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**Wavelength (February 1981)**

Connie Atkinson  
*University of New Orleans*

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Cover Photo by Josephine Sacabo

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Local Wax
Headed For Gold

Carnival time means Mardi Gras records on the jukeboxes. This year there'll be some new candidates for continuous playing. Li'l Queenie and the Percolators have recorded "My Darlin' New Orleans," the crowdpleaser from Ron Cuccia's first album, for February release. Professor Longhair's classic "Goin' to the Mardi Gras" gets a new, parade-style treatment from George Porter and Joynride, who recorded it for their own label, as yet unnamed. Traci Borges of Knight Studios has produced "Mardi Gras," which he wrote with Lionel Robinson, as well as "Carnival Song," which he says will appear on an album of his material on the Australian Omega label.

Leading the list of new local singles that have nothing to do with Mardi Gras is The Cold's new 45, "Mesmerized," backed by "Wake Up." Others are "A Mother's Love" by Earl King and a couple of 45s by Ernie K-Doe and Willie Tee.

Two contemporary jazz ensembles have self-produced LPs in the works, which should be out by the time everyone is sick of Carnival. The New Jazz Quintet is mixing an album and looking for the money to release it before the Jazz Festival. And Ramsey McLean and the Lifers have cut a live album at the Faubourg, to which they may add some studio tracks.

Another jazz outfit, The James Rivers Movement, has a new LP, Thrill Me, already out, and it is reportedly receiving considerable airplay on one local station ("the Pope is wearing it out" says Wavelength's source).

And to put a bright polish on this brief summary of recent local recordings, the word is out that Martha Raye has recorded an Ipana Toothpaste commercial at Knight Studios. It's the one New Orleans recording you'll be sure to hear.

Big Band Jazz,
More Music on Air

The Urban Spaces Jazz Orchestra will present its debut concert of Big Band Jazz on Sunday, February 8, at 3 pm at the Contemporary Arts Center. The orchestra of 20 players, consisting of some of the finest musicians in New Orleans, is presented in a setting that calls upon their skills in both improvising and reading. Feature arrangers/composers/conductors will be John Fernandez, Clyde Kerr Sr., and John Berthelot, who is music director of the orchestra. Featured guest soloists will include flutist Kent Jordan and vocalist Nancy Fisher.

Cold Meets Tip's
With a Thud

In a bizarre turn of events the Cold's long-awaited debut appearance at Tipitina's was postponed last month when singer Barbara Menendez took a fall at an afternoon sound check, tearing ligaments and dislocating an ankle. The injury immobilized both Babs and the band for at least ten days, manager Bruce Spizer said. In addition to the Tip's appearance at least five gigs had to be cancelled. The injury comes at an inopportune time for the band, which, for the past few months has been drawing monstrous crowds into the uptown clubs.

Among the cancellations was a weekend stand at Jimmy's, January 16 and 17, and a trip to Baton Rouge's Mother's Mantel on the 22nd.

February should find the Cold back on the club scene. Tipitina's manager John Kelley has rescheduled the Cold for Monday February 23, after the parade of the Krewe of Freret.

Radio Notes

WRNO owner and general manager Joseph M. Costello III has been granted a license by the FCC to construct and operate the most powerful privately owned commercial radio station in the U.S. Transmitting at 100,000 watts short wave, programming will feature contemporary adult music, programs in French and Italian, and programs on Louisiana activities and culture. The coverage will be worldwide; with special emphasis on reaching Canada, Central and Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and the Mediterranean.

Wavelength Recommends

Elvin Bishop, the great boogie-blues picker, will be featured at Jimmy's on Thursday, February 5. Sunday, the 8th, former Runaways lead singer Joan Jett brings her new band, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, to Ole Man River's. Original Eagles member Randy Meisner makes a solo debut in the area on Tuesday, February 10. Meisner is promoting a new album, "One More Song," on Epic Records.

Appearing February 13 and 14 at the Old Absinthe Bar is Captain Sean and the Moon Rock Boppers, a six piece band featuring latin jazz, rock jazz, country jazz, gospel jazz, and any other jazz you may dream of. The Captain has played with Al Hirt, Miles Davis, Mose Allsion and Vass Clements. Also on the 13th, Mighty Joe Young will storm into Tipitina's.

The Krewe of Clones will parade its way out of the CAC on Valentine's Day, February 14th at about 6:30. After arriving at the riverboat President, the parade will magically turn into a Mardi Gras ball, with music by the Cold and the Neville Brothers. For information call 523-1216.

Sixties soul men Sam & Dave will make their first Tip's appearance on Tuesday, February 17. Satisfaction will open. 38 Special, led by guitarist Donnie Van Zandt (yes, another Van Zandt brother), plays Ole Man River's on February 18. The Sheiks will open up this show.

Reunion time: The Normals, New Orleans' most popular punk band ever, will get together again on Friday February 20th at Jimmy's. It has been over a year since this fine four-piece outfit "straight from the suburbs" last played a local club. Saturday February 21 offers Taj Mahal back again at Tipitina's; septuagenarian blues-picker Elizabeth Cotton will open the show. The club will offer cabaret-style seating for this show only.

The Oo Poo Pa Doo Revue will be at the Blues Saloon February 28 for Chris Kenner's birthday with a fitting tribute from Al "Carnival Time" Johnson, Reggie Hall, Jessie Hill and the band. The show is to be taped for international radio.
Music Business Courses at UNO

Rupert Surcouf Jr. was just another teenaged musician when he was struck by a great musical truth: “I found out I could make more money booking than playing. You could only play one job, but you could book four or five and take a cut from each.”

That started him off on a 16-year career in the business end of music—as a manager and consultant. One way or another, he’s worked with artists such as The Meters, Neville Brothers, Leon Redbone, Rolling Stones, and Bette Midler.

Surcouf will be passing on his experience in Music Business IV, a course in artist management starting February 3 in the University of New Orleans’ continuing education program.

It’ll include information on contracts, touring and other management topics.

That’s just one of several non-credit courses on music offered at UNO this spring. Budding record moguls can take John Berthelot’s Music Business III, record production.

Local producer Berthelot says the course will have four classroom lecture sessions, followed by six classes to meet at Ultrasonic Studios. There, students will take turns recording and critiquing several groups—from new wave to country.

“It’s mainly to give them experience in coordinating the human and technical aspects,” he says. “Producers have to be able to keep everybody happy.”

Ultrasonic Studio’s Jay Gallagher and George Hollowell will also be offering an introduction to recording techniques, Music Business II. Classes will meet in the 16-track commercial studio with “hands-on” experience in sound recording and mixing, as well as principles of acoustics.

In addition to the business-oriented courses, UNO is also offering classes in music theory, piano (for kids), and guitar (for anyone). Most classes start around the beginning of February, and UNO says you can register up until classes begin at Room 122 of the Education Building, or by mail. For more information, call 283-0351.
THE INDIANS

At some point around the turn of the century, after overcoming an enforced ban on street gatherings by non-whites, groups of black people were observed on Mardi Gras Day, parading in their own neighborhoods garbed in American-Indian-like costumes, elaborately decorated with egg shells, turkey feathers, and broken glass. These were the beginnings of the black carnival associations known as the Mardi Gras Indians.

No one knows exactly when these Indians appeared, or why blacks adopted the symbol of the Indian as a Carnaval motif, though speculation on that topic abounds. Some contend that the Indian associations were started by light-skinned creoles, i.e. those of African and French or Spanish ancestry, who had actually intermarried with Native American Indians. Support for this theory comes from the fact that some Mardi Gras Indians can remember grandparents who were "pure" Indian, and that the earliest Mardi Gras tribes originated in Creole neighborhoods where actual Indians from the surrounding countryside came to reside. Others believe that the Indian was merely a symbol of oppressed blacks of a people who resisted enslavement by white civilization. In addition, there are numerous examples of Indians harboring runaway slaves who eventually intermarried with them. Another conjecture is that the urban tribes grew out of earlier African tribal associations which existed during the great Sunday afternoon dancing and drumming competitions in New Orleans' Congo Square, when slaves were given a day off to congregate. When these slave gatherings were banned around the Civil War, the groups could possibly have gone underground and later emerged as disguised Africans, i.e. Mardi Gras Indians. Credence for this idea comes from the fact that today's Mardi Gras Indians have preserved a rich storehouse of powerful African rhythmic drumming and dancing that would suggest a connection. The music has all the characteristics of much West African music, including polyrhythms (two or more rhythmic ideas played on top of each other), call and response singing (a leader improvises verses and is answered by the group), and improvisation (unwritten, spontaneously composed music). The songs often tell a story about Mardi Gras Day, the Indians' suit, prison, life in the ghetto, or another theme of common interest to the community. In any case, whether or not there is a direct transformation from African to "Indian" tribe, today's Mardi Gras Indians are the inheritors and perpetuators of that great musical tradition. One final theory on origins is diffusion from the Caribbean, particularly Haiti and Trinidad, each of which still has a Mardi Gras with Indians similar to those found in New Orleans. Both have or had strong French traditions, and a strong link with New Orleans. In Trinidad, one even finds the existence of a tribe known as the Red, White and Blues, the name of a tribe that once existed in New Orleans, and after the black Jacobin revolution in Haiti, there was a large creole migration to Louisiana. However, with no solid documentation, all this remains speculative; but we do know for certain that the Indian associations are thriving in New Orleans today and significantly represent how Afro-New Orleanians express themselves on Mardi Gras.

On Mardi Gras Eve, the night before Carnival, all the Indians get together in this little barroom and they get their little stuff, ya understand, and some of 'em go "Um!" in the arm and that makes 'em feel good and they get there and they pitch a bitch! I don't mean a ball—I say a bitch! All night long, don't care. See, when Mardi Gras day come, you fall out there—Oooooohhhhh Wah! The Indians have been around ever since there was a carnival. The Indians really begin before the beginning of time when Columbus come over here and discover America.


WAVELENGTH / FEBRUARY 1981
song is a type of Calypso and is sung in West Indian dialect. Nowadays, though, physical violence has been replaced with aesthetic competitiveness, and the "prettiest" Indian is now the most powerful. Seeing a crowd of Indians on the streets of the city is a rare treat to behold, and it is really impossible to judge who has constructed the finest suit. The Indians spend weeks and months hand sewing velvet, ostrich plumes, rhinestones, sequins, and ribbons into fine garments with elaborate headdresses and ornamented objects such as peace pipes, hatchets and staffs. During the months preceding Mardi Gras, sewing sessions are held, and the suits, which are taken apart every year, are created anew, each one often representing an investment of $1000. While the suits are disassembled annually, the beaded patches depicting anything from geometric patterns to Indians massacring Buffalo Bill, are saved for future use. These patches are masterful art works and remain one of the finest examples of authentic African-American craftsmanship in the hemisphere.

On Sundays prior to Carnival, the tribes assemble in neighborhood bars and rehearse the repertoire of songs which they will sing on Mardi Gras Day. These are the sessions at which the rhythmic intensity and emotional energy level reach incredible peaks, and the bars are generally overflowing with neighborhood people who join in singing choruses and beat on tambourines, bottles or drums in a throbbing sea of musical excitement.

