Wavelength (January 1981)

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Musical Scholars Take Note

The Metropolitan College of The University of New Orleans will offer a course on New World music during the upcoming spring semester. Taught by Andrew Kaslow, an ethnomusicologist who played saxophone with the late Professor Longhair, the course will examine the aesthetics and cultural context of the musical forms that have arisen in the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America since the period of European contact. For information on registration, call the UNO Metro College at 283-0665; Kaslow can be reached during registration at 283-0294.

Musical Year Opens With Flourish

The 1981 musical year opens with a flourish as WYES-TV presents three more "Jazz Now" programs spotlighting contemporary New Orleans jazz. The half-hour shows will run at 10:30 p.m. on the first three Thursdays in January, beginning with a performance by the Astral Project on January 8. The second program, January 15, pairs Ramsey McLean and The Lifers with jazz poet Ron Cuccia, who performs two numbers from his new album. The final show, January 22, features Alvin Batiste and the Kidd Jordan Ensemble. Produced in collaboration with the Contemporary Arts Center and Musicians For Music, "Jazz Now" looks to be a real step forward in music programming on local television.

The CAC and Musicians For Music are working with WWNO as well, producing the "Contemporary Music On Air" radio series at 10:30 on Friday nights, and bringing in outstanding musicians from around the country to play with local jazz ensembles. On January 16, avant-garde composer and conductor David Amram is scheduled to play with Patrice Fisher's new group, Jasmine. Amram, who has recently conducted the New York Philharmonic, plans to play some Middle Eastern music as well as his own compositions. Subject to final confirmation as Wavelength goes to press, saxophonist Sam Rivers plans to fly in from New York on January 30 to play with his former student Ramsey McLean, who will augment his band, The Lifers, by adding a second drummer.

WWOZ-FM On The Air

WWOZ FM-90.7 is on the air and that, as regards New Orleans music, may be the single most important fact of 1980.

Since November 28, founding brothers Walter and Jerry Brock, and a staff of volunteers, have been doing interference testing.

As of this writing, all the music is pre-taped and they are broadcasting from the tower itself, on the banks of the Mississippi. They expect by early January to be operating from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, and later the same month, to move into their temporary home above Tipitina's. They have ordered enough equipment for a rather modest but complete on-air and production studio, and hope to be broadcasting live by February.

WWOZ is non-commercial community radio. Walter Brock explains it like this: "Rather than sell the community to advertisers, we offer our services to the community. WWOZ is membership sponsored, but in a unique way. Each membership constitutes a share in the corporation; each member is a stockholder; each stockholder has a vote."

WWOZ is committed to playing primarily the music that reflects the tradition and culture of New Orleans, and secondarily that of the Western Hemisphere. In a city whose commercial stations are far more eager to break a single by Elton John rather than by Deacon John, that commitment has resounding significance. Another threat to commercial radio is the fact that WWOZ is located smack in the middle of WWNO and WTUL. So if you have a triumvirate of good taste that may test your decision-making powers. And, in the case of community-owned WWOZ, if you don't like what you hear, you can, quite literally, change the station.

N.O. Songwriters' Association

The New Orleans musical heritage has long been recognized as a rich labyrinth of influences, having given definition to nearly every phase of American music since the beginning of this century. As musicians here well know, a significant aspect of this history has been the almost systematic theft of both compositions and playing styles New Orleans' great artists. The list of influential composers and stylistic innovators stretches back beyond Basin Street and into the incomprehensible isolation of the bayous. The rip-off has become a tradition, carried on today with unprecedented zeal as the next generation of musicians takes the stage.

It is no secret that local musicians have a reputation with national record companies for ignorance to the ways of business and finance. Fierce regional feelings and reluctance to move north or west to work have fostered the animosities, as have the devastating effects of inept management, from which many New Orleans bands have suffered. The situation is so well established that young musicians are raised on horror tales about the outsiders from national firms, the failures of national concert tours, the losses incurred through fraudulent recording contracts. It is no surprise that ennui among local musicians has also become a tradition.

There has been some particularly angry talk among music people lately; many anticipate new episodes of usurpation with the renewal of R&B, its growing influence on New Wave, and with preparations for the next World's Fair. Strong evidence is emerging to show that New Orleans is moving into another period of musical renaissance and ostensibly, another round of rip-offs.

A group of New Orleans musicians and songwriters have taken the talk a step further. The New Orleans
Songwriters Association, a recently organized, non-profit collaboration of composers, lyricists, musicians and skilled advisors, has been formed to take on the task of reversing this age-old trend. Though still at an embryonic stage, NOSA has attracted an initial membership of nearly 50 and held its first seminar on the business of songwriting and the potential hazards of making demonstration tapes, taught by experts John Berthelot and Jay Gallagher. Organizer Bud Tower is responsible for nursing the association from an idea to reality, and plans to hold more seminars and, eventually, showcases of original material by local composers.

The goals of NOSA are to educate local writers and musicians to business and legal practice, and with the help of attorney Brad Smolkin, to make the essential don'ts of contracting known to people unaccustomed to reading fine print. NOSA is also intended as a forum for composers and lyricists to find each other, a place where non-performing songwriters can contact musicians to tape or score their material, where musicians will soon be able to obtain printed matter relating to music business and legalities.

NOSA is currently meeting at the Penny Post, 5110 Danneel, but hopes to outgrow the coffeehouse in the coming year. The organization has not attracted exclusively folk artists, as one might associate with the Penny Post; the total range of musical forms is represented in NOSA's membership, from rock to Cajun.

Protecting musicians' rights through securing copyright and performance royalties has been a major problem here for years and is first on NOSA's agenda for artist education. The inherent problem of communication among artists can also be addressed, as meetings are held on alternating Mondays, when many musicians are not working.

Organization has always seemed foreign in the milieu of New Orleans music. Whether or not NOSA is able to find some answers depends on the players and the writers, if they are ready to talk business as smartly as they can riff.

Those interested in meeting with NOSA can contact Bud Tower at 949-9400, after 6PM, or write him at 2643 Desoto St. NOLA 70115.
That's right, Jackson. And getting colder all the time.

At a time when many artists in the hierarchy of pop's mainstream sound isolated and confused, when the major record companies speak only the languages of Wall Street and Madison Avenue, and when commercial radio plays only what a handful of promotion men tell them to, where do you find interesting music?

“It's starting to be cold out For people who live like me.”

—Jackson Browne

At the corner bar, of course.

New Orleans, in simpler days a concert stop for national recording acts, has, in the absence of larger promotions, turned to its nightclubs and its local bands. Following a national trend toward smaller venues brought on by worsening economic conditions, the improving club scene has drawn talented young local musicians out and put them on stages.

The year 1980 saw the deaths of Professor Longhair and Big Chief Jolly, progenitors of the second line rhythm, men who helped make the black music of the streets popular among white listeners. As one era ends, someone once said, another begins.

The year also saw the emergence of a large number of white pop bands on the club scene, bands with fresh energy and new songs. Harsh economic realities demanded that these bands simply draw people into bars and make them feel good, move with the music, and most importantly, drink. Those able to accomplish this found steady work in the clubs, and some gathered large and loyal follow-
The standout among the young and energetic bands to emerge on the local scene during the past year is The Cold. Playing a tense, uptempo style of pop music that owes as much to the influences of the Sixties as to those of the Eighties, The Cold has reached and cultivated a large audience.

