12-1983

Wavelength (December 1983)

Issue
38

Connie Atkinson
University of New Orleans

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Recommended Citation
Wavelength (December 1983) 38
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Death of the Ivory Emperor

Mint Condition Jazz

Music From Mars

Christmas On Wax

The Devil and Guitar Slim

NEW ORLEANS MUSIC MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1983
ISSUE NO. 38  $1.50
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"I'm not sure, but I'm almost positive, that all music came from New Orleans."
—Ernie K-Doe, 1979

Cover by Bunny Matthews

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WAVELENGTH/DECEMBER

3
Boogie Bill's Video Voyage Down Bourbon St.

After Cox Cable capped the first installment of its Music City video documentary series with a live recording of bluesman Boogie Bill Webber and Mason Ruffner at the Absinthe Bar, Time Saver Video Inc., sponsor of the program, donated a copy of the series to the Jazz Archives of Tulane University's Howard-Tilton Memorial Library. Bill Groome, General Manager of CCNO, presented the series of thirteen tapes to Kurt Jerde, Curator of the Jazz Archives and long-standing member of the New Orleans musical community.

Walter Brock and John Scheuerman were there representing WWOZ-FM (which simulcasts the performances every Wednesday night) and the local musicians union, respectively. "A royalty contract has been established that will directly benefit the featured musicians every time these shows are aired," added CCNO Executive Producer Jim Gabour, "which could mean substantial dividends for the players if we secure an arrangement for European distribution of the series. We were also lucky to have taped James Booker at the Maple Leaf Bar just a few weeks ago, which was his last recorded performance."

The November 4 Absinthe Bar taping was an interesting study in blues tradition, which has often been handed down from older black players to younger white guitarists on the contemporary scene. A slight generation gap was apparent when Boogie Bill and his accompanying harmonica player, Slim, joined Mason and the Blues Rockers for a few numbers. A satisfactory take of "Johnny B. Goodie" was eventually recorded, however. Even though Bill popped a string early in the number, The Blues Rockers sustained the groove with Mason improvising Chuck Berry licks to the delight of his older cohorts. Bill and Slim's solo performance was wonderful eccentric, with Slim blowing wild to Boogie Bill's classic offbeat meter and authentic back porch Ninth Ward vocalizing.

"You know, this is the first time I've ever been down here to Bourbon Street," Bill said, "I was supposed to be leaving for Europe this morning, but I had a funny feeling about it, something just didn't set right. But I'm glad I came down here to play with these boys instead." -rico

A Day In The Folklife

The Folklife Pavilion at the 1984 World's Fair got lucky this summer when Mrs. Russell Long visited a special Smithsonian exhibition with a large French folkways section. Surely, there would be something like that at the Louisiana World Exposition?

Not necessarily. Though an active steering committee had been formed in May and people like Nick Spitzer, Louisiana Folklife Program manager, had been beating the bushes since 1981 for the sponsorship, so far no help had been forthcoming. This was true, despite the wild success of a similar exhibition sponsored by Stokely Van Camp at the Knoxville Fair. Money was needed fast to ensure space. Otherwise, Louisiana's unique living heritage, including traditional music, would have to be sandwiched in with other entertainment programs, as space, funds and inclination allowed. It was looking grim.

Mrs. Long communicated her concern to her husband. The steering committee put together a five-minute tape/slide presentation and Senator Russell Long convened a group of corporate lumber representatives. He pointed out the merits a folklife pavilion would have to the people of the state and to their own corporate prestige. He got some nibbles, interest at the Fair staff revived, and Jean Lafitte Park put up the initial funds necessary to hold a site in the Fulton Street warehouse section. The wheels were in motion but the project still had a major drawback—no full-time director. In November, Missouri folklorist Jane Bergey came on to head the project. In addition to programming folkways for the St. Louis Gateway for the last several years, she is also experienced with a little known segment of Acadian immigrants, the French speakers of southern Missouri.

The folklife exhibition intends to offer a rich mix of traditional music. Plans are for two stage areas, one with a 400-person capacity and another smaller, more intimate setting. With about fourteen performances a day, the musical focus will shift from week to week. Some theme weeks under consideration include a Delta blues week, old time fiddling, East Texas music and zydeco.

In addition to music, the exhibition will include storytellers, indigenous food, architecture, accordion makers, weavers and more.

According to Bergey, space has been staked out and the official announcement of sponsors is just around the corner. The envelope, please. -Virginia Levine

Preston Jackson, Trombonist, Dies At 81

New Orleans jazz trombonist Preston Jackson died November 12 at the age of 81. Jackson died in Blytheville, Arkansas, of heart failure while on tour with Kid Sheik's Jazz Band. Born in 1903, Jackson studied trombone under Honore Dutrey (who played with King Oliver) and Roy Palmer, before moving to Chicago in 1917. Jackson recorded in 1925 with Benny Young's Band and later with Erskine Tate. During the 1930s, he recorded and toured with Louis Armstrong and later with Jimmie Noone. Jackson also played on Johnny Dodds' last recording session in 1940. From the Fifties until the late Sixties, Jackson led his own jazz band. By the early Seventies, Jackson had stopped playing altogether because of poor circulation and health. However, he moved to New Orleans where the warmer climate revitalized him and he returned to music, playing with Kid Sheik and other groups at Preservation Hall. Even though Jackson spent more time away from New Orleans than in it, his playing always reflected the traditional sound of his birthplace. He was buried in Chicago. —Almost Slim

Does Takee Outee sell guitar picks?

Texas Rockers: Six Strings, Not Six-Shooters

Everybody knows about The Bermuda Triangle, but there's another one that extends from Austin to Galveston to Baton Rouge that's a lot more fun to get lost in. Once you get sucked under by its cosmic current of magic music, you may never surface again.

A staggering number of great rockin' R&B and blues artists came from the South Texas/Louisiana region: Slim Harpo, Juke Boy Bonner, Albert Collins and many
others. Great guitarists like Sam "Lightnin" Hopkins of Center­ville worked the small clubs of the area with his insightful everyday songs and smoky voice. Mance Lipscomb, singer, songwriter and extraordinary, equally facile with a boogie, ballad or ranting rag played around Navasota, Texas for over fifty years. The Bayou Prairie has always spawned passionate players, from the days of T-Bone Walker and Pee Wee Crayton right up to Johnny Winter and ZZ Top. Thankfully that tradition lives on in Texas club bands like Anson Funderburgh and The Rockets, The Leroi Brothers and The Cold Cuts.

The Rockets and The Cold Cuts have both released albums on New Orleans' Black Top Records, while the Leroi Brothers have a debut LP on Amazing Records (also issued on Jungle) and a mini LP scheduled for release on CBS. Jackie Newhouse, former Rocket bassist, now works the bottom for the Lerois, an electrified quartet/quad run of blast furnace bluesrockers. They contrast rather sharply with the sophisticated ice house cool of Anson and The Rockets, who played November 18 at the Maple Leaf Bar.

Hundreds of bands can play Otis Rush's "All Your Love," for example, but few can interpret his chopp­py guitar phrasing or plaintive vocal such as Funderburgh and Go. When they shift mid-song from a jerky tango beat to their firming rhythm and half shuffle, you can sense that here is a band with a finger firmly on the pulse of the blues centered.

Meat The Cold Cuts is a not-so­recent release that is more than a little schizophrenic. The tunes can be neatly divided between straight ahead rock-ability tunes from bassist Kenny Bobo and jazzy blues from guitarists Jimmy Don Smith and Little Junior One Hand. Although they make great free­dance songs, the rockers are not extraordinary cuts. They could fit well on any Top Forty radio station's playlist, which may well be the reason for their inclusion on the world radio chart. Their upcoming mini LP reportedly contains a version of Roy Head's "Treat Her Right" that has caused several heart attacks among privileged insiders. The Beaumont Triangle is a very dangerous region. Now how often do we get to flirt with death in this repeatedly

boring time-space continuum called "life"? When was the last time you laughed in the face of an­rhythmia or hyperventilation by working up a real lowdown American funk froth to some high­volume rock 'n' roll? But it's been a while unless you belong to one of those signifying churches. Well, calibrate your compass, baby, the Leroi Brothers will be in town January 1984. Bring your own life insurance, nitroglycerin pills, oxygen tank, maps and navigation devices.

--- rico

**Jumbo Makes Way For Fishnet**

The old Al Hirt club has been converted recently into the Moulin Rouge for Las Vegas style shows, complete with showgirls and enough fishnet to wrap Manhattan. The current production from NYC, Follies on Broadway, gaily splices together motifs from Guys and Dolls, Fiddler On The Roof, My Fair Lady and Jesus Christ Superstar concluding with an amazing disco version of Yankee Doodle Dandy.

In between shows in the back bar, Decatur Street's own Becky Allen, with Harry Mayanne on piano, deliver the cheeky, lascivious and altogether good-natured atmosphere of Sanville gone by, in songs and soft shoe shuffle.

Evidently, the lure of greasepaint was enough to make Al Hirt bypass his much publicized qualms about the French Quarter, as he was seen catching the second show of the Follies in November.

**Collect 'Em All**

R. Crumb, the legendary San Francisco counter­culture/underground cartoonist, artist and musical archivist of some stature, has inaugurated the Eighties in classic high times style. The introduction of Crumb's Heroes of the Blues trading cards in 1980 brought his patented eccentric neo­realism and ironic sense of humor to bear on the likenesses of some 36 early blues greats. The selections span the well-known and the nearly forgotten—from Blind Lemon Jefferson and Skip James to Charley Patton and William Moore.

The Early Jazz Greats series followed in 1982, highlighted by a change from his famous cartoon style to a new popular watercolor portrait idiom. From a grinning Louis Armstrong holding his trumpet and a matty, pensive Earl Hines with hands in his pockets, to the quiet look on New Orleans clarinetist Johnny Dodds' face and the detachment and resignation on the visage of King Oliver, Crumb has caught a whole new strain of nuance and expression. Reportedly, next in the trading card series, due to be finished next year, is R. Crumb on hillbilly stars. Impress your friends, confound your adversaries, surprise your neighbors at parties and Christmas!

--- William D. White

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WAVELENGTH/ DECEMBER
**Prof. Longhair In Bronze**

Although none of his own records were ever issued in gold-plated versions, a bronze bust of Henry R. Byrd, better known as Professor Longhair, will soon grace the Napoleon Avenue neutral ground, just outside the door at Tipitina's.

The bust, designed and executed by artist Coco Robichaux (who has been responsible for many of Tipitina's more transcendental posters and brochures over the years), will be cast in a new foundry deep within the Ozone Belt and dedicated at a celebration on Sunday, December 18 (the day—or evening—before Fess' birthday).

Robichaux worked from numerous photographs of the late Longhair to create his sculpture and the work bears the personal imprimatur of Mrs. Alice Byrd, Longhair's widow, who wanted to donate her husband's gold teeth and sunglasses to the project.

Robichaux, however, fixed the idea, figuring that some of the wilder inhabitants of the Mighty 13th Ward would make off with the teeth and shades within hours of the sculpture's dedication.

Likewise, the bust of Mr. "Ball The Wall" will be very implanted in place. Some people, unfortunately, have got no respect.

— Gian Lorenzo Bernini

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**Ernie The Whip Dies, 'Never Bought A Drink'**

**New Orleans: Homeplace of the Blues**

**Big Bang/Waka Waka Smash Backbeats/Red Rockers**

On November 13, 1983, the thirty-three-in-chin model aluminum bat of white American reggae pinged resoundingly against the softheaded ball of white American pop rock. Sunday 13 was the fateful day that the Big Bang/Waka Waka softball powerhouse whupped upside the head of a spirited, but outdated, young Backbeat/Red Rocker team by a score of 13 to 2.

The BBWW hit machine was piloted by Big Bang percussionist George "Sluggo" Terzis, whose homer-bashing prowess was surpassed only by his rifle-shot left field arm to second and his ability to meaningfully converse with teenage girls in colorful knit tops. BBRR pitcher Vance DeGeneres had a fair day signing autographs but a disaster on the mound. As the day wore on his lofting literally "degenerated" into cannon fodder for the power packed BBWW r.b.i. howitzers. Several of the BBWW top sticks used the November Wavelength cover photo of DeGeneres (shot by umpire Rico Esquela) for a batting target in their fiery pre-game pepper sessions.

"We came to play ball and soil reputations," growled the spilling slugger. "Why am I not having all the fun in the world?" roared the determined pitcher.

The BBRR offense never materialized, even after a miraculous base hit by right fielder Fred "Dread" LeBlanc. "Hey Leonard, no, you have wasted your away listening to Bo Diddley records, man!" taunted the opposing bench in fake Rastafarian accents. "Your mothers like Ozzy Osbourn!!" squealed the BBRR cheerleaders in frenzied retort.

"I think the key to our victory was the way we physically punished the opposing squad," boasted BBWW captain Vernon "Skunky Fingers" Rome. "You see, we owned all the baseball gloves, and we were nice enough to let them use our gloves when we were up to bat. But just before toasting them our gloves between innings, we'd each slip in a few upholstery ticks from a stash in our respective jockstraps. Everybody except Tracey "Butch" Williams, that is, she used caramels. Damn, I don't think they ever caught on."

Possibly the most outstanding performance that day was by umpire Rico "Eagle Eye" Esquela who nailed nine exacting split-second calls, two questionable decisions, and one out-and-out mistake. BBRR left fielder Paul "Hothaid" Sanchez vehemently objected to Esquela's close calls, but the steel-headed and almost-composed arbiter held firm. "Jeez get back on left feel or my cousin well cut that leet pleeg tail off ju head neck, Pedro!" shouted the excitable alien in incomprehensible cajun.

"Now we take peek-chur..."

—Icaro

---

**Who Dat Say Who Dat?**

By now, we've all heard Steve Monistere's grid-iron hit, "Who Dat?" (the song that finally vaulted New Orleans music to the front page of the Times-Picayune) but only a chosen few were actually in the studio to watch history begin made. The participants in the hottest local seller in recent memory were (bottom row) Steve Monistere, Carlo Nuccio, Aaron Neville, Ron "Fit Bull" Swoboda, (top row) B.R. Waymer (with mikes), Brad Edelman, John Hill, Reggie Lewis, Louis Oubre and Art Neville.

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"Now we take peek-chur..."

—Ecardo

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**A Nasty Letter To The Editor**

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Vance DeGeneres for his statements concerning our band, Nasty Nasty. We are now devoted Backbeats fans and look forward, with much eagerness, to their next record. The publicity was appreciated and if Wavelength ever does a cover story or an interview with us, we will be sure to return the favor. Maybe for the cover of their next album, they could write "Censored" across the front cover and it would sell out...

Thanx Again! Sincerely, Nasty Nasty
CAJUN COLLECTIBLES

Tired of paying exorbitant prices for Louisiana collectible records? A short trip down the highway from New Orleans uncovers a treasure of Louisiana bits, all under one roof.