Finally Mardi Gras Day dawns and the Indians gather at their chief's house and wait for instructions. The tribe is broken down into spyboys, who march ahead to look for oncoming tribes; flagboys, who convey signals to the chief and carry the standard or emblem of the tribe; wildmen, who keep the spectators from rumpling Indian feathers; 2nd, 3rd, honorary, and trail chiefs; queens; princesses; and a crowd of loyal followers who form the chorus known as "second liners," a group seen in nearly all New Orleans street parades. The tribes venture out into their own neighborhoods, rarely seen or heard from by the downtown revelers in the French Quarter. When two tribes meet, the chiefs initiate a complex encounter ritual, dancing around each other, and shouting threatening remarks. In the old days, one chief would order the other to "Humba" or bow down in deference to his superiority, and if he refused, they would fight, often to the death. But now, after this outward display of hostile rivalry, everyone becomes friendly and curious about how the suits have been constructed. This process goes on all day until the Indians, by now exhausted from walking with heavy suits all day, return home. They won't be seen again until St. Joseph's day in March, when they come out for a final display of their suits. St. Joseph's day happens to fall midway between Mardi Gras and Easter and is celebrated by other Orleanians, particularly the Italian community, as a break from the abstinence of Lent.

Some Indians have recently expanded their activities and now perform publicly on other occasions. The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage festival, uptown and downtown nightclubs, commercial Mardi Gras spectacles, educational forums, and music festivals from California to Europe, are a few of the new arenas where Indians perform. And three tribes have released commercial LP's, including the Wild Magnolias on Polydor and Barclay records, and the Wild Tchoupitoulas on Island Records. Purists lament these commercial ventures as a sellout, but the results are unquestionably interesting experiments. And despite these new developments, on Mardi Gras Day you can be sure to witness one of the finest examples of people's street art, music and theatre that America has to offer.

—Andy Kaslow
A List of Tribes

Uptown
- Golden Eagles (not masking)
- Black Eagles
- Golden Sioux
- Wild Magnolias
- Wild Tchoupitoulas
- Golden Arrows (not masking)
- Creole Osceola (new tribe)

Downtown
- Golden Blades (not masking)
- Apache Hunters (not masking)
- Yellow Pocahontas
- Ninth Ward Hunters
- Diamond Stars
- Seventh Ward Hunters
- White Eagles
- Yellow Jackets (single member)

West Bank
- Golden Stars (Marrero)

Defunct Tribes
- Red White & Blue
- The Hundred and One
- Creole Wild West
- Cheyenne Hunters
- Second Ward Hunters
- Third Ward Terrors

WHERE TO hear the Indians before Mardi Gras. Several live performances by Indian groups are scheduled the week before Carnival. The legendary Bo Dollis and the Wild Magnolias will be performing with the New Orleans great Willie Tee, the combination that recorded the first Indian 45 "Handa Wanda" and the LP on Barclay and Polydor records. They will be at Tipitina's on Wednesday, February 25.

The next two nights, Feb. 26 and 27 at Tip's, the Golden Eagles, led by Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, will be performing. The Eagles recently returned from a triumphant European tour with performances at the Berlin Jazz Festival. They are some of the most exciting Indian performers on the scene, and have developed Chief Boudreaux's original repertoire which includes "Shotgun Joe," "Search till You Find It," "Holy Man Come to the Ghetto," and "Me Donkey Want Water."

The group called the Original Wild Tchoupitoulas will be featured in concert on Sunday night at the Saenger Theater, with the dynamic Neville Brothers. The late Chief George "Jolley" Landry was the Nevilles' uncle, and the brothers are carrying on the tradition which was started several years ago when they all recorded the acclaimed Wild Tchoupitoulas album on Island records.

Of course the finest place to really hear the Indians is on the streets on Mardi Gras Day. Uptown, they have to be scouted down, but you can start at Washington and Claiborne and make your way through central city. Downtown, Claiborne and St. Bernard is a good bet, but Indian territory is fairly vast and you'll have to cover a lot of ground. Good luck!
An Indian Glossary

Chief—Supreme leader of tribe. This position is attained when a man has the financial and/or organizational ability to hold the “gang” together.

Second Chief, Third Chief—In the event of a Chief being unable to perform his duties, the Second Chief and Third Chief are available to fulfill these tasks.

Honorary Chief—Usually an elderly Indian who is still able to mask and has the desire to hit the streets.

Trail Chief—Brings up the rear of the tribe.

Wildman—His primary function these days is to keep spectators away from the Indians’ feathers and if possible, off the street.

Spyboy—A reconnaissance person. His job is to proceed the tribe and issue reports (to the flagboy) of other tribes within the immediate area.

Flagboy—Relays the Spyboy’s messages and dispatches to the tribe.

Queen—An honorary position usually bestowed upon a girl much younger than the Chief. She is almost never the Chief’s wife or girlfriend but rather the daughter of family friends or neighbors. Like all Indians, her greatest talent should be an ability to sew.

Scout, Squaw—Indian children.

Gang—The tribe.

Pow-wow—An assembly of different tribes.

Humbug—A disturbance or disorder.

Humbah—Bow down or surrender.

Jock-A-Mo Feenah Hey—Spelled in a variety of ways, the message is the same as “Kiss My Ass”!

Firewater—Alcohol.

Handa Wanda—An Indian chant of no particular meaning.

Crown—Indian headdress.

Mummy Crown—Worn by the downtown tribes, this is a one-piece costume similar to ones worn throughout the West Indies at Carnival. There is a well-known self-portrait by the Haitian painter Wilson Bigaud in such a costume. The Uptown tribes wear crowns and costumes based on those once worn by the Plains Indians.

Apron—The elaborately beaded and decorated apron—usually featuring scenes of Indians locked in combat with panthers or buffalo or each other—is an integral part of the suit.

Battlefield—The area near the old New Basin Canal (now the Ponchartrain Expressway) where tribes would meet to battle on Mardi Gras Day.

Shallow Water Li’l Mama—A chant for “No Rain On Mardi Gras.” Rain, for obvious reasons, is the Indians’ worst enemy.

An Indian Discography

45’s

Sugar Boy & the Cane Cutters—“Jock-A-Mo” (Chess)—1953

Professor Longhair/Earl King—“Big Chief, Part 1 & 2” (Watch 45-1900)—1964

The Dixie Cups—“Iko Iko” (Red Bird RB 10.024)—1965

Wild Magnolias—“Handa Wanda, Part 1 & 2” (Crescent City 25)—1970

Wild Magnolias—“Smoke My Peace Pipe”/“Iko Iko” (Polydor PD 14242)—1974

Roger & The Gypsies—“Pass the Hatchet” (Seven B)—Circa 1965

78’s

Danny Barker’s Creole Cats—“Chocko Mo Feeno Hey”/“My Indian Red” (King Zulu 001)—1955

Danny Barker’s Creole Cats—“Corinne Died on the Battlefield” (King Zulu 002)—1955

LP’s


Jelly Roll Morton—To-Wa-Bac-A-Way (Original Library of Congress Recording LC 2487-2489)—1939

Wild Magnolias—Wild Magnolias (Polydor PD 6026)—1974

Wild Magnolias—They Call Us Wild (Barclay 90033)—1975

Wild Tchoupitoulas—Wild Tchoupitoulas (Island LPS 9360)—1976

The Meters—Rejuvenation (Warner Bros. MS 2200)—1974

Dr. John the Night Tripper—Gris Gris (Atlantic SD 33-234)—1968
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Papa Doc

Victor “Papa Doc” Augustine, shown here in a photograph from the late Forties, ran a voodoo shop at Dryades and St. Andrew. In this shop, under the aegis of Augustine’s Wonder Records, both Earl King and Huey “Piano” Smith got their start in the music business. Years later, Earl remembered Augustine in the last lines of “Teasin’ You,” a tune written for Willie Tee: “They call you Doc ‘cause you’re the island man...” Another self-styled physician, Dr. Gizmo[top], reportedly sold his tune entitled “Big Chief” to Earl King for the grand sum of $10. Both Papa Doc and Dr. Gizmo are still around and circulating about the Dryades Street area.
There are people for whom Mardi Gras is not confined to the society pages of the Times-Picayune and the sedentary opulence of the Comus Ball. The outfits these people wear are the products of second-hand stores and their own crazed imagination rather than custom costume shops; they drink more Dixie than Dom Perignon and eat more Popeye’s than pate, and the small carnival krewes they belong to have more fun than three balls’ worth of bluebloods.

This is not to say that tradition is not a part of these small krewes, but their rites and rituals are looser, less defined, not yet having evolved to the state of rigidity often found in the established organizations. They have a different interpretation of how the Mardi Gras season should be celebrated, one that is most refreshing in its originality, vitality, energy, and lusty pursuit of happiness.

In looking at a few of these krewes, we are overlooking quite a few more, but such are the dictates of space and time. Be advised that many more than are mentioned here exist, and if you look hard enough you can find them and help them celebrate Carnival. You may also notice a certain lack of specific detail about what the krewes are doing this particular Mardi Gras. Well, if you want to go to their parties, parades and balls, you’ll just have to find out about them yourself; as one of the krewe of Dreux told me, “The whole world is invited but we don’t want the whole world there.” These krewes are small and only have room for people whose Mardi Gras spirit leads the way for them.

The Krewe of Dreux is in its ninth year. Beginning as a keg party at a house on Dreux, it has grown to about ten-keg size. They proclaimed themselves to have been the only krewe to march inside the city limits in 1979, the year of the police strike (they told the representatives of the law that it was a party, not a parade) though they admit they don’t know for sure (the Clones may have an argument there). The king and queen are anointed the night before the parade, at the Bacchus bar, which is their headquarters, and which is where you should go if you want to find out anything more.

“We were started on a whim five years ago,” a member of the Krewe of Motha Roux tells me, “and our anonymity is one of the keys to our style.” This year is a transition year for this krewe: they will be marching from bar to bar on foot instead of renting buses, and they will offer live music, with the Lastie Brothers and Bobby Mitchell and maybe Ernie K-Doe, at their ball. Before you go to the Saturn bar to find out about this krewe, maybe you should know that they traditionally parade without a permit and film the entire affair.

One often finds close ties between two of these krewes; such is the case with the krewe that calls itself the ‘Society for the Preservation of Lagniappe in Louisiana’ and the Krewe of Krawe. Originally, many of the functions of these two were combined; currently though, the Society an uptown Tipitina’s-type crowd, has its own outdoor festivities, the Gator Ball. This year Odetta will play at the Gator Ball and reggae music will be featured (music is the central point for this krewe). Several other activities are also planned. The Krewe
Randy Meisner takes center stage.

Randy Meisner's past association with the Eagles is history to be proud of. Now he has the spotlight all to himself with his new album, "One More Song."

"One More Song."
Randy Meisner's premiere performance, on Epic Records and Tapes.

"Epic" is a trademark of CBS Inc.

