Wavelength (November 1980)

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The Alterman Audio $735
Recommended System

As component systems go these days, $735 is not a lot of money. After all, one company actually makes a set of speakers that sell for $20,000. At Alterman Audio we try to put together well balanced, matched systems, that put your money where it does the most to improve sound reproduction.

The real key to the excellent, realistic sound quality of this component system is the NEW ADVENT LOUDSPEAKER. We have compared this speaker to other speakers. Some cost over $400. Some sounded as good, but none we listened to (and have listened to quite a few) sounded better. Yet the New Large Advent sells for only $205 each, in a beautiful walnut veneer cabinet.

When we at Alterman Audio talk about sounding good, we mean reproducing music so it sounds real. We mean not adding or subtracting anything from the original High Fidelity. We critically listen. We a-b speakers. We even do live vs. recorded comparisons to make our judgements.

To drive the New Large Advent, we recommend the Sony STR-V35 Receiver. It has an excellent tuner and 35 watts per channel with very low distortion. Our turntable recommendation is the very popular Sony PS—T22. It is semi-automatic, direct drive, and has Sony’s unique MAGNEDISC SERVO SYSTEM and Sony’s BRUSHLESS and SLOTLESS motor for constant torque. Our system price also includes the excellent AUDIO-TECHNICA PRO 12e dual magnet cartridge.

The Turntable:
Sony PS T22

Two unique technologies make Sony turntables better than other makes. The new SONY PS-T22 has these plus other new Sony technology which we feel make it one of the best turntables values available today.

Push the platter on any direct drive turntable, with the turntable off. After awhile it slows down and stops. This is due to friction.

If you were to take a cross section of a typical direct drive turntable motor, it could be represented by a wagon wheel. At the spokes of the wagon wheel the motor is given a push. Inbetween the spokes you have “slots” where there is no torque. If the motor is not given a push, friction slows it down. This slowing and speeding up of a motor is called “cogging.”

Now if you listen to a quality direct drive turntable you don’t hear a speed variation, due to cogging. This is because the momentum of the platter and the precision bearings keep cogging effects very minimal. But what you do hear is a sort of frequency modulation distortion.

What this means is that your ear, averages out these speed variations because they happen so consistently and regularly. So a 1000 cycle note on the record actually is heard of as a combination of notes of say 974 to 1024 cycles per second (Hertz).

Well, Sony who began designing motors in 1919 when they made their first tape recorder, developed an entirely new kind of motor. Sony calls it a “brushless and slotless” motor. It turns with a CONSTANT torque. The push of the platter is smooth and even, virtually eliminating cogging and the distortion caused by it.

Another advanced technology offered by Sony turntables is the speed sensing system. Back in 1966 Sony made the world’s first servo controlled turntable. Today all direct drive turntables, and many quality belt drive models incorporate this Sony innovation. But today’s Sony servo systems are a lot more sophisticated than other makes.

Sony coats the bottom of the platter with a ring of barium ferrite. This is very much like magnetic tape, and Sony records a precision signal on this ring. A special magnetic pick up head reads this signal from the platter. This signal then is compared with a reference signal. If they don’t match, Sony servo circuitry speeds up or slows down the turntable motor, correcting the error.

Sony calls this the “magnedisc servo control”. The pick up head reads a sine-wave signal of 568 Hertz. Other turntables have servos, but are fed only 48 or maybe 90 pulses per revolution.

So the Sony magnedisc servo feeds much more data for the servo circuitry to analyze. It can thus respond quicker.

You can test this yourself. Just watch the strobe on a turntable and lightly slow down the platter. With the Sony, the strobe almost instantly returns to speed while other turntables overshoot and hunt for the right speed longer.

But Sony’s concept of Total System Technology demands more. The PST22 base is made of a special anti-resonance compound with a low “Q.” This “Sony Bulk Moulding Compound” (SBMC) is made under 6000 pounds of pressure and helps reduce external vibrations from reaching the platter.
The turntable drive and base material are only half a turntable. The other half is the tonearm system. The tiny little stylus needs to have a support to let it travel across the record, without friction or too much inertia holding back.

New phono cartridges with higher compliances require less massive tonearms. The mass of a tonearm is not the tracking force. You can have a high mass tonearm and still track with a downward pressure of only 1 gram. The mass, or weight of the arm itself relates to its inertia. Too much inertia is like too much friction and impedes the ability of the needle to move freely in the groove. It also will cause resonances which will effect the sound you hear.

The PS-T22 is composed as short as possible it's a straight line. It is composed of Duralumin alloy for high resiliency. This permits a slender shaft, again reducing mass and inertia.

At the back of the arm, Sony's long span pivot reduces side play and bearing friction. Unlike conventional arms, the shaft is supported at two points, in front and behind the pivot. This reduces resonances.

The Sony PS-T22 is truly a superb turntable at a very affordable price. It's constant torque BSL motor, the Magnediac Servo, SBMC Base and a new SLM, short low mass arm, offer audiophile performance comparable to the finest turntables of only a few years ago.

The most overlooked component in the hi-fi chain is the phone pickup cartridge. We don't skim in our system recommendation either. We recommend an AUDIO-TECHNICA PRO 12E. Audio-technica utilizes an exclusive Dual magnet design which has several advantages. First, they have two TINY magnets instead of one large one. Thus the moving mass of the stylus assemblies are much easier in the groove. They also have two coils. The result of all this is a cartridge with an unusually flat frequency response and excellent transient response.

The Receiver: Sony STR-V35

Sony never tries to be a follower, but a leader and an innovator. With the introduction of Sony's current line of receivers they certainly have kept their goals.

In the audio world, where there are as many different opinions as there are models, it is rare for almost an entire industry to agree. But with the introduction of Sony's new receiver line, Sony's competitors, hi-fi retailers and customers alike all agree: the Sony receiver line is the most unique on the market. High fidelity magazine, in their July 1980 test report on the STR-V25 (the model below our recommendations is this system) summed it up this way: "Looking back on Sony's many achievements in consumer electronics, the excellence of the STR-V25 is really not surprising, yet its freshness and originality are

blessing in a market crowded with look-alikes and this at such a low price point. While our recent tests show that surprisingly good gear can be bought at a bargain price these days. We see Sony's achievement as above and beyond the call of duty."