The Cold, five young performers of varying degrees of musical proficiency, manage to create a total effect of sound and feeling that is far greater than the sum of its individual parts.

The parts are:
- **Kevin Radecker (guitar and vocals)—** A bubbly yet intelligent presence on stage, Kevin talks, sings, and lends personal pizazz to the whether singing, playing her rudimentary keyboard parts, or just dancing.
- **Vance Degeneres (bass and vocals)—** A handsome ex-marine with a broad musical background, Vance writes most of the Cold's original music, plays a rock-solid bass, and is a heart-throb for scores of young females.
- **Chris Luckett (drums and vocals)—** The most gifted member of the Cold, Chris packs a genuine wallop with his drumming, and his voice is strong and supple even in the midst of his most thunderous percussive flurries.

Instrumentally the music is built from the bottom up, with bass and drums providing the punch for the layered one-dimensional guitars and keyboard. Vocals are split five ways, though Menendez and Radecker sing most of the lead vocals with a good material in their repertoire includes such diverse selections as "Hawaii Five-O" (the TV theme), the Outsiders' "Time Won't Let Me," Petula Clark's "Downtown," the Yardbirds' "Shape of Things," and Elvis Costello's "Mystery Dance." The band is able to inject much of its own enthusiasm into the songs while retaining the credibility of the originals in tight, energetic arrangements.

The Cold makes people feel good on the dance floor at least partly because they feel good on stage. The band's uncanny rapport with their predominantly young, white, upper-middle class audience is as much responsible for their popularity as anything emanating from the loudspeakers. Pop(ular) music depends as much on a feeling as a sound, and when the feeling is genuine the audience knows it and responds. In a small room like Jed's or Jimmy's this collective pathos, shared by hundreds of people, is infectious, and at times nearly overwhelming.

Transferring the feeling to an immutable product (a record) can be tricky business. Nevertheless the Cold's single, "You/I Three Chord City," has somehow managed to cap-
ture the essential feeling the band projects on stage every weekend. Produced by Knight Studios entrepreneur Traci Borges, the single has enjoyed as much success as any locally produced 45 in recent memory. The ever-supportive, non-commercial WTUL was the first to give it local airplay, then WEZB, but with some prodding by manager/promotion-man Bruce Spizer, even WOUE and WTIX added the record to their tight commercial playlists. This is no small accomplishment for a band that played its first gig just one year ago.

Though a second single has already been completed at Knight Studios, the Cold’s avowed aim for 1981, according to Spizer, is to land a recording contract with a major label. Having shown the ability to produce a commercially palatable single on their own will certainly help the cause.

One can only hope that this young band that has come so far in such a short time will go on to greater successes with their freshness, enthusiasm, and originality intact.
The NOPSI garage lights spill wildly out into Willow street, over red tile rooftops, reflecting against chromed slivers and rear-view mirrors. A mechanic in bright coveralls is pounding furiously on one of the old green buses. Gil Scott-Heron crooning from a radio somewhere in back, as if the night shift had phoned him in L.A. and piped it over their cackling public address. A group of adolescent hep cats in tiger skin tops and black spandex pants shares a smoke in the street, oblivious to even the traffic that threatens to take them out.

Saturday night at Jimmy's, the Cold is playing, and the line of anxious customers reaches around the block. Everyone in the Cotton South is here. Wrap-around shades, black needle-toe bal oxords, Tex Ritter string ties, polyvinylchloride belts, white lipsticked girls yattering away at 78 speed, snapping gum so purple you could taste the artificial grape flavor from across the street.

"Ya know, I like da Cold cause dere so real, I mean, ya know, dat song Three Chord City is just a howl....ya know, it's like dey don't take demselves too seriously, ya know....

The doorman is carding everyone obviously under 50, and he looks nervous, like the secret service guys get when the President goes hand-shaking into an uncertain crowd. There are some first class fake ID cards being flashed tonight, ones with alternate photos scotchliaped over the original, date of birth around 1950,'51-hard to tell. And Jimmy is nowhere in sight, not even hiding behind a cash register. The opening act is whacking drums and twisting wires and upturning Dixies. People continue filing through the door; there is a promenade.

Unattached dialogues are heard:

"This has gotta be the fifteenth time I've seen 'em. Shit, I took Dave with me last time, and when Barbie started doin' shit to that microphone he almost creamed in his jeans...."

"Barbara is definitely the whole band. I mean she could make it big by herself in New York or someplace. The band is really tight— I mean they can play the songs all right. It's like Blondie or The Pretenders. Crissy is so sexy, I mean—like she could be a movie star without the band. Bands come and go I guess. I mean who remembers Janis Joplin's bass player anyway?

"I saw her one time in the River Bend. She looked just like a regular person. Just had on some kind of real conservative suit like some saleslady. I didn't think she was anybody special—I didn't know who she was until Flash pointed her out, over by the desert case. Funny seeing her with all that cheesecake and gooey stuff right there. She kind of looks like a bread pudding."

The Cold comes out after a significant wait and winds up to play. Everyone shuts up halfway into the first number, like Walter Cronkite has just announced that Soviet SS18s have crossed the Polar Ice Cap and are due in Washington in 13 minutes. Faces locked on target here, and Barb Menendez is wearing the bull's eye.

By midnight the place is shoulder-to-shoulder, bun-to-bun. Some kids are jumping up and down, Three Stooges style. There is still a brief wait at the door and from the street it looks as if Hendrix himself had risen to do a couple sets, just to keep up his chops. Some latecomers, wise to the scene, have brought their own oxygen, in little yellow tanks with warning labels.

Out on Willow Street the incessant hammering can still be heard, somewhere behind the muted echoes of Barb and The Cold. It is still Saturday night at 2 A.M. and the usual fireworks pop and hiss from back towards Leonidas. There are people walking leisurely along Carrollton who have not heard The Cold tonight. They are from Iowa, no doubt.
Plucking strings as one of the few jazz harpists anywhere, pulling strings as the ace grant-getter and organizer on the New Orleans music scene, Patrice Fisher has a sure touch in both the creative and the business side of jazz. A member of what is beginning to look like an extraordinary generation of contemporary jazz musicians now coming into their own in this city—natives like Johnny Vidacovich and Ramsey McLean, for instance, and more recent arrivals like James Singleton and Tony Dagradia—Fisher has the kind of managerial skill to pull together some of the creative energy that runs through the jazz community. She is the guiding hand of Musicians for Music, and for the past half year or so has served as music coordinator for the Contemporary Arts Center. The skills she acquired in taking a master’s degree in urban planning at UNO, and honed as a planner in Dutch Morial’s office, have made themselves evident in such cultural endeavors as the “Contemporary Music On Air” radio series, which WWNO broadcasts from the CAC on Friday nights, and the “Jazz Now” television programs.

The first week in January, however, marks a change for Patrice Fisher. She is leaving her job at the CAC (though remaining as a consultant) to develop her own musical ideas. Like the former heavyweight champion Joe Frazier, whose philosophy it was to “come out smokin’,” Fisher characteristically intends to begin at a point that most musicians take a good long while to reach, by setting off for New York to line up a record contract for her new band, Jasmine. I asked her if she planned to descend on record company executives, harp in hand, charming them with her angelic countenance.

No. I’ll wear high heels and lipstick and look them straight in the eye and give them a benefit-cost analysis. Do you think that getting a record contract is a real possibility?