Randy Meisner, at 14 years almost ancient by small-krewe standards, began with "a bunch of hippies from Tulane" getting together to drink beer and eat crawfish on Fat Tuesday. The krewe throws crawfish instead of doubloons during its parade, and the king is the owner of the winning entry in their annual crawfish race. An annual highlight is pelting the Hare Krishna house, which they pass on their parade route, with the small crustaceans which give the krewe its name.

The biggest ball offered by any of these krewes is the MOM's (Mystick Orphans and Misfits) Ball, which is held in Chalmette and provides live music and beer. Begun nine years ago by "a bunch of people looking for any excuse to have a party," it is free for anyone who hears about it and shows up in costume. It is dedicated to preserving the spirit of Mardi Gras as a freak show, one in which you have to participate in order to be able to watch. If you're at Luigi's one night, you might learn something more about it.

Anyone familiar with the Faubourg area knows the Dream Palace, and any familiar with the DP knows about the Krewe of Cosmic Debris and its marching band, the Paradise Tumblers. Loose-knit at best, these groups' parades are of the "pick-up-and-join" variety. The Tumblers play year 'round, appearing at parties and weddings and so forth. Some members don't really play music but contribute various honkings and bangings which add greatly to the final effect. There is also a Poodles majorette section. The Krewe of Cosmic Debris is one of the most splendidly rag-tag of the small krewes; if you hang out at the DP long enough, you may not find out anything about their parades but you may end up in one.

Well, there, in a coconut shell, you have it. These krewes don't compete with the big krewes or with each other; they impose no restrictions on their haphazard paths of decadence. They see Mardi Gras as a celebration and a spirit that should be accessible to everyone, and mostly they see it as a glorious reason to go out and have a gloriously outrageous party. If the spirit moves you, wander out and join in with them. Or for that matter, start your own krewe—all it takes is a keg and the desire to drink it.
Everyone familiar with stereos knows the advantages of headphone listening. They can be listened to at loud volumes and you won’t disturb other people in the room, let alone your neighbors. You can get great headphones with quality sound for a lot less than quality speaker systems. You can get great stereo separation, and, when listening to recordings in “binaural” sound, headphones will let you think “you are there ...”.

But, headphones should be heard, and not felt. To set good bass, most headphones use as large a diaphragm as possible. This needs to be sealed against the ear, so low frequency sounds don’t cancel out. Large, heavy, and with lots of pressure on your ear, headphones like these become uncomfortable quickly. They hurt you and you can’t enjoy the music.

Sony is a leader in the world of miniaturized electronics. Sony engineers are always looking for a new and better way, using new technology. Sony engineers set out to design super lightweight headphones, with good bass, that could be worn with extreme comfort for a long time.

The result of this research is the new MICRO DYNAMIC RECEIVER. The MDR line of Sony headphones represents an advance in high fidelity reproduction of considerable magnitude. It’s introduction has created a sensation in the audio world. Reviewers around the world are reporting astonishment at the size, performance, comfort and price of these new Sony headphones.

The key to these headphones is the new MDR driver diaphragm. It is only 12 microns thick, only half the thickness of Koss and Sennheiser lightweight headphone diaphragms. This means better transient response. Special samarium cobalt magnets over three times more powerful than conventional types, are employed. This results in high sound pressure level and excellent damping for accurate response to input signals across the entire audible frequency spectrum.

The new MDR-3 weighs only 1.8 ounces. It has less than 70 grams of pressure against your ear. It’s weight and ear pressure is less than a third of that of other so-called lightweight headphones. It sounds fantastic!

If you never liked headphones before, or if you are looking for the finest phones you can buy, be sure and sound out these new Sony MDR headphones, simply one of the most astonishing new high fidelity products in years.

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10-9:30 Mon.-Sat.
Gatemouth Brown goes his own way, prides himself on facing up to whatever he finds. Among the art objects on display at his house off Esplanade Avenue is a painting, obviously the work of an admirer, that catches one of the images that this singular musician—master of several instruments and many styles—takes some pains to project: The Drifter. Alone astride a stallion starting to rear back at the sight, Gatemouth Brown has reached the very brink of hell, whence comes a demon, clambering out of the pit, his hand raised to bid the rider to go no farther. The artist has painted Brown in the cowboy outfit—embroidered black shirt, black Stetson—that he wears on stage. Brown evinces not a qualm at proceeding, looks ready, in fact, for a tussle. The demon, in an odd reversal of expectations, apparently feels that this loner's soul would not be worth the struggle he'd have to wage for it, and seeks instead to guard the brink of hell like St. Peter at the gates of heaven.

Confounding expectations looks to be a way of life for Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown. The persona of the Drifter seems real enough, as far as a recent acquaintance can tell; Brown drifted, in his description, to New Orleans about four years ago, during a slack period in his career. “I migrated—except in my case I wasn’t migrating; I was drifting. Both engines had petered out on my boat, let’s say, in the middle of the ocean. What you gon’ do? Drift. I drift here, been here ever since.” But there is an edge of steely determination to the man that belies any casual notion of drifting.

His stage act plays off a similar tension, a tension between his flashy showmanship, giving his audience what it wants, hour upon hour, and his sometimes sardonic delight in confounding what he knows the crowd expects. Consider his most recent New Orleans performance, at Tipitina's on a Saturday night in January.

Arriving late, Brown lets his band warm up for a couple of numbers; then, to the accompaniment of an ominous Peter Gunn-style riff, the “high priest of Texas swing” takes the stage. Not a large man, Brown has no trouble looking imposing. A compact cowboy in black, he sips from a mug, flashes the grin that earned him the nickname “Gatemouth” as a small boy singing in a school choir in Orange, Texas. He’s surely no choirboy now. “What’s in the cup?” a black woman calls out from the crowd.

“Just coffee, baby,” Brown chuckles. (It’s true, too; he doesn’t drink.) It sounds like an exchange off a classic live blues album, say, with the performer showing his casual rapport with a congenial crowd. Closing one’s eyes, it’s easy to imagine being part of the audience of a hip black club, the kind of place blues fanatics dream about. Opening one’s eyes, however, it’s hard to miss the fact that this is Tip’s, and that the woman who called out is one of the handful of blacks in the house.

It’s a white audience, collegiate and post-collegiate, less funky than a Neville Brothers or a Radiators crowd. These are people who are likely to know Brown from his Jazz Festival appearances. On the road about ten months out of the year, he hasn’t built up the kind of regular barroom crowd that most successful New Orleans musicians play to week in and week out; rather, he packs Tip’s with aficionados. They’ve come to hear this legendary guitarist and fiddler, this black man who’s been on the road for 40 of his 56 years, an incredibly vital musician whose widespread acclaim has yet to blossom into mass recognition.

As a performer, Gatemouth Brown is a cult item. Like a number of
American black musicians, he commands a greater following in Europe than in his own country. For those who know, his lack of recognition adds to the mystique; being unknown is one of the things that Brown is famous for. That paradox may supply some of the cutting edge of his style. Brown is after more than playing legend to the cognoscenti. He seeks, quite clearly, to be a classic American popular entertainer.

At Tip's, he plays the audience with the same virtuosity that he brings to his musicianship. Check out the grin, for instance, the famous gatemouth, gleaming against that dark brown, flat-featured face. It's like the grin of a Louis Armstrong, a signal of instantaneous communication with his audience. His ploy, it seems, is to ingratiate himself with the audience as a personality, then bring his musical gifts to bear on a performance of monstrous skill. There is at least an occasional hint that the wizardry musicianship mocks the naive expectations that his stage persona sets up.

Amateur psychologizing aside, though, the first thing to say is that the performance works splendidly. Brown opens on guitar, snaky fingers plying the strings without a pick. It's a cold, clear sound, the playing precise and economical. One moment he's leaning back in his chair on stage, heavy-lidded eyes drifting dreamily over the crowd as he combs on his instrument while his young band shows their well-rehearsed stuff. Then suddenly he's on his feet, afire, as he executes a dazzling solo. Brown's guitar parts work to transform the several styles he plays in—this set he does blues, jazz, country, Cajun and calypso music; they all become Gatemouth Brown tunes.

When he switches to fiddle, the playing may bear less of his distinctive stamp, but it swings just as hard. Bringing together his Texas and Louisiana roots, he fiddles a "Texas Coonass Breakdown." Toward the end of the set he whips out a harmonica to accompany his vocal on a blues number. His set lasts well over and hour, and he doesn't quit for the night until dawn. The audience that arrived as blues aficionados departs as happy, exhausted dancers.

"So you liked my little two-bit show last night?" Brown inquires of a novice music writer (this one) visiting his home to wrap up an interview and join in a farewell party, since Brown and his band are due back out on the road, with dates over a ten-day period in Texas, Oklahoma, and California. Brown's question shows a little of his sardonic edge. Impressive as his Tipitina's show was, it may seem a bit down-scale by the standards he set at other stages of his career. Brown first gained prominence as a musician in 1947, beginning, as the legend has it, when he picked up T-Bone Walker's guitar while that master bluesman was temporarily indisposed, and sat in, impromptu, with Walker's band at the Bronze Peacock club in Houston. Brown's nerviness provoked Walker's ire, but his musicianship gained him the older man's admiration. Building from his association with Walker, Brown developed a reputation of his own on the Texas blues circuit, as a musical innovator as well as a fearsome guitarist. (One of the half-dozen Gatemouth Brown albums available on local racks, San Antonio Ballbuster, contains sides cut during that period.) At the height of his popularity, Brown was fronting a 23-piece band (he was the first guitarist to lead a large ensemble) and playing music that went well beyond Texas blues.

With the ascendancy of rock music in the 1960s, Brown's career went into eclipse. "The very worst times," he says, "were 1966 to 1970. Wasn't making no money, wasn't supporting my family. Let me tell you something, man, that's the worst pressure on earth. "Rock and roll killed everything else. Country music was buried. Jazz and blues was buried. But thanks to the Europeans for bringing them back to our country. They appreciate good music."

Some dedicated European blues enthusiasts rescued Brown from oblivion, brought him over to play the Montreaux Jazz Festival in 1971. "They had been looking for me for seven years. I was in Aztec, New Mexico, trying to make a living." Brown's appearance at the festival created a sensation, won him a new audience. He has since made frequent European tours (he's going over again in April, coming back just in time for the Jazz Fest), and he has recorded eight albums abroad (the best ones available in New Orleans are Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown Sings Louis Jordan and Cold Strange).

Since 1976, when an appearance at the Washington, D.C., Folk Festival caught the attention of the cultural minions in the State Department, Brown has also made a number of tours as a U.S. goodwill ambassador, playing in Africa, Japan and, in 1979, the Soviet Union. "I was like Moses leading my flock through the wilderness," Brown says of his six-week Soviet tour. ("You had a lot of help with that flock," his wife, Yvonne, responds.) We set foot on soil that, I guarantee you, no other American has ever set foot on. We went so far out that the Russians didn't monitor us whatsoever.