Are you sick and tired of walking into your favorite local record store to find it's been converted into a zuccini boutique full of huf-fing ladies and a lonely Pomeranian? Tired of paying exorbitant prices at unused record stores for untouched vinyl collectibles? "Well, that $25 single of Myron Floren doing 'Cherry and Apple Blossom White'..." you mutter in a feeble attempt at justification.) Have your last garage sale outings netted nothing...and you hit town, it's almost impossible to not find the store; it is literally a Ville Platte landmark. It contains the obligatory large screen TVs, burglar bars, cheap Japanese quartz-locked direct drive high tech turntables, but often these little disc contain not one, but two great tunes for only $1.89! For example, if you need a copy of Rod Bernard's "This Should Go On Forever," and you buy Jim's Golden Oldies 1001, you get Jivin' Gene's "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do" (not the Neil Sedaka song) on the flipside, another swamp pop classic. Same thing with Dale and Grace's "I'm Leaving It All Up To You," which is backed with the similarly beautiful "Stop and Think It Over"; the Sir Douglas Quintet's debut hit, "She's About A Mover"...and try them.

Floyd's Record Store offers what is probably the largest selection of Louisiana records to be found in the world in one shingled roof. From Johnnie Allan to Buckwheat Zydeco, if you can't find it at Floyd's, then get out the Goldmine and start saving pennies, you're in for a real hunt. Floyd Soileau is the man behind this "Nationally Advertised" store and also the man behind the Swallow and Jin records which have preserved some of Louisiana's most important local music for the past few decades. Hoping to meet this somewhat legendary producer, I called ahead to announce my visit, but to no avail. "Well, I'm going with my family to the camp this weekend, podna, sorry but I won't be around the store," he explained in a slight French accent, "we're gonna barbeque and maybe watch the ballgame, you know, just take it easy and spend some time out in the woods." Yep, Mr. Floyd is definitely a Cajun.

Once you hit town, it's almost impossible to not find the store; it is literally a Ville Platte landmark. It contains the obligatory large screen TVs, burglar bars, cheap Japanese quartz-locked direct drive high tech turntables, but often these little disc contain not one, but two great tunes for only $1.89! For example, if you need a copy of Rod Bernard's "This Should Go On Forever," and you buy Jim's Golden Oldies 1001, you get Jivin' Gene's "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do" (not the Neil Sedaka song) on the flipside, another swamp pop classic. Same thing with Dale and Grace's "I'm Leaving It All Up To You," which is backed with the similarly beautiful "Stop and Think It Over"; the Sir Douglas Quintet's debut hit, "She's About A Mover"...and try them.

This classic volume traces the careers and songs of the major R&B artists, as well as peripheral activities of the New Orleans music industry. Featured are the significant contributions of Fats Domino, Ray Charles, Professor Longhair, Huey "Piano" Smith, Little Richard and many others.

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LETS GET CLASSICAL!

You're thrilled by the great symphonies, and you'd love to play them at home, but the classical section of your record store overwhelms you. Here's some suggestions on getting your own classical collection started.

Buying your first classical recordings can be a little like diving into a pool without testing the water's temperature. What may first look like a pleasant experience could in fact turn out to be a shock. Let's face it, walking into a record store and matching your taste I have compiled the following list of records, which I believe are good places for the uninitiated classical consumer to begin.

1. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos as recorded by Nikolaus Harmonicius (Telefunken 2635620). Excellent recording and very spirited playing on original instruments. There are many good recordings of the Brandenburgs but for my money none can quite stand up to this. (For the hopelessly insatiable audio nuts, this recording is not only digital but is also a direct metal master and should prove to be very impressive, even to you!)

2. Holst's "The Planets" as recorded by Herbert Von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Gramophon 2532019). For those seeking BIG records you usually can't go wrong with the Boys from Berlin. When a lot of power is needed behind a piece of music, no one can surpass Karajan. The Holst recording is only one small part of a huge catalogue of performances. For Beethoven, Richard Strauss, or any other grandiose pieces, Karajan and Berlin are the perfect choice. Stay away from the chamber music and the Baroque where they often sound like elephants in the china shop. If you're interested in breaking your lease, check out their recording of Richard Strauss' Alpine Symphony (DG 2532017).

3. Any of the recordings of the Mozart symphonies by The Academy of Ancient Music on the L'Oiseau-Lyre label. This is the series of recordings which Time magazine reviewed as "the best of the year," with good reason. It is an expensive group of records (there are seven sets, three to four records a set), but if you have the cash it is well worth it. Volume six contains what are probably the more popular symphonies, but there probably isn't a bad groove in the entire twenty-three record series. Sell your car and buy them all!

4. Vaughan Williams, an orchestral collection performed by Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. (Argo arg 696). Perfect music for your Walkman in Audubon Park. Rolling English countryside at their best. Sunrise at Stonehenge-Castles on the Thames. You get the idea...now get the record. Marriner is perfect for this kind of thing. Practically anything with strings. His Four Season by Vivaldi (Argo 654) still stands above the many fine performances as the best by far.

5. The Unknown Kurt Weill. (Nonesuch 75019). Rare songs performed flawlessly by Teresa Stratas. This may be my favorite vocal record of the last couple of years. If you think you hate classical vocal recordings, you owe it to yourself to check this out. Absolutely wonderful songs including a great attack on the Shell Oil Com-
pamy, the album is a perfect first step into the world of vocalizing. None-
such, by the way, has changed their whole approach to record releasing in the last couple of years and is now fast becoming the classiest label produced in the U.S. They are no longer con-
tending just being a good budget label but now stress high quality perform-
ances and good recordings (as well as record surfaces) while still emphasizing the presentation of the more unusual and lesser known musical works.

6. With Christmas coming up, I thought I would use this space to recommend what I consider to be the best recordings of Tchaikovsky’s Nut-
cracker and Händel’s Messiah. There are several good Nutcrackers as well as Messiahs. For the Nutcracker, try Andre Previn’s on Angel (3788 or 36990 for the suite only), or the Dorati recor-
ding on Phillips (6047257-5500607 for the suite only). For The Messiah, try the Marinetti (Ardo D18D3), the Colin Davis (Phillips SC71AX300), or

the Richter (DG 2709045). There are excerpts available on single discs of all the above performances. So much for Christmas...Happy New Year!

7. If you must buy a copy of the Pachelbel Canon there are some things you need to know. 1. No two perfor-
mannances are alike. Everyone who records this piece seems to take dif-
ferent liberties with it. They stick strings, flutes, oboes or whatever, in all the corners and generally treat the whole thing as if it were the final chorus in “Take the A Train.” 2. The one that was used in Ordinary People was the RCA recording (FRL1-5468).

3. The only one which is the original arrangement (that I know of) is the Academy of Ancient Music recording on L’Oiseau-Lyre (394). This one is my favori-
tes but will tend to make some people gag since it is only performed on three violins and a keyboard. It does not sound like the G.E. light bulb commercial, Ordinary People, or a quick ride up to the fifteenth floor!

---

**HOLIDAY TURKEYS**

Without seeming too hastily oracular about it, I think we can go right on and file 1983 away as a perfectly wretched year for movies (not just American ones, ei-
er—i-t’s the reverse of a benchmark, whatever that is, and although I’ve tried to be careful about what crimes against vision I inflict on myself, you simply can’t win. Just about the only heartening trend (for lack of a more endearing term) seems to be that Amer-
ican movies are recovering some of their sense of humor. Almost every one of the enjoyable American pic-
tures this year have been comedies: Vacation and Eating Raoul and Tradi-
ing Places and Easy Money, and even Zelig, are all brashly over-
burdened with conceit, goofy-gro-
tesque to point of luxuriance, all one-
note-sambas, period pieces for the age of Reganomics. Even their titles have a sort of sour wistfulness that echoes the title of Depression-mood comedies (Nothing Sacred, Love Is News, Soak The Rich, Merrily We Live, Sing and Like It, etc. etc.) The humor even seems to cross into other genres—Psycho II is only enjoyable when it’s played at a shabby low-laugh level, and a picture like Larry Cohen’s Q (most idiosyncratic grade-C horror this year—or a quetzalcoatl, for heav-
en’s sake, nesting in the spire of the Chrysler Building, occasionally dipping over Manhattan to gobble up sun-
bathing cuties by their penthouse pools or hardhats working on high-rise

construction) even gets into the act with a Poverty Row wit that is what is missing from some horror horrors like Videodrome, The House on Sorority Row (any picture with that title should be a natural—just like Rita Mae Brown’s feminist body-count glory, Slumber Party Massacre—but it ain’t so), or The Evil Dead which comes complete [sic] with Stephen King’s personal testimonial to its greatness—a warning to the curious right there. If one stays away from the good art films (Veronika Voss, La Nuit de Varennes) and simply surveys the ordinary ter-
rain, things are not promising.

Most peculiar at the moment is The Boy Movie. Certainly the most stu-
pifying exhibition by a once-considered-
major director this year, Francis Ford Coppola’s Rumble Fish (his second Boy Movie this year—just goes to show what happens when you have Matt Dillon and plenty of time on your
hands) is one of the damndest things ever seen. Matt Dillon is a living (sort of) Caravaggio, sweating, bleeding, rippling, smirking, weeping, often simultaneously (I could watch him cry till the cows come home but there isn’t near enough of this), and the picture is a swamp of camerawork and sound and lighting out of some 1929 Tobis Klangfilm or a 1954 Brakhage short about nocturnal despair, with lots of nutty angles and spitball editing—even, God help us, a use of Negroes as some sort of cheap exotic, the kind of thing one thought had flown away with Lew Leslie’s Blackbirds (even an appearance by Queen Ida and her band!) or with the mystery fostered by people like Nancy Cunard and Cocteau.

All of this elaborate wrapping conceals nothing more urgent than the standard-mild juvenile delinquent bildungsroman—can Matt live up to/down his brother’s mythopoetic reputation as sage-and-hell-raiser (a question that wouldn’t keep a moron awake nights). Rumble Fish is something like opening an old issue of Muscle Tension and finding someone’s notes from a bad college English Lit. course stained inside, pederasty on ice. Don’t even ask me about the Tom Cruise pictures, or The Lords of Discipline (which is far duller than what it sounds like, an old Olympia Press Traveler Series title).

One recent picture of dazzlingly routine interest (to readers of this rag at least) is Eddie and the Cruisers, a curious item that unsuccessfully takes on such dodgy minor topics as the veracity of record producers, can-popular-music-produce-art as it produces singular figures of semi-legendary stature, what do people do twenty years later when their group/record suddenly hits as nostalgic? This item deals with a lousy movie—first of all, a band that appears so desperately to make Art—their producer won’t let ’em—that their charismatic lead singer drives his car off a bridge in the wee, wee hours and the body is never recovered. For those not familiar with Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Braddon and their imitators, the above plot device may have some novelty, but that isn’t the issue here, nor is the general tried seediness of the production. Rimbaud is evoked by name (often), and Springsteen and Morrison are at least called on for a few raps on the table-top, but Eddie—this dim-witted Adonis monument to musical art brut—is, at least as Michael Pare plays it, something like a brunette Joe Dallesandro, an amiable dimwit with nice arms and thick voice and a too-sold jawline. The passing tapes of the “great lost album” are a plot device, not a musical milestone. A film like this ultimately asks too many large questions about the meaning of putting one’s life into one’s art, and answers the questions less well than, say, Orchestra Wirte, a zestful 1942 B-musical about the tribulations of the dames married to the boobs, buffoons and Lotharios in the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

A side from the usual run (and it’s a shame to use such an anagrammed verb in this fashion) of Christmas turkeys and geese that the studios will put into the national deep-freeze for the holidays, there isn’t much to look forward to. Along with the Pyramia’s festival of new (and one suspects, from past experiences, worthily unexportable) French films, the Uptown Square is planning (or so my sources have it) a series of films by Jean Gremillon (“one of the great French film makers, despite forced periods of inactivity,” says Sadoul; Gremillon is almost unknown in this country—his most famous films are Remorques (1939 with Gabin, Michele Morgan, Madeleine Renaud, about an adventuous tugboat captain) and Lumiere d’ete (1943, with Renaud, Pierre Brasseur and Madeleine Sologne)
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The Renegades innkeeper ques Preven a Vous world's distance-flying record for women), and

LIJ dard s interesting his last film and unhappily slammed Duvivier (physically) women play the one role of Concha, which doesn't help things, The get) shaggy-dog story. There gussied up for a change, and a Tuts Washington NEW ORLEANS PIANO PROFESSOR Rounder 2041.

Professor: the definition ably describes Tuts Washington on his first album. At 7½, Professor, Tuts exhibits all the confidence of a dean from the old school of New Orleans piano, a school known for its highly evolved approach to the keyboard. Much of the fuel for this evolution came from intense competition. Like gunfighters, the quickest and most accurate one at the top while others got shot down. Tuts, armed and dangerous, is still walking the keyboard.

In this fine offering from Rounder Records, Tuts has given a sampling of standards as well as more obscure blues, showcasing his considerable talents as a solo performer. He has been reluctant to record over his long career. The professor is a well-known recording artist, and Tuts has been cautious about freezing his ever unfolding music in a finite form.

The album opens with Arkansas Breakdown, a tune that was a big hit for Fats Domino. The album's closing cut is The Bluest of Them All, a tune that is not often heard. The album closes with a spirited version of When The Saints Go Marching In. It is here that the Professor shows the competitive nature of the music. Phrasings, though similar, are never identical. Tuts plays with the melody, always creating variations that are humorous and interesting. This aspect of his music is the fascinating dimension of that old school. The album has solid sound quality. The piano is balanced and very present (hats off to Ultra Sonic Studio). Rounder Records is to be applauded for their efforts in New Orleans, generally, and for this historic album, specifically. Professor Tuts Washington has allowed one of his lectures to be recorded at last and students have got some heavy homework due.

Waves JSON: DECEMBER
Traditionally, New Orleans jazz has not held the fascination for New Orleanians that it has for those farther afield. For decades, the dedicated have flocked here from Hamburg, Osaka and Cleveland with the zeal of pilgrims to see the town that spawned Louis and Jelly Roll and catch the music at its roots. Today, a dose of Dixieland is de rigueur for even the most casual tourists. But public recognition by the residents of this town which is altogether proud and casual and commercial in its handling of its cultural riches has fluctuated over the years.

For the last several years, there has been a curious gap in the commemoration of New Orleans jazz. (We do have the white light arch to Louis Armstrong Park, bristling with incandescents, but the education visitors receive in that hilly domain is another matter.) On October 29, a major museum exhibit opened, *New Orleans Jazz*, at the Old Mint on the corner of Esplanade and Decatur, providing the storyline for the music. It’s been a long time coming—thirty-five years after a fateful po-boy at Ugle羲’s and twenty-two years since David Brinkley put the first, scrappy little museum on network TV.

*New Orleans Jazz* chronicles the music’s evolution, taking a particular look at the roots that produced such a vibrant hybrid. The show opens with a bandstand mural of the King Oliver band, lovely Lil Armstrong at the keyboard, surrounded by their instruments. Visitors are lured in by the sound of classics by the likes of the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra. The emphasis is historical, tracing influences back to the opera, voodoo, brass bands and bass. As a clip from the paper, the *Picayune*, 1858, informs,

“there is a mania in this city for horn and trumpet playing,” social life gets a lion’s share of the responsibility, the importance of music at home, “the piano in the parlour,” the ragtime sheet music industry, the absolute necessity of dance hall music all get their due, while Storyville and all its seedy rapture receives definitive low key treatment here. There are original copies of the rags in sheet music, Louis Armstrong’s first cornet from the Colored Waif’s Home and shots of Buddy Bolden.