Sony attention to detail is evident if you consider Sony incorporation of a "dual-transistor" differential input. These two transistors are made of the same semiconductor chip and are perfect mirror images providing a very staple circuit.

The power amp provides a large drain on power supply. To prevent interaction there's a PET buffer stage, thus operating current remains staple even during loud musical passages.

Another feature found on expensive separate components are polypropylene equalization capacitors. A new Sony integrated circuit yields very low noise in the phono preamplifier section.

The tuner on the STR-V35 is equally impressive. First, its easy to use. As you tune a station, it's LED lights up if it's to the left, the tune right (and vice versa) and then a green LED lights, and you are there, on frequency with low distortion and low noise. This Sony calls "acoustic servo lock." It keeps the station locked on frequency. At the same time the five segment LED signal strength indicator shows how strong the antenna.

This receiver has all your usual controls. But unlike most receivers of this price range, the STR-V35 has two tape monitor hookups, allowing dubbing from one recorder to another. Also, typical of Sony attention to detail, when you set your tone controls flat (as we at Alterman recommend), the entire tone control circuit is completely disconnected from the circuit, eliminating any distortion that might be added by even a tone control, even set to flat.

Sony receivers sound as good as they look. They look different and are different. They are built with 25 years of transistor technology that no other hi-fi maker has. The result is superior sound quality, more detail in the highs, solid clean bass, and a dynamic capability that makes the music sound like music.

The New Advent Loudspeaker

Musical integrity. By that we mean accurate. We mean realistic. We mean that this system reproduces music with a high level of musical integrity. We mean that the sound coming from the speakers does not sound like its coming from the speakers.

We mean that the bass is full, tight, and in proper level compared to the rest of the audio spectrum. It is defined with ability to allow you to resolve the differences between a bass drum and a bass guitar. The speaker doesn't just have "bass." And it produces even the lowest notes of a pipe organ, about 32 Hertz.

Voices sound like people singing, and the sound is spread into the room evenly with good dispersion. On some speakers voices sound like you cupped your hand over your mouth. The Advents don't. Horns and other brass instruments have detail and clarity. And the highs are also quite excellent. A cymbal sounds like a piece of metal vibrating, which it is. It has clarity and realism. Violins don't sound veiled as so many speakers do.

The NEW ADVENT LOUDSPEAKER is a really excellent product. But how come it's so good and sells for only $205? First Advent believes in only producing a product which represents an excellent value. They have felt that careful design and engineering of a two way design are better, or at least better in relation to price, than more elaborate and expensive three way designs. Three way speakers need first, three drivers, each of which adds costs, they need a dividing network which splits the sound into three segments so it costs more, and must have more precision. And although there are advantages to this type design, the economics of mass production and careful manufacturing make them hardly worth the price - at least according to Advent.

But we have to agree with them. We have listened to many speakers compared against THE NEW ADVENT LOUDSPEAKER. Some cost several times more then the Advent - some twice as much. And in many cases we couldn't say the speaker was better, and in some cases we thought the Advent reproduced music more accurately than speakers costing much more. And these tests were done with critical A-B comparators and with live vs. recorded listening of the real instrument in the room vs. the recording we made of it.

The NEW ADVENT LOUDSPEAKER utilizes a ten inch acoustically suspended woofer and a special tweeter which has equal mass on both sides of the voice coil for less distortion. It has received many excellent and rave reviews. There are many people in the audio business besides us who feel the NEW ADVENT LOUDSPEAKER represents one of the best values in hi-fi, and in its walnut veneer cabinet, looks as good as it sounds.

But these are only words, and most people buy a stereo system to listen to music, not read music or words. And the only way you can find out whether we are right or not about the NEW ADVENT LOUDSPEAKER is for you to listen to it yourself, and listen to this $735 system which includes it for how it sounds.

Alterman Audio

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WAVELENGTH , NOVEMBER 1980
Bobby Mitchell at the piano

remembers New Orleans music

Just 45 years old, Bobby Mitchell can reflect on a recording career that spans 28 years. His vocal group, The Toppers, was the first Doo Wop group to record in New Orleans. He recorded no less than 20 singles in a ten-year period between 1953 and 1963 that are among the optimum examples of New Orleans R&B. He traveled the country and worked with such stars as Chuck Berry, Ray Charles, Joe Turner and a host of others. Remarkably, Bobby managed to combine a recording career with raising a family of eight and incredibly, a career of teaching pathology! Bobby retold his story to WAVELENGTH in his comfortable den in Algiers.

I was raised up on the river batch. I had eight brothers and eight sisters. Fishin' was our livin'. I use to cut wood and sell wood before I even...
I'm gonna be a wheel someday, I'm gonna be somebody
I'm gonna be a real gone cat, then I won't want you.

A Bobby Mitchell hit, 1957
it. I really got to know the people and that's something I always liked to do, 'cause people are the ones that make and they're the ones that break you.

Truthfully, I wasn't really satisfied with Imperial Records. I was satisfied with the work I was doin', but not with Imperial. I think I could have been better than any other artist out there. I could have been recognized stronger and better known today.

They had Fats, Ricky Nelson and Slim Whitman; those guys got recognition but us local artists, we didn't. People like Smiley Lewis and I, we worked so hard and other people got the credit. If Smiley was here, he'd tell ya, the harder we worked the worse it got.

Imperial didn't appreciate us, maybe as a worker but not an artist. Now Fats did "Blue Monday," from Smiley and "I'm Gonna Be A Wheel" of mine. It was a change of ideas for Fats to do somebody else's tunes. You see, we were all with the same company.

I often wondered why Imperial never came out with an album on me, but ever time I asked Lew Chudd or Dave about it they said "Well, your singles sell so well we don't need an album."

I left Imperial in '59 and did some stuff for Ron records. I then went back to Imperial again ("I Don't Want To Be A Wheel No More" in 1962). Then I went to Rip Records. I cut my last record on Rip in 1969. Rip Roberts (owner of Rip, and Ron records) is still my manager.