I think I can do it. It’s a challenge, something that’s always seemed mysterious to me, like a record con-
TRACT is sent down from heaven to the gifted few, but it's the people who go after them and don't give up who get one.

Sounds like your background in planning is coming to the fore. I guess you're the only musician, probably the only person in the arts in New Orleans, who has that kind of training and experience.

When I first got out of music school I couldn't make a living. I only got about one gig a month, so I got a job with the City Planning Commission as a planning assistant, and ended up going to graduate school and getting a master's degree in planning, which now makes me very valuable to the jazz community, because I have a green thumb to get grants. People can conceive of a "Jazz Now" television program, but they can't put it together and get it funded. That's what I can do.

I really liked doing that until I started doing it full time, and then I didn't have time to practice, didn't have time to look for gigs. When I'd go to the gig I'd be worn out from working at the CAC, so I decided to slow it down, make it less of a priority. But I still do it.

So you're going to concentrate on your music. Isn't it unusual for someone to be a jazz harpist?

Yes it is. There's Alice Coltrane in New York, who's really a pianist but plays harp also, and Dorothy Ashby, who does a lot of studio work in Los Angeles. She's one of my idols.

I don't emulate either of their styles. I had to create my own from listening to guitarists and pianists and trying to take what's possible to play on the harp

What kind of music are you going to be playing with Jasmine?

I went to Brazil last summer and bought a lot of sheet music and records of Brazilian sambas and bossa novas, because I really like that music, and it seems easier to play on the harp than a lot of American music. We'll be doing that and some jazz.

I've played in a lot of groups where there were loud intruments that covered up the harp. With Jasmine I wanted to have a band without guitar or piano; all the instruments except the harp are monophonic, which means that they're not chordal; they can play only one note at a time. It leaves a lot of space in the music for the harp to be heard. And the drummer is very sensitive about not playing very loud.

Her name is Maria Martinez. She's from Cuba, so she understands the kind of styles in Brazilian music. She's eighteen or nineteen years old, with that alive spark that you can only have when you're about nineteen. You can feel the whole stage vibrate with her energy.

Who are the other people in the band?

There's Sun Kim, the violinst. She played in the Miami Symphony, The Honolulu Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony. I had some jobs with her, playing the Hilton Hotel, and I started telling her how much fun it was to play jazz, inviting her to play a job here and there. She got really, really interested because it's what I can do.

I think I'll wear high heels and lipstick and look them straight in the eye and give them a benefit-cost analysis!

very challenging for her. She has incredible technique but didn't know how to improvise; this is a new aspect of her career.

Then there's Kent Jordan, the flute player. He's also very young, and just got out of the Eastman School of Music. He's Kidd Jordan's son. When I was in college I was a teaching assistant at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, where he was going to high school. I'd hear him playing extremely difficult flute passages, this guy fifteen, sixteen years old. He got a scholarship to the Eastman School of Music and studied with Hubert Laws. Now he's a jazz artist in residence with the New Orleans public schools.

The bassist is Jim Markway. He's played all over town with a lot of different groups. He's a very versatile player. He plays fretless electric bass, which is sort of a compromise between acoustic and electric bass. You can get certain kinds of sounds that you can only get on an acoustic bass, because frets get in the way of sliding around getting different sounds; so he's taken the frets off his bass.

I hear people whose sound I like, and if they can fit in, I bring them into the group.

There isn't anything very close to what you're doing in New Orleans, is there?

No. It's good and it's bad. We're unusual and easy to remember, but at the same time we scare some of the club owners because it's not a standard format. It's different. They don't know if it will work or not. My mission is to let them know that it's okay.

Sort of what you've been doing with other people's music through the CAC.

Right. Let people know that there's more to life than r&b.

The jazz audience is small but loyal. You'll never get rich playing jazz, but you can make a living. That's all I want to do. I'd be scared of getting rich.

I love living in New Orleans, and as long as I can make a living playing the music I want to play, I'll stay. I feel most comfortable in the music I want to play here; this city inspires a certain style.

Do you see Jasmine as the kind of group that could work regularly here, in clubs or whatever?

I'll have to see. When I leave the CAC after the first of January, I'll take all my management skills and apply them toward getting jobs for Jasmine. There are certain kinds of music that sell themselves; with Jasmine I'll have to make it into that kind of music.

It's a great problem when it's your baby, your music that you have to risk being rejected. You're much more vulnerable.

Do you think that as the scene grows here there'll be more people playing those two roles, artist and manager?

The most successful musicians I've met on the national scene are the ones who can do that. There are a lot of people with a lot of talent who can't deal on the business and professional level, to make themselves national. People I've met like Nat Adderly and Billy Taylor and Anthony Braxton can deal on both levels with equal proficiency. I have to work on the music more than management.
Pass A Good Time

A Guide To Live Cajun Music

BY ALMOST SLIM

South Louisiana can arguably be called the richest area of indigenous music in the world. New Orleans is often referred to as "the birthplace of jazz," the home of marching bands and an instantly recognizable rhythm and blues style. But it is Louisiana's bayou country that has perhaps spawned one of the warmest bewildering varieties of music—Cajun and its black equivalent, Zydeco.

Within the last decade the rest of the country, and indeed the world, has taken notice of our true folk music. Both Clifton Chenier and Doug Kershaw have received worldwide acclaim and their recordings are much sought after. It is a strange parallel, but with the increased popularity of Cajun music it is seemingly getting more difficult to find live Cajun music, be it the amplified accordion and guitars, or the natural sound of fiddle, accordion and triangle, it's getting hard to find, but it's out there.

Here is a sampling of a few promising spots. A phone call to these particular clubs would be in order to find out who is playing because a Cajun nightspot could just as easily become a disco or an urban cowboy bar by the time you read this.

Here in New Orleans your best bet is to head over to 1822 Airline Highway, to The Cajun Bandstand. Allen Fontenot and his Country Cajuns entertain weekends and a good time can be had by all. Bring a group of people and wear shoes you don't mind getting scuffed up. The Maple Leaf Bar on Oak Street features one of the better young local Cajun bands, Bourre, every Thursday night. Tipitina's serves as a stop-over for the best in Zydeco groups. Clifton Chenier, Buckwheat and Rockin' Dopsie have all played weekends here. A short trip across the river to the Moulin Rouge, 5514 Fourth Street, in Marrero, on weekends will provide the listener with the strains of South Louisiana from the bandstand. Good French juke box too.

If you find yourself in the environs of Lafayette, a good location is Jay's Lounge in Cankton. Jay's has popularized Cajun music with the students from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. But call first because I've heard rumors Jay's is swinging towards disco. Johnny Allen, Rod Bernard and Warren Storm often perform. And if that's not enough, Little Bob and the Lollipops are the house band.

In Eunice, on the weekends there is the Blue Goose Club and the Lakeview Club. Both are located on Mamou Road. The Blue Goose features music on weekend nights and Sunday afternoons beginning at 4.

Perhaps the most renown Cajun music club is Fred's Lounge in beautiful downtown Mamou. Fred's features live music that is broadcast live on KUEN-AM every Saturday. The music and beer begin to flow at 8 a.m. and continues through to 11 a.m. About two dozen musicians comprise the program's regulars; among them are Ambrose Thibodeaux and Nathan Abshire. Reevon Reed hosts the spirited on-air party.

If you find yourself in Scott, head for Sunset Road and try either the Triangle Club or Going West especially on Friday or Saturday night. The Triangle Club has a Saturday afternoon set at 4 p.m.