A large show, half the exhibition space of the main floor of the old federal building, the exhibition is broken up into numerous smaller sections. The impression is neat, ordered and linear, like a guided tour. Arranged chronologically at first, in terms of influences, it shifts to individuals like Papa Jack Laine, Ferdinand Joseph de la Menthe—Jelly Roll Morton, then on to a focus on instrumentation, the flow north of the musicians, to Chicago and Roseland in New York, and the “revival” that got going in the Forties.

*New Orleans Jazz* is a sleek compilation of the history behind the music. Visitors spend a lot of time reading. In weeks to come, they should also be holding white plastic wands that will pick up the music designed for each segment like tiny radios. The past seems secure. We’ve got the history of New Orleans jazz right here, all tied up, plus any night of the week we can head down to Preservation Hall and hear the music for a buck. But for that, we owe the musicians and an assortment of local folks who never played anything but a phonograph.

The jazz that began in New Orleans in the first couple of decades of this century was hurting by the Thirties. Constrained by hard times and the emphasis on big band sounds, many of the local musicians who stayed in town were forced to retire music to a hobby. But in the Forties, after the war, a new generation of fans emerged. On the basis of early classic recordings, New Orleans sound jazz bands were being formed by young, mostly white musicians as far away as San Francisco and London. Locally, enthusiasts found a source at Oren Blackstone’s New Orleans Jazz Records, down in the Quarter. An imposing discophile, ex-newspaperman Blackstone published probably the first jazz discography in English (in four volumes), *Index To Jazz*, as well as publishing *Playback* magazine for new releases.

New Orleans Jazz Records was the place to buy records and hang out. A lot of the customers were kids at the time: Gilbert Erskine was at Loyola and Don Perry, a nineteen-year-old Irish Channel boy. As Perry recalls, an informal group evolved, listening to records and catching the live music at places like Manny’s Tavern. By March 1948, the group decided it was high time they saw Zulu. Growing up white in New Orleans in the Thirties, Zulu had seemed off limits but Al Mattalbert was playing trumpet in Lewis’ band and it was time to go. Johnny Wiggs, Al and Babette Diker, Erskine and Perry caught the coconut-laden spectacle on Dryades Street and it was a thrill. Exhilarated by their daring and the music, they decided to fortify themselves with a po-boy at Ugle羲’s on Baronne and Erato before...
Jazz was born alive and kicking in New Orleans and has been a restless youngster ever since. New Orleans Jazz, now on view at the Old Mint, chronicles the music that emerged here, uptown, downtown, and back of town. We can look back and remember, thanks to the musicians who made history and a number of New Orleanians who never played anything but a phonograph.

Going on to see Rex. Over their roast beef and gravy, a brilliant idea struck—why not form a club? As original member Perry said, "I was never that interested in clubs, but we wanted to get together more and listen to records." Grinning, he adds, "Besides, we were hoping that with a group we could get a better deal when we went out to hear the music."

That week, Perry and the others did a bit of calling around and the New Orleans Jazz Club was born, dedicated to "the preservation and fostering of traditional New Orleans jazz." Over the years, the club proved to be a focal point for jazz enthusiasts, hosting Sunday jam sessions, publishing the magazine Second Line, and drawing in jazz fans the world over.

As the urging of original member Harry Souchon, the club decided to open a museum dedicated to the music in 1961. Over the years, Jazz Club members had accumulated quite a stash of photos, records and memorabilia. New Orleans jazz was in its second revival period, with Preservation Hall having opened in 1960, Dixieland Hall going too. With more determination than funds, they secured a building for their use from D.H. Holmes. Holmes reconstructed the Quarter cottage from its original site on Bienville Street and moved it to some property Steiner Brothers had made available at 1017 Dumaine. A week-long celebration marked the opening of the New Orleans Jazz Museum and David Brinkley picked it up for his special on New Orleans jazz. Much of the instruments and memorabilia now on view at the Mint were also at 1017 Dumaine but so were some items that have been edited out over the years, a wall-sized 'tree of life' mural, the dial-a-music phone where you could choose Jelly Roll Morton or Bix Beiderbecke at the flick of a rotary dial, the Louis Armstrong wind-up tap-dancing doll, and a lamp made out of King Oliver's cornet.

As long-time volunteer Helen Perry recalls, "We always had somebody in, mostly tourists—lots of Germans and Japanese. We always had music on. Danny Barker was on the staff and he would talk to the people as they came in. If he didn't know a fact, he could make one up, just like that. People loved him." However, rooms in the old Quarter cottages run small and after nine years, the Collection was cramped. When jazz fan Jim Nissakis, as the manager of the new Royal Sonesta, offered the club space above its Economy Hall club, the Jazz Museum moved. It stayed at the Sonesta until the mid-Seventies when Nissakis was transferred and priorities shifted. The Museum moved again to Conti Street, but the rising costs in the French Quarter made it harder to get by on zeal and good intentions. The staff had always been largely volunteer and the museum depended on admission for funds. The club began looking for a sponsoring organization to take over the Collection and the responsibility for exhibiting it. The state museum system got the honors. The Collection begun by the New Orleans Jazz Club is now secure and strengthened by the professionalism of the Louisiana State Museum. But growth necessitates change and some of the warmth and charm of the first struggling spot on Dumaine is gone. The shift is to be expected, it's almost inevitable, but there's no reason to assume that the presentation of New Orleans jazz shouldn't continue to refine itself. The Old Mint includes an audiovisual area and one would hope that it can soon be occupied by old jazz clips and documentary films and video. The old dial-a-phones had a virtue that shouldn't be dismissed; they let visitors choose and identify the musicians they were hearing. Some high tech version would be a great addition to the music that accompanies the show. There's a lot more gold in those hills, and a lot more music history in the archives. In the meantime, New Orleans Jazz does New Orleans proud. More New Orleanians should take a look at it.
Please come home for Christmas... and bring the turntable.

BY VINCENT FUMAR

Christmas Soul Special

Wilson Pickett
Martha Reeves
Ben E. King
Mary Wells
Sam Moore
Shirley Alston

The risk of immersion in banal music runs high during the Christmas season. Whether it be from Charles Brown's lovely but overexposed "Please Come For Christmas" or "The Twelve Days Of Christmas," tedious reigns. Meanwhile, some of the finest works of this vast genre remain perennially little heard.

Perhaps it is the widespread yearning for musical familiarity that seems to reinforce the mawkishness of so many Christmas pieces. Certainly the most commonly heard works were at first merely precious. But time and repeated cover versions have done little more than make them exercises in sentimentality, or checklist of the season's decorous aspects. As a consequence of the annual demand for cozy standards, gems are lost in the shuffle.

Consider Amos Milburn's "Let's Make Christmas Merry, Baby." By all rights, it should have become an R&B Christmas classic. (It did reach the #3 spot in the R&B charts in November 1949.) With some of the finest piano he ever put on record, Milburn only brushes against the seasonal cliches, and instead pleads with his baby to let him "slide down your chimney," with promises of "a dolly, a chartreuse Cadillac and a diamond." It's too bad that Milburn never had the luck that his old pal, Charles Brown, had in this department.

Two Christmas beauties that somehow failed to gain much popular acceptance come from that Yuletide treasure trove, Phil Spector's Christmas Album. Both are by Darlene Love - "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)") and "Marshmallow World." The "please!" refrain of the former is considered by many Spector buffs to be Love's greatest moment on record, while the latter's majestically rocking arrangement always suggests a sleigh-ride collision between Nelson Riddle and Dave Bartholomew. For some curious reason, the Warner/Spector label's 1976 release of the album was in stereo.

No one would doubt the significance of the a cappella choral style in Christmas music. The recording world's two best exponents of the style have both issued Christmas albums. The King's Singers, an English sextet, released a George Martin-produced LP, "Songs for Christmas," in 1973. The group's stately articulation is heard on exquisite readings of "Morning-song for the Christ Child" and "Iluminare Jerusalem." Those masters of emotional harmony, The Singers Unlimited, recorded Christmas, an album whose vocal grandeur never fails to overwhelm. Much of the collection concentrates on the works of the late Alfred S. Burt, a jazz trumpeter who composed "Jesu Parvule" and "Ah Bleak and Chill the Wintry Wind." But their readings of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" are simply of angelic perfection, and confirm that the Singers Unlimited are the most engagingly ornamental vocal group in the business.

Among Christmas oddities, the pop world has yielded "Rain, Sleet or Snow," a Paul Revere and the Raiders tune that sympathizes with postal officials and advises us to start sending our Christmas mail by the Fourth of July. And the devious Procol Harum offered the appealingly enigmatic "Shine On Brightly," a song whose demented narrator viewed himself as the Christ Child: "The chandelier is in full swing/As gifts for me the three kings/Of my "h and Frankincense, I'm told!/And fat old Buddha carved in gold."

Perhaps the most unwarranted case of Christmas-pop obscurity comes from the brilliant English mimic Roy Wood. His short-lived group Wizzard released "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day," an orchestral masterpiece of massed pianos, French horns, sleigh bells, a children's choir, and sledgehammer saxes. Wood managed to nail down the season with the same aplomb demonstrated on the Spector LP. The tune rocks emphatically from start to finish, and from the standpoint of sheer finger-popping splendor, Christmas never sounded so good.
Acoustic Christmas David Grisman (Rounder 0190)

Blues and New Age music fans will want this. Joining Grisman on versions of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town," "I Wish You A Merry Christmas," "White Christmas" and "Auld Lang Syne" are Dan Anger, Mike Marshall, Bela Fleck and Rob Wasserman.

Popular Songs of Christmas and New Year (John Fahey) Victor 012.

Fahey’s first Christmas album “Christmas Guitar,” proved to do so well that this year a brand new followup Christmas disc was recorded. If you liked the Sixties jazz classics and others.

Sound of Christmas (Ramsey Lewis) Chess 8510

Thankfully, Chess has seen fit to reissue this mid-sixties jazz classic. Ramsey goes through the best of the season, “Jingle Bells,” “White Christmas,” etc. in classic style.

Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite (London Symphony Orchestra) Everest 3111

I forgot this one last year and it should have been at the top of the list. I know next to nothing about classical music but this piece of music has been associated with Christmas for what seems centuries.

Traditional Christmas Carol (Pete Seeger) Folkways 32311.

Seeger handles these traditional Christmas songs in his usual excellent style. This is one of the better seasonal releases.

Reggae Christmas (various) Joe Gibbs 8077

What can I say? You’ll just have to buy this one to find out. It features Dennis Brown, The Mighty Diamonds and others.

Voices and Bells of Christmas (The Boy’s Choir of Vienna) Olympic 8130

You don’t have to be from Austria to enjoy this one. From what my ears detect this had to be recorded by little angels in a 500-year-old church hidden somewhere near the Alps.

It’s Christmas Time Again (various) Stax 8519

You could name this one the Memphis Christmas Soul Spectacular. It contains such Christmas Classics as Mack Rice’s “Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin’” and “I’ll Be Your Santa Baby” by Rufus Thomas. Other Stax artists include Johnny Taylor, Albert King, The Emotions and The Staple Singers.

December (George Winston) Windham Hill 1023

This isn’t strictly a Christmas disc, but it has the flavor of a cold, crisp winter day and that’s good enough for me. Anyone who enjoys Keith Jarrett will fall head over heels for George Winston.

The True Meaning of Christmas (Reno and Smiley) Starady 874.

This is truly a magnificent album. This duo has always been one of my favorite “hillbilly” exponents. These Christmas songs echo the traditional sounds of Appalachia.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (narrated by Lionel Barrymore) Radio 3115

Bah Humbug! This will remind you of when you were a kid.

Please Come Home For Christmas (Charles Brown) Without doubt, “Please Come Home For Christmas” is the one R&B Christmas standard. Surprising, it was recorded in July of 1956, right here in New Orleans. (What a time to think of Christmas!) Glorious versions of “Christmas In Heaven,” “Mrs. Santa Claus” and a host of other yuletide selections on this one.

Elvis’s Christmas Album (Elvis Presley)

This is one of my favorites — even listen to “Blue Christmas” on Elvis’ birthday, “I’ll Be Home For Christmas,” “Oh Little Town of Bethlehem” are also included. A must for Elvis fans.

Have A Merry Cajun Christmas (various)

Of course when Santa arrives on the bayou he has to dispense with his standard sleigh and reindeer and switch to a truffeau (mud sled) pulled by six tiny alligators. I recommend “Christmas On The Bayou” by Van Bruce. Also available on eight-track, as all good Cajun records are.

Christmas (Bing Crosby)

Not only is this the biggest selling Christmas album, it’s the biggest selling disc of all time. Everyone gets a lump in the throat when Der Bingle croons “I’ll Be Home For Christmas.”

Phil Spector’s Christmas Album (various)

Contains rockin’ renditions of the yuletide numbers by the Ronnettes, the Crystals, and Bob B. Soxx and the Blue Jeans. Quite honestly, the sax solo on Darlene Love’s “Christmas Baby, Please Come Home” alone is worth the price of the album.

Rhythm and Blues Christmas (various)

This one’s good enough to listen to all year long.

White Christmas” by the Drifters, “Run Rudolph Run” by Chuck Berry, Amos Milburne’s “Let’s Make Christmas Merry,” and the inevitable Charles Brown classic, “Please Come Home For Christmas.” Perfect for a rhythm and blues Christmas.

Jingle Bell Rock (Bobby Helms)

Probably the title tune is rock ‘n’ roll’s most popular, if not only, Christmas Classic, though I doubt you’ll ever hear it at Midnight Mass. Bobby runs through an even dozen tunes including “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree.”

New Orleans Christmas (Johnny Adams)

This is probably the best of the lot. Johnny sounds just great in these renditions of Christmas classics.

Guitar Christmas Album (John Fahey)

This is a most pleasant album. A fine guitarist, Fahey performs acoustic versions of “Joy To the World,” “The Bells Of St. Mary,” “Silent Night” and more.

Merry Christmas From The Jackson Five (Jackson Five)

These guys were just so cute. Fine Motor City versions of the usual assortment of Christmas faves. I’ll be listening to this December 25.

`Twas The Night Before Christmas (Huey Smith and the Clowns)

This is my favorite, and gets me in the Christmas mood. The record was banned when it was first released for its “blasphemous” renditions of sacred Christmas classics. Wait till you hear the Clowns work on out on “Silent Night.”

Disco Noel (Mirror Image)

I’m just listing this, don’t go out and buy it. But if you do you’ll find the album jacket contains disco steps choreographed by Arthur Murray’s Disco Dance School, no less. Disco versions of “Joy To The World” and “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town” are included.

Gospel Songs of Christmas (various)

Sunning renditions of Christmas favorites by the brightest of Gospel’s stars. James Cleveland gives out with the definitive version of “The Lord’s Prayer,” and Shirley Caesar does the same with “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear.”

It’s Christmas Time Again (various) Stax 8519

Perfect if you plan to be spending Christmas in Memphis. Little Johnny Taylor, Rufus Thomas, Albert King and the Staples Singers will insure a soulful Christmas if you pick this bargain up. Mack Rice’s “Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin’” — my choice for Christmas tune of 1982 — is included here.

