yes, they are legendary figures in rhythm 'n' blue, N'Awlins-style. But, didja know that all-of-the-above are stockholders in Tipitina's, perhaps the premiere showcase for the New Orleans sound, what it has been and what it continues to be? Whenever I find myself, like it or not, entertaining visitors from out-of-town, if they profess even a passing interest in "the kind of music you folks listen to," I hustle them off to the corner of Napoleon and Tchoupitoulas. I have yet to hear anyone complain. Tip's, as it is affectionately known, looks and feels "authentic," something that outsiders immediately pick up.

Tip's is different, not just because many of the performers are also shareholders, but as a place to hear music and to dance (something of equal importance) to "roots music" (I don't like the term either, but it's the most descriptive), it is without peer. New Orleans, at the moment, boasts an impressive array of clubs that feature progressive jazz, new wave, fusion, and good old rock 'n' roll, but the blend you find at Tip's, especially heavy with rhythm 'n' blue, has its own special flavor. It's a thriving institution.

However, as a business, well, Tip's is an MBA's nightmare. There's not much danger of Warner Communications staging a hostile takeover of Tipitina's, hoping to consolidate its earnings from their Atari home video division. It would make a nifty tax write-off. Right now, the club owes some $47,000 in back-taxes to federal, state, and city govern-
ments — and the Feds are making noises. How Tipitina’s, the business, got into such dire financial straits would seem a more appropriate topic for the Wall Street Journal than for Wavelength, but as the live music clubs fare in our city, so goes the future of our music and musicians. Hopefully we can learn from Tip’s mistakes. Actually, its fiscal follies would appear inevitable given how the bar and restaurant began life. Steve Armbruster, present at the creation, and someone who has lovingly watched Tip’s grow by starts and fits, states baldly “It wasn’t started as a business. It was a place to hear New Orleans musicians who just didn’t get regular bookings.” Armbruster credits Hank Drevich as the original impetus behind just such a club. As he tells it, “Hank and several others had attended a gig of Professor Longhair’s and had been knocked out by his piano playing. Hank later approached ‘Fess to ask him where his next date would be. ‘Fess smiled and told him probably the Jazz Festival — which was six months away.’” So like Charles Foster Kane thinking wouldn’t it be fun to run a newspaper, Drevich and Armbruster and a handful of others thought it would be fun to run a club. Unlike Charles Foster Kane, they didn’t have millions to lavish on their whim. And the years spent getting the hang of it have been costly.

If you wander into the bar on a Saturday night or a Mardi Gras weekend, you might indeed wonder how they could possibly be losing money. Well, they aren’t exactly losing money. Right now, management is struggling under the heavy load of those accumulated back-taxes and the accompanying interest penalties. If that debt could somehow be magically erased, Tip’s could keep on truckin’ along nicely. Tim Lyman, current manager, says they could possibly survive this crisis without an appeal to their patrons, but it wouldn’t really be the same Tip’s. Live music would have to be cut down to a couple of nights a week, the hours that the bar and restaurant were open would have to be drastically reduced. All of which might make an accountant happy but sap the vitality of the institution Tipitina’s has become. Tip’s deserves Special Pleading. In a short time, it’s become a vital part of the local music scene.

Several months ago, I trekked down to the Quarter, elbowing my way pass the crowds spilling out of Pat O’Brien’s, to dutifully sit through a session at Preservation Hall with an acquaintance from foreign shores. I prefaced our entrance by remarking that Preservation Hall was a place hardly anyone spent much time except for visitors, like himself, who wanted to hear the kind of jazz they imagined just poured from every balcony in New Orleans. Whatever the merits of the music (which are considerable), I always felt like I was visiting a museum, the cultural artifact of another time. When I hear someone like Earl King at Tip’s, there’s nothing academic about it. And more importantly, I don’t get that queasy feeling I get attending an oldies show where the whole point of the affair is “wouldn’t it be great if it were 1962 again?” That’s depressing, it makes you want to go home and sell off your vintage record collection at premium prices. What’s so wonderful about Tip’s is that total lack of wallowing in nostalgia that so frequently accompanies performers who have been around for some time. You come away feeling that what you were hearing is alive and kicking and you’re alive and kicking. As many of us huff and puff our way through our mid-thirties, that’s infinitely preferable to reliving the past. Even if you’re afraid that your brittle bones wouldn’t survive slam-dancing, you can get out on the dance floor and shake your groove thing without feeling uncomfortable. Tip’s is one club where you never feel too old to boogie.
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Delectable Dinners
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On August 11, The Radiators will play a special concert at Tip's. You're asked to look through your closet, clean out the attic, or check behind the washer-dryer in the garage for anything that might be "rummageable" and bring it along to the concert. Jeanne Dumestre will be stationed at the door to determine whether your trash might be another's treasure. If so, then admission is absolutely free. On August 22, these collected items will be sold or auctioned off. Other fund-raising activities include a special showing of Stevenson Palfi's "Piano Players" at 8 p.m. on August 29 and a live music marathon from 6 p.m. Friday, September 17 till 6 a.m. Sunday, September 19.

The Big Event is an outdoor bash planned for the weekend prior to Labor Day, or possibly the following Saturday—exact day and time is dependent on availability of scheduled bands—at the driving range in City Park next to Pops Fountain. It will be an all-day affair with a line-up of national and local acts. At press time specifics were still not available. Readers are advised to either call the club or check the local papers for listings.

All these events are for a "worthy cause," reasonably priced, and a good time is guaranteed to all.
Cousin Joe

Heralded in Europe but practically unknown here at home. Cousin Joe has known some of New Orleans greatest music and musicians in his 75 years.