I always wanted to advance, I stayed in school all the while I was making records. First I took up electronics at Delgado, and I studied radio engineering at Tulane. After that I decided to go into the field of medicine.

Right now I'm at the L.S.U. Medical School. I'm over there as a medical researcher. I'm in charge of the first and second year pathology students. This year we've got about 260 students. In the medical world it's strictly education. You've really got to buckle down. In my research we do a lot of electronic work because we have a television station here. We broadcast from the morgue when we do autopsies. In fact, we can broadcast from the V.A. Hospital, the coroner's office and Charity. I'm in the heart study, I'm in the cancer study and the sickle cell program. I take my work very seriously. I work twelve hours a day and I'm dedicated to it.

Tommy Ridgley and Jonas (president of the Swedish Mr. R&B Records) were together at a "Oldies But Goodies Show" that Gordon DeSota put on. He said, "Tommy Ridgley told me how much old stuff you had out. Would you like to work on a re-issue album?" I agreed to his ideas and tried to help him out. One day Terry Pattison came over, and we made a list of all my records and taped them so we could send it over to Sweden.

The album is selling pretty well overseas, but the biggest problem is trying to get it sold over here. On my oldies shows I can sell between a hundred and two hundred copies. So far, it's the biggest thing on the label. I just ordered 700 more copies.

My biggest problem right now is getting on a record label. I would really like to get on a record label that would handle me, but handle me my way. I want to record and let the public know I'm still here, because a lot of people think I'm dead! I want to get back in the music business because I haven't really done my best singing yet. I know I'm ten times better than some people they have out there today. I haven't even proven myself yet.

I love doin' the oldies shows, I love it. Oldies shows remind me of the things that should have been done. Everybody has a good time, they have fun. A lot of kids today don't believe we had fun. They figure when they heard the blues it was hard times. Yeah, it was hard times but we had fun, people didn't show the world these problems; they went out and had a good time.

I hate it when people say New Orleans music was built off of jazz. You got more R&B singers and rockin' roll singers here than you got jazz musicians. I estimated the other day you got over 500 R&B performers. The book must be out on New Orleans because the big record companies won't touch us. That's why all the small companies are here and the sickle cell program. I take my work very seriously. I work twelve hours a day and I'm dedicated to it.
Work Done On Premises
Radiator,s, Croaker 114

First of all, what premises? Start with the premise of the album's cover photograph: Ed Volker's keyboard set up and ready to go at the Jazz Fest, and, seen underneath the keyboard, an audience on its feet, ready to rock.

The premise that the keyboard is surrounded by the tools of rhythm: drum, cowbell, bicycle horn, maracas, drumsticks, trophy...

The trophy: armless figure on a pedestal with a rubber fish head on its shoulders and - as only the accident of a camera shutter can produce - a real bird emerging from the fish head's left ear. This is perhaps a better premise than any other.

For the Radiators play fish head music, music that is based on the premise that there is at least a little pond of a dance floor out front of them when they play, that listeners approach them not as ichthyologists but as swimmers in a common school of thought where music is to move to.

Thus a self-produced live double album recorded at one of their haunts, Tipitina's, one Friday in 1980. They recorded the following night, too, but the first night had more adrenaline in it.

Technically, the recording is a wonder. The mix is bottom-oriented without losing anything up top. Fish head with bird. And the mikes are on the band, where they belong - the crowd noises are real, the ones that seep through; none of this, "Hey, the song's over, let's see what the natives are doing." It may be seen, then, as a studio album done on the first take with lotsa people around. It's the spirit of the town.

And yet, it was also just another gig. That's the law of the fish. As such, one remembers it well. It was better than most. The general feeling around the dance floor was that the band had risen to the occasion.

A feeling that comes again upon listening to these four sides.

Rising highest are the Ed Volker vocals and Camile Baudoin guitar leads. Volker's voicings have never been more supple, delivered as always with a power beyond question. Baudoin sounds more and more comfortable with the slide guitar, yet it's his finger work that is regularly astonishing. And his noteless right hand rhythm riffs are a model of tasteful use of that technique.

David Malone, at the center of the band with his driving rhythm guitar, also takes a quarter of the turns at the vocals and lead guitar, and has some fine moments. His vocal on "Hard To Tell," one of the two songs he co-authored with Volker, simply make the tune, and his charded leads on "Red Dress" and "Number Two Pencil" light a fire under each number. Interestingly, he comes out of both solos into probably his tastiest grooves.

It's drummer Frank Bua and bassist Reggie Scanlon who are right there at the music's foundation, putting the tunes through their changes. That they are so fluid, that they mix so well with Volker's keyboards and rhythm, lending lyricism to the divisions of time, is what creates the fusion of melody and rhythm that is the band's trademark.

Lyricism in both senses of the word. Suffice it to say that Volker's lyrics, always the definition of lagniappe to listeners, have never been better than on the two newest compositions, "Hard To Tell" and "Screwloose" - the former with this reviewer's personal favorite of a line, "You say a ball gag is a piece of cake," and the latter, their wildest tune, with the wildest (and equally effective) rhythm, "If I had a pack of dangerous firecrackers."

Through all the changes of this album, and through many listenings, a couple of things stay with you, the emotional breath and persistent honesty of the tunes and the staying power of the longer songs, "Red Dress" and "Lowlife," both nearly anthems in their own way...

But what it really comes down to for this listener is the way the album finishes up, the longest tune, "Number Two Pencil," each member of the band really rising to the final occasion: The psychic turnaround of the two lyric segments. The elevation of detail (it's not the pencil, it's the kind of pencil). The long, blissful segue from four time into three time. The step by step ascension of tension through all ten minutes. Tough and tender, fish head with bird. Really, I haven't heard an album finish like this since - I can't help it - Abbey Road.
Buckwheat Is Already A Legend

BY HAMMOND SCOTT

Just as much as a well-kept secret as the intriguing and beautiful culture of the French speaking Cajun community of South Louisiana and Southeast Texas is Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural, a product of that rich heritage.

However, Buckwheat is no secret to the age-old Louisiana and Texas dancehalls religiously attended by "fais-do-do" folks who have always picked their own recording stars, anyway.