Christ Was Born On Christmas Morn (various) Historical 34.

This is a collection of mostly pre-war country blues on the Christmas theme. But with Blind Willie McTell and Blind Willie Johnson featured, you’ll probably listen to this all year.

Merry Christmas (NRBQ) Rounder 4520

This is a four-song EP that contains NRBQ doing “Jolly Old St. Nick” and “Christmas Dream” plus (you guessed it) two more.

Bluegrass Country Christmas (various) Starady 317

This is a collection of some of the finest country and “hillbilly” artists on the old King label. Quite a treat, this is one of Christmas’ best.
Guitar Slim: The 'Performanest' Man in the History of New Orleans Rhythm and Blues

'Slim was getting a fuzz-tone distortion way before anyone else. You didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix came along.'

BY ALMOST SLIM

'Slim was getting a fuzz-tone distortion way before anyone else. You didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix came along.'

The Things That He Used To Do

'Slim was getting a fuzz-tone distortion way before anyone else. You didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix came along.'

Simply entitled "Guitar Slim," and recorded in 1955, the song conveys in the man's own words Guitar Slim's life and attitude. Earl King remembers seeing Guitar Slim at the peak of his all too short career:

"Gatemouth Brown, T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulson and Guitar Slim were all performing one night at the White Eagle in Opelousas. Slim was headlining because "The Things I Used To Do" was a scorcher. They were all sitting in the dressing room and Guitar Slim walked up to 'em all and said, 'Gentlemen, we got the greatest guitar players in the country assembled right here. But when I leave here tonight, ain't nobody gonna realize you even been here.' Well, they all laughed, but that's exactly what happened.

'Slim come out with his hair dyed blue, blue suit, blue pair of shoes. He had 350 feet of mike wire connected to his guitar, and a valet carrying him on his shoulders all through the crowd and out into the parking lot. Man, he was stopping cars driving down the highway. No one could outperform Slim. He was about the performanest man I've ever seen.'

'King's description coincides with most everyone else who saw Guitar Slim on stage, or knew him personally. Dead for over two decades, Guitar Slim's legend continues to grow. Even though his music has remained popular all these years, many details concerning his life are still shrouded in mystery, so much so that putting together a concise biography is like completing a complex jigsaw puzzle.

Guitar Slim was born Edward (Eddie) Jones, December 10, 1926, and is known to have at least one sister. Even though Slim claimed in his Specialty biography that Greenwood, Mississippi, was his birthplace, Hollandale, Mississippi, has also been suggested. No matter, Slim was raised in the Greenwood area, a rural region of intense cotton production in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. Times were probably tough, and likely Slim did his fair share in the fields, visiting Greenwood on weekends.

The first mention of Guitar Slim (he was six feet tall, 160 pounds, so he easily fit the colorful alias) in the Louisiana Weekly was during September, 1930. It stated: "New Orleans' newest gift to the show world is Guitar Slim, held over at the Dew Drop. The New Orleans blues sensation has made a terrific impact on blues fans in New Orleans. Claimed to be an exact carbon copy of Gatemouth Brown, the singing guitarist includes 'My Time Is Expensive', 'Gatemouth Boogie', and several other performances made popular by Brown.'

The comparison between Guitar Slim and Gatemouth Brown is indeed apt; it is interesting to note that he would draw his greatest influence from the Texas guitar school, rather than the guitar players from his own state, Mississippi. 'Gatemouth's 'Boogie', 'Rambler', was Slim's theme,' adds Earl King. "He listened to all of 'em and compiled bits of their style-Gatemouth, T-Bone, B.B. King. But he took a different approach, he had a lot of melodic overtones in his solos. He used to play a solo that had a marriage to the rest of the song, rather than just play something off the top of his head.'

Earl also chaffs when others suggest Slim was a poor instrumentalist and unable to even play without the aid of a capo, or as Slim referred to it, 'a choker.' 'Slim tuned Standard, but he used that capo to get the effect of open strings. You can't do that without that choker. I've seen Slim play many a time without it. He just used it for effect.'

Percy Stovall arranged Slim's career. Slim's first record was a different story. Percy Stovall arranged a session with Jim Bullet in Nashville, producing the popular 'Feelin' Sad,' in 1952. David Laste played six on the tune and remembered the circumstances that surrounded the session: "We was working at the Kitty Cat Club in Nashville, and me, Huey, Little Eddie Lang, and Willie Neutes did the session with Slim. 'Feelin' Sad' was a good little record, it had a church sound to it. We worked pretty good off it."

By 1951, the record companies had been beating about this wild guitar player in New Orleans. Imperial approached first, and Al Young produced four sides on Eddie Jones at the J&M Studio. The session was rather chaotic, originally producing 'Bad Luck Is On Me,' and 'New Arrival,' but the record sounded and sold poorly. Imperial wouldn't ask Slim back to the studio, but still issued the remainder of the session when Slim hit the big time, using his alias instead of Eddie Jones.

Slim's next record was a different story. Percy Stovall arranged a session with Jim Bullet in Nashville, producing the popular 'Feelin' Sad,' in 1952. David Laste played six on the tune and remembered the circumstances that surrounded the session: "We was working at the Kitty Cat Club in Nashville, and me, Huey, Little Eddie Lang, and Willie Neutes did the session with Slim. 'Feelin' Sad' was a good little record, it had a church sound to it. We worked pretty good off it.'

WAVELENGTH DECEMBER

18
When Slim came in off the road, he stayed upstairs at the Dew Drop. "Slim liked to be where the action was," chuckles Earl. "In fact you knew Slim was back in town, 'cause early in the morning, around seven—eight o'clock, if he was tanked up, you'd hear them amps and P.A.'s going off. People'd be calling the police, 'cause you could hear Slim three blocks away! And here's Slim up in his room with his shorts on, goin' through his stage routine."

"And Slim's room was something else, man," laughs Earl. "If you went up there, there'd always be about seven or eight different women up there. He'd have his songs written with eyebrow pencil on pieces of paper tacked to the wall."

Earl also recalls that Slim bought the first Les Paul guitar in New Orleans. "Slim was playing one of those big hollow boxes like T-Bone had. But when the solid boxes came out he got one right away. Slim said the hollow boxes were too big, and they didn't give him enough room on the stage. He couldn't control the feedback that was comin' out 'em. So he dealt with the Les Paul."

By 1953, Guitar Slim was one of the biggest draws on the southern R&B club circuit. The responsibilities of managing and booking reverted to Slim's landlord, Frank Pania, who owned the Dew Drop, while Percy Stovall concentrated on building up a larger roster of performers. Pania also took it upon himself to find Slim a new band. He hired the Lloyd Lambert band from Hosea Hill's Sugar Bowl in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Hosea was a friend and business associate of Pania, and paired Slim with the band for a series of road dates. Lloyd Lambert claims that Pania was responsible for introducing Johnny Vincent, then a Specialty A&R man, to Slim. Vincent was impressed enough to convince his boss, Art Rupe, to sign Slim to a recording contract. Vincent recalls that "Slim was supposed to sign with Atlantic, but this was one artist I just had to get. He was fantastic. Slim wouldn't let anyone outperform him. I wouldn't let him out of my sight until he signed with Specialty."

On October 16, 1953, Slim entered the R&B Studio to record what was to be the biggest record of his career, "The Things That I Used To Do." Backing Slim on the session were Gus Fontenette, Charles Burbank and Joe Tillman on saxes, Oscar Moore on drums, Lloyd Lambert on bass and Frank Mitchell on trumpet. Vincent claims he had to bail Ray Charles out of jail to arrange and play piano to complete the personnel.

When Vincent says, "Slim was hard to record," he has lots of support. Tales of Slim's recording sessions are many. Vincent claims that it took "all night" to record "The Things That I Used To Do." Engineer Cosimo Matassa says "all day," and Lloyd Lambert reports it took "two days." Nonetheless, the musicians were obviously gratified when it was over, because Ray Charles is clearly audible yelling "Yeah!" in relief in the last bars of the song.

According to Earl King, the idea for the tune came to Slim in a dream. Slim related to King that in the dream he was confronted by a devil and an angel, both of whom held the lyrics to a song. Naturally, Slim chose the devil's song and it turned out to be "The Things That I Used To Do."

Vincent sent the tapes of the session out to Rupe, who was less than impressed with the result. According to Vincent, "He told me it was the worst piece of shit he'd ever heard. He said, 'I'm gonna put it out, but if it don't sell, you start looking for a job.'"

The public disagreed with Rupe, to say the least. Immediately after its release, both Billboard and Cashbox made it the pick of the week. Cashbox commented, "a slow southern blues rhythmically chanted by the blues shouter...great vocal with the proper blues styling and this side is headed for sales...top notch."

"The Things That I Used To Do" stormed the charts. It topped the R&B charts for six solid weeks.
For many, the real appeal of "The Things That I Public" was the lyrics, sung in Slim's impassioned style, that struck a chord in everybody's imagination. Slim come a fuzz tone distortion way before anyone didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix ended up the biggest selling R&B record of 1954. The record caught the imagination of the public: the sound, because Slim was getting a fuzz tone distortion way before anyone else. You didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix came along.

"Believe it or not, Slim never used an amplifier. He always used a P.A. set, never an amplifier. He was an overtone fanatic, and he had these tiny iron cone speakers and the sound would run through them. I guess any vibration would create that sound, because Slim always played at peak volume. That's why it was hard to record him, because of the volume he was accustomed to playing—cause let's face it, if Slim was playing you could hear him a mile away."

Lloyd Lambert agreed that Slim played as loud as he could. "He had this tinny sound," says Lambert, "that he'd get by turning all the bass controls on his guitar and amplifier as low as they would go, and turn up the treble controls as high as they'd go." With the number one record in the country, Frank Pania booked a full itinerary for Slim through the South, and bought him a brand new Olds 88. Slim promptly got drunk one night and ran into a parked bulldozer, wrecking the car and sending Slim to the hospital. "Slim weren't too good a driver," laughs Lambert. "He didn't hurt himself too bad, the doctor just told him to take it easy for a month."

Pania decided to send Earl King out to impersonate Slim on a number of dates, and apparently got away with it. Even though King went along with the charade, he admits he was "touched to death."

"When I got back to town, the first person I saw was Guitar Slim," laughs Earl. "He was walking down LaSalle Street with a guitar under one arm and an amp under the other, yelling, 'Hey! King! I heard you been out there makin' me. If you want my name I'm gonna sue and I'm gonna kill you!'

Slim was back on his feet soon, and ready to hit the road for a tour of the northern theatre circuit. Since Lambert's band already had Lawrence Cotton on piano, Slim had to split with Huey Smith, an event which likely saddened both of them.

One of Slim's first stops was at the Apollo Theatre, where he shared the bill with the Spiders. Earl recounts a story told to him by Chuck Carbo (one of the Spiders), about Slim's initial performance: "When it came time for Slim's came to conclude, they closed the curtain on Slim, but Slim decided he wasn't finished. Instead he just stepped in front of the curtain and continued playing."

Eventually Slim's popularity became too much for Frank Pania to deal with, so he turned over Slim's management to Hosea Hill, who ran his own popular nightspot in Thibodaux, The Sugar Bowl. Consequently, Slim spent a good amount of his time in Thibodaux, which nestles Bayou Lafourche.

Guitar Slim's next release, "The Story of My Life," was a powerful follow-up and came from his initial Specialty session. Once again Cashbox spotlighted it by giving it their weekly award and calling it "another powerful item. His mournful tale is accentuated by the chanter's stylings and impressive guitar work."

Lambert still relishes the days of the mid-Fifties barnstorming the country. "We had the best band out there," he affirms. "Fats, B.B. King, even Lionel Hampton—we could cut 'em all.

"We had trouble following Slim at first 'cause Slim'd always jump meter, but it got to where we'd just jump right with him and it would sound fine. Slim was a showman and a musician. He'd have purple suits, orange suits, green suits, with shoes and hair to match. He'd make motions and faces that would drive people berserk. You couldn't hardly get into the place when he was playing."

Earl King agreed: "You could play Slim at the Dew Drop and get a mob of people, and the next night play him in Shrewsbury (in adjacent Jefferson County)."
Bernadette Kerrigan’s grandfather fiddled at the Old French Opera House, her parents composed ragtime classics and she pounds the skins in an all-girl band. Bernadette is 82.

BY BOB RANDALL

I had lunch with my friend Bernadette the other day. Bernie and I had a pleasant visit, and as the waiter poured coffee we talked of her career in music. Enthusiastically, she told me how glad she is to be keeping busy in a city that has always harbored more musicians than it could ever support. She is the drummer for an all-girl group, she says, and they work often. Trouper that she is, Bernie also finds time to do spot engagements as a solo pianist.

Now at face value, there is nothing odd or unusual about any of this, but I listened with a curious wonder anyway—my friend Bernie, drummer, pianist, musician, is 82 years old.

Bernadette Kerrigan, formerly Kelly, nee Petersen, is 82 years old.

Bernadette Kerrigan was born in New Orleans in 1901, back when the Crescent City actually was just a crescent. Widowed twice, Bernie has five children, and a veritable herd of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She hails from a background that reads like an abbreviated history of this city’s musical heritage. Her grandfather was a first violinist in the Old French Opera House; both parents were composers of popular music. Her mother, in fact, is reputed to have penned many of the ragtime classics that are still well-known today.

“There’s no way to prove that,” says the soft-spoken Bernie. “Back then you wrote a song and sold it to a publisher for maybe fifty dollars, and then it wasn’t yours anymore, you see.”

Back at her home, Bernie sits herself before an ornately wrought upright piano that is undoubtedly a priceless antique.

“This was my mother’s piano,” she says, and then plays the classic “12th Street Rag” for me. She delivers the piece with an authenticity that defies description. Stunned, not so much by her skill as by the anachronism that has just taken place, I ask the obvious question:

“Bernie, did your mother write that?”

“Well, we can’t prove it, you see.”

She doesn’t say any more about “12th Street Rag,” and the talk turns to other things—her brother, for instance, eighty-five-year-old Harold Petersen ran a music store on South Broad some years back, the store, according to the story, where Pete Fountain got his first clarinet.

The heritage continues. Bernie is pleased to tell me that a daughter, Theresa Kelly, has studied and performed opera, and has a Carnegie Hall recital among her accomplishments. One grandson is a rock musician/songwriter, and another is a church cantor.

Gradually, the conversation swings back to Bernie’s own endeavors, such as her group. Called Ethel Merwin’s All-Girl Band, the group is comprised of six ladies, mostly elderly. The group dedicates itself to benefit work, for the most part, such as performing for senior citizens’ gatherings, and nursing homes. Paid performances are occasional, and the girls never fail to please. Bernie’s solo work is of a similar nature: benefits for the Golden Age Club, sing-alongs at nursing homes, and more.

“It’s what keeps me young,” says Bernie, smiling, seeing those people happy, seeing them smile. “She pauses for a moment.

“People don’t smile enough anymore.”

She’s right, you know. There are too few people left in the world like Bernadette Kerrigan, and that’s a shame; her kind has ever been an inspiration.

