Wavelength (July 1982)

Connie Atkinson

University of New Orleans

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WAVELENGTH / JULY 1982
To The Editor:

The other night I ventured out in search of entertainment with my friends Ray Moan and Pepe L.P. We soon found ourselves at Tupelo’s Tavern and desirous to go in as The Radiators were filling even the street with that Fish Head music. We received our stamps and despite the reservations of others were allowed in.

I was prepared for a fun-filled evening of dancing to the Radiators or “The Rads” as was popular parlance at Tupelo’s. However, I discovered that dancing is no longer a proper mode of participation for the active audience member. Much to my chagrin dancing has become passe. It seems dancing has been replaced and the dance floors commandeered for an entirely new activity. Unfortunately, this new activity requires equipment and this is what presents a perplexing problem for me and many of my friends.

What I am sincerely hoping is that you, here at Wavelength, can help me with this problem of equipment. You see, it seemed just about everyone else had and was playing either an air guitar or air drums. I’ve looked all through the ads in “New Orleans Music Magazine” but still can’t find anyone or place who sells air guitars or air drums. Now, I’ve been wondering if maybe some of your friends know where I can purchase some air equipment. I know Birkenstock used to refurbish old sandals, and I was wondering if I bought a new pair could I get a complimentary air instrument of my choice. I saw in your magazine that Werlein’s has “Exciting New Electronic Keyboards,” but they don’t mention air keyboards. Suppose I purchased an air keyboard from Werlein’s, would I get any free lessons on how to play it? What if I were to go ask the folks at the Red Star Co. for an air guitar. I don’t know who manufactures air equipment or the best names to buy. I would like to purchase only quality air equipment. Does an air guitar require a special air amplifier?

I hope you understand the dilemma in which I found myself. I looked through the Dixie Roto and still not a clue. Perhaps, an old issue of Rolling Stone discussed air instruments? Any information you could give would help. I couldn’t even find anything in The Whole Earth Catalogue, which begins to make me wonder if this is an Uptown Phenomenon and in that case, never mind—you see, my friends and I, we from the Gentilly Side of Town, so the only alligators we interested in are the kind popped on the dance floor.

Hopefully,
Sheila Dew

To The Editor:

For a magazine that seems to be so knowledgeable and respectful of real American roots music, I’d think you would be aware of the American band, and that you would know that Terry Adams of NRBO wrote “Me And The Boys.” It was covered by Bonnie Raitt recently, too.

Sylvia Syms
New York City, N.Y.

In WL 20 we referred to Dave Edmunds taking “a stab at Seventies English rock with ‘Me And The Boys.’” Our mistake, sorry. — ED.

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Sunday 4
• Richard Dimplesfield and the Whispers, Saenger Theatre.
• Lacey J. Dalton, Riverboat President.

Thursday 8
• George Carlin, Saenger Theatre, 8:00.
• Lacey J. Dalton, Riverboat President.

Friday, Saturday, 9, 10
• O’Jays, Atlantic Star, Patrice Rushen, Saenger Theatre.

Wednesday 14
• Kansas and Survivor, Municipal Auditorium.

Saturday 17
• Flora Purim and Arito and Joe Farrell, Trinity’s, Baton Rouge.

Saturday 24
• Van Halen, Gulf Coast Coliseum, Biloxi.
• Frankie Valli, Saenger Theatre.

Tuesday 27
• Defunkt, Jimmy’s.
• Steel Pulse, Tipitina’s.

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The Blue Vipers
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Spencer Bohren
The Cobras
Dirty Dozen Brass Band
French Market Jazz Band
Anson Funderburgh & The Rockets
Jasmine
The Juke Jumpers
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The scene was New Orleans music at its best. People jammed the club, their motion on the dance floor like the flowing tides of a musical current. The band was charged up, playing to the moment, intense while relaxed. Each song induced successively more exciting ripples to weave their way through the crowd. It was the magic of performers and audience finding the same place, and having a helluva time being there.

Yet there was another, contradictory flavor running through the evening, like a counterpoint out of sync with the melody. For though the event was officially a celebration, it was a celebration of the end of the road for one of New Orleans' most popular bands. It was a Landing Party, the final performance of Li'l Queenie.

Everyone's favorite question was "Why are they breaking up?"

No one's going to like the answer. It involves broken agreements, shoddy semi-professionalism, questionable contracts, missed opportunities; it has reached the point where it is out of the hands of the principals involved and into those of lawyers and judges, in the form of a lawsuit by former band manager Ric Scheurich against pianist/vocalist John Magnie, lead singer Leigh Harris, and drummer Kenneth Blevins. It is without a doubt, New Orleans music at its worst.

Li'l Queenie and the Percolators began almost exactly five years ago. Primarily, the band was Leigh Harris ("Li'l Queenie") and John Magnie; they wrote much of the material, and were the only constants among the twenty or more musicians associated with the group at one time or another. Drummer Kenneth Blevins joined about two years ago, as did guitarist Tommy Malone, though on a part-time basis at first. Bassist Rickey Cortes replaced John Meunier a little over a year ago. Horn players "came and went like a Mardi Gras parade," according to Harris, though sax player Fred Kemp was probably the longest tenured horn man in the band.

In June 1980, the band signed a con-
It was New Orleans music at its best and its worst.

of the end of the road for one of New Orleans’ most popular bands.

Scheurich claims to have spent $24,683.00, covering band expenses, salaries, equipment, stage dress, etc., as well as ten thousand dollars on studio time which is not germane to the lawsuit. He also states that beginning in September 1980, he stopped being paid as per terms of the contract, and has received only two hundred dollars since then. He further claims that he exercised a right to extend the original contract through June 1983 (though the lawsuit only asks for payment through November 1981), and that payment should be at fifteen percent, a figure agreed upon when he stopped receiving his regular ten percent commission. The investment and salary are what he is attempting to recover in the suit — along with fifty thousand dollars in alleged damages.

Scheurich and Magnie do not deny that Scheurich is due to receive some money, but they consider his dollar figures to be extreme. They point out that from a career perspective, the band was in essentially the same place when Scheurich left as when he signed on. Magnie’s impression is that while Scheurich meant well, he was not capable of promoting their type of band successfully.

The first major event for the band after the start of Scheurich’s association with them was a trip to New York, their second, where they had five nights booked. His role was limited to being the band’s attorney, handling business matters so the Percolators could concentrate on the music. Unfortunately, after the band got to New York, the gigs were cancelled (the band wasn’t new wave enough); when alternative gigs were discussed, Scheurich demanded that the money due for the original dates be paid first. The money was anted up, but not until it was too late to salvage any New York bookings. What began as a promising venue for career advancement had fallen through completely.

Upon returning to New Orleans, Li’l Queenie and the Percolators created a five tune demo tape, funded by Scheurich, which was shopped around to record companies. By this point Scheurich’s role had evolved to that of manager; as Magnie puts it, “we both kind of backed into the situation.” At one point, a showcase performance was hastily arranged for record execs passing through the city. The band had one day’s notice; the show, put on at a local club on a weekend, was flat, and no contract appeared.

A few months later, in December 1980, the band again went to New York, by way of Rhode Island, with a fresh line-up. Perhaps too fresh, as only three weeks of rehearsals preceded the tour. “Getting the band to practice was almost impossible,” says Scheurich. “Apart from those three weeks, I could count on one hand the number of times they got together.” This is a charge that is leveled frequently at New Orleans musicians. Scheurich says a number of recording industry people were present at these New York shows, “but stage fright or something got to them (the band), and they were real flat again.”

Interestingly, the reasons cited by various record companies for turning Li’l Queenie and the Percolators down, according to letters on file in Scheurich’s office, were more to do with the material than performance. The consensus was that the band’s sound was not commercial enough — there was no instantly recognizable hit single. But Magnie and Harris say that was never their objective anyway.

Shortly after this time, Scheurich’s association with the band was terminated. Though no one has a clear concept of exactly when this was, it happened between January and March of 1981. Scheurich began attempting to get what he thought he was entitled to almost immediately. On May 13th, he sent Magnie a telegram forbidding Magnie, Harris or Blevins to use the name Li’l Queenie and the Percolators. Soon the situation deteriorated further, into threats of legal action.