Any Cajun worth his boudoin knows of Clifton Chenier, Rockin' Dopsie, Guitar Slim, Lonesome Sundown, Little Bob and the Lollipops, Clint West and the Boogie Kings, and now Buckwheat Zydeco and his IIs Sont Parti Band.

Buckwheat's story reads like many legends in the blues recording business who seem to spring out of nowhere with hot records on small, independent labels. It may be a case of good timing for this young, 33-year-old singer, composer, organist, pianist, accordionist. With his new twist to timeless music, he enters the void left by the ailing Clifton Chenier.

Buckwheat's story goes back to his youth in Lafayette, Louisiana, where he first began to play organ and piano around the age of ten years old. Buck says his earliest idol was Clifton Chenier and many of the fine musicians who came through Clifton's band, such as saxophonist John Hart and guitarists Lonesome Sundown, Phillip Walker, Lonnie Brooks and Paul Senegal. Even Buckwheat had a two-and-a-half year tenure with Chenier as organist. Ironically, Buck's present band features Paul Senegal on guitar as well as the flamboyant guitarist heard on Buckwheat's records, Russel Gordon.

Stanley claims that his first music was rock and roll and soul music when he formed Buckwheat and the Hitchhikers in 1969. This group was successful enough to tour with Bobby Womack, Betty Wright, Barbara Lynn, Joe Tex and Joe Simon. However, by 1975, the band was having a rough time and Buckwheat was debating whether to break up his band and take an offer to be keyboardist for Bobby Brooks and Della Reese, with the first gig to begin in Houston a few weeks away.

In desperation, Buckwheat called Clifton Chenier in Austin, Texas, where he was playing an engagement, to ask his advice. Chenier told him to hold tight until he returned to Lafayette. Next thing Buckwheat knew, he was playing organ for Clifton Chenier.

Says Buck, "To be honest I met most of the great blues players through Clifton, like Gatemouth (Brown) and B.B. King. I had always dug blues but the work with Clif really got me deep into it. Like disco...I had to play it and it makes you feel like you are a dime a dozen when you play it. It's not playing what you feel. But the blues has a meaning and you can stand out and really communicate with the audience."

Shortly before Clifton Chenier first became ill, the legendary South Louisiana record man, Jay Miller, approached Buckwheat. Miller is the man behind the many great records released on Excello Records in the late Fifties and all through the Sixties. Miller recorded, produced, and even named his swamp blues stars Slim Harpo, Lazy Lester, Lightning Slim and Lonesome Sundown.

As Buck remembers, Jay Miller told him, "Why don't you get into the blues thing? You're talented, and there is money in blues because it will always be there. Can we work together?" Buckwheat told Miller he was willing to try anything. He cut a single for Miller's Blues Unlimited label called "I Bought A Raccoon."

"I couldn't believe it; they got to playing it on the radio in the South Louisiana area and the record sold quite well. KVOL really got the record off the ground and I started working.

Well, the question had to be asked about how Buck ever came to write a song about a raccoon. The answer is as weird as might be expected. It seems Buckwheat had a pet raccoon named Jack. Since Jack wasn't completely tamed, he often wandered from home, but he always returned a day or so later.

One day, when no one was at home, Jack came back and climbed into a tree in the front yard. Well, two of Buckwheat's friends happened by at the same time Jack returned home and spotted the raccoon in the tree. Their appetites whetted, they shot the raccoon, cleaned him, and barbequed him. When Buckwheat came home, he got a whiff of the tasty barbeque, not knowing it was his friend, and helped eat Jack. When Buck began to worry about Jack several days later, his friends confessed that they had shot the raccoon and told Buckwheat that he had helped eat his pet. Buckwheat "broke down and cried and was very upset for a long time." His recording is a tribute to his old friend.
We have just assembled what may be the finest component system we’ve ever sold for less than $1,000.

The key to the system is the new Boston Acoustics A100 speaker. The A100 is a two-way, floor-standing loudspeaker with a wide frequency range (solid bass down to 32Hz), incredibly smooth tonal balance and very wide dispersion.

But what really makes the A100 stand out from the other speakers in (and above) its price range is the feeling of “bigness” to its sound. The tall-wide-and-thin cabinet design of the A100 results in clean stereo imaging and a feeling of “spaciousness” that you won’t find in a conventional bookshelf loudspeaker.

To complete our A100 system, we chose the YAMAHA CR 640 receiver (40 watts per channel from 20-20 kHz with no more than 0.02% total harmonic distortion), the BANG OLUFSEN BEOGRAM 1600 turntable and the MMC 10E cartridge. We think it’s the best combination $995.00 can buy.

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The Seed Has Been Planted

BY JERRY BROCK

A rarity within the realms of Rastafarian memorabilia: Members of the mystic revelation of Rastafarian traveled from Jamaica to visit with Haile Selassie, the Lion of Judah, emperor of the lost tribe of Israel. Left, Bro Sam; third from left, Bro Phill; and right, Bro Duggy of the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari with a young priest from the Orthodox Patriarch of Ethiopia...Abba Tekle Michael

Last May, on the 16th floor ledge of the Federal Exchange Building in Memphis, Bro Zewbwe and I and I and the Lion of Judah with some sacred herb, pounded the rhythm and expounded words. Burning Spear, Ras Michael, Big Youth, Augustus Pablo...“Reggae” poured forth from an inexpensive cassette player capturing our attention like a watch swinging from the hand of the most capable hypnotist. The Lion roared.

What tickles my psyche and jogs my memory most about this experience is that this Bro had never been out of Memphis. But his grasp of Rastafarian literature, its traditions and customs, far exceeded that of my own, being of the type that gobbles down anything I can get on the subject. Something about being born a “Rasta,” and brothers and sisters sharing unselfishly when they passed through town.

“The seed has been planted, now you just have to watch it grow...” Bro Zewbwe roared.

Reggae has now spread worldwide and the fact that most of this has occurred without the aid of mass communications but by word of mouth in this day and age is a true phenomenon.