Play it again, Bernie.
James Booker: Music As A Mysterious Art

By Bunny Matthews

"Harlequin without his mask is known to present a very sober countenance, and was himself, the story goes, the melancholy patient whom the Doctor advised to go and see Harlequin—a man full of care and perplexities like the rest of us, whose Self must always be serious to him, under whatever name or disguise he presents it to the public. And as all of you here must needs be grave when you think of your own past and present, you will not look to find, in the histories of those whose lives and feelings I am going to try and describe to you, a story that otherwise than serious, and often very sad."

—William Makepeace Thackeray, 1851

James Booker's death, according to Dr. Frank Minyard, Orleans Parish coroner and freelance trumpeter, occurred at 11:32 p.m. on Tuesday, November 8, 1983 as Booker, in a wheelchair, waited to be admitted to Charity Hospital, where the pianist was born on December 17, 1930. The morning after Booker died, The Times-Picayune/States Item ran a front-page obituary. The story, by Vincent Furrer, was headlined "Piano Prince of N.O." James Booker died at 43. On the same front-page, there was a large front-column photograph of Aaron Neville and a group of New Orleans Saints in the recording studio, cutting "Who Dat?" and an Associated Press story that Bill Allain printed its obituary, headlined "James Booker; Was called Piano Prince In New Orleans.

His parents were listed as Heyward and in Europe, although he rarely played in the United States or outside of New Orleans. His parents were listed as Heyward and in Europe, although he rarely played in the United States or outside of New Orleans.

On Thursday morning, The New York Times printed Booker's official death notice. His parents were listed as Heyward and in Europe, although he rarely played in the United States or outside of New Orleans.

The Times-Picayune/States Item printed Booker's official death notice. His parents were listed as Heyward and in Europe, although he rarely played in the United States or outside of New Orleans.


The unsigned piece noted that Booker "was known in New Orleans as a flamboyant pianist and that, among other things, he had recorded his first single ("Doing The Hambone") in 1953, impersonated Huey Piano Smith on tour during the late Fifties and served a one-year jail sentence during the Sixties for possession of heroin. He was rediscovered in the 1970's," the Times said, "and became a major attraction at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and in Europe, although he rarely played in the United States outside of New Orleans."

Actually, Booker served his one-year jail sentence in 1970 at Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. On January 31, 1970, Booker was observed removing a plastic bottle containing a white powder from his coat pocket by a New Orleans police officer and was arrested at the Dew Drop Inn on LaSalle Street, not far from his Aunt Eva's House. Booker was charged with possession of heroin.

On June 23, 1970, at a hearing before Judge Bernhard Bagert, Booker was denied a motion he had filed "to suppress evidence" and on the same day, as advised by his attorney (Jerome Winberg), Booker pled guilty to a lesser charge of "attempted possession of heroin." Judge Bagert sentenced Booker to two years at hard labor at Angola. The 34 days Booker had already spent in Orleans Parish Prison were credited to Booker's sentence. While serving time, Booker worked in the prison library, taught himself yoga and was allowed to play the piano. Because he was a first offender, Booker was freed after serving half his sentence.

Booker's wake was Thursday evening at the Rhodes Funeral Home on Washington Avenue, formerly the Tivoli movie theatre. Whereas Professor Longhair's wake was something of a three-ring circus with the curious and bereaved snapping at the body, with inscriptions and Nikons while Ernie K-Doe and the female commandants of Civil Defense Post 714 vied for control of the podium, Booker's wake was solemn and dignified. Those present were mostly family, friends and what Booker called his "contact men." Contact men were basically family, friends and what Booker called his "contact men." Contact men were basically family, friends and what Booker called his "contact men.

There were few musicians at Booker's wake. Saxophonist "Red" Tyler and bandleader Deacon John were in attendance, and Allen Toussaint arrived in his brown Rolls-Royce after the brief service was over. Booker's two closest musician friends, Earl King and Mac Rebennack, were both in Europe at the time of his death.

Booker's body, dressed in a dark suit, was placed in a silver coffin. He wore the sunglasses he was usually seen in during recent years (having discarded the rhinestone eyepatch as the '80s dawned) and his face was whiskered with a few days' growth of beard.

Booker did not look very good. He looked like a body that had been dead for a couple of days and his face bore the usual uneasy countenance. Even alive, he sometimes looked dead but then when you saw Booker laying there looking as utterly respectable as the mortician's skill allowed and the grim faces passing before his body and the floral arrangement that utilized his 'Classified' album cover as a center-piece and the ubiquitous, sopita-toned portrait of Jesus on the altar—a picture that is well known to every child who has ever been through Sunday School, the mourner sensed that Booker would have dug the proceedings. The music—Mozart piano versions of songs such as "Oh, Danny Boy"—might've bothered the deceased, but Booker would've really loved the idea of his friends and relatives—all of them in their best clothes—arriving at one time to see him, to pay their tributes.

At the end of the wake, a middle-aged black man dressed in a pink, three-piece polyester suit briskly walked down the center aisle, introduced himself as a minister and told those present that it was important for them to go to church. Then a younger black man stood up and sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Finally, Booker's 82-year-old Aunt Eva knelt before his coffin and sobbed: "I tried to talk to you, I tried to talk to you." The last time she had seen Booker alive was two months before when she went to the Maple Leaf to hear him play. Eva left during the first set without speaking to him.

On the next morning—a cold, gray Friday morning, Booker's hearse was driven slowly down Airline Highway to Providence Memorial Park in Metairie. His coffin was placed in a crypt and the mourners departed. Gerri Hall, the New Orleans singer, bumbled Booker's death on astrological factors—citing that Pluto had entered Scorpio (or "Scorpions," as she called it) and such an event only happens once every century always causing large numbers of deaths. Booker would be back, she said, the next time it happened.

Friday afternoon, veteran record dealer Jim Russell, who had known Booker as a teenager, confessed that a conversation with Booker could give a person "chills." "Booker," said Russell, "was a man who lived 430 years in 43 years.

Leaving Providence Memorial Park, this writer recalled the evening when I encountered Booker at the Maple Leaf and asked him if it was true that he was really going to go to Chicago to tape a program for educational television with Mac Rebennack. Booker laughed: "I might go as far as Airline Highway.

In person, Booker could be a little like having the entire Bacchus parade march through your living room. A few hours with Booker was a demanding experience, a draining experience and usually, an enlightening experience.

On January 23, 1970, Booker was observed removing a plastic bottle containing a white powder from his coat pocket by a New Orleans police officer and was arrested at the Dew Drop Inn on LaSalle Street, not far from his Aunt Eva's House.
was busy—too busy for Booker’s shenanigans and conspiracies so he departed in a taxi, leaving me with his cane and a stapled manila envelope rubber-stamped six times with his “Creative International Associates” logo. Booker told me to hold on to it and that I would know when the time was “right” to open it.

About four years later, when Booker asked Rounder Records producer Scott Billington to ask me to compose the liner notes, I assumed that the time might be “right” to unveil the artifacts which represent a slice of his existence circa-1978-79. Catalogued thusly:

1. A color postcard with two scenes of Mason’s Motel Americans on Claiborne Avenue. It is addressed to a friend in West Germany, signed “Booker—The Piano Pope” and reads: “This is the place when you come to play the festival; stay here and you’ll never leave.”
2. A Creative International Associates business card, printed in green ink. Booker’s address is given as “New Orleans, Blueziana.”
4. A 1968 receipt from Mighty Duke’s Tavern with the telephone number of a sax player on the back.
5. Assorted business cards and phone numbers written on slips of paper.
7. Two panoramic-view-of-Canal-Street color postcards. On one of them Booker has used a blue ballpoint pen to draw arrows emerging from the top of the Bank of New Orleans skyscraper, the roof of which features a giant “BNO” sign. The arrows evolve into musical notes over Carondelet Street and then, centered over Canal Street—the heart of the city—Booker has printed in vertical letters: “Booker of New Orleans,” corralling his B, N and O with quotation marks.

9. Four sheets of lyrics, in Booker’s handwriting. One is in blue ballpoint ink and the other is in pencil. The pencilled sheets for a song titled “One Day From Bein’ A Fool!” are credited to James Booker and Ronald Gucia, a.k.a. Vonvzig Dark and Zerk Y. Black.

The inked sheets, for a song titled “Take Your Time (And Live),” dated “4-11-78” and credited to Booker and a name that looks like “WuBuKa,” contain the line, “Remember them the way you’d want them to remember you.”

During the same period, Booker was arrested three times for public drunkenness—August and November of 1978, and September of 1979.

A 2 p.m. on November 11, 1978, I interviewed Mac Rebenmack in his hotel room at the Hilton. After nearly 45 minutes of reflection and commentary, he got around to his mentors and, of course, Booker. “That’s how I learned from like Huey [Smith] and Fess. Allen [Toussaint] and Booker played much more correctly and they were more properly trained in the piano, and naturally, more classically-oriented. I’ve never had any delusions of playing that stuff. Booker, being like the child prodigy he was when he was so young and to have gone through all he’s been through over the years—that’s still amongst us, to me, great. I don’t think any different than any of the rest of the guys in the business. It’s like a part of the tradition of New Orleans to not be a
good businessman or to be a worse businessman than the average cat.’

Two months before my conversation with Mac Rebennack, I conducted an interview with Booker, who had just returned from a European tour that had taken him to Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, the French Riviera and the Montreux Jazz Festival, where, Booker proudly announced, his Swiss album, "James Booker Alive!" had won the Grand Prix award for best live recording. Honorable mentions, he pointed out, were awarded to Ray Charles and Otis Rush. In either Copenhagen, Denmark or Oslo, Norway (Booker couldn’t recall where), he had slipped and fractured his elbow while going through the airport.

I only used bits and pieces of the interview in a subsequent article (Booker’s apparent impression, at the time, was that the public needed to be constantly informed of his adventures, which didn’t always fit into my various editors’ scheme of things and I never transcribed the entire interview tape. What follows is most of the 45-minute interview, with commentary.

Booker began by urging me to interview Earl King, “because he’s very frank and very honest. I’m proud of him for being like that because I remember when he was not very frank or very honest.” Booker then accused King of once taking some of his material and turning it into songs “where I couldn’t even recognize ‘em when I heard ‘em.”

Booker proceeded to handleader Dave Bartholomew, who had just returned from a tour that had taken him to Scandanavia, the Grand Prix award for best live recording. The average villa

The week of the interview was Taste of Honey’s "Boogie Oogie Oogie." You can’t tell the difference between a record that was made this year or a record that was made last year all the time. Some of ‘em sound like that’s the same song you heard last year at such and such a month and then when you find out who it is, it’s a different person singing it. Or maybe it’s not a different person singing it—maybe it’s a different person singing it and it just sounds like another song that came out last year that was successful. Music is a tricky business, man.

I asked Booker if he had ever met Charles Levy, the New Orleans attorney, now deceased, who had handled the careers of Dave Bartholomew, Fats Domino, and Chris Kenner. I wanted to know because Mrs. Chris Kenner, the recording artist’s widow, had recently been released from St. Gabriel Women’s Prison (where she had served time for

The situation with record companies—not only record companies but booking agents, personal managers, producers, anybody you gotta sign up with—how can I remember what’s on eight pages of another contract, eight pages of another contract, eight pages of another contract and sign something saying, “I will not violate this agreement—everything is cool?”

“The most important thing is the sales clause and guaranteed release. You can put five clauses on the contract and have it very flexible, because those five clauses can have subclauses—maybe three of ‘em. I’m for revolutionizing the music business. Let the tables turn a little while.

“Music is a little bit at a standstill right now; the Number One song on Billboard’s Pop Chart the week of the interview was Tavis’s "Boogie Oogie Oogie." You can’t tell the difference between a record that was made this year or a record that was made last year all the time. Some of ‘em sound like that’s the same song you heard last year at such and such a month and then when you find out who it is, it’s a different person singing it. Or maybe it’s a different person singing it—maybe it’s a different song and a different person singing it and it just sounds like another song that came out last year that was successful. Music is a tricky business, man.

‘I don’t have no combination of faults that the average entertainer doesn’t have.’
sort of unholy, psychotic tantrum on the spot, was paid his fee and bid adieu.

"He shouldn't have squawked about that," Booker said. "I don't like people squawking over petty change.

They talk about principles. The principle of what? Principle is one thing, feeling is another...

"I have respect for contracts but there's always an exception to quite a few rules. If you're qualified to be an exception, that's something that's quite natural to draw resentment and all kinds of negative responses and it's very difficult to deal with and for the reasons I've been just about on the brink of insanity three or four times. I've never been really, really totally insane, but I've felt as though I was standing on the brink of insanity at times.

"I can feel it when it comes on. My brain gets certain signals just like heart trouble. You get signals when you've got heart trouble. Your heart beats a certain way. When you've got rheumatism like I've got, you get pains through your muscles at times. So I usually keep myself kinda posted on what time it is. It's time for a brighter day because we've had a whole lot of the other way."

The subject of managers and booking agents arose: "All this for control. Uh uh. They say my biggest difficulty is that I cannot be controlled or that I'm too difficult to be controlled. Oh, I can be controlled. I can be controlled very, very swiftly if the circumstances prevail in favor of the better half. I consider the better half to be my financial advantage, where I can call out a few shots.

"Don't get me in a studio and tell me to do this, do that, do the other. If you know how to do this, that and the other and a little bit more, I wouldn't have to be sitting there screaming and hollering like somebody hit me in the head with a cue stick.

"If a manager gets a commission to be a manager—to give you advice—you're the performer, but you're also the boss, right? If so, why do the powers that be want to dictate to the artist as if he were in Moscow?"

I reminded Booker that record companies are capitalistic enterprises. Selling records and selling toothpaste—what's the difference? There's little regard for the artist...

"Little regard for the artist—that's the punchline of this whole interview. Little regard for the artist, no matter how big he is or what.

"A friend of mine, a very good friend of mine, Richard Perry, who produced Ringo Starr, he told me one time, 'I don't like lawyers, I don't deal with lawyers.' When I had to file a claim against Ringo Starr to get my proper earnings for the one song that I did with him—"Hold On"—around $1,998, Ringo didn't want to pay it because Richard had advanced me about $760 and Ringo felt we should be even because that was a hell of a favor. And it was a hell of a favor.

"Richard Perry was real, real hung up behind my music because he told me one time he remembered when 'So Swell When You're Well'—he produced it—he said, 'I remember the night I met you, Booker, you came and staggered over to the piano and you played some of the most fantastic stuff I've ever heard in my life.'

"Music is a mysterious art, to start off with, and people that's really good at it—at an elaborate, mysterious art—they get a little taste of the mysterious sometimes. Sometimes they have mystical, mysterious attributes but it's whether or not they're aware of it that's important.

"Let me tell you something, man, every generation that ever come up has always revolved around the older generation. This happens in the music business, too. It's always been that way. Sometimes from professional envy—that motivates a whole lot of things. Professional envy has some good sides to it, if it's dealt with a certain way.

"Look at the politicians. They have their share of
James Jr. was a tall dark man much older than his country. She was fair-completed; an early fean.;res., wife.

Cheatham Booker, December 17, 1939, in New Orleans. His family moved to New Orleans from Cajun country. She was fair-completed; an early fean.;res., wife.

He was born to James Booker Jr. and Ora's family. His father was a Baptist "Follies biggest and brightest award winning musicals."