In Riceville there is the Town and Country and in Louisburg there is Richard's (of course that's Reeshard's), again weekends are recommended.

On Highway 14 between Abbeville and Kaplan, The Cajun Club features live music. The Cajun Club is best known for its weddings. Couples often have their receptions here and follow the tradition of pinning money
to the bride's veil. Red Labry, the owner, says ethnic weddings are quite popular there.

Also in Abbeville is the Cajun Bandstand. Any of the locals can give you directions.

Breaux Bridge sports La Poussiere Club on the Henderson Road and the Corner Bar that is within the town. If you keep headed down the Henderson Road and you're hungry, head for Pat's Seafood Restaurant, one of the finest restaurants in the state. After your meal you can head over to Pat's Waterfront Lounge or across the road to the Balcony Club.

In Judice, Louisiana, the traditional Belvedere Club is still operating, featuring Cajun music on weekends. In Ville Platte, head for Snook's Friday or Saturday night. Sunday afternoon George's Club, located on Lake Arthur, has live music starting at 4 p.m. In Ville Platte too, don't forget to stop by Floyd's record shop for the best in Cajun waxings.

For the best in Zydeco, Richards club in Opelousas, or in Lawtell on Highway 190 will fit the bill. Fernest Arceneaux, Rockin' Dopsie, Sam-Brothers Six and Buckwheat play them both.

Just off Highway 70, between Highway 1, and Pierre Part, on the White Castle shortcut, are located the Hula Hoop and the Bon Chance. Both are old time Cajun dance halls. Adam Bareleaux entertains at the Bon Chance Saturday evenings. The dance floors are waxed and everybody dances here.

Quite often clubs that usually feature other brands of music will feature some Cajun entertainment and some church groups or groups like the V.F.W. will have a fais-do-do dance in town. They are usually announced by telephone pole placards. For the most part, music starts late and goes until very early in the morning, quite often until sunup! Musical sets often follow a similar pattern. No breaks, just enough time between numbers to take a few drags on a cigarette and down half a beer.

Hopefully there will be no further demise of live Cajun music spots with its increasing popularity. Although the market is small it is gratifying to hear the "shaw-shawn" live. Hopefully it still has a long and prosperous future.
Droves of spurious rednecks (and some of the real thing) are waltzing across the Mississippi River Bridge on any given night to hear the Salt Creek Band.

BY NANCY WELDON

“We don’t do anything but play music.”

“Strictly professional,” deadpans another of the Salt Creek band, engaged in a quickie interview before taking the stage at Bronco’s Saloon on the West Bank.

“I watch Guiding Light during the day,” confides still another. It’s something like interviewing a couple of sets of twins who speak in unison or in tongues.

The sound system is blaring “Cotton-eyed Joe,” and it’s hard to tell who’s serious and who’s saying what as the band gathers around a dark table by the stage to talk about its music.

On a good weekend, its music reportedly draws some 1,500 two-steppers to the two-story wood-floored bar.

Salt Creek—in one form or another—has been together for about seven years, since most of the group met up at a bluegrass festival in Florida.

They came to New Orleans, and played at the old Judah P’s, now Big Jim’s on Bourbon Street.

Nearly three years ago, Salt Creek had some changes. Former Copas Brothers drummer Don Kendrick and guitar and fiddle player Randy Rea joined original members Luke Haines, steel guitar; Dick Hughes, guitar; and Sam Alfano, bass; to form the current Salt Creek.

On this particular Friday night at Bronco’s, band alumnus Gary Frazier is sitting in on bass because Alfano is on his honeymoon. The honky-tonk spirit is undiminished.

“We’ve been playing country music when most of these bands over here were playing rock and roll...I don’t think there was any country bands playing when we started,” says Hughes. “It’s what we’ve always played.”

Now of course, droves of spurious rednecks (and some of the real thing) are waltzing across the Mississippi River Bridge on any given night to hear the Salt Creek Band.

“We don’t just play country music, we mix it up. We play a little country, a little rock, a little Cajun,” says Haines.

“A lot of original stuff,” continues Rea, who with Hughes does most of the group’s writing.

They collaborated on nearly all of the songs on the Salt Creek Living On the Bayou album, as well as the more recently released 45 “Honky Tonk Amnesia.” (“Honky Tonk Amnesia set in again and I don’t remember who, what or when.”)

The album was produced by drummer Kendrick, and engineered by Eugene Foster at Magic City Recording. Foster now owns Bogalusa’s Studio in the Country, where the single was recorded.

Both records have a good, classic honky-tonk sound, with Cajun and even Texas swing overtones.

“We wrote a lot of ’em just during the day [presumably around Guiding Light], sitting around. One of us

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would come up with an idea, and get with the other one, and just start picking it out," says Rea.

All the cuts are about Louisiana life: "Sacalait Hole," "Atchafalaya," "New Orleans," "Fais Do Do," "Hip Boot Joe," to name a few.

Hughes and Rea, originally from Baton Rouge, say they like writing about the state because, except for Doug Kershaw, few songwriters are concentrating on Louisiana.

"We'd be doing it down on Bourbon, and it'd give the people from up North or wherever they came from a souvenir they could buy that would be about Louisiana."

Most of the Bronco's crowd seems local. From the lady in black vinyl with the Dolly Parton wig to the young couple with matching feather hatbands, they two-step around the floor in true Gilley's style under wagon wheels, steer skulls, antlers and harnesses.

Bronco's also has a mechanical bull and a gift shop selling everything from John Wayne commemoratives to panties and cloisonne wildlife hat tacks.

Saloon-goers can watch the action from upstairs, looking down through picture windows into the parking lot or over a balcony onto the dance floor.

Most come to dance, and Salt Creek's originals and covers are eminently danceable.

The band is unfazed by interruptions of the "you-have-a-phone-call-will-the-owner-of-a..." variety, segueing back into the music with a brisk "Okay. Looks like ya'll want to slow dance. Get on out there and hunch on each other."

An evening with Salt Creek is anything but dull.

There was a time when they weren't quite so country-oriented.

"I was a Beatles fan," says Rea. "My uncle, who I learned guitar from, was a big Hank Williams fan. He used to teach me Hank Williams stuff and I'd go home and try to work it into Beatles stuff."

Kendrick converted to country after earlier work with Baton Rouge's Butch Hornsby and John Fred and the Playboys. "Just say 'Don says he's played in too many bands to remember'."

Which brings us back to "Honky Tonk Amnesia," the single that the band says has had some local airplay (minimal success," as one put it).

"The radio stations are kind of hesitant to play a local band" says Haines. "We don't have a major label."

Their work is mostly self produced, and they would like to record again.

Meanwhile, there is the regular gig at Bronco's and they're not at all concerned that country western music may be just another fad.

"Country music seems to always, even after it dies out, to resurge every few years. I don't think it'll ever die out completely. It's been here for too long."
JANUARY 1981

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

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**January 1981 Calendar**

**Sunday, January 1**: Blank

**Monday, January 2**: THE NEW ORLEANS BROTHERS

**Tuesday, January 3**: Blank

**Wednesday, January 4**: Blank

**Thursday, January 5**: Blank

**Friday, January 6**: Blank

**Saturday, January 7**: BREEZE

**Sunday, January 8**: Blank

**Monday, January 9**: Blank

**Tuesday, January 10**: Blank

**Wednesday, January 11**: Blank

**Thursday, January 12**: Blank

**Friday, January 13**: Blank

**Saturday, January 14**: Blank

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Jazz

Tony Dagradi Returns in Style

BY YORKE CORBIN

Tony Dagradi, the sensational sax player with Astral Project and Ramsey McLean and the Lifers (the two foremost contemporary jazz ensembles in New Orleans) has returned to town in style after touring Europe with Carla Bley, the avant-garde pianist and composer.