In New Orleans, live performances of Reggae music have yet to find a true home. However, we are fortunate to have WTUL's Reggae program every Monday night hosted by Shepard Samuels and an extensive selection of Reggae, Kaiso and Ska recordings are available in some record stores. Mr. Leisure Landing, Pat Berry, told me, “The sales of Reggae has increased over 500 percent in the last six months.” Many of the best recordings of the “Reggae Masters” are only available on Jamaican imports so keep in mind when you buy one that the sound quality is often reminiscent of those beautiful sandy beaches from where they come.

Reggae is sprouting up everywhere. There are now active “home grown” bands in Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Austin, and up and down the east and west coasts. Alligator Records (the label that brought us Professor Longhair's Crawfish Fiesta album), based in Chicago and formerly an all Blues label, recently released Black Slate, an album by an English Reggae band of the same name.

“It's too early to compare the sales of this record to our others,” says Otis Taylor, promotion manager at Alligator, “but the record has just reached number one on Europe's Reggae chart. Most of the radio stations in our major areas feel that the Reggae craze has already passed, though WLIV in New York is playing it...Black Slate plans to tour America in the spring...”

With the exception of “Community” and some college stations, most radio stations in America never knew Reggae meant anything more than a new Bob Marley album. Jimmy Cliff, who will be appearing also with Third World at Ole Man River's in November, has received acclaim in America not for his work as a recording artist but for his role as Ivan O. Martin in the movie The Harder They Come.

This movie is important because it accurately depicts the ghetto condition in Jamaica that the “Reggae artist” must contend with. It has become apparent that America is the country in which the Reggae recording artist or “music messiah” can achieve financial stability in order to help bring relief and social justice to the depressed brethren in the homeland.

Martyn-Gebre of Rootsan Productions, a Reggae booking agency in Boston, says, “We have many superstars ready to tour but most club owners are hesitant to guarantee the amount these people are asking.” For instance Burning Spear, currently on tour, is asking for $3,000 a performance. Considering the amount for travel and housing for five or six people from New York to New Orleans, this would not leave much of a profit.

We all know a good thing never comes easy. So while we light up a spliff and patiently await the performance of Jimmy Cliff, STAY UP! and remember the words of Marcus Garvey, “What you do today that is worthwhile, inspires others to act at some future time.”
New Wave

Knockouts And Local, Too

BY CARLOS BOLL

There seems to be a million new LP's out lately but few have made a good impression on me. It's unfortunate but it seems that many new albums, particularly those by new bands, have achieved a very homogenized sound. It's also getting to the point where you can tell what a band is going to sound like by the kind of clothes they wear.

All this, plus the increased cost of buying import albums, has contributed to the increased selectivity by many people when choosing records to buy. Fortunately, there are new records that merit mention -- records that are total knockouts. The two records reviewed this month are local productions as well.

Suzie Huete
No More Boy/Girl (EP)
Produced by Suzie Huete

Suzie Huete made this record with an inheritance she got. When I first heard the tapes about six months ago, I wasn't really crazy about them. Finally out this week, on second listen I find this record fabulous! It was recorded at Ultrasonic at the beginning of the summer and is by far the best produced of any local new wave record.

Suzie, who used to play with the Neutral Mutes and the Ballistics before she moved to Boston, has assembled a great cross-section of local rock musicians. Featured on the five song EP are Ed Volker from the Radiators, Bunny Matthews and Spencer Livingston from the Ballistics, Clark Vreeland, and Bruce Raeburn.

The five self-penned tunes, with the exception of one written by Clark Vreeland and one by Bunny Matthews, showcase Susie's voice, which is in great form. She flows through the songs with a casual style not heard often on independently produced records. The songs really shouldn't be classified as new wave, but their innovativeness keeps them out of the “tired old run of the mill” rock syndrome. The record should definitely be on your “have-to-get” list.

Red Rockers
Guns of Revolution (EP)
Vinyl Collusion

Another item of interest is the Red Rockers EP, recorded in Austin during the beginning of the year. Their record features three fast moving hard edged punk songs. Of all the local bands, the Red Rockers are the only ones who have jumped wholeheartedly on the current political scene. The band is very, according to U.K. standards, very contemporary. I'm sure if the Red Rockers were from England they would have already gotten a major label contract.

Next Month; Part One in the "History of New Wave in New Orleans" - featuring stories on the Backstabbers, the Normals, and the Skinnies.
Two formidable forces in the New Orleans cultural community have joined forces to bring to the community and the airwaves a series of "live jazz" concerts originating from the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) at 900 Camp Street, and broadcast on WWNO-FM, located at the University of New Orleans. Both organizations have been consistent supporters of jazz, and New Orleans artists' efforts to bring jazz to large numbers of people.

In 1979, CAC director Don Marshall, and jazz coordinator Patrice Fisher, were interested in seeking support for a series of concerts featuring local and national artists at the CAC. In discussions with WWNO general manager Christopher Albright, who was also interested in promoting such a series, the two organizations joined forces to establish this daring concept. Fortunately, interest and some badly needed financial support came from the National Endowment For the Arts (NEA) and the State of Louisiana-Division of the Arts (DOA).

Last year the series was held once a month. This year the program will be held every Friday beginning at 10:45 p.m. and be broadcast simultaneously over WWNO-FM as well. Coril Joseph says it's a great opportunity, not only for him but for the show, which will air on Fridays at 10 p.m., then switch to the CAC for the live segments and return with part two of "Elements". In essence, you'll hear two and one half hours of recorded and live jazz.

In 1980 season kicked off last month with the contemporary composer, arranger, educator and musician, Anthony Braxton. Braxton, who has played with the best American and European musicians, has several albums released on Clive Davis's Arista label. Braxton plays all woodwinds (clarinets, flutes and saxophones) instruments. However, the opening act was our own James Black, himself a distinguished composer, arranger, educator and musician, performing his own compositions.

The artists scheduled for November are: Kidd Jordan and Hamiet Bluiett on Nov. 7; Omnibus and John Baur on Nov. 14; Willie Tee and Friends on Nov. 21; and Alvin Batiste on Nov. 28. In December, look for Jimmy Robinson on Dec. 5; Leigh Harris and Lady B.J. on Dec. 12; Ron Cuccia and the Jazz Poetry Group on Dec. 19; and John Vidacovich Trio on Dec. 26. Some of the big names for 1981 are the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Dr. Billy Taylor and David Amram.