Cousin Joe is among the city's best known musical figures in Europe, but in New Orleans remains one of our best kept secrets. Even to those who catch his rare local appearances or buy his albums, he's known as a blues piano player, although the majority of his musical career has involved tap dancing, singing, and playing the ukulele and guitar. It's too bad that you can't listen to Cousin Joe's life story on videotape because watching and hearing him is oral history at its best.

Cousin Joe Plesant was born in 1907 in Wallace, Louisiana, a small country town, which might account for his love of going fishing whenever he has the chance. However, at 12, Cousin Joe moved to New Orleans, first living uptown on Cherokee Street and then moving downtown to live with his grandmother.

While attending junior high school, Cousin Joe bought a ukulele for $1.75 and proceeded to teach himself to play it. Why a ukulele? "The guitar at that time was simply a rhythm instrument. There were no single strings; you'd never hear no solo guitar. That was too restrictive for me. Before too long, the Creole people in the Seventh Ward started to send for me to sing and play at Saturday night fish frys and pay 50 cents plus all the food and drink I could eat and all the girls I could catch."

During his teen years, Joe started working at the Busy Bee Shop on Rampart Street, then a bustling center of black commerce. On Saturday he'd bring in his ukulele and play for customers between shoe repairs and shines. One weekend the dancing trio of Hats, Coats and Greens came into the Busy Bee and upon hearing Plesant said "Stop cutting your fingers up working here and come play with us." A new group was formed, Hats, Coats, Pants and Buttons, with a very young Earl Palmer who later became the premiere New Orleans drummer, as the last addition. Cousin Joe recollects "Earl Palmer, Buttons, I used to carry him on my back. He was the best dancer in the whole city. His mother and aunt were the Dearfield Sisters, the best choreographers around, who used to teach all the chorus girls. We'd dress Earl up in white satin tails and a white satin hat. First he'd come out during shows, then we followed, picking them up and nailing them down."

This troupe played all the clubs on Bourbon Street and was offered a job in New York but Palmer's and Plesant's mothers wouldn't let them go. According to Cousin Joe, "Black people then didn't believe in taking a chance; white people would put a tag on a child and send him to Hong Kong."

Just as he knew Earl Palmer before he started playing drums, Cousin Joe remembers "Champion" Jack Dupree long before Dupree touched a piano. "Jack Dupree had a tin pan band. He was a genius at making instruments out of boxes of condensed milk and big used lard cans. Jack made an instrument out of a suitcase, cut a hole in the middle and then took some inner tubes, used the fine parts for the treble and the bigger parts for the bass. A Goodrich Tire executive saw Dupree playing in front of the Roosevelt Hotel with those tire parts. They took him to the company headquarters so they could copyright and manufacture an instrument like that. Years later when I ran into Jack Dupree in New York and he told me he was playing piano, I thought oh no, man. He could have been a millionaire with a funny instrument like that. White boys would pay just to see it, then want to play it, then only Jack Dupree could have taught them how."

After prohibition ended in 1933 and wine was twenty cents a quart, Cousin Joe left Hats, Coats, Pants, and Buttons to play on his own in a variety of clubs. His first job, singing and playing ukulele, was at the "Original" Jimmy's Place on Orleans between Villere and Marais.

Shortly thereafter, he started playing a four-string guitar because "it was tuned just like a ukulele" and played at the Black Gold on Seventh Street and Howard Avenue, which was owned by a policeman named Nick Patterson from the old Twelfth precinct. Around 1935, Billie and De De Pierce asked Cousin Joe to play guitar with them at the Kingfish, named after Huey Long, on Ursuline and Decatur. Plesant played at the Kingfish along with George Lewis on clarinet and Billie on piano, I thought oh my golf. I'd play guitar and go around the tables picking up money."

Then Cousin Joe moved on to play at the Oriental on Bourbon Street. His work at the Oriental was ended when the Jass Jesters lead by Billy Sherman, approached him about working at the Famous Door. Sherman played what Cousin Joe calls "a flat mandolin, often behind his
THE SOUND OF FURY

Ya Ya!
Lee Dorsey
Fury 1002

This eleven-track album capsulized Lee's Fury recording career. Besides the title number, such sheer delights as "Behind The Eight Ball," "Do-Re-Me," "Irie Dixie" and "Je T'aime (Oui Oui)," "Give Me You," are also included. Although the album is a collection of singles and not an album per se, the song selection is excellent and offers an opportunity to compare two of New Orleans' greatest songwriters, Allen Toussaint and Earl King, who both contribute songs for this album.

The album liner notes deserve special mention as they contain plenty of superlatives a la 1961, such as "in orbit," "push button warfare," "Mr. T.N.T. Hi-Fi'd."

Now a hard-to-find item, clean copies are fetching as much as $25 in collectors' shops.

—Almost Slim

(Continued from page 33)

But as a bandleader, Sherman was well aware of the need for a unified group effort. "He'd give each of us a note and when each of us perfected that note, you'd hear that chord as clear as crystal."

Each member could play the other's instrument. "We were interchangeable so if one guy had a gig somewhere else or wanted the night off there was no problem." Their attire and presentation for many years had the minstrel show look. "There'd be bales of cotton on the stage in front of us while behind us was a moving sign with a white-haired black fellow sitting in a rocking chair. We'd dress up in overalls with red bandanas around our necks and wear wide farmer's hats."

The Jazz Jesters with Cousin Joe occasionally encountered racism in even a less subtle form. Typical was an incident at the Dallas Athletic Club where a Mr. Poole came up and said "Let me tell you niggers, if anyone asks you something answer 'yes sir' and put the accent on that 'sir.' I then told the Jesters 'Let me do the talking; I'll tell him I'm from Gumbo.' My attitude was it didn't matter what they called you. As long as you got out with the money, the hell with what they call you.