A complicated series of negotiations took place, in an attempt to settle the matter without going to court. A further element of dispute was injected when Magnie and Harris lined up some potential new backers (including their parents) and were ready to go into the studio. The result would have been a complete album, produced by Dr. John, promoted by the band. According to Magnie, Scheurich’s demands — which had always included a percentage of future earnings — escalated as the band’s situation grew more promising. The Percolators were faced with making an album whose profits could possibly be seized by someone they clearly regarded as an enemy. The strain on Harris was such that she “threw up at least once a day, just from thinking about it.” Magnie claims that by December Scheurich knew the band was in a “record or break up situation,” and pressed his demands. Magnie claims the suit was officially filed in December.

Scheurich’s side of it is that he nearly reached settlement with the Percolators’ new lawyers this year. “We were 24 hours away,” he says, “the only thing left was to cross the t’s and dot the i’s.” He states that he didn’t want any percentage specifically off the record, just the general future earnings clause. But when it looked like a settlement might be reached, it fell through; Scheurich attributes this to the new investors pulling out (which Magnie flatly denies), “although I don’t see how I could have touched the new money. But with their (the band’s) past history, I wanted the agreement signed, sealed and delivered before I’d withdraw the suit, and their investors weren’t willing to wait.” Magnie says he and Harris would have used the new money to buy out the contract, but that Scheurich asked too much. Ultimately, they decided to pack it in and let the matter go to court.

The real key to this entire mess is the timing. When the Percolators were faced
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with a major career opportunity in the
form of the prospective album, Scheurich's claims gained considerable
leverage. In pursuit of what he considers
rightly his, he used that leverage to force
the issue. "I did not want to file the suit,"
his says, "but it was the only way to
recoup some of the losses." The reaction
was, after considerable anguish on the
part of Harris and Magnie, to scrap first
the plans for the album and then the
whole band. Although all the Percolators
had input, the decision seems to have been
largely John Magnie's.

Magnie and Harris are somewhat bitter
about the forced breakup, as one would
expect, but not all shook up about it.
They are currently working as a trio with
rhythm guitarist Bruce MacDonald, play-
ing quieter jazzy-bluesy material than the
Percolators. Harris views this as "an
evolution which would have occurred
anyway — this just speeded it up. Our
consciousness has changed in five years.
An R&B revival can only last so long,
and it was time to move. Johnny and I
aren't even writing in that style any
more." Similarly, guitarist Tommy
Malone (who may be playing with Exuma
by the time you read this) noted that
"the change has been in the works, though the
timing was abrupt." Band dates for the
rest of the month were simply cancelled.
Several members thought the band might
regroup in one form or another, but the
possibility seems remote. Bassist Cortes is
playing in the house band at Trinity in
Baton Rouge, and drummer Blevins is
temporarily in Montreal.

Ric Scheurich still feels "the only way
Leigh and John are going to make it is
with a strong hand behind them to guide
them." As for the breakup, "I hated to
see it, but that's the way it goes. They
were one of my favorite bands — that's
why I got involved — and it certainly
doesn't benefit me to have them split up. I
don't consider myself responsible for
them breaking up, I don't even feel
responsible for them not getting the
record deal. Indirectly, yeah, I guess I'm
responsible, but in the business world
there are certain commitments you have
to stand by. I'll probably be cast as the
heavy, but I don't feel I deserve
it."

So off it goes to the courts. Trial has
been set for November. There are no win-
ers on the scoreboard, only losers: the
musicians, the many music lovers in our
city, the city itself as one more jewel is
plucked from its often thorny musical
crown. In reality, it all ended on a hot
Monday night at Tipitina's. The sign
onstage read "Li'l Queenie: Gone but Not
Beheaded." The emotions were bit-
tersweet, flooded with glorious music
weighted with a cutting air of finality.
One last "Wild Natives," one last "Chain
of Fools." One last "Iko Iko." And
finally, one last luscious, teary "My
Darlin' New Orleans," the band's great
legacy to New Orleans music. Then the
Landing Party, the end of the five year
flight, was over. As Leigh Harris said,"this bird has flown."
From Eddie Shuler's Lake Charles studio came some of the earliest recordings of Southwest Louisiana Cajun and rock 'n' roll music.

Most of the musical activity around Lake Charles, Louisiana, centers around Quick Service T.V. on Church Street. There you'll find Eddie Shuler either fixing a television set, tending to some mail-order record business or producing a record session.

Behind the televisions, you'll find all the Goldband records you want. At the side of the building in a converted garage is a recording studio, which is usually busy at night and on weekends. If you want to meet or hear musicians in Lake Charles, you could look in the dance halls and bars, but better yet, just hang around Eddie's shop and wait for them to stop by, because besides being the proprietor of Quick Service T.V., Eddie Shuler is owner of Goldband records, the historic label that recorded some of the earliest Southwest Louisiana Cajun and rock 'n' roll music.

There's still plenty of music in the area, some of it very good, but it has to be sniffed out. Li'l Alfred and Katie Webster have a regular gig at The Bamboo in downtown Lake Charles, as well as working one-nighters occasionally. Joel Sonnier, "The Cajun Valentino," plays in and around Lake Charles with Robert Bertrand's band. Warren Storm and Al Ferrier, both Louisiana rock 'n' roll veterans, keep busy weekends just as they have for the past twenty years.

Don La Fleur, Eddie Shuler's latest find, may be around, but more often than not he will be playing out in East Texas where French music is in biggest demand. In nearby Vinton, Louisiana, the Texas Pelican Club has live music with Johnnie Allen a regular attraction. In Iowa, Louisiana, Club 90 features French bands regularly as does Bushnell's, which houses zydeco groups. Just drive around until you hear that wailing sound.

Eddie Shuler, the man behind Goldband, is a one-man record company. He has been involved in the area's music since he moved from Texas in 1942. Since then he has probably done more to promote Cajun music than anyone else.

Shuler was the first Cajun record entrepreneur and label owner. He has recorded some of the greatest music in the state of Louisiana. In the Cajun field, such artists as Iry LeJune, Nathan Abshire, Boozoo Chavis, Cleveland Crochet and Joel Sonnier have recorded for him. He's also cut some splendid blues by Clarence Garlow, Guitar Junior, Jimmy Wilson, Hop Wilson, Katie Webster and Rockin' Sydney. The rockabilly and rock
It is perhaps ironic that Eddie is not a Cajun, but he explained how he got involved with Cajun music. "I came to Lake Charles as a drag line operator at a defense plant. I was riding to work with a fellow who played with the Hackberry Ramblers (a popular string band led by Luderin Darbone) and asked them if they would be interested in recording some of the songs I had written on an acetate disk, so I'd have something to show my grandchildren."

Everyone in the group but the vocalist was interested in the songs. Consequently, he quit the band and Eddie was approached about the vacancy. He accepted, though hesitantly because he couldn't speak French. "I could sing the words but I didn't know what they meant." Occasionally this led to problems as the enthusiastic dancers tried to converse with Shuler in French. "The bandleader would tell them I couldn't speak French, and they thought we were putting them on. They would be pretty looted up, and it got pretty scary sometimes."

That wasn't the only problem Shuler had. "I played the saxophone but I had to switch to the guitar, because the country people didn't like the saxophone. They'd say 'What dat' ting'? They'd pour beer in it and everything.'"

Shuler persevered, though, and eventually gave up his day job as the group continued to be one of the top draws in the area. After a long stint with the Ramblers, Shuler began working as a disc jockey, hosting a live country and western show on radio station KPLC, where Shuler met the man who was destined to change his life — Iry LeJune.

LA VALSE DE CAJUN

Iry LeJune was born on October 28, 1928, and lived on his father's small farm near Church Point. His father taught him to play accordion at an early age. Since LeJune was nearly blind, music became his livelihood and sole enjoyment.

His biggest influence was Amedie Ardoin, the great black accordion player. It was from Ardoin that he took his singing and basic accordion style, though LeJune was more nimble in his playing.

LeJune became a popular entertainer at local dances during the 1940s. Ironically, at this time accordion music was dying out and the Cajun people didn't want to hear accordion music. Fiddle music was popular. LeJune tried to learn the fiddle but finally abandoned it, feeling he could make it with the accordion.

In 1948, LeJune moved to Lacassine near Lake Charles and began sitting in with larger groups. Later that year he went to Houston and talked himself onto the opera label where he recorded "Love Bridge Waltz" with Virgil Bozman's Oklahoma Tornadoes. The record turned out to be a hit and became a turning point for LeJune and French music. It was the first time in ten years that the accordion had been recorded. LeJune stayed in Houston enjoying his hit, playing nightspots and small dances, before returning to Lake Charles in 1949.