"One time we stopped at a roadside cafe, looked like a little old wooden shed. Real country and funky. Flies by the millions. As I got off the bus I looked across the road, and I saw marijuana growing thirty, forty foot high. Since we didn't take no grass to Russia, we got several pillowcases full, took it on to this town we was going to. Put it outside the back window to dry. Some of it dried pretty good. You'd smoke some of this stuff and be high as a coon for about two minutes, then you'd feel like you was dying. Man, that stuff did me more harm than good."

But overall, it seems safe to report, Brown has found his globe-trotting of recent years to be beneficial. "What I found made people wise, have a hell of a lot more understanding than people that sit in one spot, is travel. If it's to the next town, the next state, there's always something different that you didn't see where you left from." That's the Drifter talking. In conversation, Brown continually presents himself as the common man making sense of extraordinary experiences. Much as his music establishes a simple appeal, then works some sophisticated changes, his talk springs directly from his country background, yet he takes
Brown moves away from everyday speech in certain key words. Blacks are almost invariably “negroes” in his parliance, for example, and Tipitina's is a “caucasian” club. He talks about writing a book on “the negro man,” and has reflected at length on his experiences as a black musician before integration, when he played all-black clubs like the Dewdrop Inn in New Orleans. Gatemouth Brown is not at all taken with the nostalgic recreations of such clubs that have surfaced locally in recent years. "This town tried to do it, but I just don't think they should try to reproduce that. I think there should be clubs for people, and not certain people. You see, if they do that, I'm gon' tell you man, you're going to go right back to where everybody fought so damn long to get out of.

"That's why you never hear of me playing an all-black club, because I would feel just like this: like I used to feel when I played the white club, and that's all you could see. And I knew why there wasn't nobody else there."

His resistance to racial categories has caused some discomfort among Gatemouth Brown fans who view him primarily as a bluesman. For the past several years, Brown has placed increased emphasis on his country music background, which has resulted in the only adverse commentary about him that appears in the voluminous file of articles that his wife is collecting as reference material for a projected book. Though his move into the country music market (as on the Blackjack album, a Brown favorite) has turned out to be a shrewd commercial move, his blues following should be aware that Gatemouth Brown has played country music all his life.

"I'm so grateful to my father," he says, "for teaching me American music, rather that just one music. There's some types of places where the average entertainer can't even play. I'm not being egotistical, but it's the truth. You never hear of no B.B. King or Muddy Waters or Buddy Guy playing in no Gilley's, man. You have to be country-oriented to play there.

One image from a visit to Brown's home that springs readily to mind is that of his 19-month-old daughter, Rene, dancing to tapes of her father's new music. "She's our heart," Brown says, marvelling at her precocity. The music Rene dances to is off demo tapes for a new album that Brown is due to record presently at the Studio in the Country in Bogalusa. (One of the tunes, "In Father's Memory," is a collaboration between Gatemouth and Yvonne Brown, who is a classically trained pianist and a mournful country fiddler herself.) According to Brown, the new album will contain "big-band, jazz, good blues ballads, semi-classical, semi-reggae, and some type of music you might have heard back in the twenties or thirties, but modified so it will sound like today, but you will still get that yesteryear idea. You know, one should never record the same kind of record he did before."

Gatemouth Brown refuses to repeat himself musically. What remains constant is the persona; he plays Gatemouth Brown, The Drifter, in his living room as well as onstage. It's an act that plays very well, and he knows it. A lot of writers, one surmises from reading his press clippings, have seen it. There were two writers at Brown's farewell party the night after his performance at Tip's: the representative from Wavelength, and the one from The New Yorker. Or at any rate, a hotshot music journalist, Nik Cohn (he wrote Rock From The Beginning and made a killing with the article from which Saturday Night Fever was adapted) was on the scene, with a pocket tape recorder and an eye toward doing a New Yorker profile. The Wavelength writer, his own interview completed, hung around feeling a bit abashed. He did manage to note, however, that Gatemouth Brown, relaxing in front of the fire and as spontaneously earthy as you please, was putting on a souped-up version of the conversational show he'd staged for the local rag. "You can print this!" Brown exclaimed, and launched into a tale of the marijuana growing tall in the boondocks of the Soviet Union.

The Drifter rides again.

"You'll never hear of me playing in an all-black club."
EXUMA—The Obeahman

BY J. DAVIS

The crescent city is a musical brew. So are a lot of other melting-pot cities that stir and blend to the influence of a menagerie of musicians in any one place at any one time. Nassau, Toronto, Kingston, Amsterdam, London, Paris, each of these is a music city in its own right. Being in any one of them at the right time can give you a taste of not only the native sounds but also a galumaufry of beats and rhythms of other cultures. Ah, but how often we can be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and time, she passes us by whispering, "Boy, you missed it," leaving us thirsty for a taste of this music or that. (I, for one, should have been in Nassau for the year-end Junkanoo Mardi Gras celebration.)

This time of year, no sweat. New Orleans is what's happening. If you are already dancing to the Mardi Gras beat and your feet itch when you cross the street, perhaps we would all do well to stick around, especially if we want a taste of this music or that. (One, for one, should have been in New Orleans for the year-end Junkanoo Mardi Gras celebration.)

"Boy, you missed it," leaving us thirsty for a taste of this music or that. (1, for one, should have been in New Orleans for the year-end Junkanoo Mardi Gras celebration.)

Having stopped here between gigs in New York, Toronto, San Diego, and other points east and west, Exuma now plans to take in a bit more of our "sweet southern comfort." The alignment of his Bahamian second-line beat with our traditional second-line rhythms of Mardi Gras explains his marriage to the New Orleans beat. Says Exuma, "New Orleans is the most receptive place in the world to the artist, this music spirit that flies around in the air all the time waiting to be reborn and reborn."

Together with Josiah (Teddy-The Junkanoo King-Kinlock, timbares, syndrums, and pans), in charge of the rhythm section and his righthand man of percussionist ambidexterity, Exuma and his group provide audiences with a treat. An Afro-Carribean folk funk (rock influenced) calypso used as a storytelling vehicle, Exuma's music is highly (I say highly) percussional in orientation. In a review of Exuma's Bahamian musical "Junkanoo Drums," Robert Palmer, music critic of the New York Times, notes that "the production's message is summed up in the song 'Soul People, Get Back to the Drum.'" Palmer characterizes his work as "reminiscent of reggae in that he shouts his message in a gospel or soul style, recalling Toots Hibbert of the Maytals. But reggae moves to a relative slow and sensuous rhythm, while the Bahamian junkanoo beat is much faster, more like the street samba of Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, it is simpler than most African-derived drumming in terms of overt and implied polyrhythms."

Singer, songwriter, guitarist, foot stomper extraordinaire, Exuma compliments his presentation with percussional instrumentation including set-drums, chimes, cowbells, ankle bells, timbales, wood blocks, junk bells, congas, gourds, clackers, junkanoo drums (goat skin stretched over kegs and heated over a fire to tone), and always the Sacred Foot Drum. These along with the mouth harp, whistles, and larger number featuring keyboard, sax trumpet, and ariola (Gunga Din) bugles, place the people with happy feet in an atmosphere of total movement. Recently, at Tipitina's, Exuma stepped in to play with Joyride. The effect was summed up for me when a woman dancer said to her partner, "Gus, just be quiet and dance."

Exuma gigs have often had a Joyride backing, particularly at The Old Absinthe Bar. In the short time his junkanoo beat has been here, in addition to bassman George Porter, Jr., Ricky Sebastien (drums), and Bruce (Weazel) McDonald (leadwork), Exuma's stage has been shared with many other superlative performers of the city. Keyboardist
EXUMA—
Mardi Gras To
The Second Power

BY SEVERINE

The scene is the Old Absinthe Bar on Bourbon Street last November. It is three in the morning and Exuma is ending his second set of the night with his song “Africa.” He roars like a lion, cries like a hyena, finally as he exhorts the audience to “listen to the drums,” he puts his guitar down, jumps off stage and rushes through the crowd, blowing a whistle and hitting cowbells together, his red satin cape flowing behind him, shaking the feathers on his wide straw hat.

The crowd goes wild, jumping and dancing with him. Josiah, “The Junkanoo King” leaves his timbales to join him with more cowbells. The rest of the band continues driving the hard beat up on the stage. Exuma will keep the frenzy going, pausing for a few beats only to start with renewed force till he finally walks off, promising to return shortly for another set.

Exuma was born on Tea Bay, Cat Island in the Bahamas but grew up in Nassau, the capital, a place made famous by pirates who came for fresh water and to hide their gold. He took his name from Exuma Island, one of the outer islands of the Bahamas. Imagining growing up on Canaan Lane, in the heart of Nassau, on a street maybe eight feet wide, lined with small wooden houses, most without electricity, right without television, all without television. Right around the corner is Dog Flea Alley, a street so small, it seems only dog fleas can live there. Women fetch water from the fountain in the middle of the road and cook on open fires outside or over kerosene stoves.

If you want to catch some of these numbers, The Old Absinthe Bar in February (17-21) and in March (11-14, 18-21) would be the right place at the right time to do so. Other gigs are in the works for the Mardi Gras season. Undistributed, Exuma’s albums can be had at performances, and you never know, in those post-Mardi Gras days, this high energy Obeahman mixture might be just what the doctor ordered to counteract those excitement withdrawals.

David Torkanowsky, bass guitarist Bill (Hutch) Hutchinson and Dave Watson, lead guitarist Victor Sirker, along with such percussionists as Earl Gordon, Alfred Uganda Roberts, Jacob Watson, and Subabah, have all joined in the excitement withdrawals. A signing with Buddah record label, Innagua Records, out of New York. This latest release features such numbers, Exuma has seven albums out.

His first two releases, Exuma, and Exuma II, on the Mercury label are both rare discs now and this writer for one would pay the price for either of those. A signing with Buddah was followed by four additional albums, Do Wah Nanny, Snake, Reincarnation, and then Life. Afterwards, being pressured too much into doing other people's songs, Exuma broke with Buddah and, in 1977, released his seventh album, Penny Sausage, on his own label, Innagua Records, out of New York. This latest release features such songs as “Africa,” “Rasta,” “Pretty Woman,” “Armageddon,” “Soul Conga Line,” the New Orleans number “Southern Comfort,” and others.

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PLAYMATE'S body on the ground with pieces of broken glass to create an effi­gy. They sing: “Moonshine baby, Lovely Lady”...always clapping, always singing. Sometimes during the day, they amuse themselves shaking tin cans full of rocks of “shack-shacks.” (Those same big dried beans we see at the Jazz Fest)

They are also the church people in Nassau, who come to preach by the fountain, singing and jumping up and down, beating on tambourines. And the house Exuma grows up in with his mother is shared by Ma’ Gurdie, the old woman who dances so well. “When I sing, I can still see Ma’ Gurdie beautiful moves” says Exuma.

And Nezzie, who is near sixty years old, but to this day still dances and can be seen coming down the road, one pantleg rolled up, with his goat-skin drummers, jumping, spinning, rolling on the ground, an Island Boijingles. And then all year round there are people practicing for Junkanoo, being chased off by the Police because they are too loud.

