Louisiana Recording Studios
What's Available And For How Much

Huey "Piano" Smith Remembers
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We at the FRAMEHOUSE wanted to make a graphic example of how we make framing affordable. So we went and did some do-it-yourself frames (16 X 20 #1 silver frame, reg. glass and mounting) and here is what we discovered when our custom price is compared to their do-it-yourself price.

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WRONG.

FRAMEHOUSE/1130 St. Charles Ave./566-0949/M-S, 10-6
June

Wavelength's Top 20

For those nocturnal creatures who possess a limitless supply of (1) money, (2) summertime energy, and (3) the desire to hear a variety of live music, as well as those who just want to occasionally have a night on the town, here are twenty ideas on curing the summertime blues:

2 TUESDAY—Lady B.J. and Larry Sieberth entertain at Clarity, the new downtown club on Rampart Street that has already become a favorite nightspot for French Quarter regulars.

3 WEDNESDAY—Velvet Underground co-founder and something of a cult hero, John Cale plays at Old Man River's tonight. The Driveways play the opening set.

4 THURSDAY—Bwana Dik and the Headhunters, renegade rockers run amok build a fire under Tipitina's tonight and bring to a slow boil.

5 FRIDAY—This may be a good night to stay up late and catch Ramsey McLean and the Lifers, who have just released the hottest local LP of 1981. They perform at the Faubourg, where most of the cuts were recorded live, tonight starting at about 1.

6 SATURDAY—Shine up your boots and head out for a night of beer drinking with the West Bank weekend cowboys tonight at Bronco's on Romain Street (across from Oakwood Shopping Center). Salt Creek, the area's hardest working country & western band, kicks off at about 9.

7 SUNDAY—Tonight and every Sunday night the Maple Leaf Bar on Oak Street features guitarist John Rankin in one of the most comfortable settings for solo music in town.

10 WEDNESDAY—Willie Tee, longtime local keyboard wizard, holds down Wednesday nights at Tyler's, the Magazine Street jazz and oyster place.

11 THURSDAY—Still on Magazine, tonight check out the Hot Damn Jug Band at Le Bon Temps Roule. It's Ladies Night tonight, so tear the old lady away from the Zenith and show her a good time . . . cheap.

12 FRIDAY—The Lotions are white boys from Texas who play reggae music that sounds like it came off the back streets of Kingston, JA. They perform at Tipitina's tonight. Smoke your rope.

13 SATURDAY—Rocker Joe Ely, who has come into national prominence during this current tour, plays Ole Man River's tonight.

14 SUNDAY—If you're up to another trip across the Huey Long Bridge, it may be well worth it to check out a couple of genuine eccentrics at Ole Man River's: Leon Redbone and Gilbert Hetherwick. Mr. Hetherwick, who is most comfortable around assorted kitchen appliances, plays the solo opening set.

15 MONDAY—Zeke Fishhead breaks a few tunes (and maybe a few ivory keys) in a solo performance tonight at Tipitina's. Rarely does Zeke play solo, and considering the admission price (free), this is a rare bargain.
TUESDAY—If you haven’t heard James Carroll Booker III play piano in the Maple Leaf Bar on Tuesday night you’ve been missing a great early-weeknight treat. He’s there tonight and every Tuesday.

THURSDAY—Music from the islands, blues from the delta, and an increasing preponderance of original material are the ingredients that Remedy has to offer. A good band that is getting better, catch them tonight at Tipitina’s.

SATURDAY—Since the recent renovation at Jimmy’s, the Willow Street music club now boasts one of the largest and most comfortable dance floors in town . . . a near-perfect setting for the Fish Head Music of The Radiators, cranking it up tonight about 11.

MONDAY—Tonight and for the next two nights jazzman Jimmy Spheeris plays at Clarity, 308 N. Rampart St.

TUESDAY—Tonight British new-wavers The Fall visit Jimmy’s. They currently have four albums available in the U.S.

WEDNESDAY—Herbie Hancock and VSOP, a quartet that includes Ron Carter, Tony Williams, and local prodigy Wynton Marsalis, play tonight only at the Saenger Theater, preceded by the Heath Brothers.

FRIDAY—You can watch the late show tonight or even a midnight movie and still be right on time to catch some red-hot salsa at the Dunn Inn, with a band that usually includes a rhythm section of Archer Dunn, Nick Daniels, and longtime Bay Area drummer Bill Vitt. The music starts late and finishes early (in the morning.)

TUESDAY—Great contemporary jazz is schedules for the Saenger Theater: Stephane Grappelli with George Duke and Stanley Clarke.

—Bill Cat
THE WAVELENGTH GUIDE TO RECORDING STUDIOS
BY ALMOST SLIM & BUNNY MATTHEWS

One of the instantly recognizable styles of modern music is the "New Orleans Sound." For decades now record companies and performers have flocked here in search of the sound that is unique to this city.

Perhaps the glory years have slipped away but a steady stream of recordings has been maintained. There are more studios than ever with capabilities to record anything from a birthday present for your mother to a symphony by a 200-piece orchestra.

The first recording studio in New Orleans was the J&M Studio located on Dumaine and North Rampart streets which began operations in 1945. In those days, of course, there was no sophisticated recording equipment. Records were cut directly onto a master on a disc-cutting machine. Hence, if a mistake was made, the entire master had to be discarded.

The man responsible for the first studio, and creating the "New Orleans Sound," was Cosimo Matassa. Thankfully, he is still actively involved in the industry. Matassa had a simple formula for cutting sessions: Set the knobs and dials at one level, turn on the tape machine and let the musicians go. The songs were cut live, no overdubbing, no electronic gimmicks; the song was done right or it was done again.

Remarkably almost every R&B record and rock 'n' roll disc from 1945 until the late sixties came out of the recording studios of Cosimo Matassa. Incredibly, it was the only studio in New Orleans. In the fifties Little Richard, Ray Charles, Fats Domino, Lloyd Price and many more sought the sound that came from the acoustics of the room and the simplicity of the control board.

In 1956 the studio was moved to Governor Nicholls Street. The studio employed a single channel tape recorder. Microphones were shuffled around until the right sound was attained, a technique in which Cosimo takes great pride. The reputation of the studio flourished. Many of the most important record companies began booking sessions: Imperial, Specialty, Chess, Aladdin and Ace were among the largest independent companies to use the studio. What Nashville is to country and western music, New Orleans was to rhythm and blues—and all from one tiny studio in the French Quarter.

Recently, Seasaint Studios, funded by record man Marshall Seahorn and producer Allen Toussaint, has carried the torch for the local studios as far as national recognition is concerned. Paul McCartney, Ramsey Lewis, Albert King, Etta James, and the Staple Singers have employed the Gentilly studio. The studio is among the best in the country technically, but add perhaps one of the best producers in the country and you have an unbeatable combination.

Other studios have entered the business of late. Although not a newcomer to the business, Traci Borges' Knight Studio in Metairie has become popular recently. Ultrasonic has increased its capabilities and signed an important deal with Alligator Records of Chicago.

Studio in the Country, located across the lake in Bogalusa, has recorded an impressive roster of talent. Master Track in Crowley is beginning to gather steam, hoping to recall the glory days of J.D. Miller's Excello achievements. Malaco Studios in Jackson, Mississippi, has attained national recognition, with a string of number one records that goes back to King Floyd's "Groove Me."

Anyone with aspirations to make records for fun or profit can consult this list. Though by no means a complete list (Please consult us if you have any additions: We'll list you next month) this should be in the ball park. Studio rates vary widely in prices and capabilities. You should be able to find a studio to fit your special needs. Consult the studios directly for up-to-date rates.
“When things go right, I can make records all day.”

**SEA-SAINT**

3809 Clematis Avenue, New Orleans (504) 949-8386

TRACKS: 48

OWNER(S): Allen Toussaint, Marshall Sehorn

MANAGER: Roberta Grace

ENGINEER(S): Skip Godwin, Danny Jones

RECORDERS: Multi-track MCI 24x24 with Audio-locator 3, JH 100/24 with Audio-locator

MIXERS: Harrison 32x32, Ampex 4040

OUTBOARD EXTRAS: Lexicon Digital Reverb 2/24, Lexicon Prime Time 93, The Plate, ADNR Vocal Stesser

INSTRUMENTS: Yamaha grand, Pearl drums, Moog, Fender guitar amps

RATES: Studio A—$125 hr., Studio B—$100/hr.

CREDITS: Dorothy Moore, Anita Ward, Fern Kenney, Z.Z. Hill, Jean Knight, King Floyd, Fred McDowell, Batiste Brothers

**PEPPER POT**

900 Seventh Street, Gretna, Louisiana (504) 392-5093

TRACKS: 16

OWNER(S): Buzzy "Beano" Langford

ENGINEER(S): Buzzy "Beano" Langford

RECORDERS: TEAC Tascam

MIXERS: Studiocraft

OUTBOARD EXTRAS: "All the necessary out-board equipment."

INSTRUMENTS: Fender Rhodes, Vox organ, acoustic piano, pedal steel, drums

RATES: 8 Track—$25/hr., 16 Track—$60/hr.

**MASTER-TRAK**

Miller Building, 415 N. Parkerson, Crowley, Louisiana (318) 783-1601

TRACKS: 16 (soon to be 24)

OWNER(S): J.D. Miller

ENGINEER(S): Mark Miller

RECORDERS: MCI

MIXERS: Neumann

OUTBOARD EXTRAS: AKG reverb, Delta Lab, digital delay, Sony, Shure, Sennheiser

INSTRUMENTS: Yamaha grand, Fender Rhodes, clavinet, harpsichord, Rogers drums, Peavey and Fender amps

RATES: Variable

NOTE: Louisiana’s oldest operating recording studio, since 1946.

CREDITS: Buckwheat Zydeco, Hadley J. Castille, Warren Storm, Tabby Thomas

**STUDIO IN THE COUNTRY**

P. O. Box 490, Bogalusa, Louisiana (504) 735-8224

TRACKS: 24 (soon to be 48)

OWNER(S): Eugene Foster

ENGINEER(S): Eugene Foster, David Farrell

RECORDERS: Studer A-80 Mk. III

MIXERS: Harrison 4032

OUTBOARD EXTRAS: dbx Pro 900, rack Lexicon Prime Time, Eventide Harmonizer, Eventide Phaser, Orange County Vocal Stesser, Orban Parasound Parameters, Orban Siblance Controller Cooper Time Cubes, 125 mikes and much more

INSTRUMENTS: Baldwin grand, Hammond B-3, Arp Omni II, Clavinet D-6, Fender Rhodes, Wurlitzer electric piano, Crumar T-2 organ, Crumar Orchestrator, Crumar Trilogy, Cassiopea 201, Marshall amp

RATES: $90-$110/hr.