The CAC hopes to convert a portion of the downstairs area into a music club that could become a permanent place for musical events there. As it is now, music and theatre events compete for the same space.

The logical problems involved in broadcasting the series are awesome. So many hours go into preparation and coordination that it would age anyone not as dedicated to accomplishing the tasks successfully. Ask the program director for WWNO, Louisa Walker, and chief engineer, Steve Rush. Of course, they only had one a month last year, but now that it's weekly... well, need I say more?

You could stay home and relax and enjoy the shows on radio this fall, but the real joy will certainly be in being in the audience to really experience the great music that will be offered. There is a modest admission to the concerts to help defray production costs. Emcee Coril Joseph promises to get the audience involved because as he says, "The artists feed off of the audiences. It's the audience as well as the musicians that makes the music live."
Rare Records

Even Toussaint Doesn’t Have One

BY ALMOST SLIM

The Wild Sound of New Orleans
Allen Toussaint, RCA 1707

Tousan, of course, is a thin guise for Allen Toussaint; I guess RCA thought it would sound hipper. These are the first recordings by Allen Toussaint on his own and date from 1958. The session took place after RCA had run an ad for a talent show in the local paper, which produced hundreds of people in front of Cosmos’ door wanting an audition. The man who most impressed Danny Kessler of RCA was the piano player that played for the audition—Toussaint. So with Red Tyler’s sax in tow, twelve tracks were cut, all instrumentals.

All twelve tracks are on the album, and the 21-year-old Toussaint really does sound wild. The tunes were sent to New York untilled, where the RCA PR men named the instrumentals. One of the ones they titled was “Java,” which became a big hit for Al Hirt in the mid-Sixties. The influence of both Fess and Fats are immediately evident.

This album is exceedingly rare; it is probably valued at over $50 for a clean copy. Purportedly even Allen Toussaint doesn’t own a copy of it.

Note: This is a monthly column for readers interested in collecting records and talking about it. Hopefully we will have a number of hard-to-find discs (45’s and 78’s, too). If you have something you think might be of interest to readers of this column, drop us a line. This is your magazine!

Continued from page 10

With the success of the single, Jay Miller suggested that Stanley do a whole album. The results can be heard on Buckwheat Zydeco — One For The Road (Blues Unlimited LP 5006) available at finer record shops or directly from Blues Unlimited Records, Box 1345, Crowley, LA. The album features Buckwheat’s working band and is an exceptional record with mostly original material and Buckwheat featured on accordion, organ, piano and vocals.

Buckwheat has another album soon to be released. Although he was happy with the first record, he admits “I think I’ve improved quite a bit. I was still finding my sound and had only recently really started playing the accordion. The change from organ to accordion wasn’t that difficult except for the left hand on the bass side. The keyboard on the accordion was no problem to handle, but the pushing and the pulling to draw air into the box, plus the 120 bass keys that work counterclockwise, took some getting used to.”

If Stanley “Buckwheat” Dural appears in your area, he is not to be missed. Of course, Clifton Chenier’s stamp is inevitable in his music, yet Buck throws in many originals that melodically are very much his own. You might also expect to hear such Louisiana classics as Guitar Slim’s “The Things I Used To Do” as well as many intense soul numbers. In fact, just ask Buckwheat to do Tyrone Davis’ “I’ve Reached the Turning Point” and get ready to dance.

As Buck would say, “It’s som partis!”
Reviews

Remain In Light
Talking Heads
Sire SRK 6095

Talking Heads has done something different and the result is well worth living with for a while. Their previous or less separate and distinct songs. Their new release, Remain In Light, is more of a concept album, with the same style of song construction used throughout. Each song is a variation of one overall approach, each one a different result of the same process. Together the songs make a single extended approach is well suited to some funky and infectious dance rhythms that, once started, go on unaltered throughout each song. This extended approach works well, allowing David Byrne to be more integral part of the group, and the rhythm section to jam harder and longer.

The songs on Remain In Light don't go through any changes in the sense of verse, chorus, bridge, etc. The vocals and accompaniment move in broad sections over a rhythmic pattern that, once started, go on unaltered throughout each song. This extended approach is well suited to both the rhythm section, generating some funky and infectious dance music, and the vocals, featuring displays of layering, with as many as four different vocal parts occurring simultaneously.

Using a systematic approach in making an album is an idea common in all of Brian Eno's work. Remain In Light is as characteristic of a Eno solo project as it is a Talking Heads record. His influence as producer is stronger and he is more active as a musician, where his work in the group has progressed from embellishment to being a more integral part of the music. He co-wrote songs, arranged the vocals with David Byrne, and his voice is recognizable in much of the singing.

In his subject matter, David Byrne continues to communicate his feelings and observations about the modern human condition. He speaks as a personal conscience about common problems in society, like lack of purpose, lack of psychologic and emotional visibility, and feelings of alienation. He also speaks as a social conscience with overtones of Armageddon and a collective lack of purpose.

The lyrics and the styles of the delivery are the main factors in creating a mood that can be described as religious: reminiscent of the music from pagan, Judaic and Christian ceremonies as they were until the Renaissance. The constant and unchanging rhythm section becomes the pulsating drone for the congregation to dance to during the ritual. Defined by the changing vocal sections, the songs become a series of chants, psalms, antiphons and responsories with male and female choruses and David Byrne as cantor and priest. Remain In Light is "soul" music because it's funky like Motown and disco, and because it is from and about the human soul.

Remain In Light proves Talking Heads' ability to be creative and innovative while remaining commercially acceptable.

--Steve Cunningham

Grateful Dead
Saenger Theater
October 18, 19

Back in 1972, after an ambitious tour of Europe and Great Britain made Deadheads of many on the continent, the Grateful Dead's P.R. machine put it succinctly on the insert of the resulting live album: "There is nothing like a Grateful Dead concert."

That is as true now as it was then, and the elder statesmen of West Coast rock proved it here in two sold out performances at the Saenger Theatre, October 18 and 19. It was the Dead's first visit here in ten years, dating back to an ill-fated two-night stand at the Warehouse in 1970, when several band members were arrested on drug charges.