On his return he approached Shuler about appearing on his broadcast. The station didn't like the music, but the audience did and demanded more. The Cajuns around Lake Charles got together and bought time. Within a year there were eight hours of Cajun music on the air daily.

"I felt sorry for the kid," recalled Shuler. "He was nearly blind and had no other way to make money. Iry came to me and said, 'I want to make some records, and I want you to make 'em.'"

"I told him, 'I don't know anything about makin' no records.' "I know where you can get it pressed and everything," he told me."

"I agreed, 'cause there was nobody down here making French records. We had it all to ourselves. Before, the big companies like RCA and Okeh would come down here with a tape recorder and pay the people $25. That's the way they did the Hackberry Ramblers."

"But like any other type of music it has its peaks and lows. Well, I got in when it hit bottom. Nobody was interested in it 'cause there just wasn't any money in it. So the conglomerates weren't interested."

Shuler and LeJune came to New Orleans for their first session. "They had a studio on the top floor of Godchaux's, on Canal Street. We had an old disc recorder, and I'd set it in the middle of the floor, and place all the musicians around the microphone and get 'em where they all sounded equal."

The duo released "Calcasieu Waltz" and "Lascassine Special" on the Folk Star label. Shuler made $75 and LeJune got plenty of publicity for dances. LeJune began traveling all over South Louisiana filling dates. Suddenly fiddle music was on the way out. Nathan Abshire and Lawrence Walker made records with accordions but neither could touch LeJune for consistent sales, or popularity.

Shuler continued cutting LeJune in radio stations with a wire recorder, and later with a primitive tape recorder in LeJune's kitchen, where the popular "Durald Waltz" was recorded.

In 1954 at the height of his career, Iry LeJune was killed while returning from a dance with J.B. Fuselier from Eunice, Louisiana. "They was comin' home on old Highway 90," explained Shuler. "They had a flat comin' back where they was widenin' the highway, and they couldn't get off. Well, they was tryin' to change the tire when a guy came along goin' 90 miles an hour and hit 'em and knocked Iry into the field. That was the end of him."
There was a sudden demand for LeJune records and sales hit an all-time high, as public appreciation of his talent, belatedly, grew. Now 27 years later, his records still outsell most French musicians, and can be still heard on many jukeboxes in Southwest Louisiana. Instead of dying out, his popularity has grown. If you don't have an Iry LeJune record in your collection, you'd better correct the situation immediately.

**LET'S GO BOPPIN' TONIGHT**

Goldband's biggest rockabilly artist was, and still is, Al Ferrier and His Boppin' Billies. Born in 1935, Al was a regular attraction on the Louisiana Hayride, along with one Elvis Presley. He began recording at Goldband in 1955, and is still recording at Goldband to this day.

Ferrier has to be rated as one of the top rockabilly artists of all time as anyone who listens to his records will testify. His biggest early records, "Let's Go Boppin' Tonight," "No No Baby" and "Honey Baby," are all classics. He is still a popular attraction in the Lake Charles vicinity, and his latest release, "Rockabilly Blues," is a real treat.

**FAMILY RULES**

Other lesser known blues artists who cut for Goldband were Juke Boy Bonner, Left Handed Charlie, Mad Dog Sheffield, Big Chenier (Clifton's uncle), and steel guitarist Hop Wilson, all who recorded outstanding records. Shuler also had a fair-sized hit with Big Walter Price's "Shirley Jean."

Shuler's biggest record ever was the classic Louisiana ballad "Family Rules," recorded in 1956. The artist was Guitar Junior, who surfaced twenty years later in Chicago as Lonnie Brooks. Eddie still loves to tell the Guitar Junior story. "Man, Guitar Jr. did a fantastic job," began Eddie. "We were going real gone with him. But right in the middle of the thing he wanted to get on a major label. Well, I told him the grass wouldn't necessarily be greener on the other side, but I'd try. So I got him with Mercury, but I said, 'Don't go tryin' to come back here.' So guess what? For the next ten years, Junior called me every three or four months tryin' to get back on Goldband.

"Guitar Junior also had big hits with "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down," "The Crawl," and "Roll, Roll, Roll." All his Goldband releases were excellent examples of South Louisiana rhythm and blues.

**BON TON ROULE**

Shuler built up an impressive roster of blues artists. He got into blues the same way he did Cajun music. "There just wasn't any place for these people to record," he exclaimed. "I just sat here and they came to me.

"The first thing we had was this 'Big Leg Mama,' by James Freeman, and I liked what he was doin'. Next we had a big hit with Jimmy Wilson who cut Clarence Garlow's 'Please Accept My Love.'"

Garlow became the resident blues guitarist and songwriter around Goldband's studio. Now 62, Garlow lives in nearby Beaumont, Texas, where he runs a radio repair shop and still picks up the guitar on occasion. He still speaks French and English, so the zydeco influence was always in him. After being a postman for eight years, Clarence took T-Bone Walker's advice and got a band together.

Before coming to Goldband, Garlow had a big national hit in 1949, with "Bon Ton Roule," on Macy's, which guaranteed him plenty of work along the Gulf Coast. After Macy's folded, he recorded for J.D. Miller before becoming an on-again, off-again feature in Lake Charles. He also recorded for Aladdin and Flair.

In the late Fifties, Garlow moved to California for a short time but returned to Beaumont, where he became a DJ.

His guitar style became a major influence on many modern guitarists.

**PECHAUCHE AU TANTE NAVA**

Shuler's method of distribution in the late 1940s was by selling the discs (his only) from the trunk of his car. With LeJune's records doing well, Shuler could afford to cut more records, himself included.

"LeJune's records were the sustaining
Shuler's next big Cajun artist was accordionist Sidney Brown, who became popular in the early 1950s. Brown was a self-taught musician who came to Shuler's attention just after the success of Iry LeJune. With his group, the Traveling Playboys he cut many fine sides including "Peachauche Au Tante Nava," "La Valse De Meche" and the rollicking "Rolling Pin Special." He became very popular, especially after the death of LeJune. He retired from music in 1963 after an illness, and opened a workshop repairing the instrument on which he became famous. Brown died just over a year ago; however he left on record some of the finest French music over recorded.

Shuler couldn't follow it up and he returned to Goldband in 1965, recording everything from soul to Cajun. Although he never had another big record, all his records had a somewhat hypnotic effect even when he hit those sour notes.

During the Sixties, Rockin' Sydney was a colorful character resplendent in a gold lame suit and a huge silver turban. His group was a popular regional attraction.

Today Rockin' Sydney is still active in the Lake Charles music business. He now runs Lake City Music, where he sells records, instruments, and various electronic equipment. He now produces records on himself and other groups for his own label. Most weekends he sits in on organ or harp in a number of lounges around town playing whatever the crowd calls for. (While in Ville Platte I found Sydney's new lp Joy to the South on his Bally Hoo label. Review to follow so stay tuned.)
tapes makes me shake my head in disbelief.

"The first rockabilly group I had was a duo called Bill and Carol out of Texas. I mean that cat Carol was a fine guitar player, but he was an alcoholic, so they didn't really get off the ground.

"Jivin' Gene cut his first record here but he was under age when he cut it and we couldn't get consent from his parents.

"Gene Terry and the Downbeats were very big in this area. They had a bunch of hits like "Cindy Lou," "No Mail Today," — a bunch of great things."

Other big rockabilly finds were Larry Hart who had "Coffins Have No Pockets," Johnny Jane, who is best known for "Mabel's Gone," and who is now the biggest Cajun DJ in Texas. Jay Chevalier also scored with the humorous "Castro Rock."

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NO BREAD, NO MEAT

One thing that Eddie Shuler and I found out we had in common was a fascination for Katie Webster. Not much happens in Lake Charles during the week, but I was lucky enough to catch her with Li'l Alfred's group in the spacious "Bamboo," downtown one Thursday night. I wasn't quite prepared for what I heard. Although I was familiar with her fine backing for a number of Louisiana artists, what I heard dumbfounded me. She displayed more talent and enthusiasm in one evening than most artists can muster in a career. Frankly, Katie Webster is a female Muddy Waters!

Now an energetic and proud 41, Katie was born in Houston, but started her professional musical career when she moved to Lake Charles in the late Fifties. Katie came up playing piano in a religious family of ten. Fats Domino was an early inspiration for Katie. Although her folks were upset about Katie playing blues, they finally encouraged her in that direction.