Junkanoo is the great celebration on Boxing Day (December 26), and again on New Year’s Day, when bands like the Valley Boys or the Saxons come down on the city, rushing through the streets, each band made up of forty to a hundred musicians with goat-skin drums, whistles, bugles, cowbells, trying to drown each other out, and competing for a grand prize. Junkanoo starts around one in the morning and goes on all night till the musicians, exhausted, remove their papier-mache masks and wild costumes, satisfied that they have welcomed the New Year in proper fashion. It is during those Mardi Gras-Junkanoo festivals that Exuma saw Josh Kaling Ting blowing his bugle up and down Bay Street. “He blew his bugle for years and years in the Junkanoo line; he was the meanest bugler ever. A true Junkanoo King.”

On Saturdays, Exuma and his friends sell the fish they have caught...
to buy tickets to the movies. There they are exposed to the American Blues Singers: the music of Sam Cooke and Fats Domino, which they imitate.

Music is everywhere in Nassau, but Exuma wants to be an architect, and he arrives in New York, seventeen years old, where he promptly runs out of money. Some friends give him an old guitar, he knows three or four chords, and he starts practicing some old Bahamian calypsos. He loves the guitar and he is so homesick for Nassau. It is cold in New York and he longs for the games, the dancing. So Exuma starts writing poetry, poetry about Ma' Gurdie and the ring play and Junkanoo. Then the poems become songs like “Brown Girl in the Ring” and “Rushing Through the Crowd” and other now famous Exuma tunes. Exuma also has friends from Nassau in Brooklyn and they take him to Greenwich Village to play in hootenannies and cafes. They have maracas, a goat-skin drum and they take turns singing: blues, ballads and calypsos.

By 1966, Exuma decides to concentrate on writing and also starts painting. He now channels his energy into the “Obeahman,” because he wants to share another side of his culture, something that “nobody else is talking about back home.” Of the Obeahman he says: “I grew up as a roots person, someone knowing about the bush and the herbs and the spiritual realm. It was inbred into all of us. Just like for people growing up in the lowlands of the Delta Country or places in Africa.”

The traditional Obeahman is the Bahamian equivalent to the Jamaican bush-doctor or the Haitian Hougaman. A gatherer of herbs from the bushes for ointments and teas, he brings the love vine, the gale wind bush, the bread fruit leaf. Dillseed, chamomile, and bush or strong bark. The Obeah robes are worn for the various ceremonies performed. Now Exuma sees himself as the Obeahman of music. The music is the ceremony, the medicinal compound prepared and performed before the gathering. “I try to be a story-teller, a musical doctor, one who brings musical vibrations from the universal spiritual plane through my guitar strings and my voice. I want to bring some good energy to the people. My whole first album came to me in a dream.”

In the same spiritual vein, in 1977 Exuma wrote and directed a musical named “Junkanoo Drums,” including a dozen of his tunes which he wove around a story as told by a Grand Deacon. It was performed in New York, in Damrosch Park in Lincoln Center, and got him rave reviews. Quint Davis tracked him down by calling the Bahamian Embassy. So in the spring of ’78 Exuma came down to New Orleans to perform at the Jazz and Heritage Festival. Three Jazz Fests and many gigs later, Exuma says of New Orleans: “I found New Orleans to be a very cultural place where if you bring love to the people they will give you the necessary energy to bring even more.” For the future, Exuma promises more of his unique music which he qualifies as universal. He says: “On my albums you can find rock, reggae, junkanoo.” He agrees that it can be a challenge to musicians who play with him, but that in fact, his music is very simple. “Some try to make it very complex but they only need to plug in and play it as it is. I am a writer, a poet, a romanticist, a thinker, a philosopher, and an artist. I write what I am and what I see and according to what spirit touches me at the moment.”

Exuma is in fact an extraordinarily versatile music and lyrics writer. He offers us true dance music that guarantees to bring you to your feet in “Juju Love” or “Bam-Bam,” a glimpse of his spiritual world in “Joshua” and “Andros is Atlantis Rising” as well as his own style of up-tempo reggae with tongue-in-cheek comments as in “Exuma goes to Hollywood,” “Superstar,” “Fame,” and “Punk Rocking.” So whether you just want to dream of islands in the sun or madly dance the night away, Exuma remains the Obeahman, and his spirit will surely touch us all.
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Puzzle

Toussaint Teaser

BY BUNNY MATTHEWS

POP QUIZ AND IT AIN'T EASY! APPROXIMATELY 14 YEARS AGO, ALLEN TOUSSAINT PRODUCED THE 3 + 5'S FROM WHENCE THE ILLUSTRATED LINES BELOW ORIGINATE. NAME THE TITLES & ARTISTS.

A. "I GET MY FOOD FROM A CRAWFISH HOLE..."

B. "GOING TO LOOK FOR A NEW CAR LIKE THAT RAVEN I SAW..."

C. "HE MAMACITA! LET ME HAVE A DOZEN OF THOSE HOT TAMALEs!"

SEND YOUR ENTRY TO WAVELENGTH BOX 19667 NOLA 70115

A. 
B. 
C. 

YOUR NAME ___________________ TELEPHONE NO. ___________

22 WAVELENGTH / FEBRUARY 1981
Rhythm & Blues

Lonnie Brooks
By Any Other Name

BY HAMMOND SCOTT

One of Louisiana’s great musical prodigal sons will soon be returning to the New Orleans area to make another of his infrequent “homecomings.” Yet most of Lonnie Brooks’ old Louisiana fans would not recognize his new identity since he departed the state, in 1959, for greener pastures.

It seems Brooks has had several careers to go along with his several names. However, two things have remained constant in this man’s musical life; his clean, powerful, lusty and vibrant singing plus the strong Louisiana influence in Mr. Brooks’ guitar work. Yet, Brooks’ varied careers have shaped him into a unique artist with a commercial blend of modern rhythm and blues underpinned with funky swamp blues stylings. It is this combination of styles which recently lead Downbeat Magazine to proclaim that “Lonnie Brooks has the greatest commercial crossover potential of any blues artist to emerge in recent years.” The Washington Post heralded Lonnie “the most exciting new talent in blues today.”

Yet, the word “new” puts a smile on Brooks’ face, knowing his career began in the mid-1950s, playing guitar for Clifton Chenier’s zydeco blues band based in Lafayette. Brooks’ days with Chenier go back to the time when Lonnie was still known as the hot, young Lee Baker, Jr. It was only natural that he would come under the wing of Clifton since he was born, in 1933, in Duhuissont, Louisiana mere stone’s throw from Lafayette. It was in Louisiana that the young Lee Baker first came under the spell of swamp blues legend Lightning Slim, whose influence is still heard in Brooks’ guitar work. A short time later Lonnie was exposed to “his granddaddy in blues guitar,” the man who made him “know he had to play,” Gatemouth Brown.

After being knocked out by Gatemouth’s showmanship, Lonnie (Lee Baker) went out on his own making his first record in 1955 for the tiny Goldband label out of Lake Charles. His first record, “Family Rules” was an immediate regional hit, starting him on his new career as “Guitar Junior,” young Louisiana rock ‘n’ roll star. As Guitar Junior he soon had another hit on Goldband Records titled “the Crawl” (since re-recorded by the Fabulous Thunderbirds). In time, Goldband Records proved too small to advance Guitar Junior’s career any further. So, in 1959, he took off with the late Sam Cooke as the guitarist with Cooke’s touring band, crisscrossing the South.

By the early 1960’s, Guitar Junior settled in Chicago where there were already two Guitar Juniors (who both happened to be named Luther Johnson Jr.). So, “Lonnie Brooks” became our man’s new stage identity. During the 1960’s, Lonnie recorded 45’s for Mercury, which never really hit, but Lonnie’s newly formed band was an instant success, spicing his Louisiana rock ‘n’ roll with a taste of soul and hard Chicago blues. Under his new identity Lonnie pumped out blues and soul 45’s for Chess, USA, Palos, Chirrup and Midas and established another career as an in-demand session guitarist for dozens of local and national records during the 1960’s and early 1970’s.

Lonnie Brooks got what seemed like a big break in 1969 and recorded his first record album for Capitol Records, but once again (just to add
Rare Records

The Real Stuff Captured in Wax

BY ALMOST SLIM

Jock-A-Mo
Sugar Boy
Checker 787

For some reason this was left off the Mardi Gras in New Orleans album, and I'll be damned if I know why. This is an old Indian song still chanted in forms during Carnival. Sugar Boy was the first to wax it, and he captures a flavor of Mardi Gras that only Fess, and the Hawkettes, could attempt to capture.

This raucous jam was cut at Cosimos studio in 1954: the personnel was Snooks Eaglan on the guitar, Big Boy Miles on trombone, Alfred Bernard and David Lastie on sax, Frank Fields on bass, and Eric Warner on drums.

Of course, the Dixi-Kups did it in 1963 and called it "Iko-Iko," but that version is somewhat mild when one compares it to Sugar Boy's stormin' second-line banter.

You don't hear this much anymore at Carnival Time but the Wagusi Warriors feature it in their parade Mardi Gras day! You can find this on Sugar Boy's album from the Chess Blues Masters Series.

Continued from page 19

Again, to the confusion) in this record, he was using the name "Guitar Junior." Unfortunately, a management dispute killed the record almost as soon as it was released.

Finally in 1978, Lonnie Brooks became part of Chicago's Alligator Records' roster of blues artists. Four cuts of Brooks' were included in Alligator's three-volume Chicago Blues Anthology released that same year. This brought Lonnie instant, wide critical acclaim and a whole new album. The record album cemented his superlative songwriting and arranging skills as well as his obvious commercial crossover potential.

The Alligator album titled Bayou Lightning features a strong mixture of modern soul, funk, Louisiana swamp blues and Chicago blues into well-synthesized, clever compositions. It truly represents Brooks' best recorded work to date.

The success of the Bayou Lightning album has lead to more European tours, and appearance on the Hee Haw TV show with Roy Clark, and most recently his appearance as guitarist on Lou Rawls' latest album. Oddly, Lonnie is listed as Lee Baker, Jr., on the album credits of the Rawls record--confusion still reigns!! One thing is for sure, though, there will not likely be any more confusion about who Lonnie Brooks is, once the public hears him.

A new album called Turn on the Night is due for release by Alligator this month. According to Brooks its flavor will be more noticeably New Orleans. Forthcoming area appearances include Chief's in Baton Rouge February 12 and Tipitina's on February 14.

Lonnie Brooks is at the bottom of the top and moving up. His special brand of "bayou lightning" will be crackling with energy for a long time to come.
The Sheiks at the Second Decade

BY KEITH TWITCHELL

In the world of music, ten years is the better part of eternity. Ten years ago Jim Morrison was alive. The Beatles were freshly separated. Plans for the second jazz festival were being struggled with. Disco was still a gleam in some mad producer's eye.