CREDITS: Kansas, Maze, Stevie Wonder, Perry Como, the Neville Brothers

**ROYAL SHIELD**

1251 N. Acadian Throughway West, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (504) 363-8671

TRACKS: 24

OWNER(S): Homer Sheeler

ENGINEER(S): Lee Peterzell

RECORDERS: MCI

MIXERS: Harrison Automated

OUTBOARD EXTRAS: Eventide Clockworks, Harmonizer, Lexicon Prime Time, Innovonics 201 Limiters, EMT and AKG reverb

INSTRUMENTS: Hammond B-3, Yamaha Grand, Prophet 4 synthesizer

RATES: $105/hr. (master tapes), $65/hr. (demo rate)

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Continued on next page.
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KNIGHT
3116 Metairie Road, Metairie, Louisiana
70001 (504) 834-5711
TRACKS: 24 and 16
OWNER: Traci Borges
ENGINEERS: Bob Lawrence, Camile Boudoin, Terry Bickle
RECORDERS: Ampex and Scully
MIXERS: API
OUTBOARD EXTRAS: Akg acoustical reverb chambers, U-87 mikes, DBX and Dolby noise reduction, MXR delays.
INSTRUMENTS: Kawai piano, Fender Rhodes, electric clavinet, Hammond organ with Leslie, Ludwig drums.
RATES: 24-track—$100/hr. 16 track—$80/hr. Block time $75/hr.

ULTRASONIC
7210 Washington Avenue, New Orleans
(504) 486-4873
TRACKS: 24
OWNER(S): Jay Gallagher, George Hallowell
ENGINEER(S): Jay Gallagher, George Hallowell
RECORDERS: MCI
MIXERS: MCI
OUTBOARD EXTRAS: Lexicon Digital Delay, Kepex, Allison Gain-Brain, Urei Limiters, Altec One-Third Octave Equalizers
INSTRUMENTS: Kawai grand, P Fender Rhodes, Hohner clavinet, String Synthesizer, R.M.I electric piano, Ludwig drums, Fender TWIN Reverb and Princeton, Ampeg B-15 bass
amp, Pignose
RATES: 16 track—$85/hr., 24 track—$80 hr. and up
CREDITS: Chocolate Milk, the Sheiks, Lili Queenie and the Percolators, Clifton Chenier, the Radiators, Susie Huete, the Driveways

FIRST TAKE
3941 Bienville, New Orleans (504) 486-9444
TRACKS: 8
OWNER(S): Sherman Bernard, Jr., Steve Monistere
ENGINEER(S): Holly Brandon, Glen Himmaugh
RECORDERS: Otari MX-5050, TEAC 3340, Crown Halftrack
MIXERS: M&M English Console
OUTBOARD EXTRAS: Allison Gain-Brain, AKG Echo, Sennheiser, AKG 451 E, Shure SM-54, SM-58, Electrovoice PL-77, RE-20
INSTRUMENTS: Steinway grand, Fender Rhodes, Ludwig drums, Fender Bassman 100, Dual Showman
RATES: $35/hr.

GROUSE HOUSE
2004 Burgundy, New Orleans, Louisiana
(504) 945-3233
TRACKS: 4
OWNER: Gilbert Hetherwick
ENGINEER: Gilbert Hetherwick
RECORDERS: TEAC 3340, Akai 2-track
MIXER: Extremely crude "The past created today"
OUTBOARD EXTRAS: None
INSTRUMENTS: Saloon player piano
RATES: $25-$75 per session, depending on how much fun it is for the engineer!

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WAVELENGTH/JUNE 1981
THE HIRED HAND SALOON

1100 SO. CLEARVIEW PKWY.
HARAHAN, LA., 734-0590
Marcia Ball’s pencil-thin, six-foot (not counting her wedgies) frame is gracefully draped over a church pew on the balcony of the picturesque Columns Hotel. In a mock-bass voice, the pianist-singer-songwriter is recalling advice once offered her by a philosopher-guitarist friend:

“I’m telling ya Slinky,” she growls, “if you can make ’em dance, money’ll become a space problem.” Laughing, she adds, “So that’s what my ambition is. Make ’em dance.”

She does. Just the night before, she’d packed the dance floor at Tipitina’s with back-to-back rhythm and blues. Even the Yankees were up. (On a steamy May evening of Jazz Fest week, at Tip’s, it’s easy to tell the out-of-towners. The West Coast wears lineny tweed jackets, the East Coast favors cordroy or velvet. The natives know better.)

Ball (nee Mouton), a native of Vinton, Louisiana (near Lake Charles), has been playing piano since she started lessons at the age of five. “My grandmother played piano when she was young in Lafayette, in moviehouses accompanying silent films... It was just assumed that I would take piano lessons. So I did.”

But Ball didn’t really start singing until she enrolled at LSU in Baton Rouge as an English-journalism student. “They wouldn’t even let me in my high school chorus. I didn’t even try until I was a senior in high school and they knew I was trying to get out of taking senior math. They wouldn’t let me do it.”

After a couple of years in Baton Rouge which included a stint with a rock band called “Gum” (“We were not a commercial success”), she and her husband decided maybe San Francisco was the place to be.

But they were sidetracked. “We got to Austin on our way, and had car trouble, and ended up staying with friends.” That was nearly ten years ago. She is still based in Austin—making mostly regional forays on what she calls “the crawfish circuit”—through Texas and Louisiana with occasional trips to Chicago.

Her earlier bands had colorful names: Frieda and the Firedogs (she was Frieda), the Misery Brothers, and a generally progressive country sound.

“We were long-haired hippie types playing straight, straight country music... We were playing in bars that had always been considered completely redneck territory and we were drawing in our crowd a little bit.”

They were a successful bar band, but over the years band members changed continually. About a year and a half ago, she took a long-overdue vacation and reassessed the direction she wanted to take.

“I took about three months off and decided that when I started again, I would go ahead, ’cause I’d been gradually edging toward what I’m doing now—which is rhythm and blues, very Louisiana oriented, very New Orleans oriented... I decided that when I put it back together it was gonna be a band that was in that...
Making 'Em Dance

rhythm and blues vein.

The current group includes David Murray, guitar; Craig Knudsen, saxophone; Roddy Colonna, drums; and Pat Whitefield, bass.

A current set often includes Professor Longhair's "In the Night," Irma Thomas' "I Did My Part," plus ball originals like "Two-Timer," "Go On and Cry," "My Mind's Made Up," and "Eugene" ("kind of a take-off on Chuck Berry's 'Nadine'").

Her personal piano style is sometimes reminiscent of Longhair and other New Orleans piano players: strong, often heavy on the backbeat, with touches of Caribbean and Cajun rhythms, too.


"My favorite album in high school was James Brown Live at the Apollo." Hits by Fats Domino and Ernie K-Doe also made it to the Vinton airwaves, and left their mark.

Her one album, Circuit Queen, on the Capitol label, was a country effort recorded about three years ago in Nashville. It's hard to find. At least one local record store has re-ordered it for months with no results, and she thinks it may be out of print. Did it make money? She shrugs, "You never make money."

Since the Capitol recording, she's not only changed in musical direction but even in appearance. Her purple-trimmed sunglasses now top a mass of permanent-waved curls. (She explains: "I was looking through the Daily Texan and I saw this ad that said 'cheap hair cut and free beer.' So I went.")

Record companies economics have changed somewhat, too. "There was a time when they would sign every band on the block. You know, give 'em $20,000 and let 'em make a record. If it worked, it worked, and if it didn't, they'd drop it. But the record business is not in the position to do that anymore."

So, like a lot of bands in Texas and Louisiana, she's recorded her own soon-to-be-released 45: "Two-Timer/Soul on Fire.

"There's no magic to making a record, you know. And it's not even all that expensive. You can make a record and ultimately get your money back a lot quicker and a lot easier than if you sign with a major label and end up with five or ten percent of 90 percent rather than all the profits in your hand."

Self-production, promotion and distribution also allows more personal control. She jokes that the high pressure Nashville sessions for her early album made her face break out, and resulted in too much talk about "pieces of product" and "units" sold without producing the kind of musical feeling she wanted.

This time, on the 45, it's different. She even has her own label. The name? "Magnolia," she drawls, grinning. "What else?"
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Recently a master craftsman of musical instruments visited New Orleans and passed through town practically unnoticed. His name is Ellie Mannette and he is the man largely responsible for the existence of one of the world's most unusual instruments...the melodic steel drum.

Ellie Mannette made the first melodic steel drum from a 55-gallon oil drum in 1946 and has spent the last 35 years perfecting the instrument and expanding its capabilities to that of a full orchestra. He was in town to tune and make new drums for the U.S. Navy Steel Band, whose home is the 8th Naval District Headquarters in Gretna. Probably few people realize that the Navy Steel Band has been in existence almost as long as the steel drum itself, and that the band uses the drums the same way (in orchestra form) that they were used when Mannette first made them in the Forties. The origin of the band (originally called Admiral Dan’s Pandemoniacs) dates back to 1957 when Admiral Dan Gallery, while stationed in the Caribbean, met Ellie Mannette and heard his steel drums. Ellie has been making and tuning the band’s drums ever since.

Mannette promotes the music and culture of his island home, Trinidad, in school systems around this country. He spends almost all his time traveling, making steel drums, and teaching the skill to others. While he worked on a 55-gallon oil drum, creating in just one day another of his beautiful sounding drums, he spoke to me of the evolution of the steel drum (or steel pan).

In 1937, steel bands were common in Trinidad, especially at Carnival time, but the steel drum as we know it today didn’t exist. The steel pans being used by the bands of that period consisted of any that could be beaten with a stick...buckets, tinpans, anything metal. Rhythm was the goal; there was no melody. It was during this period that Mannette (age 11) and friends began experimenting with the idea of getting a melody from their steel pans. Their first efforts resulted in pans that could play two or three notes. The pans were still small objects such as buckets and ranged in size from about 9 to 14 inches in diameter. The playing surface of the pans were pounded out in a convex curve rather than the concave form we see today.

The years 1941-45 saw a prohibition of Carnival celebrations in Trinidad due to World War II, but during this period Mannette and friends continued experimentation. During the Victory in Japan Celebration of 1945 they introduced their newest achievement: pans with five or six consecutive notes. Along with these drums, which were capable of playing simple melodies, they featured drums that played one or two low bass notes. These new drums were still small in size but a new development was the concave playing surface instead of the old-fashioned convex one. It was during this period that one of Mannette’s friends, Winston Spree Simon, made a name for himself by playing the first recognizable melody on one of the drums...a native folk song, “River Vine.”