"I was a teenager going to school," related Katie between sets, "I was workin' in a club in Beaumont, Texas, when Ashton Savoy saw me and asked me if I wanted to work with their group in Lake Charles. I told 'em I would, just as soon as I finished school.

"So I did. That's the guy I cut 'No Bread, No Meat,' and 'I Need You,
Baby,' with. That was for J.D. Miller in Crowley." Originally Katie approached Shuler about recording at Goldband, but he sent her over to Miller, because he wasn't interested in recording women at the time.

Once Miller heard Katie play, he installed her as a more or less permanent fixture in the studio as she doubled on organ and piano. "I recorded with Lightnin' Slim, Clifton Chenier, Lonesome Sundown, Warren Storm — just so many of them.

"See Mr. Miller had a certain group of musicians he would use on his sessions. Basically it was me, Warren Storm on drums, Al Foreman on guitar, and sometimes a horn player. We'd go in the studio at eight o'clock in the morning and have lunch right in there, and go till eight at night. My fingers would be bleedin', the bass players fingers would be bleedin', Warren Storm would have big knots in his hands."

When not in Crowley working sessions, she was in Lake Charles working on Shuler's records. There practically wasn't a record released in South Louisiana in the late Fifties or Sixties that Katie didn't play on.

When the session work slowed, Katie hit the road with a number of soul groups, including Sam and Dave and Percy Sledge. She also played with Otis Redding, and recalls waiting at the gig in Wisconsin when they got word that his plane had crashed.

Today she still works on many sessions and Goldband releases a steady stream of her fine records. Still a popular attraction in Southwest Louisiana, she can be heard singing and playing most nights. Recently she had just returned from a nine-week tour of Germany, and enjoyed a fine performance at the Jazz Festival. As far as I'm concerned, Katie is the best female blues artist active today.

"SUGAR BEE"

Shuler remains the first man to ever get a true Cajun record into the national charts, with the now acknowledged classic "Sugar Bee," credited to Cleveland Crochet. According to Shuler it was no easy task. "I knew I had a hit, but when I recorded it I had one of the guys in Cleveland's band, Jay Stutes, sing it. We were all pretty looped when we cut it and Cleveland's fiddle sounded terrible, and I had to leave it out of the record when I mixed it. So Cleveland wasn't even on his biggest record!

"I took it to all the radio stations in Louisiana and nobody would play it. I said, 'Look I got a hit record here I want you to play it.' But they all brushed me off. They wouldn't even play a Cajun record in Louisiana!

"Well, I showed them, though. I took it to Clarence Garlow over in Beaumont and he played it and that thing took off like wildfire. It still sells today all over the world."
HITS AND MISSES

When it comes to stories about the record business, Eddie Shuler has the best. One of his favorites concerns Dolly Parton.

"I was the first one to record her," smiled Shuler. "Her uncle was stationed down here in the army, and came by the studio with a tape for me to listen to. Well, she sounded pretty good for someone that was only 13, so I agreed to make a record if he would bring her down here from Knoxville."

Goldband made just one record with Dolly, "Puppy Love" (Goldband 186). "It's a funny thing," said Shuler, pausing for effect. "Out of all the people I helped to start out she still tries to contact us somehow whenever she comes through."

The list of careers Shuler helped to launch is indeed impressive. "I recorded Mickey Gilley's first record, 'Sittin' In A Drive Inn'. When Freddie Fender was up in Angola, I went up to record him so he could get a parole."

The record that is best remembered around Lake Charles is "Sea Of Love," by Phil Philips, which rose to number two in the country in the fall of 1959, and was recently revived by Del Shannon. "That's the record that built this studio," exclaimed Shuler.

"Khoury had this song by Phillips that he wanted to cut, but he didn't have the money. Well, after we worked on it for three weeks it sounded pretty good, so I agreed to record it for the publishing. It was sellin' so fast we had to lease it to Mercury. That was one hell of a record."

Shuler narrowly missed out on a chance to record Big Bopper's "Chantilly Lace," and Rod Bernard's cover of "This Should Go On Forever," on the same day! "I was just out of town," lamented Shuler.

Shuler also overlooked the Bayou State's greatest vocal group, Cookie and The Cupcakes. "They came to me first," says Shuler. "They were called Huey..."
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Thiery and the Boogie Ramblers then. I recorded them but then they got into trouble playin' in a white club. So I got worried the Ku Klux Klan was gonna burn me out so I put 'em on the shelf.

"Well, they went over to Khouy and the first thing they had was 'Mathilda.' I missed the boat on that one, boy."

Goldband's catalog is littered with great singles and albums. Names like Danny James, Van Preston, Sunny Dupan, Nolan Cormier, and Austin Pitre among others have excellent releases on Goldband, but space limitations prevent us from doing them justice.

Goldband is still very much active, issuing new and vintage material. Shuler's two biggest Cajun artists are presently Joel Sonnier and Don La Fleur.

Sonnier, now in his thirties, has been recording since he was 13 on a number of various labels. Although he is unsurpassed on the accordion, he also is an accomplished drummer, guitarist and harp player. Listening to him it is hard to believe he is not as big as, say, Doug Kershaw. But watch out, you should hear big things from him very soon.

La Fleur is also a stalwart of the South Louisiana dance hall circuit. Somewhat akin to a Cajun Elvis Presley, he is a witty bilingual artist, as his record "Coonass from Ville Platte" indicates. Get it and see.

A young Cajun group that recently came to Shuler's attention is Tim Broussard, from nearby Iowa. In his teens, Broussard is the newest link in the Cajun tradition. Shuler admits the group needs some polish, but he can see big things from them.

In summing up his recent musical activities, Shuler says. "I've sort of been forced to cut back," pointing at a mountain of tapes. "I've got to get my catalog organized, and I'm the only guy in the world who can figure this stuff out."

Interest in his catalog has started with European reissue labels, bidding competition on some of his unissued material. Whenever he gets a spare moment, he retreats to the studio to prepare tapes to send for mastering overseas.

"I'll tell you, it's frustrating to listen to some of that stuff," says Shuler, as a Mad Dog Shefield session plays in the background. "Sometimes I'll find a Guitar Junior tape or Clarence Garlow session and wonder where in the hell it came from!

"When I got started in this business nobody was makin' these kind of records - blues, Cajun or rockabilly. The other day I walked into a record shop and saw a whole wall full of this stuff. So I guess I must have done something right!"

Eddie would be glad to send you a catalog of his records. Write to P.O. Box 1495, Lake Charles, La. 70601.
It's Spelled QUEZERQUE

Arranger/producer Wardell Quezerque's name may not be a household word, but the man largely responsible for "Big Chief," "Bare Footin'," "Misty Blue," "Mr. Big Stuff" and over forty albums has earned his place in New Orleans music history.

Although he's arranged and/or produced albums for over forty artists and was largely responsible for such memories as "Big Chief," "Bare Footin'," "Misty Blue," "Mr. Big Stuff," and "Sneakin' Sally Through the Alley," Wardell Quezerque's name is hardly a household word. He laughs at problems his name has caused him over the years. His father used to tell him that Quezerque (pronounced Ka-Zair) was a Haitian name but the son believes it's a Creole creation. While Quezerque was in the army in the early 1950s he'd answer "present, sir" during roll call before they got to his name because, as he told his sergeant, "I'm the one you can never call right." After doing some of his famous work with Jean Knight, Wardell was about to fly out of Jackson during the height of airplane hijackings, only to be stopped by a security guard reviewing the passenger list, who barked "What kind of name is that?" Wardell answered quickly, "Irish-Negro," and flew on.

Wardell didn't start out with visions of being an arranger or producer but began as a trumpet player initially taught by his older brother, Sidney. "The whole family played music; my father, who was a bricklayer, played guitar and banjo. While my mother sung, brother Leo played Dixieland drums and uncle played sax. I can't recall a Sunday when we didn't get together and have a jam session around the house." While attending Xavier Prep, Quezerque gained the attention of music teacher and trumpet player Clyde Ker, Sr., of whom he speaks with reverence. "Clyde Ker, Sr. was the kind of man who, if you had questions about music, gave the time and patience to explain things to you. I remember when I was in high school, Clyde would be behind his desk during recess arranging tunes and that was my first encounter with arranging. I had never seen a score in my life. When I had a trumpet part I would just play it, but I had no idea of how the arranger went about doing it. He (Ker) taught me arranging, period."