His affiliation with the Famous Door continued through the late 1950s interrupted by a sojourn of five years to New York. Cousin Joe had been "fooling around" with a piano since 1927, but didn't start playing it professionally until the early 1940s. He says no one influenced his bluesy style. "The technique I got I thought his billing as "Smiling" Joe wouldn't do and substituted "Cousin" instead as "he always called me Cuz." From 1942 to 1947 Cousin Joe played throughout New York City often at the Spotlight or the Downbeat. He remembers Billie Holliday at the Downbeat. "She was great but if she heard anybody talking in the audience, she'd walk off stage." To prevent this, the Downbeat would put the lights out and put a spotlight on her while Art Tatum played piano.

Also while in New York, Cousin Joe recorded some rare 78's with Sidney Bechet, Orange Page, Sammy Price, and Mezz Mezzrow. The only recordings of that period available are what Cousin Joe calls "the work of pirates" on the French album Cousin Joe from New Orleans (Riverboat 900-265), featuring Earl Bostic on tenor sax, Pops Foster on bass, and Hank Jones on piano.

Upon returning from New York, Cousin Joe came back to the Famous Door and then moved to the Absinthe Bar where he totally quit playing guitar ("I got tired of carrying it around") and became known locally as a pianist. He stayed at the Absinthe until 1960 and went over to Poole's Patio where he alternated with Archibald on piano for four years. After eight years of piano work at the Court of Two Sisters, Cousin Joe retired in 1972 only to cut an album on ABC Records with Justin Adams and George French. Since 1964, Cousin Joe has gained international fame, having made over thirty trips to blues festivals throughout Europe, touring with the likes of Muddy Waters, the late Otis Spann, and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. This October he is booked to play at another festival in Nancy, France. For a man 75 years old and retired, Cousin Joe is doing just fine.
PRICELESS JAZZ AT A REASONABLE PRICE

MCA's Jazz Heritage Series makes the rarest and best of the early jazz greats readily available to a new generation of jazz lovers.

With its remarkable Jazz Heritage Series, MCA Records is making it easy for the serious collector to build a basic library of pioneer jazz. Prior to this MCA Heritage Series, the collectors, students and historians had to rely on European labels or small and sometimes poorly recorded domestic specialty labels or the very limited amount put out by the majors. In any case, the collector was oftentimes faced with undertaking long searches, paying outrageous prices and sometimes having to accept poor quality or bootleg reissues.

MCA is covering itself with glory by changing that bleak picture. They are making available some heretofore hard-to-find material and they're doing it with high quality reissues at very reasonable prices. So far, the Jazz Heritage Series has reissued sides by King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, Earl Hines, Sidney Bechet and many others.

One of the most recent of these MCA reissues covers very early and very rare Fletcher Henderson. Another is a collection of outstanding sides from Jabbo Smith's peak period. Reviews of these two sets of reissues follow:

**Rarest Fletcher**
Fletcher Henderson
MCA 1346


The sides reissued on this LP were actually recorded a few years before Henderson hit full stride. They give an enticing peek at things to come but fall short of producing the musical and emotional impact found with later efforts of Henderson's. Part of this is because the sides were originally recorded acoustically and are quite limited as far as sound quality is concerned. Also the fact that the Henderson Orchestra was still developing limits the effectiveness of the sides.

Nevertheless, the presence of the great Coleman Hawkins and the equally great...
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between Augie's Delago & The Bounty

Don Redman make these reissues worth listening to and studying. To know where we are, we have to understand where we have been and this is certainly true of jazz. Hawkins and Redman both helped point the way that organized jazz was to go and Henderson, probably the first serious jazz arranger, exerted an influence that is still being felt. If we can listen to these sides within the context of the period in which they were recorded, without using present day jazz as a point of reference, we can enjoy this early Henderson Orchestra for what it was. The album is not a must the casual listener or the lukewarm jazz fan. It is, however, indispensable for the history buff and serious collector.

The Ace of Rhythm
Jabbo Smith
MCA 1347


Jabbo Smith is enjoying renewed popularity due to his work with the New York cast of One Mo' Time. A new generation is discovering that Smith can be classed among the all-time great jazz trumpeters.

Prior to his present success, it was generally considered that Smith peaked in 1929 with a series of recordings he made for Brunswick. The records did not sell well. Brunswick had seen the success that Armstrong was having with his releases on Okeh label and wanted to cash in on the public's interest in jazz trumpet and Armstrong style scat singing. Although not an Armstrong imitator, Jabbo Smith became their man because he displayed similar characteristics of style. Unfortunately, Brunswick lacked the technical expertise and marketing techniques of Okeh and, great as Jabbo was in 1929, he was not Louis, so relatively few of the Smith sides were sold and this has made it hard to get originals over the years. Further, reissues of Smith's 1929 sides were spotty at best.

The Jazz Heritage Series has now made it possible for the public to enjoy early Jabbo Smith at his best. These reissues illustrate the marvelous dexterity and creativity of the man. Also, it gives us a chance to evaluate Jabbo as a jazz composer. Two of his trademark tunes "Jazz Battle" and "Little Willie Blues" alone make purchase of the album worthwhile, although there is not a bad track on the album. Previous reissues on Ace of Hearts label of London did not include "Got Butter on It" and "Ready Hokum," so the inclusion of these two additional sides to our somewhat slim legacy of Jabbo Smith reissues is most welcome.

— Duke Darnell

WAVELIGHT/AUGUST 1982
RECORDS

A SPECIAL SET OF IMPORTANT MUSIC

Albert King, the Coasters, Professor Longhair and Ray Charles are the latest shipment of valuables from the Atlantic Deluxe Series.

The vault of Atlantic Records is a musical Fort Knox stacked with the bullion of seminal Fifties and Sixties R&B, blues and early R&R. Albert King Masterworks, The Coasters, Youngblood, Professor Longhair The Last Mardi Gras (each of them two-record sets) and Ray Charles A Life In Music (a big five-record box set), all of them very attractively packaged, are the latest shipment of valuables from a company which probably has over a million hours of historic recordings on tape but which keeps only a fraction of that music in their active catalogue.