It was in 1946 at a school competition that Mannette, age 19, introduced the steel pan he had been secretly designing for over a year. He had found a 55-gallon oil drum, carried it to his backyard and spent three months working every day after school “sinking” the bottom of the drum to a final depth of 5 inches. The drum was 22 1/2 inches in diameter with 14 notes, a scale and some half steps. He had created a melody drum. This drum made quite a stir on the island and shortly afterward the Trinidad government offered Mannette a scholarship to a British university. He turned this down, however, and instead, at the request of the governor, Sir Hubert Rance, designed an entire orchestra of steel drums to represent Trinidad at the 1951 Festival of Britain. With the help of a British musicologist who
contributed the choice of notes to be put on each drum, Mannette designed three new pans to accompany his melody pan. Chords were played by his single second, a drum with eleven notes. Bass was played by a three-

...drum set with 5 notes each, and further accompaniment was provided by the single guitar, with 8 notes. This was the first steel band that was truly a complete orchestra, spanning a range of 3 1/2 octaves.

His experimentation continued through the next ten years during which he modified the single second into a double second—two drums with 17 notes each. In 1960 he created the tenor basses, a four-drum set with 5 augmented notes per drum. Through trial and error he discovered the right sized stick for each size drum (the lower the range of the drum the larger the stick). Another variable for experimentation was the length of the skirt, the cylindrical part of the oil drum. For a high range melody drum the skirt is cut off to about 4 to 5 inches, whereas the entire skirt (3 feet) is left on for a bass pan. There is no device added to a steel pan except occasionally some drummers will add paint to outline each note's striking area for easier playing in dark rooms.

Over the years Manette's original designs and the orchestration of the steel have basically remained the same but others have made their own modifications. One of these which Manette thought was important to mention is the spider web design, a melody pan with 32 notes arranged in the circle of fifths designed by his friend Anthony Williams in 1957. Another friend, Berthy Marshall, took Manette's double seconds, modified them, and came up with the double tenors which today are popular drums.

According to Manette, aside from tourist-oriented steel bands, the steel pans are not heard much in Trinidad these days except around Carnival time. The steel drums were originally designed to create a full orchestra and this is how a visitor to the Caribbean would most likely hear them. The drum's use as an accompaniment to calypso bands consisting of guitar, horns, etc. has been a recent development. Most steel drummers who play this style of accompaniment use either the 32-note melody pan or the 30-note double tenors.

There are many opportunities to hear steel drum music in New Orleans. The Navy Steel band plays all over town but is most visible on its float in Mardi Gras parades. When Taj Mahal brings a band to town he brings Robert Greenidge, who is one of the best steel drummers to come out of Trinidad. And every year another great steel drummer, Irving McLean, performs at the Jazz Fest.

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The mysterious workings of the Almighty are no more nor less confounding than those of Little Richard, described in large plastic letters on the marquee of the First Assembly of God the first few weeks in May as an “EX-ROCK ‘N’ ROLL SINGER”—surely portending in the arrested minds of Airline Highway motorists something almost as dreadful as an “EX-MASS MURDERER” or an “EX-ARSONIST.”

Of course, this is not the first time that Little Richard has been billed thusly. Back in the ’50s, he deserted the world of hit records for a Fundamentalist seminary and emerged a bit thereafter as a man of the less flashy cloth. Teenagers across America, mad for “Long Tall Sally” and “Tutti Frutti,” were not pleased. Little Richard, a called man, began recording gospel records.

Then, in the late ’60s, he was back into secular music and all the things that made Little Richard famous—astounding pompadour hair-do’s, ermine-trimmed capes, crowns, an honor guard of handsome young men dressed like Prussian cavalry troops, skintight jumpsuits totally encrusted with mirrors, several pounds of pancake make-up, waterproof eyeliner and the whitest, brightest teeth in show business.

My first visit to a bonafide cocktail lounge was to see Little Richard at Al Hirt’s (chaperoned by my parents) and the impression this crazed man left on my tender psyche perverted me forever. To get as sweaty as Little Richard got, to wear two-toned patent leather boots which you summarily tossed to the audience while dancing atop a Steinway grand, to make fun of chirpy ladies from Minnesota—could there be a more pleasant, satisfying occupation?

Apparently there is—the preaching business. Little Richard travels around the world testifying nowadays—going wherever he might collect a decent honorarium for his services (I report this solely because both Little Richard and Rev. Marvin Gorman, the First Assembly’s pastor, made a large to-do of it). Little Richard appeared at the church several times in early May and there were two collections taken at each service. The second of the two collections was earmarked for Little Richard’s honorarium and “The Caring Place,” a youth center Rev. Gorman is opening in that Sodom and Gomorrah between Canal Street and Esplanade.

Rev. Gorman is known for bursting into tears in the midst of his evangelical zeal but he is no shy, timid fellow—not when it comes to raising funds for Little Richard and French Quarter coffeehouses for wayward teens. At the Monday evening service, he merely clasped his hands and said, “I don’t want this to take long. I want to hurry and turn the service over to Little Richard. I just want one hundred people to stand up right now and give me one hundred dollars tonight.”

In approximately fifteen minutes, fifty true believers had pledged the magic amount. Rev. Gorman then lowered the stakes, asking for fifty dollars. Checks were okay, he told everyone. Hands went up fast. Rev. Gorman smiles and thanked the Lord. Little Richard smiled and thanked the Lord. A person out in the lobby who couldn’t get in either the main sanctuary or the overflow room where folks watched the proceedings on live video yelled out a donation of two hundred dollars.

Little Richard, dressed about as nattily as the executive officer of a suburban branch bank, began by bringing up from the audience veteran New Orleans guitarist Eugene Senegal. Richard explained that despite being a genius guitar play—better than Jimi Hendrix (both Hendrix and Senegal were among the countless guitarists who did...
It's recording on 24 tracks of the most technically advanced equipment, in the peace and quiet of a country atmosphere. Some folks are funny. They don't want to record their music in a big city. They want to stay where the pace is slow and unhassled. The pressure is off when you're recording here. They say sounds come out better that way. We've got a place for them. Just ask some of the artists that have recorded at our studio like: KANSAS / WILLIE NELSON / THE DIRT BAND / LeROUX / STEVIE WONDER / POTLIQUOR / PERRY COMO / MELANIE / DICK VAN DYKE / PETE FOUNTAIN / MAZE / THE NEVILLE BROS. / GEORGE PORTER'S JOYRIDE / PAUL ENGLISH / JOHNNY WINTER / DOC AND MERLE WATSON / DICK STABILE / WAYNE NEWTON / THE MILLS BROS. / BROOK BENTON.

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stints in Little Richard's band), Senegal was a man with great troubles.

Rev. Gorman, Little Richard and a selection of First Assembly deacons surrounded Senegal, laying their hands on his temporal body and summoning forth the Holy Ghost. Four of the deacons stood cautiously behind Senegal in case he was tossed backwards by the Cleansing Spirit. This never happened and after three or four minutes of intense prayer, they let Senegal go. The guitarist looked glad that it was all over and he wasted no time getting back to his pew.

Little Richard then commenced with his testimony: he had been a homosexual; he had been seduced as a child by an elderly transvestite known as Madame Oop; that he had needle marks up and down his arms and legs and sides; that he had done drugs right here in New Orleans; that the Devil had told him that he was a woman and not a man; that he was confused; that not all entertainers were homosexuals but that they were all sick; that money is not important; that he had witnessed women in Los Angeles procuring sexual favors for their 4-year-old sons; that he had witnessed many sick, sick things; that there is no use for newspapers because all the news anyone needs can be found in the Bible and the same goes for mysteries and romance stories; that, among other things, homosexuality, lesbianism, drug addiction, women's liberation and rock 'n' roll are uniformly sinful; that the dangerous homosexuals were not the flashy, campy ones but rather the quiet closet cases who ended up strangling children; that the underworld controlled the record industry; that Jesus was coming very soon and a magnitude of similarly perceptive observations.

When he had finished his discourse, the man who once described himself as "a flower in God's bouquet," sang one gospel number to the accompaniment of some taped violins and jogged out the doors with his 18-year-old male travelling companion Moses, who sings but does not look like Al Green. Special First Assembly of God Security Officers guided the multitudes through the lobby and semi-underground garage, keeping a close watch on Rev. Gorman's Lincoln parked in the corner.
Huey Smith's name has long been synonymous with good time New Orleans rock and roll music. He was involved in the rhythm and blues scene from its earliest days in the city. He worked his way up from an important recording and performing sideman, to a full-fledged rock ‘n’ roll star.

Although he achieved more success than most other R&B artists in the sixties, still Huey Smith’s career has been dotted with untimely deals, bad breaks and tragedies. He feels that some of his best works were “stolen” from him and he sunk into relative obscurity around the time of the English music invasion.

The seventies saw an enigmatic Huey Smith turn to the Bible and join the Jehovah’s Witness religious group, content to do manual labor and no longer pursue a career in music.

Today finds Huey content to stay close to his small house in Baton Rouge, content to play the occasional job in New Orleans. Probably no other man could fill the void behind the piano after the death of Professor Longhair. Huey Smith, however, has no such ambitions and would rather lead a simple, uncluttered life in quiet Baton Rouge.

This interview took place in two sessions, the first here in New Orleans while Smith was taking care of some legal business concerning record royalties, and the final session at Huey’s comfortable home on a peaceful warm afternoon.
Huey, can you tell us something about your early life?

I was born January 26, 1934. I grew up on Robertson Street around Second Street and Magnolia. One of the first things I can remember is this mark on my head that I got when I was four. I got that when I flipped over on my skates and hit my head in front of the house. That was my auntie's house, where they had the piano. That's where I picked it up. In my neighborhood coming up, even when I was 7 or 8, we used to write songs around school. Make 'em up, you know, like "The Robertson Street Rambler." I had a pal that had straight hair; they used to call it "Slick." I was "Dark." We went around as "Slick and Dark."

Did you take any lessons?

Actually I was supposed to. They had a Greywall school of music for young boys. Well, I was going to enroll in the school... Now I haven't told anybody this before, but my daddy used to give me money to go to school every week for music. But I didn't ever go! I kept that music money. My sisters took piano lessons. The lady next door would come over, and I would get down with her. I used to just play till the neighbors would knock on the wall to knock it off.

Were you listening to any records then?

Mostly I listened to the radio. But my sister had one of those record players that played 78's. She listened to Dinah Washington. But later on we had parties and played stuff by Ivory Joe Hunter, "Almost Lost My Mind," Louis Jordan, Amos Milburn, Charles Brown and Hank Williams.

Hank Williams?

Yeah. "Lovesick Blues." Used to be a white bar around the corner called "The Sail Inn." We would sit outside and that music box would play all night long. [sings] "I got a feelin' called the blue-o0o-sss."

Who were your favorites?

I liked Bull Moose Jackson, Louis Jordan. We used to go to the movies and see the little short of Louis Jordan. I was just 11 or 12 years old. People tell me rock 'n' roll started after that. Well, watch that Louis Jordan short, and you'll see where it started.

How did you meet Guitar Slim?

At the same time I was going to Cohen School, I used to stop in at this place where a fellow had a set of drums. Well, one night this other guy came in with a guitar. This guy was dressed like someone from the city wouldn't dress. He had purple and yellow pants, and a straw hat. But the drummer said, "He sounds just like Gatemouth Brown on "Boogie Rambler." It was Slim.