After getting out of the army, Wardell Quezerque attended the Grunewald School of Music in 1953. The school played a pivotal role for New Orleans musicians coming out of the service who could attend under the GI bill, with such students as bass player Peter Badie and sax men Alvin "Red" Tyler and Warren Bell, Sr., and the legendary clarinet player Willie Humphrey as a teacher.

Dave Bartholomew first introduced Quezerque to the recording business, letting him arrange Bernadine Washington (probably "He's Mine"), and then Earl King's "Trick Bag." For Imperial Records, Bartholomew, who remains a close friend of Quezerque's today, even recorded a novelty act which Wardell put together under the name of Wardell and the Sultans. The three Sultans all wore turbans and released one regional hit, "The Original Popeye," in 1962. On a more serious level, Quezerque formed The Royal Dukes of Rhythm, consisting of James Rivers and Robert Parker on tenor, Edward Frank on piano, George Davis on guitar, George French on bass and Smokey Johnson on drums, and Emery Thompson assisting on trumpet. Not surprisingly, the Royal Dukes of Rhythm were chosen as the house band by most visiting artists from 1963 through 1966, and was a favorite for big union hall gigs. With his love of strong horn and brass sections, Quezerque would often have fourteen pieces in the Royal Dukes. A reunion of the Royal Dukes of Rhythm should be a priority for organizers of next year's Jazz Festival.

Quezerque remains very modest about his own bands, remembering, "I played some trumpet and a little piano but I was more interested in the instrumentation, the arranging." In 1964 Quezerque was called upon by Cosimo Matassa for what was to be one of his most memorable arrangements, Professor Longhair's "Big Chief." The shakers you hear in the background were fashioned by brother Sidney, who put soft drink caps on large broomsticks. Wardell's talent as an arranger was put to the test as Smokey Johnson pounded his drums until his...
hands were a bloody mess and Earl King supplied the vocals and whistling. But according to Wardell Quezerque, the best kept secret about “Big Chief” is that “we had to tie Fess’s right hand to his back because he was interfering with what the band was doing. He played the whole thing with his left hand. Still we couldn’t get the sound we wanted so we sent ‘Big Chief’ to Atlanta for overdubbing and then remixed it in New Orleans.”

Also in 1964, Quezerque was flown up to Leiber and Stoller’s studio in New York by Joe Jones to arrange and rehearse the Dixie Cups. How did Quezerque succeed in making “Chapel of Love” a number one hit for the then-unknown Dixie Cups after such giants as the Crystals and Ronettes had both failed to get anywhere with the song? “That’s a difficult question to answer. When you sit down and listen at something, it’s just something that you feel. There’s an element of temperament in drawing out of the musicians what you want. Some guys think that because a musician can play, he should do things automatically. But that’s not true because if you give a musician anything he’s just going to give you his own interpretation. What you have to do is convey your interpretation to them. I know from when I first started that you can over arrange, having horns going in all kinds of directions, but really an arrangement should be part of a group or singer or tune and not outstanding. The Dixie Cups had natural talent. If you gave the lead voice an idea, something to do, the others picked it up immediately so it wasn’t really hard to work with.”

The business aspect of music is no stranger to Quezerque, who along with Clinton Scott formed NOLA records in late 1964. The label’s first release was Albert “June” Gardner’s “99 plus 1” but their first record to receive any attention was the instrumental “It Ain’t My Fault” by Smokey Johnson. In spite of its odd title for an instrumental, featuring so much drum work and the excellent alto sax highlights by Walter Kimball, the record worked musically if not commercially. NOLA also released Warren Lee’s “Every Hour Every Day,” and Willie Tee’s “Teasin’ You,” both featuring Wardell’s carefully packed horn arrangements. “Teasin’ You” was written by Earl King, who was inspired by an incident in which Huey Piano Smith was stood up by a lady friend for a date. “Teasin’ You” attracted local attention and is one of the earliest displays of Willie Tee’s extensive piano talent. However, it wasn’t until the summer of 1966 that NOLA had a commercial smash with the release of Robert Parker’s “Barefootin’” which went dancing to number seven nationally. This was especially surprising because Parker had never been thought of as a vocalist but as a sax player in Quezerque’s stable of horns. Quezerque views “Barefootin’” as the song in which he demonstrated that “I had put together a style of my own.” Although NOLA records didn’t disband until 1970, its last major release was

Contrary to popular belief, Wardell Quezerque is not part of Allen Toussaint's and Marshall Seahorn's Sansu or Sea-Saint organization. He's an independent arranger and producer who goes into the studio when requested. Quezerque relishes his status. "I like being independent. Jerry Wexler wanted me to work for Atlantic Records but I wouldn't. I can go away from New Orleans for months but I can't stay away." His independence has also allowed Wardell Quezerque room to move as he arranged two number one hits back to back, "Groove Me," by King Floyd on Chimneyville Records in 1970, and "Mr. Big Stuff" by Jean Knight on Stax, both recorded in Malaco Studios in Jackson. Also out of Jackson, Wardell arranged the string and horn work for Dorothy Moore's hit of 1978, "Misty Blue." Working at Sea-Saint Studios, Quezerque has arranged or produced such diverse acts as Albert King, the Staple Singers, Aaron Neville, Johnny Adams, and Jamaica's Mighty Diamonds. Recording the Mighty Diamonds' Ice On Fire album was particularly challenging to Wardell. "Oh man, it was funny, they couldn't understand what I'd say and I couldn't understand what they'd say but the album turned out nice." Typical understatement for an album which includes such vocal gems as "Little Angel," "Tracks of My Tears," and "Sneakin' Sally Thru the Alley."

One of Quezerque's most recent works was his string arrangements for Aaron Neville's excellent cover of "Mona Lisa" and "The Ten Commandments of Love" on the Neville Brother's Fiyo on the Bayou album. Wardell even played piano on "Ten Commandments" and traveled with the band doing most of the arranging for their live performances around the country. Aaron Neville dubbed Quezerque "the Wizard of Odds" because of his ability to get arrangements done amazingly fast. According to the Wizard, "If I have a session today, I can get up at two in the morning, unplug the phone, and have the charts done by ten in the morning. Once I start concentrating I just zip through it."

Quezerque is currently involved in a number of projects, working with old friend Dave Bartholomew and producing two new acts, Priscilla Morton, whom he describes as a "folk jazz artist," and a new group, High Potency.

How has Wardell Quezerque avoided the local problem of musical rip-off? Quezerque says he went through a few bad deals but usually had people around him to give him good advice. Wardell Quezerque hasn't just survived, but thrived. In his words, "Arranging and producing is what I've wanted to do, there's always work. I enjoy what I'm doing whether it be recording sessions or arranging live performances. When I'm on stage, I enjoy it even if no one else does." Watching Wardell Quezerque at work, I suspect he has nothing to worry about.
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SECOND LINE

Cutting the
e, Ike and Pat with Bertha just behind us silently walked on down the street moving real slowly with the band. The cornet was held high in the air and had a piece of purple (faded purple or maybe even sunbleached royal blue) ribbon tied beneath the second valve. They were playing hard with their jaws puffed out and we walked beside them. I was trying to catch who was playing what notes but I could only hear the melodies comingling, fusing and becoming indistinguishable one from another. The band marched solemnly slow.

We stepped slowly and the saxophone began sounding like Albert Ayler in his meditative moments, low and deep, full of shaking vibrato and immense feeling. The keening saxophone was a mournful sound. The player was old but the sound was surprisingly strong, especially coming out of a tarnished silver tenor that had keys held together with red rubber bands and body-heated air blown through its curves, the breath of a fifty-nine-year-old "negro" man, his fingers working in concert with his breathing to produce this sound. He eyed me over his glasses, a white and black marching cap slightly tilted keeping the sun out of his eyes.

We were turtle-marching our way out to wide Orleans Avenue and going past the city's old auditorium and an empty lot where Rev. somebody-or-the-other was in town holding revival services at night in what looked like an old circus tent. The tent's sides were rolled up and a few tobacco-colored folding chairs lay stacked against the white painted center pole.

We could see Jerome up ahead, his body dipping on the beats as the old men played their dirge. I was watching Jerome march, his long body immersed in the flood of bloods dancing to some cemetery. Jerome had danced with death prancing at his side innumerable times before during the freedom rides and sit-ins when he was with CORE. His ragged head had been bloodied many times and his body was used to jerking, trying to relax beneath the cruel crack of the nightstick, visibly flinching to bear the pain. Now he was bent at the waist, mostly his chest was moving, and he was doing a step that was probably as close to shuffling as he had ever come in his life. Later after it was over, beads of sweat would surface, popping out from the dark of his unshaded head.