Dagradi's return coincided with the publication of a rave review of his album Oasis (on the Grammavision label) by Joel Simpson—like Dagradi, a formidable East Coast addition to the local scene—in the new newspaper Gambit. Beyond that, this versatile player will be featured in three of the four bands that will appear in the "Jazz Now" television series on WYES this month. After-hours club patrons can catch Dagradi with the Lifers at the Faubourg beginning around 1 a.m. on Sundays, and with the Astral Project at the same hour Mondays at the Blues Saloon. He'll also be playing with both those bands in the "Contemporary Music On Air" radio broadcasts over WWNO this month—but why not make it over to the CAC those Friday nights to see the man play?

This guy Dagradi gets around. Fortunately for a jazz neophyte and habitual pedestrian like me, however, he turns out to live just three blocks from my house in the Broadmoor neighborhood. I hiked over the other day to ask him how it felt to be back.

"I was in Europe almost exactly a month," he informed me, "playing almost every night. It was all concerts and always well received. I totally enjoyed Carla's gig, and the music was burning, but there were so many people in the band that the featured time for each person was divided up so that you didn't get to play as much as you would with a quartet or quintet. So I look forward to playing with Ramsey or with the Astral Project because I have to be producing a lot more. I like to put out a lot more."

"With Carla's band it was a lot of reading. Her music is odd-numbered bars, so if you didn't read you'd get lost in a minute, until you started to learn the music. The solo space was very limited. But it was always a great gig."

Dagradi feels that Astral Project is his favorite band to play with in New Orleans. "Everybody has been playing together for so long that there's a lot of intuition on the stand, a lot of interaction that doesn't happen in bands where one person is playing the drums one night, and someone else the next night. Astral Project is always tight. Plus, that's the band that plays all my music; I write a lot for that band."

Continued on next page
Rare Records

Everybody's Heard It, Nobody's Got It

BY ALMOST SLIM

Who Shot The La-La
Oliver Morgan
GNP 318x

I bet you're saying "That's not a rare record, everybody's heard that." Well, everybody might have heard the 'Nookie Boy' do it but copies are extremely scarce. Roger, from the Goldmine Record Store, has come across only one copy after a decade in the oldies business.

Released in 1963, it featured Dr. John on piano, Roy Montreal on guitar, Joe Fox on drums and Shakey Knight on sax. Although co-written by Eddie Bo, Oliver couldn't recall him on the session. Oliver added, "After it came out it dragged a bit but then, boom! I even was contacted by Herman's Hermits who wanted to cover it over in England but it never came about."

The record itself is a classic New Orleans call and response second-liners bonanza. When quizzed on who did the La-La, Oliver responded, "I still don't know!"

Continued from page 19

"Playing with Ramsey is totally enjoyable, though. He writes some interesting things. It puts me in a different space than with my own music, which I like. I wish there were more people in this city who were presenting different ideas. That's something that's missing here."

"Years ago I used to think that what I should be doing was writing. Then I put it aside for quite a number of years, just worked on my playing. Now there's more of a balance, because I've been trying to write things for myself that I want to present, establish moods to present to people. That's mostly what I've been thinking about in my writing, trying to work on the next album, to get that music together."

"There are four of my tunes on Oasis. Three of them were written with the album in mind. I think I'll be doing another album in the spring, and I'm having a little more time to think about it. It's going to be a little more organized. Each album's going to be different."

"There's a lot you learn in the studio, about organizing the session and the time involved and how to deal with the people. There's a lot of things that the leader has to be responsible for that you only learn by doing."

"There were some unexpected things that I enjoyed—the interplay that happened, the vibrancy of the music. It has a very immediate sound to it, very fresh. I hadn't played with those particular musicians on the album in a while, and when we do get together, it's a nice musical thing that happens."

There have apparently been several reviews of the album in East Coast publications, but Dagradi hasn't seen them yet. Joel Simpson's review in Gambit, which should be on the newsstands through January, is well worth checking out. Perhaps the competition will rouse Vincent Fumar, the fine music writer whom the Picayune doesn't seem to know it has, from his Chalmette torpor. Or if Simpson's writing doesn't, I suspect Dagradi's album will.

"I'll make sure he hears it," said the saxophonist, jotting down Fumar's address as I took my leave.
Joyride Gets Down To Business

BY SEVARENE

“Elegant Funk” is how Sam Henry describes it; “extreme fusion” says George Porter. What they’re talking about is Joyride and to everyone who has seen them lately, they brought pure joy and a lot of hard-driving funk in the true New Orleans tradition.

Joyride may be a relatively new band in town but it is also a group of four very experienced musicians that takes music and the music business very seriously and deserve in turn New Orleans’ serious attention.

Although the band as we know it now was formally launched at Tip’s on October 28th with George Porter on bass, Ricky Sebastien on drums, Bruce McDonald on lead guitar and Sam Henry on keyboard, it all started about a year and a half ago when Tony Fontenette, in need of a bass player, called on George Porter. Later, Porter tied in with Bruce McDonald, Kenneth Blevins was on drums, Craig Wroten on keyboard. After a few months, Ricky Sebastien replaced Kenneth Blevins and Sam Henry, who had previously worked with George Porter on his album, came to play with them. The band was immediately successful, playing at the memorable “Fire on the Bayou” concert at the Saenger on May 30th, with both Craig and Sam on keyboards.

Throughout the summer and early fall, the band has been working hard, rehearsing and making its debut at Jed’s, the Old Absinthe Bar, Tipitina’s and the Dream Palace.

In November, “Joyride” was seen backing Exuma at the Old Absinthe Bar and also the four-piece band was laying rhythm tracks and then vocal overdubs at the Studio in the Country. By the time this issue is out, all twenty-four tracks will be shopped through the industry for a record deal.

It is all pretty impressive for a new band, but it is easy to understand in view of the background and experience of all four members of Joyride.

George Porter, who is well known as the bass player of the Meters since ‘67, was involved before that with the Neville Sound Band playing R&B and rock. They were doing interpretations of other people’s material; they were “song stylists.” In all, Porter has played bass for sixteen years and wants to bring his New Orleans experience and ability for creative interpretation to Joyride. He does not see the group merely as a good rhythm machine but rather as a truly creative group with recording and producing experience open to communication and participation with other artists.

Ricky Sebastien, at 24, is the youngest of the group. He grew up in a Cajun background between Opelousas and Baton Rouge, but while in college started playing jazz and Latin music. Finally moving to New Orleans in ‘77, Ricky has played with practically everyone in town: Earl Turbinton, Willie Tee, James Rivers, Ron Cuccia and the Jazz Poetry Group, etc. Ricky has put a strong emphasis on being able to play a variety of styles and he sees himself influenced by Hendrix, Chick Corea and drummers like Tony Williams, Bill Cobham and Steve Gadd.