He started to play "Have You Ever Been Mistreated." I went right with him, and he enjoyed that, so from then on he started calling me his piano player.

How old were you when you started playing around the Tijuana?

Oh I guess about 16. That was before we went into the studio to make any records. The band had Albert Scott, Eddie Bo, and Joe Smith on drums. Well they were going to Mexico or something, for a while, so Slim called me and said, "The man said we could come down and play every night." We got Roosevelt Nettles to play drums. It was a good job because sometimes you could play two, three places a night, get off in the evening and make $80. That money was piling up; I was a teenager making $24 a night, three or four nights a week. The average man didn't make $75 a week. I didn't go back to school. Well, watch that Louis Jordan stuff.

What did you do with Smiley?

I played on "I Hear You Knockin'" and maybe the flip side. I've heard you use that piano intro before.

Oh, all the time! It's just like you sign your name. If I make an H a certain way and I like the way it looks you can put it anywhere it calls for. I used it on "Lonely, Lonely Nights"; you know you don't want to fight it if it's selling. "Yockomo," "High Blood Pressure," same rolling type piano.

Now that stuff with Smiley was before I had any of my own records.
I put a little bit after that I got with Ace.

How did you meet Johnny Vincent, and get on Ace Records?

I forgot exactly how, but Johnny used to be with Specialty. He was involved on a couple of Lloyd Price sessions, so they informed him of who played sessions around New Orleans. That's how he got introduced to New Orleans musicians. Dick Sturgel was the record distributor for Specialty, at A-1. So Johnny naturally would stop in to check up. At the same time he was starting his own little recording company. He had some country stuff out by Frankie Lee Sims and Kinsley Moore, but he was still working for Specialty. I did a few things for Specialty as a sideman. Well he used to go around to different clubs and look up the same musicians. I guess you'd say he was kind of a talent scout, so naturally he would frequent the clubs where the musicians hung out.

Which clubs?

The Dew Drop, the Tijuana, Paul Gayten and Lee Allen around the Brass Rail.

You had a record out on Savoy before Ace, didn't you?

Yeah, I did something on Savoy with Earl King. I did this record "You Made Me Cry" with a fellow named Joe that we used to ride around with. He used to call himself Guitar, Jr. (he used to pick up the guitar and play a little). He used to have a saying, "You're down with me and can't quit me." He used to say that all the time and that was one of the songs I did for Savoy. That's the first record I did, period.

Did it make any noise?

Naw. Fact is I only saw but two copies on 78s. I never even heard it played. But what was interesting about it, I used to play it in my room, and the lady that lived down the hall would be singing "You Made Me Cry." She was singing it but she didn't know who sang it.

It came out somewhere around '53. I did that Earl King record "Milk and Cream." I think Earl did six sides and I did two. The A&R man for Savoy was called Lee Maghid. We met this fellow over by Doc's over on Dryades Street.

The first stuff you did with Ace was "Lonely, Lonely Nights" with Earl King, right?

That's right.

What did you think about Vincent putting "Fats featured on piano" on the record label?

Things like that I never did like. I mean, Fats! I was only 125 lbs! He already had Fats Domino, what's he want to put some Lil' Fats on for? I didn't like that at all.

What about your "We Like Mambo," that came out under Eddie Bo's name?

Well, Johnny had decided to give me a try to make a record. Eddie Bo had gone with another company after recording for Johnny. Bo did "I'm Wise" for this other company [Apollo 486] and it almost sounded like "Slippin' and a Slidin," by Little Richard. Well, Johnny thought he better put something out on Bo quick, but he only had one side. So Johnny grabbed me right quick and said, "We're gonna cut something on you and put it on the other side." So that's how I came to do "We Like Mambo."

But when it came out it said "by Eddie Bo." It made a little local noise but I felt bad about it. I was coming up and here was this thing I had made with somebody else's name on it! And Johnny said the printer made a mistake! Well the night clubs were calling for Eddie Bo, not Huey Smith. There was nothing I could do, so I had to come up with something else.

What did you come up with?

Well, I came up with "Little Liza Jane." My voice wasn't that good, though I could get by with a couple of catchy lines. But everybody did respect my piano. So when we go to the studio Johnny wanted me to play the music and then put the vocals on later. I said, "No, no!" I thought this was going to be another record out by somebody else after I put my music down. I got up from the piano at Cosimo's and went home. Johnny finally talked me back into it. Dave Dixon and Izzacoo (Junior Gordon) went in and did a verse each and I did a verse.

It did real well locally. But the football bands would do it at the games. So I was encouraged by that aspect.

How did you come up with the idea of the Clowns?

My idea was that I was lacking in vocal ability. So I wanted to get something together like Billy Ward did with the Dominos. I felt that I could direct the group in any way I wanted to get to the top of the record business. Your public appearance was based on what type of record you had out. If you could get a record out you were gone. You see, years back there were
plenty of singers, but Roy Brown was the man with the records, and he went across the country.

An artist is as big as his last record. Where were you playing then? I was still playing around the Tijuana some. Slim had gone on the road with the Edgar Blanchard Band. I started playing one-nighters with Smiley [Lewis]. Smiley used to call me his piano player; he used to pay me just to satisfy himself. You see, they always had a house band, but now when he worked I worked. He used to say “Come on boy, show em how the piano work.”

What happened after “Little Liza Jane”? I was playing with Earl King around Lake Charles, for Bubba Luther. Frank Pania (owner of the Dew Drop Inn) used to send us out to back up different artists. On the weekends we played around the Dew Drop as the house band.

Anyway, Shirley and Lee came up. That was our chance. We got some uniforms, and started rehearsing. We organized a group, and the same agency booked us as the records began to hit. In a matter of weeks we were to play the Apollo Theatre with my old band, Shirley and Lee. It was real nice because I didn’t have to play the piano all night. I just had to play three or four numbers. I was really enjoying the business then.

Where did you meet Bobby Marchan? Bobby’s from Columbus, Ohio. Bobby came into the Tijuana one night with a female impersonator group, a big old caravan of ‘em; five or six of ‘em! Bobby was the vocalist, I guess he was their boss. Bobby was looking for someone to do some recording and Vincent saw Bobby. So I got this “Chickee Wah Wah” thing together for Bobby. Bobby knew the value of a hit record, so we got it together.

I guess Vincent wanted to get you back in the studio to cut a follow-up to “Rockin’ Pneumonia.” Well the record was taking off so immediately when we got back to town we go into the studio. This was around 1957. You see, I didn’t go in the studio to cut a record, I cut about seven or eight different tracks. Sometimes we got around to putting the voices on them but all through ’58 and ’59 there was all kinds of stuff sitting around.

Rudy Moore was driving for us and he used to always say “Don’t You Just Know It.” That’s how I came up with that. I got on the piano and worked with it, turned it around and came up with it. Pat Boone even covered it for the pop market.

Why were your records credited to Smith and Vincent? Up to this day I don’t know why. Of all the people Johnny Vincent fooled with I was the only one he did that to. I asked, “Why did you put Vincent on my records?” He didn’t even do that to Earl King.

Were you aiming for a particular market when you wrote those songs? Well, you don’t have in your mind, a particular market. Rhythm ‘n’ blues
was a secondary market, you weren’t trying to sell a song but trying to sound like you wanted to sound. But we played so many fraternities that was almost the only place we played. If we played a black club we didn’t feel right ‘cause we didn’t get a response. They were hooting and hollering in the fraternities, that’s what I was used to. Colleges, that’s 90% of where I played.

Did Booker ever take your place when the Clowns went on the road?

Bobby Marchan was in charge during the time I was not there. In 1959 when we were at the peak, James Booker was in the band at that time. The band used to play to entertain the people before the group came on. So naturally I wouldn’t be up there until the group came up so then Booker was the piano player in the band.

Okay now ripping and running up the road I didn’t always enjoy it. So sometimes when they was booked I wouldn’t go so they would have Booker playing instead of me.

What was the nucleus of the Clowns when you were really hitting?

There were a lot of guys that had halfway hit records. Bobby Marchan, Roosevelt Nettles, Curly Moore, Jessie Hill, Raymond Lewis, Robert Parker and James Rivers. That’s the organization I had going into 1959.

What were the Clowns like on stage?

We were doing skits as we did the songs. We used to do comical stuff, imitate different people. Sometimes we’d imitate a blind man on “What’d I Say.” One of the guys might split his pants and have striped underwear on. Curley and Bobby might act feminine. Anything to get a laugh out of the audience.

Tell us about Sea Cruise and Frankie Ford.

During the time I had records coming out, I knew my singing ability wasn’t really there. But when I did the “Sea Cruise” track, one of the boys, Eddie, and I did the lead vocal, and I liked the way that one was. In my mind that record was gonna throw me over the hump.

Evidently, Johnny Vincent and Joe Caronna (Frankie Ford’s manager) liked it also. Johnny didn’t even know about it at first. I had it down, I had “High Blood Pressure” out and I knew this was gonna hit. Johnny came to me and said, “Let Frankie do this.” I said, “No way, in no shape or
form!” But he told me there ain’t nothing I could do about it, it was coming out on Frankie. Now the flip side they didn’t even know what was said. They said Roberta: I don’t even know no Roberta. It was “Loberta.” He couldn’t even hear it. He even kept the voices in there singing Loberta and Frankie was singing Roberta!

I don’t hold anything against Frankie. I like him. But no royalties ever come from Johnny. He kept saying, “It’s coming, it’s coming.” Oh I got some little two, three hundred dollars but I was waiting for some money!

At this stage of the game I decided I was going to teach Frankie some songs, thinking maybe I could make some money out of that. I taught him “Alimony.” But Johnny always had it in his mind he was going to beat somebody out of something. So I decided I wasn’t going to do no records for him. But he had all that stuff I had already done so he could put it out when he wanted to. Around 1959 my contract expired.

So then you went with Imperial?

I did go with Imperial but they didn’t do nothing. They put one of my soundtracks out, “Doin’ the Popeye.” But Johnny put out an old track I did and called it “The Popeye.” It even got to No. 57, but Imperial thought I was going back to Johnny then so they weren’t doing anything with me and neither was Johnny. The whole thing was disgusting. I didn’t get any money from Johnny...I did do some one nighters all through the Carolinas.

No royalty money at all?

Never! I’m talkin’ about not ever! Johnny had records and albums out on me, all kinds of albums.

What about after that?

I did a few things for Pitter Pat records. Carlton Picou and I started our own record company. We did a few things that Joe Banashak heard. He had more experience leasing stuff so we thought we’d go with him. A few things made a little noise like “Coo Coo Over You,” “It’ll Do Me Good” but it didn’t get off the ground really [Instant Records] “Ballad of a Black Man,” “You Got To,” a bunch of them.

I revived “Hootchie Coochie Man” for Skip Easterling. I did “You Got Ta” and “Simon Says” for Lee Bates. We did a thing with Larry Darnel, “Son of a Son of a Slave.” At that time I was calling myself a producer, for Instant.