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The organ had become popular in the emerging rock music of the period, due to the Bill Doggett hit "Honky Tonk." Booker was a pioneer in New Orleans on organ. With guitarist Earl King, James started the first organ group in New Orleans in 1955. Later he joined Joe Tex for a road tour through Tex, he met Johnny Vincent, and recorded a lively organ instrumental for Ace called "Teenage Rock." Things went fine until Booker discovered Vincent over-dubbing Joe Tex's "Open
the Door." Booker exploded. Vincent backed down, and released it on the flip side, under the name 'Lil’ Booker.'

In 1958, Booker hit the road with Shirley and Lee. He had a talent for imitation, and gravitated to Huey "Piano" Smith, who didn’t like to tour. Thus Booker went on the road with Bobby Marchan and the Clowns, playing piano as Huey "Piano" Smith, and financial difficulties, the group split up in Houston feeling that the structure the Junior James Booker in ward Frank found session work for Booker at Robie’s studio. James worked with Duke/Peacock talents Junior Parker, Bobby Bland and others.

His own recording, “Gonzo,” a rocking organ instrumental, surprised many people by climbing to (“Gonzo” number ten in the R&B charts of Pickett. Then again, and Wilson Pickeet. Then I went down to Bourbon Street and played at a club called Papa Joe’s and the guy heard me play and he bought three organs ‘cause he had two other places, Madonna Franchise’s and Po-odle’s Patio. I played all three of those places every night and, when it got to taxing my body, I called on Dr. John and taught him how to play organ and let him be my understudy. That’s how he started playing organ.

His deepening dependency on drugs put him at odds with the law. He was arrested and found himself in the company of Chris Kenner at Angola State Penitentiary. On release there was more session work. Fats Domino was on the road a great deal addiction itself is a dream. It’s every junkie’s dream to square up. Some pursue it, some don’t. I found every reason to pursue it because I had so much to look forward to and it seemed to be a stumbling block. I found out after I did kick it, I had a few other problems, personality-wise. When I was coming off of methadone in 1976, I found I was very paranoid. I got placed in Charity Hospital on the third floor mental ward. I had two nervous breakdowns between January and March. Then I came to the Eutre Center and I was on the tail end of de-toxing the methadone and it was quite painful. It was quite a drastic experience. I wasn’t sure I could do it.

He did do it, and late in 1976 R&B historian Norbert Hess arranged a European tour, which resulted in two live albums. The first LP, James Booker The Piano Prince of New Orleans, features several Booker compositions. "One Hell of a Nerve" has an interesting history. New Orleans has long had fruit vendors, who drive small trucks through the neighborhoods, hawking their product. Booker: "I remember listening to the watermelon man: 'I got watermelon, I got cantelope, I got okra and...’ That influenced me to write a certain style of music. I wrote 'So Swell When You Well' from that. And there’s another I have, 'One Hell of a Nerve,' and it really gives you the sound of the man going behind the watermelon track to sell produce.

The only thing that’s missing is the cowbell that the horses used to have." Booker achieves the effect by an octave-spanning yodel.

Why don’t you go somewhere If you don’t know what you’re doing! Check your situation Before you see your ruin.

I’m gonna tell you what I heard, First time, second, and you know third. You got a dime, we go see us, One hell of a nerve.

The other song, "So Swell When You Well" has been Booker’s most successful composition since "Gonzo," covered by Archie Franklin and Fats Domino.

You so swell when you’re well (three times) But you had to stay sick so long.

You know I love you, honey, From A to Z. But something about you Seems to worry me.

Today you love me. Tomorrow you don’t. Sometimes you will, And I know sometimes you won’t.

You so swell when you’re well (two times) But you just stay sick so long!

Late 1977 found James Booker at the Boogie Woogie and Ragtime Piano Contest in Zurich, Switzerland. His performance resulted in the LP James Booker Live, first released in Europe. It won the Grand Prix de Disque de Jazz for best live album of the year, which James accepted at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1978. (In the U.S., Rounder Records released it as New Orleans Piano Wizard: Live!)

Of all the artists in New Orleans, James Booker is the most difficult to characterize. He resettled in the city in the late Seventies and became one of the most popular musicians on the performing circuit—if not always a predictable one. When the crowd was right, when the music surged, the man was a wonder to behold. To some, Booker was known to erect a cold, sardonic wall.

Booker’s brilliance was tempered in the flame—the painful struggle of his addiction literally embodied the Junkers. Booker recorded "Junko Partner," an updated version of the old piano anthem on his first LP. The poetry and imagery, set to pulsing blues-and-boogie beat, are vintage Booker.

Down the road
Come a junko partner,
He was loaded, he was loaded,
Loaded as can be,
He was knocked out, knocked out loaded,
And he was singing, he was singing,
He was singing this—a song to me.
If you had, if you had,
If you had one million dollars—I
Wanna tell ya, wanna tell ya,
Wanna tell ya what I would do.
I would buy, I would buy,
Land around Angola,
And grow a nice weed farm 'til 1992.
I want turkey, whiskey,
Whiskey when I'm thirsty,
I want water, water,
Water when I'm dry.
I want my lover, lover,
Lover when I'm lonely, right now!
And just a little humble, humble,
Here's right before I die,
With a little cocaine, cocaine,
Cocaine on the side.
Steve Masakowski, jazz guitarist and inventor, exposes New Orleans to sounds from Mars

BY YORKE CORBIN

The sweet smell of commercial success has so far failed to descend upon any of the artistically potent jazz composers stirring about the city. The small audience that New Orleans normally muster for contemporary jazz events has heard some striking music these past few years, and out in the big world the advent of Wynton Marsalis has generated more public excitement than anyone concerned with either jazz or New Orleans would have dared hope. But the gulf between Wynton's success and the recognition accorded his home-based peers is large (as is the distance between jazz and pop stardom: the first Wynton Marsalis album has sold about 125,000 copies; double that figure would make a modest pop hit). Sniffing out jazz trends is a pastime in which few Orleanians indulge.

Patrons of the perfume department at D.H. Holmes, however, caught a whiff of what's happening a few weeks back. Floating through the store were the strains of Steve Masakowski's mellifluous jazz guitar, perhaps the pleasantest promotional idea any local department store has devised in recent memory. One jazz scene hanger-on who happened to be ambling about the store at the time looked up in astonishment to see Masakowski, whose usual persona suggests a serious intellectual with a sardonically humorous edge, playing gentle riffs for the perfume seekers. With his chunky frame encased in a rented tux, Masakowski's improbable Fu Manchu mustache seemed a touch of the surreal. "Now I've seen everything," the jazz head muttered. "I guess you have," the guitarist noted sagely.

Steve Masakowski plays an instrument of his own devising—the keytar. It's a keyboard for the left hand arranged like a guitar fingerboard, interfaced with a polyphonic synthesizer. Because there's no picking involved, the right hand is free to fire notes, ed a touch of the surreal. "Now I've seen everything," the jazz head muttered. "I guess you have," the guitarist noted sagely.

Steve Masakowski takes the quirks of making a living as a contemporary jazz musician in stride. Supporting himself as a private teacher, sideman, and astute grant-getter, Masakowski leads one of the most adventurous jazz groups in the city, Mars. He has just released his first album, also called Mars, which sounds like a canny mating of intellectually challenging music with an accessible, commercially-attuned approach. The third release of Prescription Records, the contemporary New Orleans jazz label, Mars will not have the advantage of major label distribution, which means that Masakowski remains several big steps away from connecting with a large audience. What we're looking for at the moment is solid evidence that he is determined and able to take those steps, one after another.

"You have to make your breaks yourself," he says flat out. "You have to pull your own strings—especially in New Orleans. I've been getting my business frame of mind together; I'm seeing with the whole group of contemporary musicians here, that's one factor that's necessary for people to get to the point where they can start breaking away from the New Orleans scene, doing things on a higher level.

"In the beginning, it's an uphill battle. You have to get to a certain point where people start becoming interested in you. But I feel like the New Orleans musical scene is on the verge of becoming prosperous and beneficial for everybody. Every separate band of personality—everyone who's working for a higher goal—is closer than they've ever been before to quality, to getting recognition that would put them on a different level."

Conscious that he has a lingering reputation for negativity about the local music scene, Masakowski is straining a bit to sound positive. But it's worth looking at how he has steadily applied himself to the
The Story Behind The Label

Packaging uncompromised music, despite its 31 voice-in-the-wilderness overtones, is usually a 31 collective affair. Such is the case with the 31 fledgling Prescription label (of which Mars is part) as viewed by one of its founders, Ramsey McLean.

"Anthony Braxton once told me that there was no such thing as a good record deal," he said. "What we're trying to do is put out the best contemporary music, that New Orleans has to offer. It's an artist-produced label. It's really more of an umbrella than a formal record company. It's nice from the standpoint of control. Things now aren't the way they were six or seven years ago, when minor companies marketed new artists. Record companies today are interested in people who have produced for them in the past. Now they're buying catalogs and re-releasing things, like Elektr/Musician."

McLean's Prescription entry, The Long View which is in the final production stages, is a duet with Tony Dagradi, and should be out before the year's end.

"All of the music is totally original," he said. "The more original the material, the higher the level of musicianship. On this album I play cello. Tony plays tenor, soprano, flute and bass clarinet. Actually I play bass on one tune. We recorded it in the playhouse at Longue Vue Gardens. It was recorded acoustically. We used the room, it should sound big. There's no studio that offered that quality. I'm going to keep picking out places like that."

McLean's first album, "History's Made Everything Moment," was recorded at the Faubourg, so apparently the idea of working in a studio still holds no appeal for him.

"I just think it's got to be live or it's not a jazz record," he said. "For authentic quality, it's got to be taken live. It has to be done with everybody playing together. You can't play it separately. You get the edge this way."

"We'll have 1,000 copies pressed. Michael Cusca will do the liner notes. If we have four records out on the same label, we'll have a catalog of contemporary New Orleans music, which will help us to deal with distributors, European companies and mail order. The strength of that will be greater than any individual could do." (Also on Prescription are the IAQ's No Compromises.)

The first album received favorable reviews and helped put McLean on the musical map. He compares it to the The Long View with a terse frankness: "The first one did well critically. The new one doesn't sound like the first one; it's thematically unified. I like duets. It's like a solo but you have a friend. It's not nightclub music. It's a highly compositional record. But it's not that kind of formal. Some of it's very abstract. The production is better, the material about equal."

—Vincent Fumar
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Bunny Matthews Pusateri’s Original Po-Boy Shop
fact managed to deliver. And if his performances in recent months are a reliable indication, he may be ready to break through to a broader audience. This year's jazz fest found Masakowski collaborating with a talented visual artist, John Graubarth, at the Snug Harbor jazz club, which has emerged as the place to hear the freshest music (some would say the most exciting art) that New Orleans has to offer. On a screen behind and above the band, Graubarth projected a shifting, overlapping series of images that danced at the edge of a viewer's powers of fact managed to deliver. And if his performances in most recent months are a reliable indication, he may be ready to break through to a broader audience. This year's jazz festival found Masakowski collaborating with a talented visual artist, John Graubarth, at the Snug Harbor jazz club, which has emerged as the place to hear the freshest music (some would say the most exciting art) that New Orleans has to offer. On a screen behind and above the band, Graubarth projected a shifting, overlapping series of images that danced at the edge of a viewer's powers of concentration, seeming to resolve themselves into coherent visual statements, then dissolving to begin a new chain of association. Masakowski and his band (some of whom seemed to chaf at the task) insinuated their music into the consciousness of the audience, depending upon where one's attention was more fully engaged, the music would seem a commentary on the imagery, or vice versa.

In subsequent performances, most notably at the Longue Vue Gardens concert series, Masakowski, Mars and Graubarth have refined and expanded their concept. Besides the considerable art involved, there is a trick: juxtaposed with the flux of visual imagery, the element of intellectual play in what might otherwise seem an intimidatingly complex style of music springs free play. "None of it's a new idea," according to Masakowski. "I really believe that electronic music is the music of the future, and as with all music that is new on the scene, people have a hard time relating to it, appreciating it. I think having visual effects will help people digest the music. It gives the music a clearer emotional perspective."

Masakowski relishes the challenge of engaging an audience. Surprisingly, he makes a virtue of the fact that conservative New Orleans audiences necessitate an extra effort on the artist's part. "One thing good about New Orleans is that's always something you can do—little goals, little projects that are good things to work for. That's why I've been down here so long."

"I keep thinking about moving to New York. I even talked to Branford Marsalis about it. He seemed to think that Wynton would have never gotten the deal he got with CBS if he hadn't been in New York. And of course, the people in high positions in the record business would never have heard him if he'd stayed here because they're never down here. But at least down here there are things that you can do with grants, etcetera, that can be artistically rewarding that people in New York don't do. There's not a whole lot of competitions for grants here."

Grant and prize money have gone to support some of Masakowski's writing, and he has a substantial grant to spend on a second album. The one he has just released was largely written by a patron, the father of one of his guitar students. He produced it himself over a couple of years, employing one nationally known musician, saxophonist Dave Liebman, and what Masakowski calls "a New Orleans all-star band. I used different people for different things—three drummers, two keyboard players. It's all my compositions, and it's a cross-section of different things. I'm into a lot of different things, which is good and bad as far as marketability is concerned. I think for a first album it's important to show what you can do, what your strong points are."

Steve Masakowski's strong points recall those of one of his regular collaborators, pianist Ellis Marsalis, his partner for the Monday night duets at Tyler's that for the past year or two have been the most rewarding regular jazz gig in New Orleans. Like Ellis, Masakowski is a virtuoso player, a challenging composer and a man with sufficient intellectual detachment to produce fine work in a steady pace in an environment that too often discourages the musical talent with which New Orleans is almost haphazardly blessed. Masakowski's first album, to be reviewed here next month, makes a convincing case that a smart jazz man can pull together the right elements from the New Orleans scene to send the city's musical force hurtling toward a new audience and into a new year.

---

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WAVELENGTH DECEMBER
CONCERTS

Thursday, 1
30 Special, Mississippi Gulf Coast Coll-
seum, ticket information at (600) 388-8010.

Saturday, 3
The Neville Brothers, Steamer Pres-
dent, Call 524-SAIL.

Rich Little narrates Prokofiev’s Peter and
the Wolf with the New Orleans Symphony,
also on the program: his tribute to M GM
and press conference. At the Orpheum, ad-
mission information from the Symphony’s of-
fice, 525-0500.

The Messiah, performed by the Jefferson
Community Chorus at Immaculate Concep-
tion Church on 7th Street in Marrero; in-
formation at 833-3366.

Sunday, 4
Frank Federico and his band, French
Market. Free.

Gertrude Stein Gertrude Stein Ger-
trude Stein, Dixon Hall, Tujane, 8 p.m.
Pat Carroll performing her celebrated mono-
logue and I hope it vaguely resembles
John Candy’s parody on SCTV—I always think
of Pat Carroll on those old shows like The
Comedians with Sid Caesar and Nanette
Fabray, or on Keep Talking (surely due for
revival soon). The subject matter of this
event is to be obvious from the title. Infor-
mation at 865-5143.

Africa Suite/Kidd Jordan Elektrik, 9
p.m. at Tootie’s.