"Where ya at?"
"Hey, ma-an."
"How you feel?"
"Feels good. Good. Feel damn good."

And then our paths which had just crossed would have uncrossed and I would wonder just how good he was really feeling, would wonder if he had discontinued using the medication he had to take to ease the Mississippi hurt that still stung his body long, long after every hamburger stand was integrated, or "desegregated" as he would probably say. You could tell it was Jerome up there rocking back, lurching forward and weaving in and out even though you couldn't see his face, you could tell it was Jerome just from the way his head looked (that is you could tell him if you knew him 'cause you would never forget the way his head looked, it looked like that) — anyway, Jerome was up front marching. Jerome marched like how they march in church, dignified as they wanted to be and yet still at the same time, very, very down. The procession rounded corners slowly, at a gentle tilt like a waiter with a heavy tray full of food weaving expertly through a crowded dining room.

"They gon cut the body loose!"

One short brother with a big mustache was running up and down the second liners and the rest of the procession was going to dance on back to some bar not too far away.

"They gon cut the body loose, y'all."

The marshal, out in front of the hearse, was draped in a blue-black suit that was a little too big and too long but which was
all the better to dance with. He wore yellow socks and brown shoes as a crazy combination of his own.

After the body was cut loose, the steps he invented with his hat flipped jauntily over his forearm were amazing contortions of knees, shins, and flying feet. He executed those moves with the straightest bored nonchalant don't-give-a-damn look I had ever seen on anybody's face what was doing as much as he was doing under this merciless hot sun. He had somebody by him fanning and wiping his face after every series of grief-inspired movements. He looked so sad to be dancing so hard and making so many others of us smile as we watched him and tried to imitate some of his easier and more obvious moves but couldn't. He was the coolest person in that street marching toward a bar two or three blocks away under a two-thirty p.m. New Orleans summer sun. The coolest.

So we stood in a line and the second liners were shouting, "open it up, open it up," meaning for the people in front to get out the way so the hearse could pass with the body. After the hearse was gone we turned the corner and dancing down to a bar where two of the younger trumpeters engaged in a short duel at the bar house door. The older of the two won 'cause he not only had the chops to blow high and strong but he had the fingers and the knowledge that let you know he knew what he was doing when he began whipp ing out those wild runs. You can't really describe it all, especially when we were marching and it seemed that all the horns were going for themselves but were really together. And free, wide open, shouting. Nowhere else in this country were people dancing in the streets after someone had died. Nowhere else was the warm smell of cold beer on tap a fitting conclusion for the funeral of a friend. Nowhere else was death so pointedly belittled. One of us dying was only a small matter, an occasion for the rest of us to make music and dance. Nothing could kill us all. Nothing could keep us contained. With this spirit and this music in us, Black people would never die, never die, never.

Like a sudden urge to defecate and with the intensity of an ejaculation, an explosive sound erupted from the crowd. People spontaneously answered the traditional call of the second line trumpet.

''Are you still alive?''
''YEAH!''
''Do we like to live?''
''YEAH!''
''Do you want to dance?''
''YEAH!''
''Well damn it, let's go!''

And the trumpet broke into a famous chorus that was maybe a hundred years ago.

''Ta-dant Dant Dant
Dant Dant Dant
Ta-dant Dant Dant, Dant
Dant, daDant''

And old bass drummer with a black coat-hanger wire in one hand and a damp drum mallet in the other, his biceps knot-
ted up beneath a sweat-drenched white Arrow dress shirt, was beating the cadence of his ancestors. A cadence, a sh'-nuff-for-real-live beat. A beat. A sound that set us jumping like beads of perspiration jumping from the grey head of an elderly cook onto the top of a greasy hot cast iron hotel stove.

"BaBOOM BaBOOM
BabubuBOOM
BaBOOM BaBOOM"

The drummer was saying, the drum skin vibrating real tough, the band's name painted on the head a blur of motion. The trumpeter was taunting us now and the older people were jumping from their front porches as we passed them, and they were answering that blaring hot high taunt with unmistakable fires blazing in their six-year-old black eyes. They too danced as we passed them. They did the dances of their lives, the dances they used to celebrate how old they had become and what they had seen getting to their whatever number years. The dances they used to defy death. The hip shakings whose function was to lure men, demonstrate their loving abilities and make babies. A sixty-year-old woman shook her hips and clapped her hands high over her head as our noisemaking passed her porch. She was up on her feet, a small child, perhaps her granddaughter whom she was caring for while her daughter worked, was looking at her, and ma-mi, and grand maw, or aunt T., or whatever she was called was on her feet dancing, nimbly dancing for maybe a whole minute or so. Not too long but nevertheless strong.

We were all ecstatic. We could see the bar. We knew it was ending, we knew we were almost there and defiantly we danced harder anyway. We hollered back even that much louder at the trumpeter as he squeezed out the last brassy blasts his lungs could throw forth. The end of the funeral was near, just as the end of life was near some of us but it did not matter. When we get there, we'll get there. Meanwhile, the drums were talking and we were listening to the old code, the bamboula beat,

"BaBOOM (tah) BaBOOM (tah)
BOOMBOOM BOOM
BaBOOM (tah) BaBOOM (tah)
BOOMBOOM BOOM"

We was looking good. Black people be looking good dancing in the street. One of us dropped an umbrella and lots of us went down real low like you do the duck walk but dancing and circling all around that umbrella, legs shot out straight and stiff, but steady stepping in time. Another was prostrate, like in a push-up position, worshipping the god of ear-thiness. This was the alligator, the ancient Egyptian symbol for Abyssinian folk. It was a mean position, mouth inches above the earth, extremeties stretched, and up and down and sideways sway, sort of like churching butter, but this was better. His palms didn't mind the heat of the concrete. The echo of the prone brother's voice praying in this ancient way was join-
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better to be there as necessary professional participant instead of being a voyeur or a dilettante looking for another experience to trophy in conversation with envious friends.

Ike danced his ass off and Kush, who never usually missed a second line, got there late. Kush asked who had died and we told him we didn't know. We really didn't know even though we had seen a small gold-framed picture being held out of the front window of the hearse by some relative as it passed by us. We didn't even know what instrument the brother had played.

But we knew it was important to be there. I should say we felt it was important to be there because there is so much we don't really know. We don't really know or understand how all of this hooks up, it's meaning. But we feel its importance and smile at it and go with it 'cause it's good. Dancing is good. Music is good. Shaking in the sun is good. Shouting and second lining together is good. So we go with it and are never disappointed by being together like this.

The trumpeter was doing his crazy runs again and people were courteously pushing to get into the bar but they were letting the marshal, the distant relatives and the band go in first. The two trumpeters were the last of the band to go in. At the doorway they turned to blow their parting shots at us. A duel began.

People hollered out after the notes of whichever trumpeter they favored had gone ringing out, riding high over the telephone wires. I was laughing 'cause the older brother was winning. His last run had almost nearly followed the twisting quick kind of flight of a mockingbird catching mosquito hawks at dawn except say that bird would have had to be as big as an ostrich or something to match how huge a sound the brother had. The loser ducked his head. The peak of the older man's top lip was pink from the pressure of playing many years at different funerals and dances and lawn parties and hotels. He had been playing that horn a long, long time. I saw him smile as he had just bested young brotherman who looked like he was only nineteen or twenty.

"Can you beat that?" his eyes said. His weathered face broke out smiling. He had just played some kind of horn. Everybody felt like laughing with him remembering the clarion calls he had put down. We laughed. We all felt good. Some of us hummed. "Can you beat that. Ha-ha. Not today, you can't youngblood. But maybe another day you will, but not today. I'm old but I got what you got to get old to get. Can you beat that. Not today. Ha-ha. Yeah." Love was in his eyes, musta been love, his arm was around the young brother's shoulders and they were grinning in each other's face, lips wide, noses inches apart, hats way back on their heads, two horns held down by their thighs as they stepped 'cross the bar threshold together. Can't beat that.

The funeral ended with us smiling and laughing at each other in the street.

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WAVELENGTH / JULY 1982
MARDI GRAS -- THE MOVIE

A s far as anybody who cares about such things can figure out, the earliest use of the New Orleans Carnival as background for a motion picture was by the noted Kalem Company, which let out with something called Mardi Gras Mixup back in the spring of 1912. After that, of course, it got to be open season.