You were on “Chinese Bandits” too, right?

Well, it really wasn’t my idea. Joe Caronna and Frankie Ford came up with it. I threw in on it. Joe started his label, too. [EDITOR’S NOTE: “Chinese Bandits” was issued by the Cheerleaders on Spinet 1000.]

Were you still playing around town?

Wasn’t any place to play! Not after 1962. I just used to do one nighters for Hit Attractions, out of North Carolina. They had no place in New Orleans where you could make any money. Those fraternities and the theatres was the only circuit where you could play.

In the late sixties New Orleans had nothing; you couldn’t even go in the Dew Drop. Fact is, if you made a record there was no club in New Orleans where you could play. Now Frogman, he settled in a club on Bourbon Street. I mean they got a half-way club circuit now with Tipitina’s, but that just came into existence recently.

What did you do in the mean time?

Some of the musicians got jobs on Bourbon Street, but that was it! If you didn’t get a weekly thing playing you had to get a day job. If it get that bad, you might as well get you another occupation. Particularly if you’re not in love with it. Periodically somebody might call you to do a show if they had a little money. So I started working at the K&B drugstore, and studying the Bible.

How did you get into religion?

A lady knocked on my door, Jehovah’s Witness. My interests were particularly to be a new student of the Bible. I had to get away from places like the Dew Drop so I could protect myself, and further my studies.

Every once in a while somebody would approach me about music, but I wouldn’t even look to it because it wasn’t offering me nothing.

I was producing for Joe Banashak when I started studying the Bible. I had to get something more regular, though, so I tried to get secular employment.

To help you appreciate my feeling, I want to read you something. For Instant.

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love. I realize that no matter how well I play, it could not make me worthy of life in God’s new system."

Well, it’s the same with me. When I started getting involved with making a record with Marshall [Seahorn], I got involved with some of the things I used to do. I ended up getting disfellowshipped from the congregation. But I’ve since been reinstated. I know I have to be careful because I’ll fall back into doing the things I used to do. But I have to be careful, I have to keep myself clean and keep a balance with my spirituality. I’ll have the opportunity to reach more people than other Witnesses. The important thing is being a Christian 24 hours a day.

So there is no conflict between the two?
If you find out it is you better shy away.

Well, you really disappeared in the seventies. What were you doing?
Well I had Smith Dependable Gardening Service. Mostly I worked in Harahan. I got enough money from my lawyer, Levy, from Johnny Vincent to buy some equipment. I was living at 126 Seventh Street. Stayed there about 13 years.

What are your present plans?
I’m trying to establish a circuit with maybe some fraternities. I worked one week doing gardening since I’ve been here. What I made in one week I could make playing just three nights a month. That would give me more time with my ministry. Keeping myself clean I can reach more people than other witnesses.

Do you have any bitterness or regrets about the music business?
I was never able to prove myself as an artist to the public because of Johnny Vincent. One day I intend to sue Johnny Vincent, for my own satisfaction.

What’s been the most satisfying aspect of music?
Well, I have had the opportunity to talk to more people than most people do in their life.

Is there anything you would have changed in your career?
I don’t really consider it a career. It’s just a coincidence that that is what I did. I found I do know it and it beats cutting grass. Like I say, it affords me a chance to further my ministry.

As far as getting rich or making it to the top, I’m not looking for anything like that.
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he is petite, dark, and fast-talking—with at least a hint of Cajun accent from her native Marksville, Louisiana. He is taller, fairer, and more softspoken—pausing to give serious, considered answers.

They are Julie Didier and Baton Rouge native Casey Kelly, a husband and wife songwriting duo who have written dozens of tunes for people like Kenny Rogers, Roy Clark, America, Johnny Rivers, Irma Thomas, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Marcia Ball, B.W. Stevenson, Loretta Lynn, Hank Williams, Jr. and more.

It is about one o'clock on a Sunday morning, and they have paused on the way to her two a.m. gig in the Quarter for a brief interview at Que Sera. Totally undistracted by the surrounding Saturday night date crowd, they are quick to explain just how their songs are written.

For instance, they say their Kenny Rogers-Dottie West hit “I Feel Sorry for Anyone Who Isn’t Me Tonight” was jointly inspired by the musical West Side Story and the television series Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman.

“There was a title that had struck me from years before,” says Kelly, “...‘I feel pretty... and I pity any girl who isn’t me tonight... That came and went, and one night Mary Hartman...’”

“Was going to meet Sgt. Foley,” says Didier, continuing the story. “She was high...”

“Taking speed or something,” Kelly interjects.

“And she was going to meet Sgt. Foley and she was like, really into this sex scene with him,” Didier goes on, “And she said, ‘I feel sorry for any girl who isn’t me tonight.’ So we wrote a song.” Which eventually made number one on the charts.

“Our collaboration works really easily,” says Kelly, “because we don’t do the same things... I’m basically a technician, and she’s basically an idea and conceptual person. We can work together on an idea, and I can go off with it and bat it around for awhile, and then we can get together again and see if it still works...”

“Nail it out, smooth it out,” finishes Didier.

It all sounds terribly simple when they tell it, but they are quick to point out that their success has been built over a dozen or so years of collaboration and work. They met as teenagers playing in Baton Rouge bands: she in “The Drifting White Trash,” he in “The Greek Fountains.” Reflecting on their early marriage, Didier jokingly sings a few bars of “It was a teenage wedding and the old folks wished them well.”

Actually, when the couple decided to move from Baton Rouge to New York, Didier says her family was less than pleased. “They cried.”

“The people that I was working with were content to work on the weekends, and do nothing the rest of the time,” Kelly explains. “And I kept saying, ‘Look, you know, if this is what we’re gonna do for our life’s work...’ It sounds corny, but if that’s what you’re gonna do, you don’t do it on the weekends. There’s more to it... And Julie felt the same thing.”

Even at the ages of 16 and 17, Didier says, “We were hip enough to know that it wasn’t happening in Baton Rouge; Louisiana wasn’t going to get us on the cover of Billboard.”

“It’s raw goods, everything here,” Kelly agrees.

Right now, the couple lives in Los Angeles and Nashville. While visiting New Orleans in May, Didier sang several sets with members of Satisfac-
They met as teenagers playing in Baton Rouge bands: She in 'The Drifting White Trash,' he in 'The Greek Fountains.'

..." He writes all styles of music from semi-classical to country, but he'll perform rock and roll.

Didier says she's more high energy new wave: "Third World rock and roll" (but she's not planning to dye her hair burgundy or pierce anything).

Looking back, they say going straight to New York and learning the business end of the music business was a struggle which has paid off. They worked multiple jobs, literally day and night. "We were the oddities. We both worked," Kelly says.

"All of our friends, none of 'em worked," Didier recalls. "We had an apartment with an air conditioner ... and she cooked," Kelly laughs. Still, "All the time I was still recording records and writing songs, but I was doing the other side as well."

"It's one of those 'We throw 'em in the Mississippi ... if they don't learn to swim, that's it.'"

They rapidly learned about deals and advances and have parlayed that knowledge into a solid string of songs recorded by major artists.

Now Didier, who calls herself a musical hood ornament, ("I dance and sing and get the audience up") says she only wants one thing: "A hot rock and roll band."
Easy Listening

Psychoacoustics: Escape For The Mind

Irv Teibel is a conman. He can con you into believing your living-room is only a stone's throw from the Pacific Ocean. He can make you think that your automobile is suddenly a wooden-masted sailboat. He can cool you off in the dead heat of a New Orleans July afternoon, without so much as a fan or an air conditioner. He can also help you relax, meditate and even improve your sex life. Teibel achieves these results through psychoacoustics. Just like a good hypnotist, if you're the least bit willing he can put you under in no time.

Teibel, a New Yorker, and president of Syntonic Research Inc. (a "psychoacoustic record company") was in New Orleans recently on business. Teibel makes high-fidelity recordings of environments, such as rainstorms, sailboats, country streams, a Caribbean lagoon, birds, heartbeats, surf, and even crickets. He packages them as tapes and records and releases them as part of his environments series of recordings.

These are not sound effect recordings, such as were popular during the advent of stereophonic sound. These are designed to be played at low-volume levels to enhance reading, studying, meditating or just unwinding from a day's work. Teibel says "The records help people cope with stress. In fact, the original idea of recording different environments was partly to help me overcome stress and tension from my work."

Syntonic Research started almost by accident back in 1969. "A friend of mine wanted a short tape of the seashore. I went out to Brighton Beach one winter morning with a tape recorder. In the end I came up with a usable three minute experimental loop." From this short tape Teibel realized that certain natural sounds could be used in some unique ways.

After much trial and error and miles of tapes of the ocean that lead him up and down the eastern seaboard, Teibel stumbled upon a technique that achieved an effect previously unused in the recording industry. The sound of the ocean had the characteristics necessary for this new environmental sound concept. The first recording was entitled The Psychologically Ultimate Seashore, a rather intimidating title, but it was found in testing the recording that it was effective in eliminating distracting noise, and that it enhanced concentration. The demand for this study and relaxation aid was sudden and Teibel was hard pressed to keep up with the demand for the initial release.

Teibel believes sounds subliminally convince a person that the weather is contrary to what may be really in existence, therefore making a Louisiana July afternoon much more bearable. The idea was experimented with oil technicians in the deserts of Saudi Arabia who played the disc on their hi-fi's. Surprisingly they reported they felt much more comfortable and slept better, dispensing with air conditioning altogether despite the thermometer in the neighborhood of 120 degrees! Think about the savings in energy costs this could mean if it worked for only a few hours a day for an entire summer.

In 1977 NASA placed two of
Don’t miss ex-New York Doll
Syl Sylvain at Ole Man River’s,
Friday, June 19—
featuring Rosie Rex on drums and
New Orleans’ own Danny Reid
on bass—and pick up the new
Syl Sylvain and the Teardrops
available now!
$5.99 LP/TAPE

Teibel’s recordings on a Voyager space
capsule, NASA’s purpose was to
represent the sounds of the earth to
alien life forms millions of years from
now, assuming they have a record
player, of course. But it’s not just
aliens who are hearing “the sound of
sounds.” With only eleven releases in
his catalog, Teibel’s Environment
Series has sold over three million
copies. The recording has also been
featured in films, and the sailboat disc
holds the non-stop broadcasting
record. The record played for 18 days
and nights on KMPX-FM in 1970
while the station was on strike.

Some of the renowned listeners of
Syntonic’s include Bob Dylan, and
even Richard Nixon, who used the
tapes during staff meetings. That was,
until Teibel released the infamous
“Altered Nixon Speech” wherein Nix­
on seemingly confessed to Watergate
and even overthrowing the govern­
ment. The tape, produced to
demonstrate the potentials of tape
editing, created such a wave of con­
troversy that Teibel was harassed into
stopping distribution of the 60-second
record. “I was constantly followed
around by men in long black
limousines,” shuddered Teibel. Only
15,000 of the tapes were actually
available to the public and changed
hands for as much as $100 among col­
lectors. Such is Teibel’s expertise in
editing tapes that he provides
testimony in courts of law regarding
validity of evidenced tapes.