Jimi Hendrix was also a strong influence on Bruce McDonald, who was a neighbor of Sebastien’s at one point and ws already playing some very serious rock. Other influences were Garcia, Eric Gayle and Cornell Dupree of “Stuff” and the Meters. Around ’75, he was playing with the Cajun band “Coteau,” then did three tours and two albums with Zachary Richard, co-producing one of them. McDonald joined Joyride when Kenneth Blevins was the drummer and has been with them ever since. Apart from his obvious expertise on lead guitar, he is a most serious music and lyrics writer. Right now about half of Joyride’s material is McDonald’s.

Sam Henry has been playing music for almost 40 years and it is hard to even begin to tell of this man’s experience. He started out as a classical musician, played jazz through his college years at Xavier University. Over the years he was involved with Clyde Kerr’s seventeen-piece orchestra, until Henry left with the entire rhythm section and the vocalists to start “Sam and the Americans.” Later he worked with the John Anthony Quartet, formed a trio with Jonas Monk. From jazz to rock to jazz. Then he worked with “Soul Machine” with Aaron and Cyril Neville. In ’73 he went to Nashville where he acquired experience in the recording business and came back to New Orleans in ’76, where he has been arranging and co-producing for Sea-Saint Studio, as well as working with George Porter. Sam is mostly interested in the production aspect of the recording business but he will also bring some powerful writing and arranging to Joyride.

All four have goals of their own, and with individuals as creative and widely experienced as they are, it is not surprising. But they do have some very definite collective goals for Joyride. They want to change the attitude of the country toward the recording industry in New Orleans.

Already, they have created Chippewa Music Publishing Corporation and Joyride, Inc., which will oversee a recording corporation in partnership with the Studio in the Country. Joyride, Inc., wants to offer better opportunities to the working/recording musician, and try to be the answer to his frustrations, legal and financial.

In the near future, most likely before Mardi Gras, Joyride will have a single out with the excellent cut “Going to New Orleans,” a tribute to Professor Longhair. They don’t want to put a label on their music, but George Porter says they will have some new directions for the Eighties and it’s up to us to hear them play and find out what these new directions are.
Low Blows

BY BUNNY MATTHEWS
Rock

X Lives, Leads L.A. Punk Scene

BY KEITH TWETHELL

X. On pirate maps it marked buried treasure. Today it names a very different treasure, definitely not of the buried type. X is the hottest band out of Los Angeles these days, and the only surprise is that they didn't get here sooner.

Their music is punk. The band is quite clear on the distinction between punk and new wave: new wave is "easy listening," punk is "challenging." X challenges with haunting bitterness of lyric and hard-driving music that, while adhering to the basic ferocious beat of punk, soars in and out, around and above it in a powerful display of what the genre can achieve.

Times were that X was facing the challenge itself, watching "safer" acts compromise their way into recording contracts while they remained unsigned. "We're a punk rock band; we screw up on stage; we're not a formula," says bassist and co-writer of most of the band's material, John Doe. "It's hard." No contract, little money, a few gigs at punk clubs in L.A. Challenging.

One night Ray Manzarek, keyboard player of another challenging L.A. band of 15 years ago, the Doors, heard X. He became their producer. Slash Records, a small, independent company that had released exactly one previous album, signed them. The debut album, Los Angeles, was cut. A funny thing happened: it sold. And sold and sold. Critics ravaged, promoters called. Slash's limited facilities couldn't keep up with the demand--more records were being ordered than could be pressed (a problem which has now been overcome).

And another funny thing happened. Some of the bigger record companies that had rejected X's demo tapes out of hand came calling. Ah, the leap to the bigtime, right? Wrong. X stayed with Slash. Wasn't the possible move a temptation? "No," says Doe. Thirty minutes with some of those guys from the big companies, and...." Exene, co-writer and vocalist, describes the situation beautifully: "When you're married to someone and you love them and they loved you when you were down, and then some beautiful woman walks up the street and says 'Come live with me,' well, you just don't do it."

This is typical of X. They will not compromise, they will be true. Exene, who views herself primarily as a writer, says a song should be about an experience with a common element for all of us, described in specific, reachable terms, and it must be true;
John Doe agrees that X's songs are about the truth, or at least "hallucinations of the truth." The truths in X's music are about people and the intolerance of their environment ("Sex and Drugs in High Society," "The World's a Mess, It's In My Kiss"). There are no apologies or sympathies, just pictures that are exquisite, torturous in their accuracy, visions finely wrought in anger, bitterness, confusion. And truth.

The band searches for truth in music, too. Influences are hard to pronounce—"Anytime you hear something, anything, that's good," says Exene, "it becomes an influence." Guitarist Billy Zoom claims not to own a record from after 1963. All of them caution against seeing too much Doors influence in X, a point the critics have played with at the length because of Manzarek and the band's status in L.A. Yet only Billy has lived there longer than four years, and Manzarek, while deeply loved and admired by the band, is their producer, not their musical guru.

What does influence them is music that is played for itself. "There's a lot of truth in regional music, like Cajun," offers Exene, "It's natural. X isn't trying to impress anyone. They search for no particular audience; they just want to be given a hearing. The music is not gentle. Its emotions complement those in the lyrics, so that sound and word are entwined. They are punk because they feel it, believe it. They don't get consciously caught up in the scene; they just live it, and now in L.A., they feel it, believe it. They don't get enough to hold back completely the strength of Exene's voice, and more importantly to X's sound, the interplay between her and John. The vocals are hard to take in. "Garbled" is the best that can be said of the sound quality. Yet this is not enough to hold back completely the strength of Exene's voice, and more importantly to X's sound, the interplay between her and John. The vocals, weakness for many punk bands, often thrown away, count here. Both sing well, harmonizing at some points and then layering voice on top of each other. Few songs are dominated by either, and here is a key to X's music: no one dominates. Four very talented people merge and are distinctive, one painting with four signatures.

At times there seems to be room for X to expand—get off the basically one-rhythm track, open up some instrumental improvisation, but that's not what X does. X is a punk band; their abilities easily overcome any inherent limitations of the form. They are not likely to compromise. They do delight in their challenge. Take them up on it.
Truth Decay
T-Bone Burnett
Takoma TAK-7080

The first post-Jesus-freak rocker's album proves to be a transcendental experience. T-Bone Burnett (no relation to Johnny-Dorsey-Billy) is a picker-singer-writer from Texas; he was the spark of the Alpha Band that was the spine of Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue. Truth Decay, the album's title, perhaps speaks of T-Bone's disaffection with the dogmatic excesses of the Born Again (don't stop being born). The music behind the title is a fresh blend of rockabilly styles, acoustic and electric, and T-Bone's visions. Let's talk about what this music's talking about.

"Quicksand" has a quick gallop with the second guitar double-timing the bass in that immortal figure that goes back to Cash's "I Walk the Line." T-Bone's telling you that the road you're on is quicksand: you're sinking deep in the matter. "Nothing here is really real." The floppy blues beat of "Talk" offers a backdrop for T-Bone to do grocery lists of phenomenological descriptions of people, situations, images. (Describe, don't explain.) The people he describes "don't say nothing," but T-Bone's descriptions speak a world. "They stare in the mirror at each other's face"—lost in the ricochet of reflection.

Great bubbling, bobbing guitars in "Boomerang" doing rubber band tricks. Seeing the action of the moment as the seed of the future. (Have you ever been in another state and witnessed an accident as it happened, the collision appearing in slow motion?)

"Love at First Sight," an evolved Hollyesque mix of black and white musical influences, features an ominous tom-tom beat through which a shave-and-a-haircut-two-bits riff slashes at seemingly odd times (you'll get the hang). Somebody's guitar is stinging like a mother (David Mansfield?): "She lit the candle by the bed/Her voice shook, she bowed her head/He sat down in her only chair/Her poverty was everywhere/It was love at first sight."