The Messiah, performed by the Jefferson
Community Chorus, at St. Agnes’ Church
on Jefferson Highway, information at
834-5727.

Wednesday, 7
The Sophie Newcomb Memorial Con-
cert, part of the Music at Midday series;
participants are the Tujane and Newcomb
Choirs. Rogers Memorial Chapel, noon,
free.

Madama Butterfly, Wed. 7, Thurs 8 and
Sat. 10. Theatre for the Performing Arts.

Buccini out of David Belasco and if you’ve
ever been there (it’s to the doomed affair
to the doomed affair between Cio Cio San and that weird
Lieutenant Pinkerton, you may as well get it over with.
Conducted by Elio Bencomo, information
from the New Orleans Opera Associa-
tion at 529-3270.

Thursday, 8
Joan Rivers, Saenger Performing Arts
Center, 525-1062. Anyone planning to at-
tend this is advised to steal a look at the
December issue of Hustler magazine for a
“carmouflage” (as they called them in the
Twenties) of “Joan Rivers’ Nightmare.”

All We Are Saying..., a music and film
tribute to John Lennon, and a benefit for the
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. At
Trolino’s at 699-5114.

Friday, 9
Holiday Favorites with the New
Orleans Symphony, as well as the
Symphony Chorus, the Children’s Symphony
Chorus and Lisa Tripani narrating.
Information, at 525-0500.

Jeffrey Osborne, Saenger, 8 and 11.
Ticket information at 525-1062.
X. Steamer President (although it might be
more appropriate to keep them while steam-
ing down the Orinoco even the Sky’s)
details at 524-SAIL.

Saturday, 10
Johnny Rivers, Steamer President. Call
524-SAIL.

Saturday, 11
Brass Quintet, at the French Market,
tickets 400. Michael Franks, Saenger,
525-1062. I like Michael Franks OK since anyone who
likes to duet with sousa is OK with me and
I like that, but you don’t ever wonder if this guy ever gets
upset and shouts and stamp around?

Tuesday, 13
Dan Fogelburg, UNO Lakefront Arena.
Tickets information at 286-7222.

Wednesday, 14
Stray Cats, Saenger, 525-1056.

Friday, 16
Stray Cats, Mississippi Coast Coliseum,
details at (600) 801-8100.

Friday, 16 and Saturday, 17
Amahl and The Night Visitors. Menin-
it’s opera about a little tike who under-
takes (partly unaware) the three Magi
during a pit stop one Christmas long ago.
at the Orpheum, details at 525-0500.

Saturday, 17
Ronnie Dio, formerly with Black Sabbath
(and is he any relation to Madre do Dio?),
with Humble Pie opening. Saenger,
525-1052.

Sunday, 18
The Desire Community Chorus at the
French Market, free.

Caroling, by candlelight, beginning at 6 in
Jackson Square.

Farewell Concert for Lady B.J., Saxony,
1717 Canal, beginning at 8, information
at 581-4466.

Wednesday, 21
The Messiah, performed by the New
Orleans Symphony, Orpheum Theatre,
525-0500; but aren’t you starting to wonder
why someone doesn’t maybe do Berlioz
L’Enfant du Christ at this season (kinda
crappy but our favorite Xmas music
anyway) or even perhaps Bach’s Christmas
Oratorio?

Irma Thomas Christmas Special, 8
p.m. on Channel 12. Irma performs such
works as God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,
Bring A Torch Jeanette Isabella, Frosty The
Snowman, Angels We Have Heard On High and
many others; advance notice is that it’s a killer.

Wednesday, 28 to Friday, 30
New Orleans City Ballet, Theatre for the
Performing Arts. Wed.28 through Fri.30.

FESTIVALS

Thursday-Saturday, 1-3,
Saturday, 10
Christmas Festival, Monroe. Information
at (318) 322-3411.

Friday, 2
Christmas Comes Alive, Lafayette. Infor-
mation at (318) 981-0693.

Friday, Saturday, 2-3
Three States Arts and Antiques
Festival, Shreveport. Information at (318)
229-9122.

Saturday, 3
Candlelight Tour of Clinton, Clinton,
La. Information at (504) 683-5594.

Saturday, Sunday 3-4
Pioneer Christmas Celebration, Clinton,
Information at (504) 659-3937.

Plaquemines Parish Fair and Orange
Festival, Port Jackson. Information at
(504) 857-9643.

Sunday, 4
Annual Victorian Christmas, Franklin.
Information at (318) 529-3631.

Saturday, 10
Home Christmas Festival and Parade,
Romer, La. Information at (318)
927-3271.

Saturday-Sunday, 10-11
Louisiana Crafts Christmas Fair, New
Orleans. Information at (504) 912-0676.

LIVE AND MUSIC

Bistro Lounge, 4061 Tulane Ave.,
842-9377. Fridays and Saturdays: Robin
Gonzalez and his Salsa Rhythms, from
10.

Blue Room, in the Thieves of Adop-
Billy Preston. Wed. 4 through Sat. 24.
John Gary. Mon. 26 through Jan. 3.
Sam Butera, that seminal
compliment of the antics of Louis Prima,
regularly with his Witnesses. Reservations;
dancing, as well.

Bobby’s Place, 520 East St.
Bemard Highway, Harahan, 717-0133.
Fridays and Saturdays: Bobby’s Bar and
the Sunday Blues.

Bonaparte’s Retreat, 1007 Decatur,
561-9473. Ralph Cox, every day except
Sunday.

Beauregard, 1926 West End Park, 382-9144.
Certainly the darkest and most “intimate” of
W.E. clubs. Fridays and Saturdays: Harvey
Jesse and Fridge.

Bronco’s, 1409 Romain, Gretna,
368-1000. Every day except Mondays;
Mississippi South House Band.

Carrollton Station, 8140 Willow,
865-9190. Sat. 13. Mason Ruffner and
the South, Buzz hopefuls. A great song
written by Richard Pierce. Fri. 16 Johnny J
and the “Hill, Dennis.

Saturday-Sunday, 10-11
Louisiana Crafts Christmas Fair, New
Orleans. Information at (504) 912-0676.
Adams and Walter Washington with the House Band.


Radiators. Other dates tee bee aayy.

1801 Club, 1801 St. Claude Blvd., 362-9707


**Fairmont Court**, in the Fairmont Hotel. 504-7111. Tuesdays to Saturdays, Judy Duggan occupies the piano bench from 9 to 10.

**The Famous Door**, 339 Bourbon, 525-7500. Need to hurry, from Thack to Durante has passed through these crowded portals. Thomas Jefferson and his Creole Jazz Band play Thursdays through Tuesdays. Wednesdays are taken up by Art Adler’s Jazz Band (see his brothers named C.C. and Ed/a/h) who also enlivens weekend afternoons from 4 to 8.


**Fum’s Hill**, 1000 Bayou Black Dr., 851-8280. Thurs to Sat, 7-11, saving Fridays: the music noisier than usual. Again as night is falling, Saturdays only at Fuller Coffee and Bar.

**Houstinan**’s Cafe, 525-7412. Like music of a jazz nature outside on weekdays from 7 to 11, saving Fridays: the music moves inside on weekends and starts two hours later.

**Jimmy’s**, 8200 Willow, 866-9549. Thurs, 7-11, getting crowded from his part-time job as Kris Kringle at the Azalea Gardens Shopping Center, Lakeside, Irwin Highway. Wed: 7; The Hands presenting. Fri: 7-9; Bas Cuat and the Baiters. Fri: 9-11; Alvis and the Dissonators. Sat: 10; The Backbeats. Wed: 14; The Mysteries (the ‘Bluesman on fire’). Thurs: 15; The Flesheaters with the Liptones. Fri: 16; Woodhead, themed after that song Elvis Presley sang in G.Blues. Sat: 17; The Models, courtesy of the Power’s Agency. Wed: 23; The Limit. Thurs: 3; B.A. — you mean the one that ran the motel next to her creepy Victoria house in Psycho? Fri: 14 and Sat: 30 and 31; The Shelles (of the Burning Sands).

**Maple Leaf Bar**, 8316 Oak, 866-9550. Tuesdays and the weekend and our Boughs of Holly. Wednesdays: Marvin (for thought Delta Blues were sad songs that Stewart’s call) Thursdays: Bruce L. Lee and Bours.

Fri: 2; Gatemouth Brown Sat: 3, Little Bob and the Little Blows. Mon. Thurs: 18; Exuma and Sat: 19; Beausoleil. Fri: 18; Disco John’s New Orleans Revue Blues and Earl (you mama and yo’ dog). Sun: 17; Zachary Richard. Fri: 22; I.B.A. Sat: 24; The Charles Neville House Band. Fri: 30; Rocket Dopsie and the Treme Reunion. Sat: 31; Satchmo Ball and a New Year’s Eve party that no doubt will include many cats of kindness—the 80 proof kind.

**Menendez’s**, 1 N Rampart, 525-8464. Mondays through Saturdays: Marguerite Montgomery from 11 a.m. until 5, and from 6 to 10. Tuesdays through Saturdays, Lee Alpinage from 10 until 2 a.m. Thursdays through Tuesdays. Janis Medlock from 7 to 10. Fridays and Saturdays: Sandy Hanson (no relation to Monte—“Mo”) from 11 until 4 a.m. Mondays. 8 A.M. from 10 until 2 a.m.

**Monster’s Dance Hall and Bar**, 357 Lyons, 889-9509. Wednesdays, the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble.


**Penny Post**, 5110 Danvers, Sundays, always open mike. Check the board as you enter for details of who’s playing whom.

**Pontchartrain Hotel**, Bayou Bar, 2031 St. Charles Ave., 525-8611. Fridays and Saturdays: Sandy Hanson (no relation to Monte—“Mo”) from 11 until 4 a.m. Mondays. 8 A.M. from 10 until 2 a.m.

**Preservation Hall**, 726 St. Peter, 525-8299. Along with Galatoire’s and K-Paul’s, one of the three places in town that consistently draws a long and deserved line outside, the only amenities are the musical ones. Sundays: Hedo Bejen and the Olympia Brass Band. Mondays and Thursdays: Kid Thomas Valentine, Tuesdays and Fridays: Kid Sheik, Cedric. Wednesdays and Saturdays: the Humphrey Brothers.

**Riverboat President**, Canal Street Dock, 524-811. Sat: 3; The Neville Brothers. Fri: 9 X Sat: 10; Johnny Rivers, the pride of Catholic High in Baton Rouge. Sat: 17; Hwy. Sat: 24; Christmas Eve Moonlight Cruise. Sat: 31; New Year’s Eve aboard—sounds suspicious, grab a life preserver if you see Shelley Writers or Red Buttons running around.

**Seaport Cafe and Bar**, 424 Bourbon, 525-0381. Tuesdays through Saturdays, Sally Townes.

**711 Club**, 711 Bourbon, 525-8379. Tuesdays through Saturdays: one man Symphony Randy Hoped, presented Thursdays through Mondays by Al Broussard.


**Sezs Harbory**, GBP, Frenchmen, 949-0669. Wednesdays: Amasa Miller. Thursdays: the Olympia Strutters. Fridays, except for Christmas Day. Lil’ Queenie with her All Want-For-Christmas Is My Two-Front-Teats revue. Fri: 2; guitar virtuoso Emily Remler. Sat: 3; Tony Dagradi Quartet. Fri: 9; Ellis Marsalis plays Horace (you know) Silver. Sat: 10; Germaine Bazzle and the sentimental Gentleman of Jazz. Sun: 11; The Dirty Dozen and the Survivors, starting at 5, just in time to smoke some high tea. Fri: 16; James Moore’s Urbanites. Sat: 17; Willie Mostic. Fri: 23; Dicson John and Lady BJ, the Heeburn and Tracy of cool music. Fri: 30; The Al Belleville Quartet. Sat: 31; The Pilgrim Sisters’ New Year’s Eve party and, speaking of Spencer Tracy, you know it is going to be like one of those macabre Twenties pictures of his: It’s New Year’s Eve in the ballroom and everyone is drunk and wobbling and doing the Shag and wearing paper hats and he and the Little Woman (probably Loretta Young or Joan Bennett) have quarantine.
The newest releases from Rounder Records embrace the full spectrum of the rhythm and blues tradition, from the driving Texas Swing of Clarence Gatemouth Brown to the lilting debut album by New Orleans pianist Tuts Washington.

Watch for new albums in 1984 by Johnny Copeland, Buckwheat Zydeco, Marcia Ball, John Hammond, the Persuasions, J.B. Hutto & the New Hawks, Rory Block, the Nighthawks and Solomon Burke.

Selections pictured here are available on LP or cassette tape. These and other Rounder albums are now on sale at:

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DECEMBER MUSIC SCHEDULE

REGULAR WEDNESDAY FEATURE
AMASA MILLER—9 PM
REGULAR THURSDAY FEATURE
DEJAN'S OLYMPIA SERENADERS—9 PM
FRIJAYS—11 PM
2ND—EMILY REMLER
9TH—ELLIS MARSHAL PERFORMS HORACE SILVER
16TH—JAMES MOORE'S URBANITES
23RD—DEACON JOHN & LADY BJ
30TH—AL BELLETTI QUARTET
SATURDAYS—11 PM
3RD—TONY DAGRA DI QUARTET
10TH—GERMAINE BAZZLE & THE GENTLEMEN OF JAZZ
17TH—WILLIE METCALF
24TH—NO LIVE MUSIC
SUNDAY—5 PM CONCERT
11TH—THE DIRTY DOZEN & THE SURVIVORS
SUNDAY 4TH, 11TH, 18TH—L'il QUEENIE—9 PM
Bar Open Daily—4 PM
Restaurant open weekdays 9 PM–12 AM
Weekends till 2 AM – Sundays Open 11 pm
ed and everyone else in the place is bomb- ed and jovial, even the strangers at their table, and God, you just know it's going to be a miserable 1938, and he's glowering and she's acting sort of worried and snip per (this goes all day before the whole day begins working over a dress so she could look medi- cally lovely and he would be Proud Of Her) and then, suddenly the band starts playing Al Lang Syne and people are shouting and cry- ing and throwing derringer everywhere and he looks at him, tentatively, and then the band segue, as they say, into another number and she begins her version of Their Song, and looks like, well, it might be a 1938 to look forward to after all... that's what New Year's Eve is with the Pispers... Sugar Mill Lounge, 4520 Williams, Ken­ neth, 545-9074 (not the ones that did "First I Look At The Purse" and "Shake Sherrie"). Sat. 7:30, 8:30. Con­ cert (not poli­ ce). 8:47 P.M. 545-7938. Jefferson Street Cafe, 209 Jefferson, Lafayette, 310-9847. Mulesa, Beauregu Highway, Beauregu, 313-326-4648. The Ol' Cajun Bar, 212 Poydras, Beauregu, 313-332-9512. Pam's Place, Old Town, Sidell. Pappageorge's, 507 Florida Blvd, Baton Rouge, 1-273-3736. Place de France, 121 S. Buchanan, Lafayette, 313-222-5213. Party Town, Military Road, Sidell, it once did. Wed. 14, 15. Topcats. Fri. 16. Nobles. Sat. 17. Rock Island, Wed., Thurs., 21, 22. Topcats. Fri 23. Concourse, Sat. 24. Sneaker, Wed., Thurs., 28. 29, 30. South­ wind. Sat. 31. Sugar Mill. 501 Napoleon, 869-9114. Thurs. 1. Deacon John's Old Town, 372 Tulane, 947-7994. Thurs. 2. Phil's. 436 Philip, Thibodaux, 447-9991. Friday's, 530 Jefferson, Lafayette, 310-9847. Humphreys', Shreve Square, Shreveport, 318-227-9611. Irons, 403 Philip, Thibodaux, 447-9991. New Orleans Museum of Art, City Park, 188-2631. Sun. 18. The Seven Samurai, Kurosawa's classic, shown once at 1 p.m., with Museum admission. Fytnia, 5339 Pyftnia, 895-4518. Through Thurs. 15. Lonely Hearts—not the Nathaniel West novel (which, in three prac­ tical tries, has never been filmed properly), but an Australian comedy about a middle-aged piano tuner and a young woman trying to escape what looks to be a spirit­ treason imprisonment within her fami­ ly. Fri. 16 through Jan. 5. The Return of Mar­ tren Garde, directed by (an unknown quan­ tity as to us) Daniel Vigne, set in 1557 and with

SEASON'S GREETINGS
from THE BACKBEATS

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THURSDAYS:
The Backbeats
The Mysteries
The Hands
The Salts
Bas Clas & The Batteries
Alison & The Distractions

THURSDAYS:
Sat. 10
The Backbeats
Sat. 16
The Mysteries
Thurs. 16
The Fleistles
Fri. 10
Woodenhead
Sat. 21
The Raffies

FRIDAYS:
Sat. 23
The Backbeats
Sat. 28
The Limit
Thurs. 29
Mrs. Bates
Fri. 30
The Shelks
Sat. 31
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Gerard Depardieu as a (no doubt loutish) medieval Billy in other words. Business as usual in Ford makes me, played by Cary at the theatre for performance dates and times.