During the next four and a half decades, New Orleans movies were being spit out like prune seeds. No fewer than 90 picture shows between 1912 and 1958 featured the city as a primary setting. At least half of these presented Mardi Gras in some fashion. And of that number, more than half were musicals.

That it took so infernally long for Hollywood to hook onto a title so natural as Mardi Gras is enough to leave a body slack-jawed. Nevertheless, it did so at a propitious time, the peak of the Never Was Generation's deification of Clean-cut. The crown prince of that cult (Boone) was lent support by two trusty dukes (Sands, Crosby) and even an uninspired set of tunes couldn't discourage their success at the box office.

As The New York Times put it: "Only a tottering eremite who has never listened to a recording or a juke box or viewed a television set or a wide screen would be unaware of the commercial possibilities of this youthful team."

The picture was referred to in publicity releases as "a musical romance." Press handouts chose not to emphasize that the white bucks hadn't actually trod the Crescent City streets in scenes of Carnival revelry, that Boone on the Fox backlot smiled. Nevertheless, it did so at a propitious time, the peak of the Never Was Generation's deification of Clean-cut. The crown prince of that cult (Boone) was lent support by two trusty dukes (Sands, Crosby) and even an uninspired set of tunes couldn't discourage their success at the box office.

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Though the city of New Orleans had grown fairly accustomed to things like movie premieres, it got more than just a little giddy over this one. Hollywood flack men had billed it as the biggest premiere since Gone With The Wind back in 1939.

It had been vaguely promised in rumor that Gary Crosby's old man Bing would be on hand, but on the night of November 14, 1958, no one seemed to care that he wasn't. For the parade down Canal Street, there were bands and motorcycle escorts and flambeaux carriers and a whole lineup of next year's floats from the Krewe of Carrollton. On board were various dignitaries, including a hundred entertainment editors from all over the country. Scarcely anyone asked why in God's name Metropolitan Opera star Dorothy Kirsten, in town to perform "La Traviata," had been included in the procession.

Stars of the movie rode in open convertibles. They pitched Carnival beads, all except Miss Carere, who threw small, brightly-colored handouts. Fox officials said that inside the boxes were diamonds which had been flown in from New York, and heavily insured.

Police fought a losing battle to keep the parade line clear, and when Boone finally arrived, efforts collapsed entirely as screaming teenagers lunged toward the car.

From his reviewing stand, Mayor deLessups S. Morrison observed that Canal Street hadn't seen such a parade since the one put on several years back for General MacArthur. Except on the real Mardi Gras, naturally.

Afterwards, the big shots tooted down on to Brennan's where, for the very first time, the restaurant's patio was opened for a private dinner.

Before it was over, a cake was brought out; the fifth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Boone was celebrated. Everyone smiled.

And the next day, when both New Orleans daily newspapers buried accounts of the Mardi Gras premiere deep inside their mid-sections, the page one headline accompanying the States-Sentinel's lead story was this:

"Tyronie Power Dies of Heart Attack."

— Don Lee Keith

* That stands for New Orleans Music in Film, of course, the subject of a Wavelength series by Don Lee Keith. This is the fifth article dealing individually with musical movies set here. Coming up: Naughty Marietta.

THE PICTURE
Release: November 1958
Running Time: 107 minutes
Filmed in De Luxe color and Cinemascope
Academy Award Nomination: Lionel Newman for Best Scoring of a Musical Picture

THE CREDITS

THE CAST
Pat Boone (Pat Newell); Christine Carere (Michelle Marton); Tommy Sands (Barry Denton); Sheree North (Eadie); Gary Crosby (Tony); Fred Clark (Curtis); Richard Sargent (Dick Saglon); Barrie Chase (Torchy); Geraldine Wall (Ann Harris); Jennifer West (Sylvia); King Calder (Lt. Vieux Orleans); John Hector (Eddie); Ralph Morgan (Eddie); Ella Fitzgerald (Sidney); Pat Boone (Pat Newell); Christine Carere (Michelle Marton); Tommy Sands (Barry Denton); Sheree North (Eadie); Gary Crosby (Tony); Fred Clark (Curtis); Richard Sargent (Dick Saglon); Barrie Chase (Torchy); Geraldine Wall (Ann Harris); Jennifer West (Sylvia); King Calder (Lt. Vieux Orleans); John Hector (Eddie); Ralph Morgan (Eddie); Ella Fitzgerald (Sidney);"
NEW ORLEANS STRING BANDS

The string bands that played here in the early part of this century were distinct, marked by the old-time New Orleans jazz.

One usually thinks of the jazz of the early part of this century as the music of the poor, the downtrodden, the outcast. It is inconsistent with this image to think of it being played by socially prominent New Orleanians in their Garden District homes. Yet, they did.

They played for their own enjoyment and for the pleasure of their friends, free of charge. They played in their parlors, at dances, and at birthday parties. Edmond Souchon, Bill Kleppinger, Bernie Shields, Frank ("Red") Mackie, Lester ("Monk") Smith, and Rene Gelpi, men who made their livings as doctors and businessmen, also formed some of New Orleans' most important early jazz string bands. Two of these bands were the Sixth and Seven Eighths and the Invincibles.

String bands were popular all over the United States in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, but those in the Crescent City were different from those in other parts of the country as New Orleans was different from other American cities. Bands here were more "low down," more bluesy, more jazzy. Like their counterparts elsewhere, the repertoires of New Orleans string bands included waltzes and novelty numbers, as well as sentimental and popular songs. But the New Orleans music was distinct. It was marked by the old time New Orleans jazz to which the band members had grown up listening. Weaned on King Oliver, no doubt they had been to Storyville and had heard the hot piano playing of men like Jelly Roll Morton. They had heard the string band music of strolling minstrels such as "Slow Drag" Pavageau, Albert Glenney, Wellman Braud, Ed Garland and Pops Foster. These musicians were later to play with the famous bands of Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Duke Ellington.

Despite all of the early jazz influences, the men of the Invincibles and Six and Seven Eighths, had they thought about it, probably would not have called their music "jazz." To them it was simply the popular music of the day - spiced up New Orleans style.

The Sixth and Seven Eighths, thus named because of the group's six average-sized members and seventh short one, started in 1911 and continued into the 1960s. The first New Orleans string band to gain international prominence, they documented the sound of New Orleans string band music by recording in 1949. Folkways, seven years later, reissued their 78 as an LP (FA 2671), and it has remained in print ever since. The band consisted of Bill Kleppinger on mandolin, Bernie Shields on steel guitar, Red Mackie on string bass and Edmond Souchon on acoustic guitar and vocals. Souchon was a
"The Original Popeye"/
"Dance Time"
Wardell and the Sultans
Imperial 5812

Wardell Quezerque mentions this record in his interview this month. This is the first of only two records released under the name "Wardell & the Sultans." This 45 was recorded in 1962 and released on Imperial records the same year. "The Original Popeye" is a fine New Orleans style dance record even without Wardell's horn arrangements. The piano carries the rhythm and the drummer secondlines while the vocalists tell us how to do the "Popeye" dance.

(Continued from page 34) doctor and Kleppinger a customs inspector; Mackie was in the Pine Oil business and Shields in shipping. Music was their hobby—something to do on Sunday afternoons, yet they rehearsed frequently and their music was tight. They played as an ensemble. This is not as obvious a statement as it might seem. Their music was not written down. They were improvising; they were anticipating what their fellow band members were about to do and were weaving their own music around it.

The Sixth and Seven Eighths' rival was the Invincibles. Theirs was a friendly competition and members often played with the rival band. Out of the two bands grew the New Orleans Owls, a professional group that rose to full-time, big band status during the late 1920s. It is in the Owls' 1926 and 1927 recordings that one can hear echoes of the New Orleans string band sound. Monk Smith will put down his tenor sax in order to pick his guitar to the accompaniment of banjoist Rene Gelpi.

The influence of the Six and Seven Eighths Band and the Invincibles can be heard also on the 1927 Louis Armstrong recording of Savoy Blues when Lonnie Johnson picks the melody on his guitar while Johnny St. Cyr picks out an accompaniment on his guitar. It is a string duet in the middle of a jazz band number.

The popularity of New Orleans string bands waned in the mid-Twenties, yet many of the members of the Six and Seven Eighths, the Invincibles, and the Owls continued to play and to exert influence of this earlier form of music. For example, the Banjo Bums, who played in New Orleans during the 1950s, did not play the usual, frantic banjo emporium fare. The jazz backgrounds of banjoists John Chaffe and Malcolm Genet, guitarist Edmond Souchon and bassist Sherwood Mangiapone, gave the Banjo Bums' music plenty of New Orleans' relaxed and low-down rhythm and feeling.