The historic value of these recordings is admirably documented in well-written notes by producer Albert Goldman on the Longhair set, linears on the Albert King and Coasters by leading critic Robert Palmer, and in an extremely attractive booklet on Ray Charles. Much more than publicity hype, these writings serve as primers and validators of the cultural importance of these recordings.

The Albert King is important because, as Palmer perceptively points out, King's "... mature playing and singing and the definitive soul rhythm section of the Sixties clicked together to produce music that would fundamentally alter the mainstream of white rock as well as the sound of commercial blues within a few years' time. In 1968, Stax collected King's best singles of the time. In 1968, Stax collected King's best singles of the preceding two years on an album, Born Under A Bad Sign. It was the most influential blues album of its era. Within months, Eric Clapton and Cream were regurgitating chunks of it whole (e.g. 'Strange Brew' and their own 'Born Under A Bad Sign') and rockers everywhere were scurrying into their woodsheds to learn King's songs and his signature guitar licks."

As demonstrated throughout these cuts, Albert King is a master at adroitly mixing a sophisticated and relaxed approach to rhythm and vocals while maintaining an emotionally intense authority in his solo guitar style. Palmer aptly metaphorically dubs Albert King "The Velvet Bulldozer." Seven cuts are from the aforementioned influential Bad Sign album and feature Booker T & The MGs, plus Isaac Hayes on piano and the Memphis horns. There are also two excellent cuts from an Allen Toussaint-produced album, and five cuts produced by Bert Decoteaux which feature singers (included among the numerous musicians are Crusaders' pianist Joe Sample and singer Deneice Williams). If you are not already familiar with or do not own any Albert King records, this album is an excellent introduction.

The Coasters' set is quintessential rock 'n' roll, very dance oriented, full of fun with a broad streak of anti-authority carousing through most of the numbers. Cut in the mold of the great Louis Jordan, The Coasters combine a droll comic delivery with very fine singing. Every one of their great hits is included here, along with a personnel listing for each number. Although there are a bevy of honking tenor sax solos by King Curtis which virtually defined the role of the tenor sax in R&R, the music on these recordings is of minor substance. What matters is the attitude and the delivery, and in this regard the Coasters were without peer.

Produced and written by a non-Black songwriting team, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, The Coasters' hit songs are subtle social commentaries often written in short, short story format. Leiber and Stoller were uncanny in their ability to capture aspects of Black life which were instantly recognizable in song form.

WAVELENGTH/AUGUST 1982
After the early songs, Leiber and Stoller went on to songs which celebrated youth, and thus was R&R born, progressing from an infatuation with Black culture to a celebration of youth culture. Although they may not be the first group that comes to mind when discussing rock 'n' roll, as this album documents, The Coasters produced by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller were a defining element of rock 'n' roll, a genre of music which completely changed the face of musical America.

As for Longhair’s music, what can be said about it that has not already been said? This set was recorded February 3 and 4, 1978, at Tipitina’s, the “nightclub” (I use the term generically) named in his honor and the place where he frequently tickled the ivories in his last years. On a couple of cuts he flashes his idiosyncratic piano stylish, but for the most part, it’s Longhair’s singing that dominates these tracks. Longhair’s voice is like Louis Armstrong shifted into boogie woogie with a whiskey hangover and whistling where the trumpet breaks would be. Longhair does not sound like nor imitate Armstrong, but he does, in his own way, essentially the same thing that Armstrong did: translate an instrumental approach to a vocal style. Longhair’s celebrated swoops and slippery rhythm accents are inimitable and wonderfully captured on this recording. Although not as strong as Crawfish Fiesta, it is a recommended addition to the limited but important body of Longhair recordings.

The five-record Ray Charles box set is without a doubt the most important of the four packages in this series. To say that Ray Charles is a genius is an understatement. Only Stevie Wonder is comparable (I use the term generically), and were it not for Ray’s pioneering work it is doubtful that Wonder would have been able to achieve what he has, for it was Ray Charles who opened the ears of America to what some call “raw soul.” Ray Charles sang as a man possessed, with a frenzied force that shattered the conventions of what many people knew as popular music. By sheer force of character, Ray Charles consistently stuck to the music forms within which he matured, and with an almost inconceivable music genius, welded together blues, gospel and jazz into a unique style which allowed him to perform not only his own music and the music of his peers with authority, but also to range far and wide into C&W or pure pop Americana, such as the song “America,” without ever betraying the essence of where he came from. No matter what he sang or played, when he finished it was always undeniably musically excellent.

First there are the blues — the cathartic song that laughs at pain and triumphs over trouble not by ignoring it but by concentrating its essence and shouting it out. If all Ray Charles sang were the blues he could have my money. But then too there is jazz — not three-chords-funk or fusion, but, as Ray notes, “serious jazz.”

Invariably, during the Atlantic years his band was as much a jazz combo as an R&B group, and they always played jazz numbers as part of their repertoire. But the linchpin was the gospel. Although others sang with gospel-influenced style, it was Ray Charles who brought in the musical elements of gospel music: the way he used the Raylettes — his female singers who were the choir to the preachings of the right reverend; original songs written in the eight- and sixteen-bar lengths common to gospel music; and especially the use of cyclical repetitions with a 3/4 or 6/8 rhythm over which he shouted and drove the band, the singers and the audience into a trance-like state, e.g. “I Got A Woman.” Ray Charles was the mixed media master of music.

A blind musician who did his own arranging by calling out the notes for each instrument at rehearsals, Ray Charles’ recordings of the Fifties and the Sixties never sound dated or stale. Charles made particularly strong use of saxophones, especially the baritone arranged to give substance to the bottom, mixing the rhythms, syncopating, hesitating, funkifying, using backbeats and upbeats. When one compares the music of Ray Charles with other music of the same period, it is immediately evident that Ray Charles was indeed charting new directions, or, as it were, was entwining and extending his musical roots to a logical synthesis.