In St. Louis ten years ago, a drummer named Rob Sanders was researching a college paper on St. Louis regional music. He went to hear one of two gospel choirs being directed by a sixteen-year-old pianist named Michael O'Hara. A week later, Sanders talked O'Hara into forming a rock band; they picked up guitarist Leslie Martin through a friend and lured bassist Nick Ferber away from another act. After some experimenting, they settled on calling themselves the Sheiks, derived from two old St. Louis bands, the Beat Street Sheiks and the Mississippi Sheiks. (“Sheik” was a 1920's term comparable to “stud” today.)

Ten years later, the same four Sheiks are still together, living in New Orleans now but playing their same brand of music. Few bands last that long, fewer retain their creative intensity; but judging by the response they get around here, the Sheiks are stronger and fresher than ever. They have watched intently while the world has agonized through its changes and have been equally intent upon remaining steadfastly honest about the music they play. They have refused to tag along with the various trends that happened by, and have watched other bands die with the deaths of the trends they followed. The Sheiks play solid, joyous rock, and they are alive and kicking hard.

High energy output is an important reason why the Sheiks continue to attract followers. Looking at O'Hara, who as the vocalist, up-front man, performs at the highest pitch, one wonders how anyone could reach such heights time and time again. “I draw a lot of energy from the audience,” responds Michael, “It makes me exceed my physical limits every night.” It becomes like training, comments Sanders: “You build up a certain amount of endurance, like an athlete, and if you didn’t put out that much energy on stage, it would seem weird.”

In sum, you do or die with your audience, and if that means cultivating new listeners, so be it. Audience response was one of the factors behind the band's recent move to New Orleans. “We've been playing here for about six years,” bassist Nick points out, “and our audience here has stuck with us through the various fads.” Not that the Sheiks haven't established and re-established themselves elsewhere—St. Louis and Chicago are especially strong for them—but New Orleans is special.

O'Hara believes the New Orleans audience is less inhibited—“They let you know when you're not hitting it off”—but they are more receptive to good music and to attempts at innovation. The music tradition here is a stimulation for the band, and they in turn add a powerful dimension to the local music scene. The Sheiks play exclusively original numbers in the shows, frequently adding new tunes to the repertoire as well, which keeps the band fresh and its audiences coming back.

The bulk of the songwriting is done by O'Hara. Sexual attraction, the gropings between two people are a
frequent theme. "I'm not really good at fantasizing," he says, "I like to write about situations I've been in...I like to talk about human beings."

Lyrics aren't the stars of the show, though; like the rowers in a two-man shell, they are equal partners with the music in the final success. As before, O'Hara disclaims anything exotic, sees no particular influences, but his gospel background can't be overlooked. The band members grew up around the St. Louis blues tradition, but the rock music they play today is diversified beyond the impact of any particular style. Combining driving rock rhythms with silky, weaving instrumentation, and enhanced by a talent for showmanship, the Sheiks put on a highly satisfying musical show.

O'Hara is the most visible Sheik in performance, the scarf around his head flying like a pennant in a gale, his body always in graceful and often sexual motion. The audience reaches out for him; his vocal artistry and his energy clearly lead the band. But the act is well-varied, eminently listenable without being pop, and impossible to sit still to. Martin's colorful reaching to exciting guitar work splays across the front of the sound, while the rhythm section puts out a polished but powerful rock beat and O'Hara's keyboards add punctuation. The interplay, the controlled, refined looseness that is part of the Sheik's distinctive sound has to come from the long experience of working together.

Experience came with playing countless nightclubs. Dances. Opening up for other acts. The band toured as Chuck Berry's back-up band for a while, and Sanders remembers that learning experience: there were no rehearsals, and Berry played no set shows; the band often found out what was coming next when Chuck told the crowd. Coping with this involved a lot of "faking it," as Rob puts it, forcing the band to expand its improvisational skills. This allows them a broader framework on stage without detracting from the flowing precision that is the mark of professionalism.

If you haven't heard them by now, at the end of their first decade, don't wait 'til the end of their second to make up for it. Catch them at Ole Man River's or Jimmy's.
Country

A Girl Named Tim
And Her Band of Gold

BY NANCY WELDON

When Timothy Louise Williams was a little girl in Natchez, Mississippi, she was so shy about performing she used to mouth the words while the other kids sang in school choir productions.

“When I was a little kid, I didn’t even think I could sing. I never even liked to sing in the choir ‘cause everybody’d stare at me… I thought the reason they looked at me was ‘cause it sounded so bad, so I just mouthed it.”

That one-time reluctant performer has been fronting her own country-western group, “Tim Williams and her Band of Gold” for about four years here in New Orleans. At press time, she was working on material for an album, and regrouping the band. Right around Christmas, she lost her bass player, Ronnie Pilgrim, to a day job promotion that required him to be on call. (“You can’t play music with a beeper.”) About that same time, her drummer, Terry Kirn, decided to go back to rock ‘n’ roll.

As for herself, Tim has played everything from gay bars to VFW parties. Her music is a mixture of friends’ originals, classic country, and top-40 tunes. On stage, playing rhythm guitar and singing, she is a strong presence. Off stage, she seems not quite so at ease, but perfectly willing to talk about whatever comes up.

Sitting in her very own royal blue director’s chair (embroidered with “Tim” in white on the back—a gift) in the suburban apartment she shares with a roommate, two spaniels, and about nine birds, she agreeably reminisces on request.

First, the name, Timothy.

That came from a strong-minded mother.

“That was just it… she wasn’t expecting a boy or anything like that, she just liked the name, and said that was it.”

Growing up in picturesque (and social-conscious) Natchez was “wonderful,” although, “There’s a real class thing in Natchez, oh yeah. There’s the antebellum, old, established families, then there’s the plant workers, and you’re one of the two.”

She was one of the former, with a four-story house facing the bluff, and established family ties.

So how did a girl from the right side of the Mississippi tracks end up singing and playing guitar in Bourbon Street honky-tanks?

It was a teen-aged Tim who started learning guitar, playing Judy Collins and Joan Baez songs, to keep up with her big brother Clifford—now a doctor. “He had taught himself to play guitar, so I couldn’t let him get ahead of me.”

She also invested in a Mel Ray guitar book, and that’s about as formal as her musical training got.

The switch from folk to country came later, after she settled in New Orleans about five years ago, and started playing French Quarter bars, most of which were then offering folk music.

“I really didn’t care for country before then, because I had just grown up with it. My father was real big into it. All I had heard was Hank Snow and Red Foley, and that’s what I thought country was.”

But later, “I started listening to the lyrics of a lot of stuff, and really liked it, so I just kind of, you know, left the twang out and changed it,” and it worked.

It worked so well that she gave up the day job at Howard, Weil, Labouisse, Friedricks, Inc. accounting department that she had moved to town to take.

“We started playing the bars, and it just seemed like we started getting more and more offers, to where it was just killing me to get up in the morning after being out ‘til three and four o’clock at night playing. I decided I had to make a decision and I felt like I’d go ahead and give it a try.”

Since then, it’s been mostly music—except for a few part-time day jobs as bookkeeper for friends’ businesses. Her accounting background also helped in running the band.

“Just being the leader of anything draws you into so many people’s personal problems,” she says. “But everything to me has got to be very organized. Everybody’s up to date. At the end of every month, they get a calendar for the next month, with all the dates on it, how they should dress, the exact amount of money they’re going to make.”

She even once hired a girl roadie to set up equipment, so the rest of the guys could just “walk up there, tune up, and start playing.”

Being a woman in charge of an all-male group hasn’t caused any special
problems, although she says from hearing the group talk about other bands, she could understand how it might.

She and her male Band of Gold played at Tipitina's country music women's night last year. It was one of a series of “women's” music events, designed to focus on female artists, which she says is a good idea.

"I think it's healthy, because you see mostly women singers are featured and told: 'Well, just look pretty and smile and sing a few songs... and then get off stage.'" That's just the way it's been—I've seen women musicians put up with that, because I guess they feel like that's the way it has to be. But lately you can see that there's a surge of female vocalists coming out, especially country, and they're holding their own."

So how come more women haven't been out there all along?

"All I can think of is just, it's the way it's always been. In a way, playing guitar is kind of a professional type thing, and maybe a lot of women had more as far as family, getting married, that type of thing, and just didn't see where they would have time to sit around and play guitar."

"Most guys, when they've taken guitar lessons, don't think of it as a hobby. They've got all these big visions of doing it for a living, and I don't think women do."

Her gigs at Tipitina's and other bars do draw lots of women listeners, including female couples who slow-dance along with the rest.

"We have a heavy gay following for sure," she says.

Tim is gay herself, and says she doesn't think that it's hurt her band's bookings, even in the macho world of country music clubs. Most of the time, it just doesn't come up.

"I'm sure if I just walked in there decked out like Henry Fonda or something like that, they would be a little upset," she laughs, "...but it's just something that shouldn't matter."

And she says the band members, who've been mostly family men, don't seem to care one way or another about the sexual preferences of their customers.

At times, they would rather play gay bars (men's or women's), because they usually pay better. "In that respect, the guys prefer playing over there, because they hate playing to these rednecks. You get these people with no teeth; they're the ones that are drunk, and want to come up there and slobber all over ya..."

She has tried to play as many different kinds of places as possible, hoping for maximum exposure. That exposure is important to her.

Looking at a long-term career, Tim would like to go on the road for a while. So far, she has three singles framed and hanging on the wall above her living room couch. That's about as far as the 45's have gone, although WSHO radio did give one some airplay.

"When you're just a house band, or a band coming up, you don't have very much respect. You're just like a loud jukebox. You can have nights where you get 'em all, and you think, 'Well, this is the pits, why am I doing this?...' But then there'll be another night when everyone is really responsive, and then, that's why you do it. I would think most of the time you have your bad nights more that your good, but the whole deal is, the good when it is good, it's that good, and that makes up for all the bad."
Pud Brown
Playing It By Ear

BY RHODES SPEDALE

Besides Pete Fountain, New Orleans currently has another resident reedman, who was the forerunner of the saxophone styles of Boots Randolph and Illinois Jacquet, but has also appeared with Lawrence Welk. These musical divergences come from Albert "Pud" Brown, currently appearing with his own group weekly at You Boutique and with the "One Mo' Time" show. Like jazz itself, Pud began in the church, went up the river to Chicago, back to New Orleans, to the West Coast, and then all over.

"I started playing at the age of four in Wilmington, Delaware, with my father's family band, Reverend Brown's Family Band. We played in churches, and he advertised 'Their presence guarantees the success of any affair--classical programs, snappy dance music.' I was the jazzman of the group at age four, and I could read music before I could read writing. I was playing soprano saxophone and learned to play all the reed instruments. We toured the United States for twelve years, working in circuses fourteen hours a day. Then we went to Florida where there was a big land boom going on, and our family band played there in the lots where they could see them (because many of the lots were under water).