A wildly enthusiastic crowd welcomed the band to the stage as they opened the proceedings both nights with a 45-minute acoustic set. Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir, as is their custom, took turns on the lead vocals. It took a couple of tunes to get the audience to settle into the low-key flavor of the acoustic picking and soft vocal harmonies, but by that time the incredibly clean sound system was adjusted into the subtleties of the playing. They chose the popular "Ripple" to close the acoustical set each night, rekindling the Deadheads' fervor right before the first intermission.

In retrospect, the band showed a genuine confidence in their rapport with their crazed fans in opening the show with such sensitive and delicate material. Not many rock bands would even attempt such a laid back opening. But then, not many rock bands on the big time circuit give concert-goers three sets of music.

The second and third sets were electric, alternating hot rockers with tasty slower tempo numbers spiced by Garcia's intricate lead guitar. Weir's inspired rhythm playing seemed to push the band from one check point to the next, and the always innovative bassist, Phil Lesh, provided the guitaristic highlights with some fancy licks of his own.

It should be pointed out that Sunday night's two electric sets contained not one song that had been played the previous night. To those attending both shows, the weekend was like one long concert containing a ten-hour melting pot of musical styles played by a band who, in fifteen years together, has always shown a willingness to experiment, to take chances with its audience, not only in the selection of material, but within

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the very structure and context of the songs themselves.
The last set on Sunday was an intense and varied two-hour excursion that left the audience limp. The set opened with a scorching medley of "Scarlet Begonias/Fire on the Mountain." Garcia and Weir stretched out both instrumentally and vocally as they led the band through "U.S. Blues" and a beautiful version of "Terrapin Station." Drummers Bill Kreutzman and Mickey Hart drove the finish of a "Sugar Magnolia/Good Lovin" medley into some extended pounding on Hart's collection of percussives, until Garcia took it back down with the haunting vocal of "Wharf Rat." The finale was a rousing version of "Truckin'," leaving the Deadheads in a frenzy. For an encore the band chose the soft and countrified "Brokedown Palace," and said goodnight to an audience that lingered quietly in their seats for several minutes after the houselights went up.

The band members seemed to enjoy the crowd's enthusiastic response and the Saenger's excellent concert ambience-perhaps enough to return again soon. It is refreshing to know that after fifteen years the Dead remain in touch with their huge following, and in touch with each other. The music still has meaning inside each of them, and one has only to watch them play to see that the unity, as well as the fire, is still there.

--Bill Cat

One Mo' Time
Vernel Bagneris
Warner Bros. HS 3454

I've praised this grand musical production in my previous reviews of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. I've seen it at least six times in New Orleans since 1977 and have watched it evolve into its current excellence. Vernel Bagneris's tribute to the T.O.B.A. vaudeville at the Lyric Theater in New Orleans in 1926 continues to improve. This is a live recording from its New York home, the Village Gate, and comes off extremely well. It certifies the fact that these New Orleansians have lost nothing despite being away from home for a while.

Bagneris as Papa Du is in better voice here than ever before; "papa da da" and "Hop Scop" still retain the Jelly Roll Morton's vocal mannerisms that I've admired in his work previously. (Remember that Vernel has appeared on scene as Morton, and Morton's vocals on the 1944 Library of Congress recordings have been hailed by many critics even recently as jazz highpoints.) Topsy Chapman has made great strides as a singer since her original, shy outings on stage here; and Kuumba as Big Bertha makes "Kitchen Man" and "Wrong Keyhole" her own with a bawdy style so well fitting the presentation.

However, one can't help but single out three other members of the troupe who haven't received as much ink as the principals. Thais Clark's versions of "C.C. Rider" and "Muddy Water" evoke all the best of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith from this powerful vocalist. She is a treasure, and I am looking forward to some enterprising record company producing an album of her doing traditional blues with a New Orleans band. She has to be the best blues singer I've heard in years.

On the gentle side of the show, there's the charming vocal of Jabbo (Yes, the legend!) on his own "Love" (which I can envision them dancing to at Luthjen's) and the blues "Louise." Jabbo has often been compared to Satchmo, and his vocal style is his own and comes as close to Armstrong's warmth as can be imagined. With respect to his trumpet playing, there's no doubt his lip is better than it was when he turned up in New Orleans a couple of years ago with Freddie Kohlman. His remarkable solo on "Love" skitters and scatters and slides and slips like quicksilver, though on the rideout he's punching at the lead powerfully. He's worth hearing more than just as a curiosity.

Orange Kellin's clarinet in here shows his Jimmy Noone roots. He, too, is a greatly improved player since he was a teen sitting in at Preservation Hall one week off the boat from Sweden. Orange plays as fine a traditional jazz clarinet as New York players with more illustrious reputations. He's one to watch.

In fact, based on this album, I'd recommend anybody to go and watch this show "one mo' time" and now you can bring the record home and listen to it whenever you like.

--Rhodes Spedale
Musical Shapes
Carlene Carter
Warner Bros. BSK 3465

Newlyweds Carlene Carter and Nick Lowe bring their marriage into the studio and come out with an album that represents the best of their musical backgrounds and abilities. Carlene is third generation Carter family, who, along with Jimmy Rodgers, virtually defined country and folk music in the late Twenties. The best songs on this record are those written by Carter, and they are delivered with a sense of confidence and heritage which speaks well of her upbringing. The ease with which she glides through the material (some traditional, mostly original) makes Linda Ronstadt's country rock posturing seem studied and lifeless by comparison.

 Husband Nick Lowe's contributions go far beyond his credits as producer and session musician on *Musical Shapes*. Ten years ago, Lowe's band, Brinsley Schwarz, brought country influenced rock to England with their critically acclaimed second LP, *Despite It All*.

Side one is well paced from start to finish, with “Madness” and “Appalachian Eyes” the standouts. Side two suffers a bit from rather predictable readings of “Ring Of Fire” and “Foggy Mountain Top” (two songs made famous by daddy Johnny Cash and the original Carter Family, respectively). “That Very First Kiss,” written by Carlene, gets things moving once again in the proper direction.

This is an intriguing and unpretentious album, Blue Ridge Mountain music by way of England's pub-rock circuit. I'm already looking forward to the next one.