With forty-eight cuts contained in the set, it is impossible in a short space to review the contents but it is important to indicate that all of the major directions are included. I think it would have made more sense to group the songs by style, particularly the jazz numbers (which include a beautiful trio rendition of Ger¬shwin’s “The Man I Love”). But that caveat aside, any set that includes the live version of the ultimate Ray Charles blues number, “Drown In My Own Tears” (on which the Raylettes flutter in and forever influence the singing of female groups), and the rollicking “Let The Good Times Roll” (on which nearly the entire Basie band shouts at Ray Charles and Ray roars back with a force which almost overpowers the horns), and the aforementioned “I Got A Woman” and “The Man I Love,” plus four or five blues and jazz cuts with Milt Jackson (some of which have Ray’s sharp blues alto sax) and numerous minor hits by Mr. Ray Charles, any set of albums that includes all of that, well, you can’t go wrong buying it, unless, of course, you have all of the original albums from which these sides are drawn. Even then, you will probably still be tempted! Ray Charles A Life In Music is one of the best buys of the year. Hopefully, there will be more releases of this same caliber from Atlantic. Or as Ray would say acknowledging the applause of an audience, “Thank you much. We appreciate it.” Yes, Indeed.

— Kalamu ya Salaam
Tempted
Vincent

As the course of British pop seems irrevocably fixed on a new dark age, the issuance of Imperial Bedroom warrants nothing short of giddy acceptance, the album being a musical wedding cake of big beat verbosity, a triumph of the baroque style and a roaring delight.

Imperial Bedroom
Elvis Costello and the Attractions
Columbia FC38157

As the course of British pop seems irrevocably fixed on a new dark age, the issuance of Imperial Bedroom warrants nothing short of giddy acceptance, the album being a musical wedding cake of big beat verbosity, a triumph of the baroque style and a roaring delight.

Elvis Costello's intense narrative style has been heard in a host of formats, and with this, his eighth LP in five years, he tackles all of them in several grand sweeps. It is an album of inspired calculations, replete with convoluted messages and altered timbres. The themes of its songs deal with the circumstances of love and hate, and are conveyed with a melodic allure and rhythmic ferocity which seem at odds with today's pop fare. But that's only part of its appeal.

The art of decorating basic riffs with memorable themes and pretty choruses is a standard contrivance, but Costello and company continue to take it to impressive lengths. Pianist Steve Nieve now extends his role to include orchestrations that augment songs in the George Martin manner. Bassist Bruce Thomas is captured with a booming tone that has never been so well-defined, and drummer Pete Thomas remains a source of persuasive beats and strong-man effects.

All fifteen songs are marked by craftily applied production touches that have appeared on previous Costello works, but never so liberally—phasing, compression, distant-miking and bits of tape reversal. It is Costello's second album without the production team of Nick Lowe and Roger Bechirian. The tricks of those two, however, are generously recalled by Costello and new producer Geoff Emerick.

In many cases, Costello is heard, through overdubbing, as a one-man vocal group. This is heard on "Tears Before Bedtime," which bears similarities with two Squeeze songs he appeared on—"Tempted" and "Black Coffee in Bed." Phased guitar and organ are heard on "Shabby Doll," whose wide bass tone contrasts with phased piano and organ arpeggios. "Man Out of Time" is reminiscent in certain ways of "Night Rally," even though it is sandwiched between an urgently reeling rhythm track under an echoed shriek. "Almost Blue" is an essentially unadorned jazz ballad, possibly the best ballad Costello has ever penned or sung. Fans of jazz vocalist Mark Murphy might note that the ballad phrasing similarities between the two are obvious.

Costello's usual saturnine disposition does yield somewhat, especially with "The Loved Ones," whose jauntier-than-air tempo leads to the kind of harpsichord and piano arpeggio figures that grace so many of the songs. The tiered arrangements yield in no way, though, as symmetrically inserted hooks (each iced with a vocal trick) find their way into every arrangement. ...and In Every Home" is a splendidly episodic bit of baroque British pop that finds Nieve's handiwork in the synthesized horns, strings and reeds. Similar devices are heard on the devilously haunting "Town Cryer."

Perhaps two of the most assiduously crafted, breathlessly evocative works of pop legend are represented by "Little Savage" and "You Little Fool." The former is an infectiously finger-popping interlude that has a bass-organ-piano push recalling "High Fidelity" and a teasing subtheme of classical origin. The latter has a light harpsichord intro launching the theme, a Dave Edmunds-inspired breakthrough (an echoed and distant-miked rhythm passage), massed acoustic guitars and cymbals. It's a stunning procession of hooks (the trumpeting falsetto in the final chorus is magnificent) that proves that the pop song doesn't get any trickier at 3:07.

Rarely have the agonies and transports of love been so handsomely festooned. It's about more than decoration, though. Catchy to the point of being maddening, it's the widest view of the Costello world yet presented, and loyal fans surely will be tempted to call it his greatest work.

Vincent Fumar

Steve Forbert
Steve Forbert
Nemperor AR2 37434

It's not easy to be the next Bob Dylan. Of all the new artists to be hailed as such by enthusiastic critics, only Bruce Springsteen has managed to cast off the kiss of death completely to establish a successful career of his own. Others, notably John Prince and Loudon Wainwright,
sank slowly beneath the weight, making some fine records but never fulfilling the monumental expectations. With his fourth album, suitably entitled Steve Forbert, the songwriter from Meridian proves to be no more than the next . . . well, Steve Forbert. And in doing so, he begins to set some pretty tough standards of his own.