"When we got to Shreveport my sister got married there and that broke up the family band. I played with the local jazz bands and then went on the road with road shows. I got to jam with all the great musicians in those days, such as Sidney Arondin and Chu Berry; I found there was a lot of jazz in Oklahoma City. Kansas City had more jazz going on than anyplace I ever saw; at one time, every building in the whole street for miles and miles was just jazz. Count Basie's band was working at the Reno Club and I used to play with the band. They made $1.50 a night. I got to know Peck Kelly and I'd say he was comparable to Bob Zurke; Zurke was doing what Kelly did even better than him. He played two hands full of piano just all going in every direction at once.

"In New Orleans in 1939 I was working for two dollars a day and I had to disappear when the union fired me. I went to Chicago and worked there with a hotel band for five years. I worked with Lawrence Welk and he got mad at me because I wouldn't join his band. He gave me a bass saxophone, and I took it back and that was the end of me and Welk. So I came back to Louisiana and opened up a motorcycle shop for five years. Then I worked for Nappy Lamare and Ray Bauduc, and then Jack Teagarden hooked up with me, along with his brother Charlie, and Jess Stacy. After a while I gave Jack the job and left and went elsewhere."

Pud Brown was actually the source of the honking tenor saxophone style of Illinois Jacquet. Pud had a hit recording on "Johnson Rag" where his gutteral tenor saxophone would be punctuated by sustained notes and piercing squalls at the upper range of the instrument. (The record was a hit for Nappy Lamare, with whom Pud was appearing, and then he recorded it again with Pete Daily. Jerry Gray
saw that the record was successful and copied the Daily recording note for note. This was a style later capitalized upon by Jacquet. In 1939 Pud Brown was warming up and, as he tells it, "I started hitting the high notes and the harmonic notes on the saxophone, and this fellow came in and asked me how to do it. I showed him. The fellow that I taught was Illinois Jacquet and he made a million dollars doing it on 'Flying Home'."

While on the West Coast, Pud led a band both on clarinet and cornet for several years. "But," he says, "I got tired of listening to myself play," and went back to the antique business in Shreveport. From there he got the call to come down and play for Jimmy Ile, and was for many months a star of "Daytime Dixieland," a local art form whose following emulates that of soap operas. He recorded an album with them and then a heart attack kept Pud out of circulation for a few months.

During his "recuperation," Pud worked the Sacramento Jazz Festival in May 1977 with five different aggregations including such stellar jazz-men as Peanuts Hucko, Eddie Miller, Pete Daily, Yank Lawon, John Guaneri, Johnny Mince, Nick Fatool, Bob Haggart, and Billy Butterfield. The local press described Pud as a "show stealer" in that company.

Although Pud is playing a lot of clarinet now, he also brings out the tenor saxophone occasionally. When he does, you're in for a treat on numbers like "Memories of You" and "Take the A Train."

This well-travelled jazzman has a lot of music to purvey. He's well worth hearing, for his solos are not at all like those normally heard on Bourbon street. He has substance and a certain amount of lyricism to his conceptions. His style is readily identifiable. Formerly known for a "gutter" sound on clarinet, he has improved his tone considerably. "I have been listening to Pete Fountain," he says. As for the future, he says, "I've got some inventions of my own, but as far as music goes, I'm just going to go on like I've been doing for years and years and play it by ear."

Pud's most recent recording is with Les Muscatt's group. His lower register clarinet work steals the album; but, then, Pud is a scene stealer from way back.
Beat Crazy
Joe Jackson Band
A&M SP-4837

When A&M Records decided they were going into the New Wave biz, they did it armed with a roster of interesting artists and a well-prepared promotion department. Most of the bands featured on the label's introductory sampler were later given a cute, instantly collectable format for their individual album releases. (Jackson's first two were made c. ute, instantly collectable format for their individual album releases. Jackson's first two were made available respectively as two ten-inch records and five seven-inch records; both a real pain to enjoy with all the record flipping necessary.) For his third release, A&M either figured out that gimmicks don't sell new wave anymore or that Jackson's music does very well on its own merit. Both premises are true.

Jackson has always been interested in reggae, and, as in the case of the Clash and other English bands, its influence is now showing up in his music. As a clue of things to come, a couple of months ago he put out a cover version of Jimmy Cliff's classic "The Harder They Come." On that record as well as on Beat Crazy, Jackson proves himself perfectly comfortable working within the idiom. The opening title cut features the snaky bass lines, chunky guitars and rock-steady drums that surface throughout the lp as counterpoints to the slower songs' instrumentation. There is a soundtrack-like quality to Beat Crazy, probably due in part to its shifting moods and the way songs segue into one another.

The album addresses a wide variety of subject matter ranging from racism to female equality. He gets away making sometimes coy and oversimplified statements about complex problems only because he does so with such wide-eyed innocence. Who else could state in liner notes that "This album represents a desperate attempt to make some sense of rock and roll" without evoking a cynical chuckle from most readers? Lyrically, "One to One" and "Battleground" stand out, the latter being a terse Patti Smith-type piece dedicated to rasta poet Linton Kwesi Johnson.

Musically, Beat Crazy is concise and well performed. Effects are used sparingly and are placed nicely at strategic points throughout. "Mad At You" might be the album's best cut, a hypnotic little ditty not unlike some of the B-52's better dance music. Things close out with "Fit," a moralizing ballad that eventually collapses under the weight of its own seriousness.

All in all, Beat Crazy is well worth the modest financial investment necessary to take it home for your personal enjoyment. It might not solve your problems but it'll give you something to dance to while you're trying to figure them out.

—Steve Graves

Arc of a Diver
Steve Winwood
Island 9576

Steve Winwood's current wanderings in the land of rock find him camped out near the border with fusion jazz. This is a perfectly fine and logical place for someone who's been among the leaders of progressive rock to be—I've always heard similarities to jazz in progressive—but Winwood doesn't give the impression that he's clear on what he's doing there.

While the new album, Arc of a Diver, is certainly a pleasant enough piece of vinyl to listen to, it rarely climbs far enough in through the ears to touch anything deep inside. Winwood's jazzy rock always has been on the softer side of the tracks, and though the music here usually stays above the level of pop, no new ground is broken, no extremes are pushed farther back. Winwood is hanging out in this particular territory, but he's not exploring it much.

Credit for production and performance is assigned solely to Winwood, and the smooth competence of both speaks for his talents and experience. But not much of the music is overly distinctive—there's only one guitar section with any real grit; rhythms, while not dull, rarely excite. Large quantities of synthesizer play, in both orchestral and lead roles, don't add a proportionate flair to the final effect. Generally, the vocals seem to be more important. This is a problem, for Winwood's voice is limited in both range and expression. Considerable production work is evident on most of the vocals, but the results tend not to justify the effort. Too often he ends up sounding like Peter Gabriel in an eight-ounce tin can.

The words behind the singing seem to characterize Winwood's confusion. Most verses of most songs are repeated at least twice, without making their meanings any clearer. While fairly inventive, the lyrics are not especially poetic and often appear to question themselves. Ponder this verse from the title track:

Lean streaky music spawned in the streets
I hear it but with you I had to go 'Cause my rock 'n' roll is putting on weight
And the beat it goes on

Where is he and/or his music going here? Does he know, can he control it? I'm not convinced.

I have a lot of records that I only listen to one side of, and this could become one. On the first side only "Arc of a Dancer" and "Slowdown Sundown," a slower ballad, are of much interest. Side two might be
worth the price of the album, though. "Spanish Dance" is about the physical side of music, and the vocals here become part of the instrumentation to good effect. This is followed by "Night Train," a hot fusion number with a simple but driving beat, probably the best tune of the bunch. Closing out the side, "Dust" is a bit of a letdown; its lyrics conjure up real pain but the music does its level best to salve the wound.

Most of what comes to mind in terms of final impression falls into the category of faint praise, and I'm not sure I want to damn the album. I enjoyed Arc of a Dancer, and I think few people would be disappointed with it. But like the diver on the cover poised above the water, I still feel a bit up in the air, still waiting to be pulled in and happily drowned by the music.

—Keith Twitchell

River Music
The Rhythm Devils
Passport PB 9844

At last! The perfect party album—disintegrates conversation left and right! All you get to go by is the dim red lights of their eyes swimming in the darkness. And the sounds—the living, breathing sounds. They say the last thing to go when you die is your hearing. The vibrations say all is vibration, manifested in sound. Universe as hum job.

This is called River Music, the river in this case being a snake that winds through the jungle (on "Steps" it sounds like Flora Purim's intoning "river, river...river,river"). Coppola heard the Grateful Dead's drummers in concert and asked Dead drummer Mickey Hart to supply the jungle sound for "Apocalypse Now." Luckily, almost none of this music is on the movie's soundtrack, which is mostly dialogue (relive the thrill of Martin Sheen's Lucky Strike voice: "Saigon, shit, I'm still in Saigon"). So Hart hooked up with Passport to put out an album of just the missing apocalypse music.

And what music! "Cave" creeps and slithers with moans, gnashing, blowing, dragging sounds—I can't stand it, this is Pure Z. Zombie Stuff!

Scotty Scarrier than even Divine Horsemen-the Voo Doo Gods of Haiti, (Lyrichord LLST 7341)—recommended. Of course, the best bit is "Napalm for Breakfast," the sound of the Cambodian ruin being smothered (Mickey: you shoulda used the entire ten minutes of "Napalm" music from the closing credits sequence). This segues into "Hell's Bells," whose closing dull bass throbs, lower than low, when played at a decent full volume, is enough to fry the staunchest of speakers.

Then again, the Saenger's still standing.

—Zeke Fishhead

Paradise Theatre
Styx
A&M SP 3719

As far as I can tell this is a concept album. The focus is Chicago's old Paradise Theater, a glittering tribute to the late 1920's golden age in America. Built as a monument as much as a building, with visions of immortality, the theater became outmoded and fell into decay, finally being torn down in 1958.

Now this would seem like a concept with grand potential. The cover paintings juxtapose the theater's opening-night glow with its physical senility prior to its destruction, and the song titles lead one to look for further development of this theme. The promise, alas, is unfulfilled.

The border between concept albums and gimmick albums is one that is often overlooked, and Styx seems to have come up on the wrong side. Calling the album sides "Act 1" and "Act 2" and inserting clever references to paradise/The Paradise into the songs does not give this disc the continuity of a true concept piece. The only evidence of the implied theme is in the sense of things changing; passing by, conveyed in a few of the numbers (particularly "The Best of Times"), but mostly the links with the theater and what its history suggests are tangential at best.

Taken on their own, most of the songs are pretty fair power pop; Styx's sound is distinctive, though the band continues to move away from
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the lavish keyboard work which
distinguished its earlier efforts. It is
listenable without being particularly
memorable; opportunities to really
get down on a couple of songs are
passed by, and few of the tunes stand
out from the pack. Enough skill is
exhibited on all fronts to have made this
a fine album, but major achievements
require the taking of risks, and Styx
takes little risk with this offering.