---Steve Graves

Duke Ellington Songbook
Sarah Vaughn
Pablo 2312-111

Sarah Vaughan is exceptionally well presented in two different formats on this album, and she works equally well in each context. Billy Byers conducts a large ensemble on some tracks, and Sassy has a horn only plus rhythm in others.

All of the saxmen (Frank Foster, Frank Wess, Zoot Sims) are in good form. It's been too long since the two Franks had solo space, and it's good to hear them again. Talk about absence making the heart grow fonder, J.J. Johnson's solo on "Solitude," I assure you, will garner him new admirers as well as rekindle the memories of his many fans.

Sarah Vaughan has rarely displayed her taste, range, and vocal prowess as effectively. She's a jazz singer more comfortable working with jazzmen than tippytoeing through a cluttered Hal Mooney arrangement. Recommended.

--Rhodes Speadale

Doc At The Radar Station
Captain Beefheart
Virgin VA 13148

Anybody who saw Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band perform at Tipitina's a couple of years ago probably realized at the time that here was a man with an entirely different point of view. It was an exceptional evening, with Beefheart and Company reeling through new and old material with a deft precision that I thought impossible to achieve live. For me, it was Professor Longhair meets Anthony Braxton, and I loved every minute.

*Doc At The Radar Station*, by the same token, is not an album for the masses. It is a collection of striking, high-energy compositions chock full of Beefheart's unique syncopated rhythms and unruly vocal growl. The new album picks up where 1978's *Shiny Beast* left off, using most of the accomplished musicians who appeared on that release, his first in years. Particularly strong are the back-to-back “Run Paint Run Run,” and “Sue Egypt,” the latter sounding like perverse horror-movie music. The intensity of sides one and two is broken up by two short instrumental pieces, respectively “A Carrot Is As Close As A Rabbit Gets To A Diamond” and “Flavor Bud Living.”

Don Van Vliet (A.K.A. Beefheart) has a small but rabid following, and it is a credit to Virgin Record that they support his bizarre and uncompromising music. Definitely not for the weak of heart.--Steve Graves

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WAVELENGTH . NOVEMBER 1980
The Last Page

Johnny Vincent, Ace record mogul, is set to reissue albums containing vintage New Orleans rock and roll material. He is set to open his own club in Jackson, Miss., called the “Bon Ton” where his old studio was on Main Street. He hopes to open the club soon with Huey “Piano” Smith...Huey has moved to Baton Rouge recently...

Earl King has opened a book and record shop on Dryades Street. Currently he is working with Deacon John under the guise “New Orleans Blues Review”...Bobby Marchan, as vivacious as ever, is still emceeing weekends at Prout’s Club Alhambra and invites all to his Thursday Night Gong Show...Prout’s recently has featured Bobby “Blue” Bland, Arthur Prysock, and Z.Z. Hill...Bandy Records has recently released Volume 2 of Ernie K-Doe’s greatest hits and plans to reissue the old “Home of the Blues” gem on Minit. Phoenix doing final touches to its studio...K-V rencont is still in the studio trying to cut the flip side of “Purple People Eater.” According to producer Carlos Boll, Mel has shaved off his mustache and can’t seem to remember the words to the song...

Ironing Board Sam has moved to West Memphis. Sam is playing in Handy Park and has shaved his head and wears a flocked rug-like toupe to match his truck...

Marshall Seaborn is going to release a collection of oldies; it’s going to be available only by mail. Marshall is planning on taking out ads on over 100 TV stations...Walter Washington and The Lastie Brothers have been working together again since their trip to Holland. Walter, it seems, had a very famous uncle known as Lightnin’ Slim...

Senator James plans to start a gospel label to record local gospel groups...Jeanie Knight should have a new single out soon; she has been working on it up in Baton Rouge.

Marshall’s dismal record has seemed to take the steam out of Ga-boon’s Gang’s “Let Get Fired Up”...Johnny Adams has recently been working some clubs in Nashville...Oliver Morgan’s “Who Shot The La La” has been bootlegged on a 45. So has Rollie McGill’s “There Goes That Train”...Charlie Records has just released a collection of early material by The Meters, Betty Harris and Lee Dorsey. Covers are great; watch for them...Quint Davis is back at his Ninth Ward abode after working festivals in Memphis and Europe...

The Neville Brothers kicked off the Brown Bag concerts downtown and were, as expected, well received, Lil’ Queenie too...Tim Lyman is no longer booking bands at Tipitina’s; Tim has left the job up to John Kelly, Tim hopes to work in management with Bill Cat...

Jon Foose and Jason Berry were recently in Washington D.C. to show their documentary “Up From The Cradle of Jazz,” At the Smithsonian Film Festival. They also hope to sell it to PBS and some European broadcasting networks...

The Cartoons sounding better all the time, recently filled in at Tipitina’s when Stevie Vaughan couldn’t make the gig...Etta James’s newest album, just out, is produced by Allen Toussaint and features the Sansu rhythm section...Sansu has recently leased some material to King Records in Japan for some reissues...

Eddie Bo is back on the scene with a new 45 on his Bo Sound label...New Blues Unlimited magazine has excellent interviews with Tommy Ridgeley and Johnny Adams...Living Blues is celebrating its tenth anniversary with a double issue, included are reviews of the 1980 Jazz Fest and some live music reports by Wavelength contributor Hammond Scott...

John Broven, author of Walkin’ To New Orleans (retitled History of Rhythm and Blues In New Orleans), in America and in town recently. He is doing further research for a new book on Swamp Pop, and has delivered the manuscript to Pelican Press...Copies of his “Walkin’To New Orleans” have turned up in the discount bin of Martin’s Wine Cellar, of all places.

Ron Cuccia, New Orleans’ own jazz poet, whose album for Takoma Records earned him national acclaim, has a new album coming out in January for Oblique Records. With Ron on this new venture will be John Magnie on piano and vocals, Johnny Vidacovich on drums. Kenneth Blevins on congas, Lise Cousineau on vocals and percussion, Larry Sieberth on piano and synthesizer, Jim Singleton on bass, and Tony DiGradi on sax, flute, and bass clarinet. Joining this all-star cast will be the Youth Inspirational Choir, directed by Lois Dejean.
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