With the release of 1978's Alive On Arrival, the Dylanesque similarities were too many to ignore. Here was this baby-faced kid from nowhere, blazing a trail through Greenwich Village's folk scene with an acoustic guitar, squealing harmonica, and some of the freshest songwriting to be heard anywhere. It seemed too much to hope for that his follow-up records would have the strength and impact of his debut. It was, because they didn't. Aside from "Romeo's Tune" from the second LP, not much more was heard from Forbert, and the critics descended upon him to bury his career with the zeal they had previously shown to establish it.

Forbert opens with what has become his forte, a simple story set to a tune bounding with energy, coupled together by a great hook of a title. "He's Gotta Live Up To His Shoes" is about the new kid in school, the guy ".. . that's got the world at his feet." Forbert sports a cynical and knowing attitude here. He knows himself how hot it is under the spotlight, and this song seems almost autobiographical. Great backup vocals by the Jordanaires.

"Ya Ya (Next To Me)" follows, and its fuller instrumentation breaks new ground for Forbert. This whole record is dense with sound, a rich layering of many instruments. With the possible exception of "Ya Ya," where there's a bit too much going on, the full orchestration works well. The excellent production and mix throughout greatly contribute; I really like to hear the placement of instruments not only left to right, but also three dimensionally. (Leave the "wall of sound" to Phil Spector's heritage; its recent reincarnation has screwed up more Springsteen albums than I can count.)

The inclusion of the cover of "When You Walk In The Room" is a mistake. I dislike the recent phenomenon of combing the vaults of old Sixties nuggets to remake. A credible job is done, but it's no improvement on the original, and it takes up the space where a Forbert-penned tune could be. This is touted as a single, and it would be a shame if it gets all the airplay. I was glad when I heard the next song played on the radio, because "Listen To Me" is possibly the album's strongest cut. From its echoey drum intro, it bobs along with a shadowy guitar line and slight reggae rhythm. Forbert addresses his lover and their relationship that's on the rocks, and when he tells her simply ".. . there's been a reason for us," his honesty and directness is inspiring. Forbert's voice is in fine form on this record. Like Dylan, it is far from perfect, yet perfect for his own songs. Despite his very limited range, he
throws his voice around self-confidently, allowing it to ai-yi-yi and bay at the moon. His vocals sit on top of everything, and it is their strength that keeps the full arrangements from becoming burdensome.

Other good ballads on Steve Forbert are “Oh So Close (And Yet So Far Away)” and “Lost,” two confessionals that exhibit a touching vulnerability. On “Oh So Close” he speaks to a friend at her wedding who, sadly, never became a lover: “You confide in me and I in you/That’s what good old friends are supposed to do/I’ve got one secret that I can’t betray/Oh so close and yet so far away.” “Lost” has Forbert telling of his affair with a friend’s lover, but the indiscretion appears to be one of the heart rather than the flesh. “Prisoner Of Stardom” and “It Takes A Whole Lotta Help (To Make It On Your Own),” while written in the third person, could well be Forbert’s autobiographical look at his own career.

The album closer is “Beautiful Diana” to whom he sings “. . . love is hope and hope is life” with tender-hearted idealism. Forbert is no longer the naive country kid in the big city (that can only last so long), yet he remains a romantic, holding out for simple truths and rewards. He has made his adjustments to stardom, weathered some bad times, and is off and running again. Steve Forbert is a pleasure to listen to.

— Steven Graves

Pure Genius
Clifford Brown and Max Roach
Elektra/Musician EL-60026

Topping the second batch from Elektra/Musician’s ambitious series is another bit of jazz archaeology along the lines of the label’s Charlie Parker rarity, One Night in Washington. Pure Genius is a heretofore unknown live date by a Clifford Brown-led group, the tape of which came from the wife of the late trumpeter. It confirms everything ever claimed about the young virtuoso, in an aggressive, fiery manner.

The set from which it was taken occurred sometime in early 1956, just months before Brown met his fate in a car crash. Besides Roach on drums, Sonny Rollins is on tenor, Richie Powell is on piano and George Morrow is on bass. The five numbers featured are exemplary of the hard bop style that flourished at the time, and the way Brown revelled in it.

Brown’s style of trumpet was ostentatious, but it never sacrificed melodic fidelity. “What’s New” leads off with Brown reeling off circus arpeggios and scurrying scales. “I’ll Remember April” is done as a rumbling Afro-Cuban number, with Roach hitting everything within reach. Brown assumes a seemingly endless middle register attack, corkscrewing hundreds of notes through almost as
many octaves. It’s a blazing, furious pace, and by the time Rollins arrives with his big tone, he sounds nearly reserved. Whether it was because of Brown’s domineering presence or the fact that it was his date is hard to tell, but it certainly is uncharacteristic of Rollins to sound so much in check. Rollins pushes on, though, and by the time Powell comes on, that soloist actually uses “Tiger Rag” to get his solo bearings.

A Brown original, “Daahoud,” is done strictly in a bebop-rush style. Rollins cuts a dark path that stays close to the line, Powell scrambles nicely and Roach maintains his no-holds-barred attack. “Lover Man,” the only ballad actually played as such, features a warm intro by the two horns, then Roach uses snare rolls to underline Brown’s lyrical solo, which is capped off by another of his astonishingly fleet runs.

“52nd Street Theme,” the rough-and-tumble bebop warhorse, is taken at an almost ridiculously fast tempo (which is the way it was meant to be played), with Brown spitting out neatly chiseled notes while Roach keeps time with the bass drum and ride cymbal almost exclusively. Rollins stutters and rolls, and the overall effect is not unlike the Clifford Jordan-Hank Mobley quintet of the same period.

That Brown would have required a few more years to be proven technically and lyrically superior to Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie is an argument that has been tossed around for some time. What Pure Genius does is provide evidence against that.