For what it is worth, here is my opi­
nion of the psychoacoustical recor­
dings: I’ve taken the day off from my
usual listening diet of R&B, and am
currently seated behind my typewriter,
with the “gentle rain in a pine
forest” disc on my phonograph. I don’t have a
decadent stereo rig, just a 15-watt
Kenwood receiver, and a bottom-line
Dual turntable and similarly rated
Japanese speakers. The effect of the
record is one of peacefulness and ease.
The sun is shining and it is near noon,
but you’d have to pinch me to believe
it. The chirping of the birds and the
rain should be there when I lift my
head up after completing this
sentence. But what is more unusual,
the ease of which I am putting this ar­
ticle together is amazing me. I wasn’t
even annoyed when the postman pass­
ed just now and didn’t leave anything.
After all, who gets junk mail and bills
in the middle of the woods?
There seem to be three main reasons offered for hesitation in buying imported rhythm and blues records. One, will the artist receive any royalties? In fact, many artists featured on these records wonder about the royalties also. The most admirable treatment of royalties is the method used by the Swedish label Route 66. Route 66 also operates the Mr. R & B label, The Blues Boy label, and the Stockholm label. Conspicuously printed on the jacket of each of the releases on these labels is the arrangement that the artist has been paid, \textit{in advance}, 40¢ per record for every record pressed. Also, the Route 66 group makes bulk quantities of the records available to the artist at distributor prices, so the artist can make additional money at the bandstand.

The less satisfactory, but legitimate method used by import labels such as the P. Vine label (Japanese), the Vivid Sound label (Japanese), the Charly label (English), and the Red Lightning label (English) is to lease the master from the company who owns the original recording masters and pay all monies directly to them. This has its good and bad points. The good point is that this method provides the best sound quality of the original recording. The drawback is that once the money is paid to the company who owns the master, the royalties owed the artist by the licensor are often unpaid unless the artist seeks them.

The despicable method of handling the royalty problem is the out-and-out “bootleg” label. There are a number of such fledgling labels, but most have been weeded out due to their bad sound quality, high cost, and poor distribution. These labels pay no royalties to anyone. These bootleg labels could be named, but to avoid confusion this article will only name the preferred import labels (previously named above) so only the acceptable label names will remain in your mind.

The second concern of potential buyers of import rhythm and blues records is the question of sound quality of the recordings. Luckily all the English, Japanese, and Swedish labels named above feature the highest quality disc pressings (higher than standards of most U.S. labels), first class packaging and extensive biographical and discographical information. Even though there are many exceptions, steer away from all French labels, generally, because they more often than not feature inferior performances and cheapie production at a high cost to the consumer. In fact, the French records rank as the most expensive of all imports and give you far less, in many ways, for your money.

This brings us to the third consideration of cost and value of imported rhythm and blues records. The cost of the English and Swedish records is generally two to three dollars higher than American LP releases. The Japanese issues are generally four to five dollars higher than American records. However, when you consider that usually these imported records are the only form in which to find these recordings allied
Rare Records

A Political Ditty
By Huey

BY ALMOST SLIM

“Lumumba”/“Angola”
Snuffy Smith
Spinet 1008

The alias Snuffy Smith hides the true identity of Huey “Piano” Smith. The strange pseudonym was used to legally protect Spinet records and Huey, who was then under contract to Imperial and/or Ace.

“Lumumba” was a politically inspired rock ‘n’ roll tune, recorded for Joe Caronna’s label during the Congo crisis of 1960. The song sports such topical lyrics as,

“Jack took his stand at the great debate,
Everybody cheered.
We’re gonna hold our place at Guantanamo Bay,
And I’m gonna get Castro’s beard!”

Besides Huey, I can identify Frankie Ford’s voice and perhaps Lenny Capello. Possibly for the first time on record Huey is playing an electric piano. The flip “Angola” is a stop time instrumental that features Huey on that same instrument.

The rarity of this record is reflected by the fact that this is the only copy I’ve ever seen, or Smith even heard of. I’ve not seen it in collector record shops, or auction lists. In fact I’ve not even talked to another collector who even knows about the record. When I played the record for Huey Smith he just laughed, shook his head and said, “I haven’t heard that since the day I cut it. I never even knew they made the record!”

Continued from previous page

with the high quality and attention to detail of these releases, they translate into a good value.

You must consider that without many fine re-issues of classic rhythm and blues recordings, many of the works of America’s finest recording artists would be unavailable. In some cases, these re-issues have been largely responsible for renewed interest in once-popular, unique recording artists and has exposed their music to new and eager audiences.

For those of you who would like a starting point in collecting some of the many excellent import record releases, an extremely abbreviated suggestion list follows. Besides many re-issues on Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, James Brown, Fats Domino, and Smiley Lewis of interest to New Orleans fans, we make these specific recommendations which should appeal to most rhythm and blues aficionados:

- Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, San Antonio Ballbuster, Red Lightning RL0010.
- Otis Rush, Original Cobra Recordings, Flyright LP560.
- T-Bone Walker, T-Bone Jumps Again, Charly CRB1019.
- Elmore James, One Way Out, Charly CRB1008.
- Little Johnny Taylor, Part Time Love, Charly CRB1012.
- Jimmy Reed, Upside Your Head, Charly.
- Earl King, Those Lonely, Lonely, Nights, ACE-Vivid Sound VS1012.
- Amos Milburn, One More Drink, Mr. R & B R&B101.
- Nappy Brown, Thai Man, Mr. R & B R&B100.

WORK DONE ON PREMISES
You hear endless speculation among critics, fans, and musicians as to whether the laxity of life in New Orleans may be a double-edged sword in the restoration of New Orleans as a focal point for the recording industry. Does the same culture that lends itself to so much creativity serve to hold back its music from national recognition?

The same question may be posed of reggae. The growing popularity of reggae locally and nationally is unquestionably but whether it will continue to expand while suffering from self-inflicted wounds is another matter. The focus here will be on record sales and recent live performances.

A survey of store managers and record buyers at Leisure Landing, the Mushroom, Peaches and the Record Connection record stores showed that all believed reggae sales have been increasing this year and will continue to do so. Not only are established artists such as Bob Marley, Toots and the Mortals, Third World and Peter Tosh selling well but so are albums by Burning Spear, Augustus Pablo, Big Youth and Gregory Isaacs. Leisure Landing sells the largest amount averaging about 500 reggae albums a month. Peaches on Elysian Fields retails about 350 pieces per month while the Mushroom reports that it sells almost as much reggae as jazz. Reggae's influence is also growing through increased interest in its Jamaican predecessor, ska, plus in its crossover effect via such diverse groups as the Clash, U.B. 40, and the Police.

But behind this robust front looms major problems in the reggae record industry. Except for the major acts on Mango Records, a subsidiary of Island Records owned by Warner Brothers, most reggae albums are on small labels and must be imported from Jamaica, England, and Canada through Jamaican distributors in New York. Dealing with these distributors is at best trying for local store owners and buyers. Unlike their American counterparts, they have no account system for stores. All sales must be paid for C.O.D. no matter how long you've done business with them. Another complaint is that the distributors are extremely slow in crediting or replacing returned, often defective, records.

Live performance of reggae in New
The story of two enterprising young men who make an amazing amount of money selling ice cream.

Orleans demonstrates both its potential and its weakness. Local reggae and ska bands consisting of Americans and Jamaicans are commonplace on both the East and West coasts, especially in Boston and Santa Monica, but also may be found in such unexpected haunts as Austin and Nashville. For reasons unknown to this writer, not a single reggae band has formed in New Orleans although we've been graced by Exuma from the Bahamas and will soon be host to Trinidad's musical pioneer, Irving McLean.

Ole Man River's management deserves praise for having brought in Burning Spear, Steel Pulse, Jimmy Cliff, and Third World within the last nine months. All three shows were great musically, but each visit suffered from either significant management, promotional, or scheduling problems. Last November, Third World's management maintained such poor contact with its label that the band's whereabouts was simply unknown even to the New York head of Island Records. Attempts at setting up a promotional interview failed in a long distance nightmare, which is especially ironic since the band members are very approachable in Jamaica. Steel Pulse's band members and management went out of their way to accommodate requests for interviews once they arrived, but as was the case with Third World, their booking agent or management failed to contact anyone locally until the day of the concert, almost ruining the publicity potential of an in-store appearance at Leisure Landing.

During the afternoon of April 24, John Kelley, the booking manager of Tipitina's, was expecting a phone call from Inner Circle due to perform that night. He received a call from an assistant manager, claiming that due to "immigration problems" the band couldn't possibly appear. According to Kelley, the problem with booking reggae acts is that they have to go through too many layers of management. Tipitina's hasn't given up on reggae, however, and has booked the Lotions from Austin for June 12.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written hours before Bob Marley's death the morning of May 11. His role in the growth of reggae is unsurpassed. The opening of his Tuff Gong Studio in Kingston provided an opportunity for many to turn distant dreams into hope. May the gates never close.
Rock Films: Suffering In Style

BY JOHN DESPLAS

Lonely at the Top. That's the major theme—some might say obsession—of the non-concert "rock movies" that have been released in recent years with an official Hollywood imprimatur. The insistent whine that the life of a rock star (or some musical counterpart) is a lonely one can be heard loud and clear throughout movies like One Trick Pony, The Rose, A Star Is Born (the Streisant-Kristofferson version), American Pop, and Honeysuckle Rose. No doubt life on the road is every bit as grueling as these movies would have it. And yes, lonely. But isn't it a trifle presumptuous to expect a weary moviegoer to shell out four or five bucks for the privilege of watching some musical luminary suffer gloriously? After all, as most will attest to, life at the bottom can be pretty damn lonely too. (Do I hear a roar from the rabble out there?) French novelist Francoise Sagan put it quite well some years ago when she bluntly stated that if she had her druthers she preferred crying in a Rolls rather than a Chevy.

The bulk of these poor-poor-pitiful-me sagas have been resounding box office duds. The notable exception, Coal Miner's Daughter, eschewed the lonely-at-the-top plaint till near the film's denouement, wisely emphasizing the rags-to-riches side of Loretta Lynn's career. In place of a woebegone heroine, here was a country singer with spunk and sass. Surely it's no coincidence that the more enjoyable rock movies—though in all fairness, these have also been financial disasters—never rub the audience's nose in the foul-smelling self-pity of their stars. The Buddy Holly Story, The Harder They Come, American Hot Wax, Quadrophenia, Rude Boy, even such misfires as The Blues Brothers and Hair, all accentuate the liberating influence of the music in their characters' lives. In The Buddy Holly Story, a simple, well-crafted film, Gary Busey makes Holly not your standard misunderstood, tormented idol but rather an ordinary, uncomplicated sort who transcended his mundane existence whenever he was playing his kind of music. When the crowd at the Apollo starts to boogie in the aisles, those in the theatre are tempted to do likewise. American Hot Wax, a slapdash B movie, releases the same kind of jittery adolescent energy as early rock 'n' roll.