Toulouse Theatre, 615 Toulouse, 522-7852. Wednesdays through Sundays at 7:30 pm, which threatens to become New Orleans' answer to the Farinatics, beginning at 7:30.

Tulane Theatre, 620 off Fren Street and McClair, so this must be the Phoenix Playhouse, 685-8360. Through Dec.3. The Glass Menagerie, by Tennessee Williams, play about a somewhat defeated Southern belle, her crippled daughter, her moody dream person and a gentleman caller. A lovely play that has been overshadowed by the subsequent turns taken by Williams' work (the late A Lovely Sunday for Cromwell) is a return, not totally successful, to the style and to St. Louis itself as a setting.

**ART**


Academy Gallery, 5326 Magazine, 895-6111. Sat. through Wed. 5:30-9:30. New work by longtime Newcomb faculty member Pat Reilly.


Bilennial Gallery, 1900 Hassies, 528-8369. In the first part of the month, local painters display their works. Turkish market fashion. In the latter half of the month: photographs by Virginia artist Charles Malin and Baton Rouge ceramicist Louise Ito.

Contemporary Arts Center, 500 Camp, 522-1216. Through Sun. 16. Victims and Violations, a cheery pre-holiday show in a gallery; we're partial to the content.

Delgado Fine Arts Gallery, 483-4048. Through Tues. 6. glass art by Deborah Sutnick, Carol Rosenbaum and Carolyn Butler Rachel.

Galerie Lucien Laforgue, 2119 Decatur, 945-7379. Though Thurs. 29. George Dureau's Most Famous Model, fifty photographs of human-torso-worship-wonder B.J. Robinson (who last we heard, was in prison in New York for running a gang of subway pickpockets—the idea of being as a model is in Heaven, it is not on Earth) is one of the most memorable times of the year.

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Man and a Snake by Ernest "Popeye" Reed at the Gaspetti Folk Art Gallery.

Treci Nelson at Tipitina's, Dec. 2.

The Topcats (in younger days, with friend) at Sugar Mill.
Guitar Slim (cont’d from page 20)

Parish] and get the same mob. Even the people who knew him to say ‘Hi’ to in the streets would think nothing of driving 100 miles to go see him that same night.”

When the first Electric Fender basses came on the market, Slim wanted one for his band and talked Lambert into buying one. Although Lambert became somewhat disappointed in their attempts to record while the group was touring. Lambert recalled that the second Specialty session took place in Chicago, and produced Slim's first hit, “Sufferin' Mind,” in 1955, with Art Rupe flying in from L.A. to produce.

Slim stayed so busy that Specialty had to arrange to record while the group was touring. Lambert recalled that the band crossed the country, playing to overflow houses. When he came off the road he would spend the days in a lazy manner usually drinking with friends in the Dew Drop or in Thibodaux at the Sugar Bowl.

And starring Slim both in New York and at Cosimo's, according to Lambert. There was little departure from the last Specialty sessions (although voices were occasionally added and the horn section beefed up) largely due to the strength of Uoyd Lambert and the new instrument. Slim had quit drinking the last months of his life, according to some. "Slim was getting ready to go on another tour," continues Earl. "Slim sat in the Dew Drop one night and he was talking very straight and serious. He told me, 'Earl, all this time I've been thinking the wrong things I been thinkin', you know your body's been slowly sinkin'."

"That's when I went over and asked Hosea Hill, 'is there somethin' wrong with Slim?' and he said, 'No, he's fine, just a little out of the hospital, and he's not even drinkin'.' Why do you ask that?' I said, 'Cause Slim talks too straight tonight, he's not funny. He's never under the weather about anything.' That was the last time I saw him."

In February 1959, the group embarked on a tour of dances and nightclubs in New York State. "We went up to Rochester," recalls Lloyd Lambert, "and Slim came up to me and said, 'Lloyd, I'm tired, I don't think I can make it no more. Y'all got a good band, you can get another singer.'"

He said, "No, Lloyd, my time is up." So we played the dance and when it came time for Slim to come on, he could only do part of the first song and couldn't finish.

"So we drove to Newark to play the next night, and Slim played the gig but he collapsed right after. One of the valet run and got a doctor, and the doctor looked at Slim and said, 'Man, check this man into a hospital, he's really sick.'"

"We were gonna stay in New York 'cause that's where our next date was. So we drove up to the Country Club and I took the valet across to take Slim to the doctor, while I checked into the hotel. When I got to the desk, there was a telephone call waitin' for me from the valet. He said, 'Lloyd, Slim's dead.'"

"I didn't believe it 'cause I'd just seen him not more than five minutes. Evidently the station wagon drove 'round the corner to the doctor's. But sure enough Slim was lain' up on the table gone."

Word on Slim's death was slow getting back to New Orleans. The Louisiana Weekly was a full week late in its announcements. "Somebody knocked up on my door and said 'Slim's dead,'" says Earl. "I said, 'Man, that can't be true. People like Slim don't die. They're still here when I'm gone.'"

"It's this liquor that killed him," specifies Lambert. "The doctor said it was bronchial pneumonia. Today they might have saved him, but all that drinking and hard living brought his resistance down."

Slim's estate in New York by authorities to see if drugs were involved in his death. Hosea Hill eventually paid the fare to fly Slim's body back to Thibodaux for a massive funeral at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Guitar Slim now lies in an unmarked grave next to his benefactor, Hosea Hill.

But ended the all-too-short life span of the 32-year-old Slim Guitar. He is survived by several common law wives, and a number of children, one of whom plays guitar in the small clubs around New Orleans and who keeps Slim's name alive. Hardly a year has passed since his death when someone doesn't re-record one of his songs. Earl King's 1982 version of Slim's anthem, "It Hurts To Love Someone" only reinforces the timelessness of his work.

Almost everyone is adamant about what would have made Slim's life one of the biggest.

Booker (cont’d from page 27)

professional envy for each other, in spite of their friendship. I don't know how to phrase this but music and politics is the same thing. Music has a very political nature. The music business as an enterprise has more of a commercial nature than it has an artistic nature. When the artistic nature combines with the commercial nature and goes over—beautiful. But if the artistic product is denied certain freedoms...

"The record company is a loan company. I remember I used to borrow money from record companies and they'd say, 'Look, remember now, Booker, we're not a loan company.' And I said, 'Oh, yes you are!'

"If you're gonna pay the musician $3,000 for so many sides and then deduct the money when my record hits a certain point. You're a loan company that's loaning me money—don't tell me you're not a loan company."

Booker mentioned that Jerry Wexler had got him some work connected with the soundtrack for Louis Malle's Pretty Baby, shot on location in New Orleans and starring Shields. Booker recalled Wexler's aid “a little bit.

"Why can't a man like that," Booker asked. "Who tells me how great I am—why can't he help me? Is it because of my attitude? Is my attitude so unorthodox? The last time I saw Jerry Wexler, he had very high compliments for me."

"Whatever faults a man can find with me, those faults exist all over—not only in the entertainment industry but in every and in every business there is. There are times when my biggest fault gets to be getting on the telephone. I might call Jerry five times a day but the man is so busy—he's somewhere, he might be in Cairo, Egypt, or something.

"I don't know whether to take a crap or go blind because it's totally beyond my comprehension why he's not freeze you out?"

"It's incomprehensible to me. I don't have any combination of faults that the average entertainer doesn't have, and yet they take you in. One of the faults that I don't like about myself is my extravaganza. I detest that because I know too much about economy to participate in extravagance. But that's one of my natural faults, it's not bad as quirks in other people, that could be top priorities." Booker the ambition that the record companies might have permanently blacklisted him "But I don't ever intend to hear no honest answer but I'm entitled to draw whatever conclusions I wish and me drawing the conclusions that I decided to draw and seeing concrete evidence of it, makes me say, 'Man, don't you think it's time to just go ahead and throw the towel in? Or should you just be as stubborn as a mule and let 'em know that they can't freeze you out?"

"That's a hell of a challenge. I'm not in the position to challenge anyone because I come from a family that was not poverty-stricken, but now I'm a grown man. I have responsibilities that fall in certain categories. It gets difficult in a case like mine where you have collection agencies hounding you and threatening you and all that kinda shit."
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Fri. 2 — Gatemouth Brown
Sat. 3 — Little Bob & the Lollipops
Fri. 9 — Exuma
Sat. 10 — Beauregard
Fri. 16 — Deacon John's
New Orleans Blues Revue
with Earl King
Sat. 17 — Zachary Richard
Fri. 23 — TBA
Sat. 24 — Charles Neville
House Band
Fri. 30 — Rockin' Dopsie & The Twisters
Sat. 31 — New Year's Eve
Party with Marcia Ball
Mon. 5 — Tomcat Shaka

Wavelength will publish its annual Band and Booking
Agent Guide, a comprehensive list of the working bands and
musicians in the New Orleans area, with all the pertinent
information—addresses, phone numbers, members' names, what kind
of music, agent's name, and anything else you might want to add.
After almost a year, we still receive requests for last year's Guide
from people who are looking for bands, and since Wavelength
goes all over Louisiana and the Gulf South, club owners and bookers
in other cities and states often want to find the bands they read
about in Wavelength. Don't miss out on a job because a club
owner can't find you!

To get your band listed, fill out the form below (use an index card
if you don't want to mutilate your copy of Wavelength) and send
it to us as soon as you can, along with a check or money order.
Deadline: January 1.

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It takes a lot of pull to get the funkiest band in the world to play on your birthday, but Ziggy Modeliste, being the drummer for the Meters, has a little pull with that group, so on Zig's birthday, December 28, there will be a Meters reunion at Tipitina's. Everybody's invited... Earl King and Walter Washington are back from Holland where they played to sold-out audiences at an outdoor music festival... Tommy Ridgley has released his own single, "Live While You Can," and "Sometimes You Get It Some Times You Don't," on his Tudor label... Definitely check out Chuck Simmons' new single "Love Motivation" and "You Like Me Like," both sides great rocking R&B. Get it... That Johnny Adams session for Rounder that we reported was to happen in the summer will finally take place this month. The session had to be postponed because of contractual problems with another record company... Eddie Kirkland, a bluesman who has made a number of great records since the 1950's with John Lee Hooker among others, has been a recent regular attraction here in New Orleans. Don't miss him if you have the chance... Mighty Sam moved back to Pensacola after his band Brownsville disbanded. Doug Kershaw was named Louisiana's official ambassador of music by the World's Fair during his Blue Room stint... Rock and Country Records, Box 83, S-310 S8 Vesigebrto, Sweden, has reissued the 1950's Spade recorded by Bogalusa rocker Vern Pullen... Sound Engineers Roberta Grace and Skip Godwin have left Sea-Saint Studios... Some of Elvis Presley's Louisiana Hayride shows will be released in album form, but will be available only through mail order - thanks, Marshall.

Recent attractions on Cox Cable's Music Makers, besides Mason Ruffner and the Blues Rockers and Boogie Bill Webb, were Tuts Washington and The Wild Magnolias... Speaking of The Wild Magnolias, they recently visited Washington, where they entertained at the Smithsonian and New York and were enthusiastically received... A new Dr. John album should be on the market by the time you read this... The Dirty Dozen's first album should be on the shelf soon, too. Kenner Mayor Aaron Broussard has joined pal Ronnie Lamarque at Studio 1 in the Country to record a 1960's style single. Apparently singing is nothing new to either of the artists; Broussard was lead vocalist with The Other Guys from 1965 to 1968 and Lamarque sang with The Nobles, a Fifties group that is still performing today. The Kenner Community Theatre will receive benefits from the record, which will be sold, naturally, at the Kenner City Hall and Lamanque Ford.

The Raloffs have recorded a "hot rockin' version" of "Silent Night" for 1985 Christmas release. (Remember, boys, that got Huey "Piano" Smith in trouble back when...). Red Shift (a displacement of a spectrum toward longer wavelengths, something we can relate to) is a new magazine from the Midwest that seeks to increase one's spectrum to a higher degree of understanding in the realms of alternative music and to combat the mediocrity and blatant commercialism that runs rampant in today's music scene... Members of the Lionel Ritchie fan club can subscribe for $6 a year at R.S., P.O. Box 513, Dekalb, IL 60115.

Elena DeGeneres won Showtime's local "Funniest Person In America" contest and Wynnona Marseis was written up in Time Magazine... We knew them when...

Ramsay McLean, heard lately playing in the Survivors with Ziggy, Charles Neville and Reggie Houston, received a call from punk idol Richard Hell last month. Hell is looking for a couple of New Orleans musicians to help him record - you're not going to believe this - Benny Spellman's "Lipstick Traces.

The Spencers—Rick Connick, Mick Fishe and David McGee—have regrouped and will debut around the end of December... Lady B! is moving to Houston late this month to perform in a long-running tribute to Billie Holiday. There'll be a farewell concert for her at The Saxony December 18.
### DECEMBER 1983

**MUSIC STARTS AT 9:30 MONDAY—THURSDAY**  
**10:30 P.M. FRIDAY—SUNDAY**

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<td>KIDD JORDAN'S ELEKTRIK BAND Africa Suite 9 p.m.</td>
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<td>ALLISON &amp; THE DISTRACTIONS</td>
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<td>SLEEPY LEEFE</td>
<td>ALL WE ARE SAYING A tribute to John Lennon in a benefit for CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament)</td>
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