The simplicity of Burnett's descriptions gives each song a verbal interiorness. You feel like you're there. Good glove stuff. "Realism" is really "Surrealism": "It's a death cult that terrorized a town/A love affair that brought a nation down/A desperate desert battle to the death—" ("Madison Avenue").

"Driving Wheel" drives. "Love that moves like a driving wheel." This is the heart of the matter—movement.

T-Bone is hanging on the lamppost for "Come On Home," begging his baby to return. "Started with a drink and ended with a fight." The guy's feeling horny and it looks like the night's gonna eat him alive. Get back to this boy 'fore he hurts himself.

With a "Give Peace a Chance" beat, "The Power of Love" reconciles the opposites. "The power of love is self of self/And scorches out all the doubt/Burns away all the pain." Dig the message and not the man; the man ain't worth a damn if he isn't the message. Mr. Jones is the dogmatic doxologist. Conscious magic is the synthesis of opposites, love.

T-Bone speaks "House of Mirrors" over an understated jerk beat that opens up with some fine cymbal work by David Kemper in the instrumental sections. Story of a man who lost touch with himself, and everybody else. "People were also his mirrors/Often times he was their mirror as well."

"Tears" is good kicking modern 'billy; "Pretty Girls" has got a sleazoid back beat and a bourbon guitar.

Wrap it up: "I'm Coming Home." Christ, that guitar hurts, it's so fancy and pretty. "Hold me to your breast/Let me stay and rest in your tenderness" croons Burnett and friend. Guitar man gets all shaky and warbly in the low notes for his first eight bars of ride, then rises like a bird. "I still have to pay the price/For some distant paradise/But now, I'm coming home."

-Zeke Fishhead
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ATTENTION ALL MUSIC TALENT

Give Me The Night
George Benson
Warner Bros. HS 3453

The emphasis of this album is stated by producer Quincy Jones: "Instead of the world's greatest guitarist who can also sing, the approach we used was a great singer, who is the world's greatest guitar player." The aim was to make this a crossover album that would appeal to a multitude of listeners and be commercial as well as an artistic success.

As a jazz album, it falls short.
As a vocal album, it shows promise; but Benson's vocal prowess can't sustain an entire 12" L.P. (Anybody remember the 10 inch?)
As a pop album, though there are several saleable tracks, the jazz overtones on some may make listeners uneasy.
As a soul album, there is more than a hint of neolite on a disco dance floor.
As an R&B disc, it's too sophisticated to be funky.

In short, as much as I admire both George Benson and Quincy Jones, and respect their contributions to jazz, pop, and music in general, I can't get enthused over this outing as an album. Believe me, I've tried hard.

The attempt to be all things to all people results in not being enough to satisfy anyone's taste.

There is not enough improvisation of substance from Benson. "Off Broadway" and "Dinorah" are the mainly instrumental tracks. "Give Me The Night" and "What's On Your Mind" are almost up to Benson's earlier standards and, for some, may be sufficient to support the album. For me, Patti Austin's brief solo in the Eddie Jefferson vocalese of "Moody's Mood" is a breath of fresh air. Here Benson shows another, gentler side of his vocal scatting that comes off well. Although "Love Dance" has brief, cryptic lyrics, Benson handles them well.

Superior Marty Paich string scoring plus nice Herbie Hancock synthesizer accompaniment are the highlights of "Star of a Story (X)." These are two examples of the Lester Young-Count Basie adage that less can be more, and it's interesting to hear Benson in such settings.

There are other points, however,
This 1979 recording of what is termed a "Jazz Symphony" by composer Charles Schwartz (whose programmatic liner notes are an assist) recalls to me the 1945 Ebony Concerto that Stravinsky wrote for Woody Herman and his Orchestra. Though Schwartz's is a more sparsely scored work (11 pieces, including vocalist, to 19 for Stravinsky), less is more complex in this instance.

There are other similarities. David Hall called Stravinsky's work "concert chamber jazz," while Donald Fuller hailed Stravinsky combining jazz elements with the lighter side of his late neo-classical manner. Schwartz himself, noting that his "jazz symphonies" can be performed by "either a chamber group or a symphony orchestra...[and]...these symphonies are fully composed works that also allow for considerable jazz improvisation."  

There are decided differences also: whereas the Stravinsky is composed of three movements which are performed without interruption, Schwartz has four distinct sections. Stravinsky's work is moderato, andante, and moderato. Although Schwartz has denominated his movements as Celebration, Jubilation, Exultation and Revelation, and they are, he says, an attempt to evoke a "positive, up feeling" I frankly feel the declension should have been "up, upper, uppest, and uppitiest," for the entire work provokes an unremitting impression of freneticism.

That's not to say that there aren't moments of value; it's just that this work is not extremely listenable no matter how much jazz titans Terry and Sims cook. There are no better improvisors among jazzmen, and their venturesome solos above, around and in some instances, through the dissonance (which is so much a part of this work) are remarkable. What Duke Ellington called the "puckish" Terry is showcased to great advantage in Exultation, (which is a monument to Mumbles, scatting, and joymaking), as well as in his recitation opening the various sections. The interplay of Sims, Terry, and the coloratura soprano Joan Heller in the closing passages is mind boggling.

I enjoy the Stravinsky Ebony Concerto much more now than upon first listening, especially the closing movement. To continue the comparison, this is an album to buy now and listen to annually. It's an example of protean improvisation over non-too-sympathetic composition.

---Rhodes Spedale

**Digital III at Montreux**

**Various Artists:**

**Pablo D2308223**

The normal format for record reviews doesn't cover this Pablo release of the Montreux Jazz Festival, July 1979, recordings for the reasons set out herein. Frankly, it's an album of left-overs that, on too many occasions, don't warm up as well the second time 'round.

These tracks are left over from On The Road and Chops, two other Pablo releases. They range from tepid to above ordinary and superlative, in the Pass solo tracks.

The Basic efforts are "I Can't Get Started" featuring a good, un-Beriganish trumpet player unidentified in the liner notes. I recognize the same arrangement as played at the 1980 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival outing, but I didn't catch the trumpeter's name then (cause it wasn't announced on that occasion either); however, I believe it's the talented Sonny Cohn. Butch Miles does the drum solo on "Good Mileage," an original by trombonist Dennis Wilson; but, although technicians may marvel, with few exceptions (Roch, Manne, Blakey and the Jones boys), as I've reported elsewhere, I tend to fall asleep during drum solos.

Ella's "Ghost" has been picked up in the mid-stream flow which may be...
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JIMMY'S

Jan. 2, 3 - Cold
Jan. 8 - Shieks/Models
Jan. 9, 10 - Nevilles
Jan. 15 - Shieks
Jan. 16, 17 - Cold
Jan. 22 - Shieks
Jan. 23, 24 - Asleep at the Wheel
Jan. 29 - David Allan Coe
Jan. 30, 31 - Rockats (N.Y.)

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WAVELENGTH/JANUARY 1981

fine for certain medical laboratory technicians’ purposes, but is annoying for jazzophiles! Backed by Paul Smith (p) Keter Betts (b) Freddie Green (g) and Mickey Roker (dms), she scats the definitive rendition of “Flying Home,” which is in itself a raison d’etre for ownership of this album.