In The Harder They Come, a true cinematic primitive, Jimmy Cliff struggles against the repressive social order through reggae music. When he sings the title song in a recording studio, he is radiant and triumphant. And though he too dies, we respect rather than pity him. Even This Is Elvis is enjoyable while...
it sticks to digging up early clips of this sexy country boy who stirred up the country. By the time the film ends with the horrifying spectacle of the bloated Elvis croaking through “My Way,” we’re ready to leave. Not because we’re not interested in how Presley got to this point, but because those who assembled the picture have opted for indulging in the simple spectacle of Self Destructive Rock Star. No one bothers looking for any fresh insight into precisely what happened.

Concert films were as inevitable (and frequently as unnecessary) as live albums in the post-Woodstock years. They were the celluloid companions to the vinyl editions. But only Woodstock The Movie hit the motherlode; the others barely took in spare change. (I still have fond memories of the evening I was attending some silent Russian classic at Loyola when a slightly sloshed frosh plopped himself down in the seat next to mine, threw his arms up into the air, and wistfully exclaimed, “Man, why of The Band’s last public concert (The Last Waltz) is a bit too reverential for my taste, but it is exquisitely photographed and extremely well recorded. My favorite moment is when B. Dylan appears in the closing minutes of the concert with The Band and Joni and Neil and Van and they all gather round like the apostles waiting for His Holiness Lord Dylan to be taken up into heaven—I nearly split a gut. United Artists should have distributed this scene on holy cards as a promotional stunt.

I had never fully appreciated the appeal of The Who until quite by accident I caught up with The Kids Are Alright (newspaper ads had confused the feature times for Quadrophenia.) It’s nothing especially original—concert footage from various stages of The Who’s career mixed with vintage interviews, baby photos, that sort of thing. Keith Moon is every bit as tiresome and annoying as you would have expected, but Pete Townshend was a total revelation.

‘They all gather round like the apostles waiting for His Holiness Lord Dylan to be taken up into heaven— I nearly split a gut.’

don’t they show something like Celebration at Big Sur? (Roll over Eisenstein, tell Pudovkin the news.) Warner Bros. had planned some major hoopla for the release of the No Nukes concert film last year; it flopped so badly in its early engagements that the New Orleans premiere was a midnight movie. Warners seems unable to forget its success with Woodstock; in the last nine months, this entertainment giant has distributed three concert films—An Evening with Gilda Radner, Bette Midler in The Divine Madness, and most recently, This Is Elvis. All met with public indifference.

Stoned children with nothing to do on a Saturday night are about all that remain of the “in concert” movie audience. Yet there have been a couple that the grown-ups (i.e. those over twenty-one) might find tolerable. Though not meeting the oh-so-stringent standards set by The T.A.M.I. Show in the early Sixties in a process that was called Electronovision, both The Last Waltz and The Kids Are Alright are worth seeing and hearing. Martin Scorsese’s film record

He’s a big, graceful man—qualities that frequently aren’t found together—and when he moves it’s impossible to take your eyes off him. Not even the antics of Keith Moon can distract you. Amazing.

I would guess the days of the concert movie are numbered. The core audience for such fare is already small (if fanatical) and those who are forever studying computer print-outs of shifting demographics tell us that the over-30 set will soon claim dominance, at least in numbers. In addition, there are those who claim to have seen rock’s future and it is video. Perhaps they’re right, but I wonder if the “kids” are as interested in seeing a group like Styx or REO Speedwagon as much as “we” were in getting a glimpse of The Rolling Stones or The Who. The difference being that a group like the Stones had Personality; even your elderly aunt had probably heard of Mick Jagger. Do those who buy those AC/DC records know exactly who is in the group? And no matter how elaborate a stage show a band puts together, movies still thrive on personalities, faces, stars.
Reviews

U2
Ole Man River’s
May 8, 1981

U2 have already made quite a splash in Great Britain, and, judging from the show they put on at Ole Man River’s, they stand a good chance of doing the same in the U.S. This was just one stop on a three-month tour of the country, which is certainly an extended stay for a new group, but apparently their record company is confident that American audiences can be won over if enough people get to see the band live. The concert was well-attended, considering that it took place during the Jazz Fest, and, judging from the reaction of the crowd, it seems safe to say that the band gained a great number of local converts.

U2 consists of Larry Mullen on bass, Adam Clayton on drums, Bono Hewson on vocals, and “The Edge” Evans on guitar. Bono, who bears a striking resemblance to a young Ray Davies, has a very serviceable voice, but he seems to have much more presence live than on record. He’s a very confident, even cocky, front man, and he doesn’t sing silly love songs either. His lyrics are built around evocative catch phrases like “if you walk away/I will follow,” “boy meets man/in the shadows,” or “out of control,” and they seem to be mostly about growing up. (All of the band members are only about twenty.) The Edge doesn’t do much besides stand to the side of the stage with a blank look on his face and play the hell out of a Gibson Explorer. He was using several effects devices to fatten his guitar sound and fill up the spaces left for lack of another lead instrument. What is most impressive about this band is their chemistry. No one really outshines the others, and they work together so well that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

U2 played all the songs from their album Boy (on Island Records, produced by Steve Lillywhite), but they don’t seem to have too much extra material. For their encore they were forced to play a couple of songs that they’d already played earlier. They were really good songs, but that’s just not cricket. It’s also interesting that the overall sound of the band is difficult to classify, so that they would seem to appeal to hard rock fans as much as to new wavers. “We’re not just your average English band passing through,” Bono said at one point, and he was right. (They’re Irish.) With a solid opening set by the Uptights and a rare appearance by the Driveways, this was a night of first-rate rock.

—Steve Alleman

Pylon
Jimmy’s
May 5, 1981

Tuesday is not the best night for a concert, but even the poor turnout for their first local appearance could not deter Pylon from putting on one of the best shows I’ve seen in a while. In fact the recent remodeling at Jimmy’s made much more room for the dance floor, and the audience seemed to enjoy the freedom of movement as much as the band enjoyed playing for a bunch of crazed dancers instead of the crush of onlookers that usually dominate the front of the stage.

Pylon’s music was made for dancing, since these four former art students first got together at dance parties in their native Athens, Georgia, just a little over two years ago. Athens is also the home of the
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B-52's, to whom Pylon are often compared, but singer Vanessa Ellison said that the comparisons don't bother them. "It helps, but we're not really like them—not as funny. We've got some humor, but it's more twisted, disguised, not as out-front." They only play about once every two months in their area to keep from burning out their audience, but they've made quite a name for themselves playing in the Northeast, especially in New York and Boston, where their records are big favorites in the rock clubs.

Despite their reputation, both their single "Cool/Dub" and their album Gyrate are on a small Atlanta label, DB Records. Guitarist Randy Bewley explains that getting the attention of a major record company is not so easy. "We kept hearing about them being in the audience, but we just got tired of waiting. Going with a small company was easier than doing it ourselves, and we learned more about the business. We saw what happened to the B-52's and decided that we'd rather have things in our own hands. When you're with a big company, they tell you what to do. We still want to live our lives in Athens, and the main thing, aside the fact that it's a comfortable base and it's our preference to stay there, is that unless we had a contract with a big company we couldn't afford to live anywhere else. There's also the difficulty of being transplanted and isolated and still trying to create the kind of stuff that came out of a particular environment." This was the band's first trip west to try to widen their following. According to bassist Michael Laqchowski, "Recently there's been more interest from record companies. Instead of just having a single that's gotten a lot of attention, we have an album out and we're touring. There's a tendency on their part to sit back and see how a band's going to do on their own before they start sinking money into a project."

Pylon's sound is based on drummer Curtis Crowe's rock-solid dance rhythms, while bass and guitar play asymmetrical but strangely complementary riffs, over which Vanessa wails provocatively. My favorite songs are the pounding "Feast on my Heart," "Dub" with its hypnotic chant "we eat dub for breakfast," and "Read a Book" (Turn off the TV/you can learn more/try to do without it"). Randy described their working methods as "real spontaneous and
unplanned. We write as a group, and we're prolific enough that we don’t ever have to decide to write a song—they just come about. During practices and sound checks, we come across new ideas and use them.” They were extremely powerful live, and according to Curtis, “We’re a real simplistic band as far as sound production goes—bass there, guitar over there, drums in the middle, with one vocal. It made the record easy to do, but when we do sound checks, they’re always surprised. ‘One vocal? In the middle? That’s all?’ They keep looking for trouble.” The band had its share of trouble on the tour, including a rained-out date in Houston, but Vanessa said after the last encore that they might be back later in the summer. Maybe then we can show them what a dance party’s all about.

—Steve Alleman

Honi Soit
John Cale
A&M 4849

John Cale is one of the select group of cult legends. A classically trained musician from Wales, he came to New York in the Sixties and ended up playing viola, bass, and organ for the Velvet Underground. After leaving the group, he made a fascinating series of solo albums during the early Seventies, none of which sold very well. As the market for his music dwindled, he achieved some notoriety as a producer, working with such artists as the Stooges, Nico, The Modern Lovers, Patti Smith, and Squeeze.

Since the start of the punk movement, which took the Velvets as a major source of inspiration, Cale has been on the back burner recently; in the last five years he has released only the Animal Justice EP and Sabotage on small labels. Instead he has concentrated on maintaining a band and touring the country, playing small clubs. (He's played Ole Man River's twice and will be back June 3.) This strategy has paid off; his band is extremely tight and ready to record now that he has the backing of a major label.

This album is quite as good as expected, but it’s also surprising in a number of ways. For one, for the first time in ages, he’s used an outside producer, Mike Thorne, noted for his

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work with the English avant punks, Wire. Also many of the songs use very odd rhythms, and there seems to be a wider gap between the more regular pop songs, at which Cale has always been sparingly adept, and the tortured, cryptic ones (sample lyrics—"And the cold people getting colder/Like babysitters in their graves/Satisfying heretic vicars passing on"). The distance from the opening cut, "Dead or Alive," with its baroque trumpet fills and its story about seeing an old girlfriend in a porno magazine, to the gut-wrenching "Strange Times in Casablanca" may be too great.

But there are still many reassurances of the old Cale, mainly the voice, which is totally without refinement but incredibly powerful, especially when he opens it up and howls like an animal on "Wilson Joliet." He also renews his habit of re-working classic songs to bring out all their latent terror and confusion. In the past, "Heartbreak Hotel," "Memphis," and "Walking the Dog" have gotten this treatment, and on this album he does up an old western ballad, "The Streets of Laredo." Cale is apparently fascinated with the world situation as it descends into chaos. In recent interviews he's been predicting a swift apocalypse, so you may want to give this record a listen before the end.