— Vincent Fumar

Freeze
Batiste Brothers
Dynasty 181952

The early 1980s may be logged in the annals of music as an era of musical crossover, a period when certain melodic genres transcended the prescribed boundaries set by age, class, or race. It’s happened in the past; for example, with bebop in the late Forties and disco in the Seventies. Today such bands as the Tom Tom Club, Haircut 100, and Rick James are ignoring the limitations that normally restrict a group to a certain “slice of the pie” and are appealing to the audience en masse.

The Batiste Brothers Band’s new album, Freeze, may be following suit. Although the band has a heavy funk/soul sound, they also have an appeal to white audiences, as evidenced by the band being booked in uptown white clubs.

The disc begins with the title cut, a funky party tone that utilizes a great deal of synthesizers and other electronic effects. The best cut is undoubtedly “It’s All About the Family,” which defines the attitude of the brothers Batiste toward each other: “And when there’s no one/When the loneliness is heavy/They never let me down/I’m talking ‘bout the family.”
Although the album is musical solid, it has several fundamental flaws. It is poorly produced, a surprise considering it was recorded at Sea-Saint Studio and the Studio in the Country. On "Party Down" for example, I had to check my stylus for dust. In spite of this, Freeze is a very fine album and is a taste of what greatness could be once Brothers David, Paul, Michael, Peter, Russ and Damon learn to, like their parents, master the art of production.

— Sam Owen

**Beat**

*King Crimson*

**EG 23692-1**

This is the second release in less than a year from the revived King Crimson band. From a distance, the sound of *Beat* is very similar to its predecessor *Discipline*; but a closer look shows the two album titles to be quite revealing of the differences between the two records.

The line-up on this album is the same as the last: leader Robert Fripp on guitar, organ and Frippertronics; Adrian Belew on guitar and lead vocals; Tony Levin on bass; and Bill Bruford on drums. The Frippertronics — Fripp's systematic, repetitive use of guitar sounds on tape loops — are less evident here, though repeating patterns are still typical of Crimson's music. But where these patterns were rigid, controlled on *Discipline*, they've been expanded here, and should be accessible to more people. Instead of closed circles of music, *Beat* offers widening spirals.

Fripp's guitar is the most prominent sound on the album, and it is a distinctive one. The strings are very taut, producing a vaguely atonal, often watery sound. Complimenting this, Belew seems to stretch his voice to a tight, reedy sound as well, running the vocals over the top of the music like a high tension wire. Bill Bruford is simply one of the best drummers in rock, and his style has evolved considerably from his early Yes/King Crimson days. One finds a simple central rhythm running through a lot of the songs here, but Bruford and bassist Levin surround it with unusual and intricate rhythmical patterns designed to accent Fripp's guitar inventions.

Though Fripp's genius is unquestionably the focus for any Crimson album, much of the credit for the success of this disc must go to Adrian Belew. His singing is much more emotional than any Crimson vocalist since Greg Lake departed years ago, and this charges up the music, makes it less abstract and intellectual. His lyrics are superb in both structure and content, frequently following patterns similar to those of the music, then trailing off as the songs come to their often abrupt endings.

The best of the record's eight tunes is probably "Neurotica," sort of a 1982...

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“Pictures of a City,” with Belew chanting over the most howling, aggressive music on the record. “Good morning, it’s 3 a.m. in this great roaring city full of garbage eaters ravaging parking spots beneath my plaza window.” Various species of city dwellers pass through the monologue, interrupted after the second verse by a haunting, slower passage where the singer ponders his inadequacies for survival in this environment. “Neal and Jack and Me” is a colorful, evocative semi-beat portrait, rambling and emotional. Also worth mention are the two slower songs, “Heartbeat” and “Two Hands.” Both treat the merging of two people in a quiet, beautiful manner, but especially in “Two Hands” there is a feeling of unease, of a trap inherent in the pairing off.

Like virtually every King Crimson album I’ve ever heard, Beat took a little while to grow on me, but it has taken root firmly and perhaps more easily than some others. For people looking for something more challenging than cocktail music, this is a rewarding album.

— Keith Twitchell

It’s Raining
Various Artists
Bandy 70012


Once more Joe Banashak unlocks his vault for Bandy’s twelfth release. On this outing total obscurity mixes with hits. Nothing too startling, just more good New Orleans music.

After starting out slowly with Rivers’ draggy “Closer Walk With Thee,” things start to cook with Art Neville’s romantic “Darling,” and the Crescent’s “Make A Vow,” a greasy group ballad. Aaron Neville’s “Reality” is somewhat spoiled by a hackneyed vocal group accompanying, but if you can ignore them, the tune’s not too bad. Barbara George picks up the tempo with the unknown but solid “Satisfied With You.” Side one’s top track, Lee Diamond’s stirring “Let Me Know,” is saved for last.

The Boogie Kings open the flip side with a romping version of “Need Your Lovin’.” Huey Smith addicts will start breathing heavy when they hear the previously unreleased mid-sixties’ takes of “We Like Mambo,” done Indian style, no less, and “High Blood Pressure,” which pales in comparison with the original. Huey also arranged the Izzakoo Gordon track.

Irma Thomas closes things out with a hit and a miss. “Hittin’ On Nothin'” appears for the first time on an album, and of course the title track still rings true after all these years. Not a bad buy if you’ve got an extra dollar.

— Almost Slim
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WAVELENGTH/AUGUST 1982 37
The Sluts album, 12 Inches of Sluts, is due to be released this month. Distribution and pressing were assisted by SST (Black Flag). Songs include "Hey, Hey, We're the Sluts" (all ad lib in the studio), "Nuke the Whales," "Chicken Stickin'" plus songs about intimate relations with young girls wearing reptile shirts. This album (so we're told) is headed for the top 40. . . . Watch for the return of the Swimming Pool Cues from Atlanta. . . . Are the Singles really breaking up? Chuck Menendez to go to med school? Brian Bat to N.Y.C. for drama school? Say it ain't so . . . IRS is showing interest in RZA. Keep your fingers crossed. . . . Stephie and the White Sox are reuniting, with new members Danny Reid on bass on Billy on drums . . . The Rockabies are making waves with new members Chris Luckette (Cold) and Frank Asunto (Dukes and Raffyes).