However, saving the best for last, I wonder if finally the listening public realizes just how well Joseph Anthony Passalaquar plays! If it doesn’t, I believe this concert at Montreal demonstrates that fact of musical life—that he’s the most satisfying solo guitarist to come along in ages. His arpeggios in “Waterfront” transcend the composition itself so that a re-hearing of that tune will never allow it to sound the same; it’s just what Bird did on “Just Friends”; “Li’l Darlin’” is a tender delight. Pedersen has long been a bass master since he was a teenager (remember the Bud Powell trio on Delmark?). The Brubeck composition shows his impeccable taste and empathy with Pass; and in “Oleo” the interplay is delicious as the duo gets down and wails.

So, this disc is recommended for Pass, Pedersen, and Ella’s “Flyin’ Home.” There’s better Basie elsewhere, but the sound throughout is superb and alive.

—Rhodes Spedale

A Cappella III
The Singers Unlimited
P.A.U.S.A. 7076

This has to be the most satisfying vocal album of the year. I’ve been following this group from the old MPS BASF releases, and they improve with every hearing. Although there is a considerable talent with instrumental backing (e.g. Oscar Peterson, Rob McConnell, Art Van Damme), it is unsurpassable talent a cappella.

Why are they so exceptional? It’s the optimal blend of harmonies and dynamics with superlative phrasing to boot. Gene Puerling’s Hi-Lo’s successful experience has been chronicled elsewhere. Bonnie Herman possesses an almost pristine, distinctly blonde voice, golden in its clarity.

Len Dresslar’s baritone on “Motherless Child” is a somber evocation of the best of darkness. Dan Shelton is also a Hi-Lo’s veteran; and, suffice it to say, on a musical, vocal level, there was never any better vocal group on the scene (The Four Freshmen included) in my opinion—until now: The Singers Unlimited, whose blend is a triumphal melding of talents.

Most of all, the group makes musical good sense. They don’t try to dazzle you with histrionics, valley and hill vocal leaps, cuteness, etc. They just perform at their best, and excellence proves itself everytime.

The program here is constantly interesting and entertaining. There’s the bright opener “Anything Goes,” the contemporary ballads (The Way We Were,” “Someone to Light Up My Life”), the standards (“Love Is Here to Stay,” “I Wish You Love”), the old, old favorites from the traditional past of vocal harmonizing at the barbershop (“Jeanie,” “Motherless Child,” “Sweet Lorain”), the innovations (“One More Time,” “Chuck (sic Chick) Corea,” “The Entertainer”), and the classic touchstone (“All The Things You Are”). It’s excellently balanced, pleasing, and yet at the same time venturesome.

High points include Bonnie Herman’s wistful coolness on “Someone,” the modern twists and turns on Joplin’s classic ragtime number and the epitome of Chick Corea captured in music and spirit, and immediacy in Puerling’s tribute. I’ve saved the best for last: Jerome Kern’s “All The Things You Are” has been used as a test for the young jazzman’s ability on countless occasions. There is no way any vocal group can surpass this performance. It displays the best of all of the qualities of this aggregation.

I’d hate to see any of the currently headlining “vocal groups” step into any ring with these champions; for I’m afraid it’d be either another Leonard-Duran fiasco (with laryngitis vice stomach cramps) or simply a Pete Rodemacher-Floyd Patterson affair (no contest).

As a colleague’s column for another jazz rag all-too-formally closed on several occasions, “All The Stars in the Sky, Leonard!” But this time, the stars are all deserved.

—Rhodes Spedale
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More important is the way Alterman Audio people translate and explain the confusing hi-fi jargon in easy to understand PLAIN ENGLISH. So before you invest in a hi-fi component make sure you sound out Alterman Audio.
The Last Page

The Neville Brothers have been tentatively signed to an exclusive A&M recording contract. Final details have yet to be worked out between the Neville's manager Bill Johnston and A&M's chief Jerry Moss but Johnston plans to fly to L.A. after the holidays to get everything on paper. Joel Dorn will produce the record and it looks like Studio in the Country should be full of Nevilles by the middle of this month.

Becky Kury has left The Cartoons and plans on attending nursing school...Eddie Volker, ace keyboard man with the Radiators, will head south of the border for a short vacation...Johnny Adams should have a new waxing by the time this is off the press. His Christmas record is a complete sell-out...Look for a new Ernie K-Doe 45 on Sansu soon. Ernie is gigging with Irving Bannister and The All Stars and frequently plays The Rose Tattoo across the neutral ground from Tip's.

St. Louis based Nighthawk Records is releasing a series of Professor Longhair tunes to be cut in late February...The Clash's new album, in the U.S. in late January, will include the New Orleans classic "Junco Partner"...Shep Samuels' show on WTUL will have Aaron Neville live, singing and playing the piano on January 19. Tune in around 8...February 1 is set for Aaron's benefit for "The Uptown Youth, Cultural and Development Center," at Tipitina's. The Nevilles, Wild Tchoupitoulas, The Radiators, Li'l Queenie, & Chocolate Milk are slated.

The 1981 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival is to run May 1st thru 10th. Among those already signed are James Brown, Betty Carter, Cab Calloway, and Nancy Wilson...Beaver Productions will bring Elvis Costello to the Warehouse January 23. The guy who started all the chaos should hit the bandstand around 8 pm. Squeeze and The Cold will open. Tickets available at Peaches...The indefatigable Denise Vallon has announced plans for this year's Krewe of Clones Ball. Denise vows that this year's festivities will surely get her run out of town on a rail, but don't hold your breath: she promised that last year. The Cold and The Nevilles should make an interesting contrast at this year's ball.

The Black Pope is back on the local airwaves. A long time New Orleans radio personality during the 50's and 60's, he is now in the afternoon slot on WNNR and is certainly one of the more boisterous dj's around...Zachary Richard, the Louisiana-born Cajun who's been such a big hit in French-speaking Canada, is slated for Tipitina's this month...Bill Clifford, conductor of the Blue Room Orchestra, orchestrated the soundtrack for the movie The Formula starring Marlon Brando and George C. Scott.

There's lots of activity at Studio In the Country. Besides the previously mentioned Nevilles, the studio also has booked Brook Benton, The Crow Brothers, Zachary Richard, Bas Clas and Le Roux. Serge Kiloen, the "Tom Jones of France," also has a February date in Bogalus; he plans to use such rhythm men as Bill Payne, Little Feats' pianist, and Albert Lee, from Eric Clapton's band...Nick Lowe was in town recently between dates with Rockpile...WWNO's Coril Joseph is now managing The Professionals, Irma Thomas's band. Look for them going solo this month. There's a new Willie Tee 45 on the market.

Jessie Hill, Reggie Hall and The Mighty Men are joining forces to form the "Ooh Poo Pah Doo Revue." Hank Drevich is doing the promotion. Their show premieres soon at a rock and roll party near you. Reggie is remembered for "The Joke" and what can you say about Jessie except "Tra La La La La, Una Mala Wala, Why you wanna holla when you know you wanna swalla Oh yeah..."Bobby Marchan is headed for the recording studio in January. Bobby is still holding down the MC job at Prout's and recently hosted the Figaro Christmas party...Lee Dorsey will be playing Trammps in New York the first of this month.

Gilbert Hetherwick, president of Grouse House Productions, announced he is moving his office and opening a studio deep in the heart of Faubourg...Spencer Bohren hopes to interest major folk labels with a recently completed demo tape....
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