As one who is extremely grateful
for the re-opening of the Saenger and
who is aware of how perilously close
we in New Orleans came to losing our
fine old theater, I guess I looked for a
lot from an album that begins by
recognizing the poignancy of these
extravagant old dinosaurs dying in
our efficiency-oriented society. To
see so little done with the concept is a
disappointment; what exists is paled
by the spectre of what could have
been. —Keith Twitchell

Trombipulation
Parliament
Casablanca NBLP

Will wonders ever cease? Will ter-
rors ever abate? Clinton and com-
pany release funky fungi into the
musical bloodstream, spreading
rhythm-acid-humor, all with a
religious bent. Each new riff, motif,
and symbol finds liberal application
in every record that comes kicking
out of the Clinton stable, new myth
redefining old myth.

Trombipulation is Clinton as
Elephant Man. Sir Nose D'Void-o-
Funk was the villain months ago in
"Entelechy." Now the joys of the
nose are celebrated. In "The Agony
of Defeet" the singer can't contain
himself: breaking up, down, out,
laughing, he sings, "Im'ah take my
shoes off and kick up my heels/Do
some ground work." Sir Nose Jr.
emerges as the new hero.

The words are the usual-unusual
stream of consciousness. Choruses of
singers are overlaid on top of each
other, bits of TV jingles jangling in
and out, along with freaky yammer-
ings that are not so easily defined.
Clinton shows the deft mind of a
media saboteur, reworking the
garbage of electronic culture to God-
For over a year the best kept secret in town

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For over a year the best kept secret in town pool, patio, pinball & one helluva jukebox

knows-what end.
Well, Unka Jam wants us to jam and have fun. It's clear that the giant body of musicians and singers on Trombipulation are having a ball—it's in the groove. Since One Nation, the grooves have been more anchored, more punch to the aquatic soundscape. The occasional fuzzy guitar protrusions and elephantine saxophonics make me wish George C. would trim the verbiage and let the boys and girls stretch, blow, and otherwise wall (I love the outer-space cocktail piano in the album's opener, “Crush It”).

Clinton has quite an empire. It's virtually impossible for a single listener to keep up with the sheer volume of product that Clinton's people keep putting out; the supply is constant and seems endless. As empires go, Clinton's is ultra-fluid. Revolution as fashion, fashion as revolution. George and Bootsy both sport processes on their respective album covers. Revolution as reversal, recycle. The cover of Trombipulation is particularly striking with its pyramids, sunglasses, fur, a trunk-nosed Clinton. I can't get over that lightning flashing across the purple skies. Throw-away thunder fun.

—Zeke Fishhead

Stand In The Fire
Warren Zevon
Asylum SE-519

Technology has finally caught up with the live album. The sound quality of today's concert recordings is so good that audience response between songs is the only tipoff you have that you're not listening to a studio labor of love. In light of these advancements, Stand In the Fire is a very interesting album. It's a little like using satellite television to broadcast the antics of the wild man of Borneo. Warren Zevon is that wild man.

Zevon has always gone against the laid-back grain of Los Angeles, his hometown. While the Eagles make millions peddling peaceful easy pap, L.A.'s bad boy sings the praises of junkies, mercenaries and the most dangerous breed of all, the urban desperado. On his live album record-

REX HARRISON treated his cast to a dozen bottles of champagne there on MY FAIR LADY'S closing night. GARY BUSEY and ROBBIE ROBERTS came in while in town promoting "Carney". ELVIN BISHOP has jammed with Luther Kent & Trick Bag. MICK FLEETWOOD played drums there until he had blisters. JIMMY BUFFET dropped in twice after shows at the Saenger. JOE COCKER jammed with Luther and in the enthusiasm of the dawn called him "The greatest white singer alive."
FOREIGNER'S RICK DERINGER played guitar with the band.
JOSE FELICIANO comes in to listen. So does ALLEN TOUSSAINT. ETTA JAMES plays there—sometimes when she's booked to play—often just to jam. DAVID CLAYTON THOMAS came in to jam after his horn section jammed there for three nights. The entire RAY CHARLES horn section comes in to jam whenever they're in town. One night BUDDY RICH'S band came in after a show at Al Hirt's Club and so did Ray Charles' band—from Baton Rouge. Luther Kent's band sat out—leaving 16 hornplayers on stage.
The word has gotten around the country. The hottest music club in New Orleans is

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By Hank Williams

"On pot whistles. Someone street darken. A light Variations comes on. The coffee enters the hall, and saw."

The trees across the mournful sound like a I'm could cry. or else leave go hang around truck-

possum; wear a wool this college town: Burn short; drive a pick-up all night back and forth between towns whose names I don't know. Contrive somehow to forget I most ever learned.

—Everette Maddox

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ed at the Roxy, he finally injects the madness and chaos into his songs that they've deserved all along. Zevon literally eats his young here, gulping down his songs and spitting 'em back up as raw, stripped-down versions of themselves. Each side of the record also features a previously unreleased song.

The title cut, a new song, opens things up and sets the mood for things to come. It is characteristic of Zevon's swaggering, anthem-like songwriting and serves as a nice lead-in to the next track, the Springsteen co-written "Jeannie Needs A Shooter." "Excitable Boy" which follows gives the first indication of where this album derives much of its energy. Guitarist David Landau, who did little to impress me when backing Zevon at Rosy's a couple of years ago, has evolved into a top-notch musician. His playing throughout is wholesomely ragged but never failing to add the power these songs need to put them over the top. I wouldn't have thought this highly charged introspective song like "Mohammed's Radio," arguably Zevon's finest. It fares well, however, mostly due to the conviction of the author's vocals. "Werewolves of London," Zevon's fluke AM hit, closes the side with a reworking of the original. It starts out lurching and staggering, propelled by Landau's howling guitar as Warren fills you in on subjects as varied as snuff films south of the border and the nature of compadre Jackson Browne's heart ("it's perfect.") Werewolves of L.A. indeed.

If side one flirts with danger, side two courts it in earnest. The material becomes harsher and Zevon's delivery more driven, almost as if this were his last chance to exorcise the demons within. He punctuates the choruses of "Lawyers Guns and Money" with an animalistic howl that is equal parts anger and terror.

The real highlight of the show comes next as the band launches into "Poor Poor Pitiful Me." How can you dislike a song with such lyrics as "...she really worked me over good/she was a credit to her gender..."? As the band pumps into the home stretch, Zevon abandons the song's closing lyrics, calls his road manager out on stage and threatens
Guess what’s coming?

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"...get up and dance...or I'll kill you...and I've got the means!" Whether he has the means to kill or to get you up dancing is not the point; he’s serious about it either way.

Zevon’s willingness to chuck it all for a good time is precisely what makes Stand In The Fire an outstanding rock ‘n’ roll album. He takes his chances, some which fail (closing out the set with an uninspired Bo Diddley rave up), most of which succeed (the rest of the record). The fact that he takes them at all is his biggest success. For me, it’s all worth the gamble.

—Steve Graves

Classifieds

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Family tickets to the Alligator ball (all parts, 2 adults, unlimited kids), $14.00 and .44 postage. Advance only. Suitable for framing. Send check or money order made out to: Your Agency For the Alligator Ball, P.O. Box 19708 New Orleans, La. 70179.

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

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

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

The Turntable: JVC LA-11

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

The Speaker: Sony SSU-45

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The musical Shangri-la, script by Dalt Wonk and music by Charles Neville, will be presented at the Blues Saloon the first three Saturdays in February, and maybe additional days. Check with the club for details. Additions to the show include two new songs by Neville and a revision of the script (Bumpy, played by Percy Ewell, will have a couple of songs this time). Lady BJ, back from her successful stint with One Mo' Time in Washington, D.C. is back, as is Frozine Jo Thomas as Aunt Cecille. The show will again be backed by the Charles Neville House Band.

Ex-Keystone members John Price, Richard Lee Mathis, and Glen "Kul" Sears are at work rehearsing original material for a new band, as yet unnamed. Watch for a fresh new rhythm section once they start gigging.

The Dream Palace will be expanding and making improvements to begin perhaps as early as mid-February. Look for more people-space after the refurbishing.

James Rivers is still packing them in every Friday and Saturday night at Tyler's after a year and a half...

In the "They Said It Wouldn't Be Done" department, Bunny Matthews, WaveLength contributor and former music critic for the Figaro, is now working for the Times-Picayune/States Item, but Bunny will still contribute art and articles to WaveLength.

Muddy Waters will return to New Orleans May 1, performing his many classics and some tunes from his new release, King Bee... Fats Domino will play on the President March 7.

Congratulations to Shepard Samuels and Aaron Neville for a thoroughly enjoyable live radio broadcast, January 19 on WTUL. The wonderfully free format was perfect for Neville's piano and singing. Love to see more of this kind of program...

The New Orleans Symphony has officially taken ownership of the Orpheum Theatre, beginning rehearsals there in late January. An official opening date has not yet been set... February is Black History Month.

KWNO-FM is celebrating with some special programs, including "Frederick Douglass Speaks," Feb. 1 at 6 pm; "International Concert Hall" featuring Duke Ellington, Feb. 2 at 1 pm; Maya Angelou, Feb. 8 at 6 pm; and "A Celebration of the Black Experience in Music and Song," Feb. 22 at 1 pm.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported an upswing in record company profits this past fall and a general rise in the music industry.

Walter Lastie, one of the city's best drummers, died of a heart attack, during the middle of a set in the Quarter December 28th. Known to family and friends as "Popee," his rock solid drumming propelled bands the like of Sugarboy, Jessie Hill, Walter Washington, The Wild Magnolias and of course the Lastie Brothers unit. A benefit was arranged at Tipitina's January 25th. The performers read as a New Orleans R&B hall of fame. Details next month...

D. More bad news. The death of Louisiana country bluesman Robert Pete Williams was recently reported. A regular at every Jazz Festival, Robert literally sang his way out of a life sentence in Angola. He will be sadly missed. A full report upcoming. ■
People Who Died  Words and Music: Jim Carroll (Carroll/Earl McGrath Music)

Teddy sniffing glue, he was 12 years old... fell from the roof on East two nine.
Cathy was 11 when she pulled the plug... 26 reds and a bottle of wine.
Bobby got leukemia, 14 years old... he looked like 65 when he died.
he was a friend of mine.

T-Bird and Georgie let their gimmicks go rotten...
They died of hepatitis in Upper Manhattan.
Sly in Vietnam:
bullet in the head.
Bobby OD’d on Drano on the night that he was wed.

Brian got busted on a narco rap
He beat the rap by ratting on some biker.
He said, “Hey, I know it’s dangerous...
but it sure beats Rikers.”
The next day, he got offed by the very same biker.

Those are people who died, who died
Those are people who died, died
They were all my friends,
They just died.

Mary took a dry dive from her hotel room.
Bobby hung himself from a cell in the Tombs.
Judy jumped in front of a subway train.
And Eddie got slit in the jugular vein.

And Eddie,
I miss you more than all the others,
This song is for you,
my brother!

The most eagerly anticipated new album of the year! Atco Records presents “Catholic Boy,” the debut album from The Jim Carroll Band. Featuring “People Who Died,” “Wicked Gravity,” and fabulous title track, “Catholic Boy.” A copy of Jim Carroll’s book The Basketball Diaries, will be given free to the first 100 customers who purchase this album.
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