Watch for talent from Baton Rouge: Product (Tupelo's Aug. 9, Parallel Lines, the Times (opened for Blondie July 23) . . . New band Tri Tone Subs stars female vocalist Teri Malone . . . New grafitti over I-10: Hey Babes, Do The Dishes! . . . More Bands: Standards (mod band, like to do a lot of jam songs), An Island (powerful new band), The Shades (don't play too often but do some great covers, Police, Costello, The Beat, some originals), Shell Shock, Teenage Waste, Disappointed Parents.

The Grateful Dead are coming to town in September. . . . With the departure of guitarist Chuck Jung, the Models are now a four-piece band. Remaining members Johnny Indovina, Mike Ciravolo, Charlie Bouts, and Steve Fuxan are soon releasing a five or six-song tape, which will contain a cover of the Gary U.S. Bonds hit "New Orleans." The Models have been making it big in Houston, drawing 850 people at the Escape club. They're planning a northern tour for October and a western tour soon after.

There may be a new recording contract in the Neville's future. At the brother's last gig in San Francisco, representatives of Geffen, Boardwalk, and EMI America turned up for a look-see. All are reported interested in signing some or all of the Nevilles. But manager Bill Johnston informs us that Keith and Mick would like to add the Nevilles to the very select roster of Rolling Stones Records. Nothing official yet, but negotiations were scheduled for the end of July. Stay tuned.

Exuma's new album, his eighth, is due out any day now. Exuma Universal was recorded in Bogalusa, La., at Studio in the Country, and will be released on Exuma's independent label, Cat Island Records. Besides Bahama-born Exuma and "Josiah" Kinlock, the record features an impressive array of New Orleans musicians, to wit, Jim Hymel, Daryl Johnson, Bruce "Weasel" MacDonold, Ricky Sebastien, some guy named Gene Scaramuzzo, Kelly "the Roots Man," Tyrone & Jerome Aubry, Alanzo Bowings, Sam Henry, Malcolm Robin-

son, and Roussel White . . . Ronnie's Rayguns, a Frank Zappa-inspired band from Little Rock, Arkansas, has recruited electric guitarist Eric Struthers, depriving New Orleans of some creative, "outside" guitar playing. For the last six months, Struthers could be heard playing lead in Exuma's band, in a jazz ensemble with Charles Neville, and in several Bourbon Street country bands along with bassist Hutch Hutchinson . . .

What do you get when you cross Memorex Tape with Popeye's Fried Chicken? Ella Fitzgerald and Dr. John, appearing together with Allen Toussaint, on a recent edition of Soundstage . . . For the Mandeville/Covington area, Ruby's Rendezvous on New Hampshire Street now has live jazz every weekend. Cross over the bridge, cross over the bridge . . .

Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets' new single "Walking Dr. Bill" is off their Talk To You By Hand LP. Hammond Scott produced. . . . And more 45s, this one from Roulette, titled "Without a Second Thought" b/w "Down Too Long" produced at IRS studio in Jackson, Mississippi. Mastered at CBS, Nashville . . .

New Bands in Town: The Rogues (Sixties pop) line-up includes Tommy Moore (bass, Doug Chatelain (drums), Glenn Grass (guitar), Stan Gelti (guitar), Eric Derr (keyboards). Also making the scene is Run, personnel includes David McGough, Billy Bones, Richard Byrd, Craig Menker . . .

"The French girl from the Moths" that Bunny Matthews referred to in a recent Saturday TP Lagniappe piece is very jolly Karine Manfredi, frequently seen with ex-Moths drummer Mark Bonner. Karine is now with Pulse. She will be doing vocals, and perhaps occasionally some work on the keyboards. Pulse has been writing political dance stuff lately—songs such as "Red Alert" (ska) and "Mr. Public" (punk).

Persia, one of the city's most popular rock bands, is riffing it up in the Big Apple till January 1. In an article in Good Times magazine (out of Long Island), the writer said: "the band formed an electric speedshow of mayhem and ass-kicking rock music, leaving no holds barred . . .

Joe Banashak plans to reactivate the Instant label. He is going to issue a country version of Irma Thomas's "Take a Look." Joe also plans to release an Art and Aaron Neville collection of Instant material for the Bandy label . . . Sad to hear that Joe Assunto passed away some months back. Joe was the man behind Watch records as well as running Joe's One-Stop on South Rampart Street, and later at the location on North Broad. He will be sorely missed . . . Eskew Reeder (or S.Q. Reeder, or Eska Redda) now lives in New York. Are the streets safe at night? . . . Barbara ("I Know") George last heard from in Raceland . . . Little Euclid and the Rhomboids, legendary garage band from the early Seventies ("Actually, we're more of a carport band than a garage band"), making noises about a reunion. Identity of group members is as much a secret as that of Kiss or Pink Floyd, but we know for a fact most of its members were erstwhile film and rock critics. Well, if Crosby, Stills, and Nash can still climb the charts, who knows? . . . It Will Stand: Blue Vipers have a new drummer, ROCKO, the original standup drummer from New York. The Drapes have disbanded too . . .

Noah's is having One Mo' Time every Friday afternoon 6-9 p.m. Chez Helene does the buffet . . .

Gatemmeau Brown is over to Bogalusa to record his second LP for Rounder. Scott Billington to produce . . . John Rankin is producing a record of his own music with Donald Hull at Hull's Night Shade Recording Studio in Mid-City.
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