—Steve Alleman
Richard Landry (and possibly others who may have escaped notice in the darkness of the downstairs Contemporary Arts Center).

Most had never seen any of the footage shown on side-by-side film and video screens in a cabaret setting. Their ability to interpret and create moods with footage ranging from New Orleans streets to the sun to tap-dancing feet was uncannily amazing.

Yet the program itself was too often a technical mess. At the end of the long, last day of the Jazz Festival, even manana-oriented Orleanians do not appreciate waiting for nearly an hour past the listed starting time while sound is checked and musicians tune up at banshee screech levels.

Then, with all that live talent sitting around, the show starts with about a half-hour’s worth of Nathan’s own taped pieces on the 1980 Jazz Festival, the Neville Brothers and New Orleans music. Who wants to see a talking head interview of Allen Toussaint on tape, when you could hear him playing live right now if they’d just get on with it?

Then, there were the visual technical troubles. Many of the tapes played seemed to have a tracking, head clog or other problem which resulted in squiggly distortions at the bottom of the frame. Filmmaker-saxophonist Richard Landry’s excerpts were accompanied by his own beautifully melodic sax solo; but the videotape playback was so distorted it looked like it was on fast forward.

Many of the tapes were not even cued up, so viewers had to sit through color bars and a countdown on several pieces. Just because drummer Vidacovich is so good he can create a fascinating rhythm pattern to go with a test pattern is no reason to make him do it.

Yet there were moments that brought the audience to attentive quiet or total silence: Aaron Neville singing “Mona Lisa” in a taped piece; Willie Nelson doing “Healing Hands of Time” in a taped anthology by Oswald Font; local genius Allen Toussaint (live) playing piano to a filmed short on Gentilly (his neighborhood)—creeping in a little “Star Spangled Banner” as Toby Armstrong’s camera pans a row of American flags, then drifting on as the shot changes.

Experimental pieces by Janet Densmore (tapping feet) and Laurie...
McDonald and Ed Tannenbaum (a dance sequence using a special visual effects process) were a pleasant change from too many New Orleans street scenes found in some pieces.

And despite poor sound quality, an excerpts from Oley Sassone's in-the-works new wave music film was highly entertaining. It's not often one gets to see the Sexdogs' "One, Two, Sex on You," on film.

At the beginning of the program, producer Nathan apologized for the delays, pointing out that no one had ever tried the film and live music concept here before. She asked the audience to consider the evening "more of a workshop."

Here's hoping the kinks get worked out for next year.

—Nancy Weldon

Live at the Hammersmith Palais
Toots and the Mortals
Mango Records

An excellent live recording, this album captures the infectious proud smile of lead vocalist Toots Himbert and presents one of the most enjoyable methods of exploring the roots of reggae. The record serves as a showcase for many of the Mortals' greatest hits covering almost 20 years of Jamaican music. You can hear one of the greatest earliest sources of reggae in their "Sweet and Dandy," a piece of fast-paced mento, the island's folk music.

In "Monkey Man" the listener finds the bounce ska roots of reggae now revived in England by such groups as the Specials, the Selector and English Beat.

In Jamaica as in New Orleans, some of the smallest churches have provided some of the greatest voices and Toots and the Mortals' soulful gospel-like vocals are used to full effect on "Get Up—Stand Up and Hallelujah." The funky side of reggae is covered here, too, with "Funky Kingston" and "54-46, That's My Number," a song of pride from prison. However be warned, the first side starts with "Pressure Drop" so remove all breakable objects from the room before playing.

—Shepard H. Samuels
Friday night, at the Municipal Auditorium, the Festival offered its jazz avant-garde concert. Although the place was not full, the turnout was strong, considering the lateness of the hour and the difficulty of the music.

The Art Ensemble of Chicago led off with a stage full of instruments. Their aptly named program “Black Music: Ancient to the Future,” consisted of a now meditative, now exclamatory, now tongue-in-cheek kaleidoscopic exploration into the black music experience. It included touches of reggae, dixieland, children’s music, high school marching band, bebop and avant-garde jazz, presented as cut-out pieces in a scrap book whose pages were made up of the varieties of African percussion. The whole thing, opened and closed with a long, shimmering, mystical-sounding prelude and postlude on a large set of gongs. It put you in the properly receptive frame of mind and closed the performance in an iridescent curtain of sound.

Kidd Jordan’s Improvisational Arts Ensemble followed, featuring Jordan on saxes, his son Kent on flute and piccolo, Clyde Kerr, Jr. on trumpet and flugelhorn, Elton Heron on electric bass, and Alvin Fielder on drums. The group played a judiciously presented, easily digestible set of free jazz. Movements and voices were clear; attention was paid to overall structure; individual solos were very interesting. Kerr even took a solo on piano. The only thing that marred the performance was that Heron’s bass was much too loud during the first half, often all but drowning out the soloist. I certainly hope we hear more of this group.

The featured artist of the evening was the world-renown enfant terrible of the jazz avant-garde, Cecil Taylor. Taylor ended the concert with a solo set on a monstrous 97-key Bosen- dorfer Imperial Concert Grand Piano. Next to the other piano on the stage, a modest Steinway, the thing...
looked like it had tail-fins. Despite all the hoop-la, Taylor was disappointing. He painted a monumental pianistic canvas using only three colors: dark brown, dark grey, and dark orange with some light flecks, but it was mostly dark brown. It sounded like three ideas out of a Shostakovich sonata, repeated over and over again with one of them predominating 75% of the time. The most telling comment of the evening came from a friend: "It's amazing he could keep that up for two hours!" It was only 45 minutes. He could have said it in ten. For an encore he played more of the same for another seven: dark heavy chords played in *accelerando* *agitato* bursts, interspersed with two-handed lapidary, rapidfire attacks on the keys, usually with finger bunches, but sometimes with fists, palms, or elbows. None of this is illegitimate, and to call it childish misses the point. But music should go somewhere!

—Joel Simpson

King

*For Fred and Amelia Ramsey*

Buddy Bolden sat on his bed in the Jackson State Hospital.
He didn't ask for no cornet.
He didn't ask for nothing twenty seven years.
Buddy Bolden without saying
Where's m' piece
He didn't tug no doctor's sleeve and ask
you got it, man?

Buddy Bolden's indifference was real.
For twenty seven years he played that
good silence and
he played it rough.
You could hear that
silence all the way
three miles around Jackson
State Hospital for twenty seven years
while Buddy Bolden
sat on his bed,
that silence slamming every
ear in the field
Wasn't a hand didn't father
extra children
being drove by that silence
night & day.
Their mamas say Hush now,
that's the King
you can't hear thrashing
them trees and
drowning the rain,
that's King Buddy Bolden,
that's that golden silence.

—Ralph Adamo
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6/5 Fri-ROYAL ORLEANS

6/6 Sat-TOPCATS

6/7 Sun-TOPCATS, 3 pm 'til

6/14 Sun-TOPCATS, 3 pm 'til

6/17 Wed-HYJINX

6/19 FRI.-AVERAGE WHITE BAND

6/20 Sat.-The COLD

6/24 Wed.-MELANGE

6/26 Fri.-SHEIKS

6/27 Sat.-SHEIKS

6/28 Sun.-TOPCATS, 3 pm 'til

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7/4 Sat.-SHEIKS

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Call 282-9449 for Up-To-The-Minute Concert Information
The long-awaited N.O. Questions/N.O. Answers album, produced by Vinyl Solution publisher Larry Holmes, is out now... The Lost Boys, a group made up of doctors, lawyers and other professionals whose identities remain hidden behind masks, have just released a new 45 "Into You" / "Still Best Friends." Dr. Welby, is that you?

Zebra has been seen in high company lately. Their new manager, who's also manager of Christy McVee of Fleetwood Mac, has taken the band under his wing, and a trip to L.A. to sew up record deals and discuss future plans is next for the band.

Jamming with Luther Kent and Trick Bag during Jazz Fest was Boz Scaggs and Rolling Stone correspondent Robert Palmer (on clarinet), among other notables who dropped by the Blues Saloon... While in town for the Fest, Sun Ra Solar Arkestra kindly volunteered to be the house band for the 1984 space exhibit at the New Orleans World's Fair. Who else?... Royal Orleans has a new 45 out: "Hustling in Hollywood" / "Valley of the Shadows"...

WWNO has two late night shows worth tuning into: on Sunday mornings (Saturday nights) from 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. Jerry Karp's blues show features all the great blues artists. On Thursdays 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. "Jazz with O.T." features Oscar Treadwell, noted jazz expert, via satellite from Cincinnati. He's been doing the show, with interviews, discussions, and great jazz, for over ten years now and knows his stuff, from jazz's inception to improvisation.

Godot has just released a single on the Cold's Top Pop label entitled "All I Want To Do" / "Alex in Wonderland." The 45 was cut at Ultrasonic... The Red Rocker's EP is finally available in fine record stores around town... The Shidogs from Baton Rouge have a new 5-song EP, History of Cheese (Pango Records)... Bas Clas's new single, "Serfin U.S.A." / "Physical World," is now available.

Noticeable absences from this year's Jazz Fest included Oliver Morgan, Jeanie Knight, and The Aubry Twins. Representatives from Rounder and Alligator record labels were in town to take in the festival. Bruce Iglaur of Alligator plans a New Orleans album series and is close to signing a number of vets for the three-lp series.

Betty Ann Lastie and George Porter plan to work on some original material to hawk as demos to some record companies. Both have been outstanding in Taste of New Orleans' recent outings. David Lastie has been gigging Sundays evenings at Tyler's and packing them in.

Ivan Neville and The Uptown Allstars have started to work sans The Neville Brothers around town... Black Magic featuring Cyril Neville plays The Rose Tattoo Tuesday evenings. Live reggae is also featured at the Tattoo Thursday evenings... Johnny Adam's latest "Hello Yes I Cheated" is just about ready to break nationally. His new 45 "I Believe In Love," is getting airplay on WNNR.

Eddie Volker has been working with a pickup combo on the Radiators' nights off... The Boot has had to discontinue its live music because of a zoning ordinance... Peaches is moving their Carrollton Avenue store to the Carrollton Avenue Plaza.

Southern Yat Club is recording Frankie Ford with Allen Toussaint producing... The Staple Singers are finishing up a recording for 20th Century... Lee Bates' recent 45 on Sansu is worth investigating. It set one Wavelength staffer with the initials A.S. into heart palpitations... Bobby Mitchell is back on his feet after a lengthy illness, back at work and singing occasionally.

WRNO is treating a number of their best advertisers on a trip to Cancun, Mexico. John Kelley of Tipitina's will be joining the excursion.

Jimmy's on Willow has expanded. With the new stage location and rearranging there's more room for dancing... Willie Tee is playing at the Racquets Bar of the Fountain Bay Hotel Mondays through Fridays 7-11 and Saturday 9-2 a.m.
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