Today, the old string bands' influence can be heard in a group called Hot Strings, which plays many of the same tunes that its New Orleans forebears did. Hot Strings also has genealogical roots to the early bands, for Hank Mackie, Hot Strings' violinist, is the nephew of Red Mackie, bassist for the Sixth and Seven Eighths String Band and the Invincibles, as well as the son of Dick Mackie, who played the cornet for the New Orleans Owls. But the ties end here, for Hot Strings sounds more like the Quintette of the Hot Club of France than any of the bands Hank Mackie's uncle and father played for. They have absorbed and blended many styles from many sources since they grew out of a jam session at a new-defunct health food store in 1978. Of the group members, Ed Wadsworth plays in the oldest style on the five-string violin, a cross between the violin and the viola. Phil DeGruy plays guitar; Tommy Comeaux plays mandolin; Eric Glaser plays bass; and Hank Mackie is the musical director and guitarist. They can be heard at occasional appearances at the Maple Leaf and the Faubourg.

There is subtle irony in the fact that Hot Strings owes much of its style to a French jazz band. Jazz in its beginnings, when the Invincibles and the Six and Seven Eighths were playing, was purely an American art form. It was the antithesis of composed European music. Since then, jazz has crossed the Atlantic to Europe and influenced a whole musical tradition. It has now come full circle. With Hot Strings, the old style string band music in altered form, has come back to New Orleans.
THE TANGO PROJECT

It began in the waterfront dives of Buenos Aires and spread to become a scandal.

Senorita Nina
From Argentina
Despised the Tango
And though she never was a girl to let a man go
She wouldn't sacrifice her principles for sex . . . .
There surely never could have been a
More irritating girl than Nina,
They never speak in Argentina
Of this degenerate bambino,
Who had the luck to find romance
But resolutely wouldn't dance!
She wouldn't dance. — — Hola!!
from Noel Coward's revue
Sigh No More

An historical absurdity, a Gilbert and Sullivan libretto come to maleficient modern life: Mrs. Thatcher's Armada
Sullivan libretto come to maleficient modern life: Mrs. Thatcher's Armada
Making catastrophically Elizabethan
Making catastrophically Elizabethan
She
But La Thatcher is
This sort of posthumous cult-worship is
also characteristic Down There, the sort of exaggerated poetic garrulity
also characteristic Down There, the sort of exaggerated poetic garrulity
wait upon the
wait upon the
It is one of the
It is one of the
It is, in the form in which we know it — —
itself a per-sonified, animistic-divinity sort of ex-istence.
itself a per-sonified, animistic-divinity sort of ex-istence.

The tango — flamenco in origin, like so many Spanish/Latin American dances, e.g.s. the bulerias, farruca or the zapateado
(though you think New Wave is fast, imagine hot-footing it to the Zapateado from Geronimo Giméz' La Tempranica of 1900, which is about the effects of a
taratulla's bite and exists in a sensational
taratulla's bite and exists in a sensational
rendering by Victoria de Los Angeles) —
is, in the form in which we know it — —
the guiding swoops, the backward bends
that look like the final effects of
strychnine poisoning, the slightly stiff
marching footwork — — contem-
poraneous with Shaw and Bergson and
Pavlov and early Freud and late Cezanne and the introduction of the Brownie Box
Camera and Max Planck's formulation of
Quantum Theory and the Spanish-
American War. It began, says the legend
which is as fixed as that of the origins of
New Orleans jazz in Storyville brothels, in
waterfront dives in Buenos Aires, in a
violent, plebeian atmosphere. (It is prob-
ably also the origin of the more rough-
and-tumble apache dancing performed by
the more unsavory elements of the French
underworld — apaches being a name
given to them by an enterprising reporter
after their ferocious behavior in the Cas-
quête d'Or affair of 1902. But the tango
spread to become a scandal, a sensation,
and even a joke, finally attaining symbolic status—both on a literary and national level.

Even without lyrics, it has a morbid and melodramatic sound, a violent sound; it was natural for a generation of Europeans and Americans emerging from a century of sweetness and light—"The scene was straight out of an Argentine tango, as befitted a rapid rapacious love affair," says Jorge Amando of a near-knifing of a giddy prostitute by a jealous Spaniard in a Bahia dive in one of his novels. And the tango deals with desertion, revenge, fury and lamentation, classical yet mundane elements all.

In America, an obsessive-faddish institution called the "tango-tea," no doubt hot-beds of light petting and Brilliantined hair-mussing, sprang up; Valentino, once a gigolo and male prostitute and (of course) an expert at the dance, became a star on the strength of it—in Rex Ingram's 1921 film of the popular Argentine dynastic-saga, *The 4 Horsemen Of The Apocalypse*, where his footwork electrified audiences filled with would-be sheiks and shebas and swooning, bored matrons.

The June, 1920 issue of *Motion Picture Classic*, announced that Valentino had instructed Nijinsky in the art of the tango during his leaner New York years (a legend charmingly recreated in a scene in the Ken Russell film of Valentino's life) and since Nijinsky was safely in a Swiss madhouse, who was there to deny this sublime bit of press-agentry?

Pope Pius X allegedly summoned some leading Duquesa or Contessa of Roman society to advise on the sinful content of the dance in private papal audience; this Italian peasant saint and pontiff, not as shrewd as John XXIII, heard the reports askance and advised the good lady, lifting his cassock and demonstrating the tarantella of his childhood that that and not the licentious tango was the dance she should be popularizing at her soirees.

And in Britain, the tango was denounced by the forces of repression and prudery, or so that invaluable volume, *Mrs. Grundy: Studies In English Prudery* (1963), tells us: the spiritual director of the Catholic Women's League, a Jesuit named Father Bernard Vaughan, claimed that "It is not what happens at a Tango tea that so much matters, as what happens after it. I have been too long with human nature not to know that, like a powder magazine, it had better be kept as far as possible fire proof." These warnings against Terpsichorean venery were part of a "violent Press attack on this depraved dance" upon its arrival "from the Argentine (via Deauville) in 1912." Over a decade later, that talented sensationalist Edith Sitwell incorporated a fairly furious tango pasadoble into her *Facade*, a poetry cycle designed for recitation accompanied by the "advanced" music of William Walton—which all sounds charming now. But by this time, the tango craze in most ballrooms exhausted, the dance
became something else: an artistic and literary symbol.

In one of the last scenes of Proust's *Recherche de temps perdu*, the narrator sees the tango being danced at the Ritz and realizes, elegiacally of course, the changes wrought in the superficial aspects of human behavior — if not in the deeper ones. And Colette's dissolute male peacock, Chéri, in the two novels bearing his name, tangos at first glitteringly and imperturbably and then desperately and phantasmagorically, as he sinks lower and lower. The allegorically sordid mythical underworlds of the Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill operas are filled with delirious but joyless tangos — the perfect dance for their sinister-cynical characters who epitomize the vanities and lethal follies of the world. For that, in art, is what the tango came to symbolize (even the one great tango painting, also German and slightly earlier than the Brech/Weill collaborations, entitled *The Tango* by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, shows just that).

After this brief symbolic resurgence as the epitome of a sort of gilded savage form of new, falsely-liberated, and thus vicious (in the sense that the term derives from "vice") behavior, the tango languished save in its native Argentina. At her solitary New Year's Eve party in Sunset Boulevard, the mad Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) gestures sweepingly to her gigolo (William Holden) at several acres of polish floor lurking beyond the hired orchestra and the magnums of Veuve-Clicquot on ice, to remark glint-eyed, "Valentino always said there's nothing like tile for the tango . . ."

Only a madwoman would remember at that point . . .

The new Nonesuch recording of classic tangos by an outfit called The Tango Project (unhappy choice of names, it summons up The Manhattan Project more than the ballroom) is faultless sonically and the classics — *La Cumparsita*, most emblematic of tangos, and *Jalousie* (which in its Frankie Laine version made my childhood miserable), *A Media Luz*, *La Violeta* and *El Choclo*, are performed with rigorous attention to authenticity. But they sound like stiffs. There is not even the affection one finds with the New Leviathan performing a similarly Resurrectionist repertoire — this instead sounds arch and cool and dilettantish. Sometimes perfection can be dubious.

I remember with much more clarity and fondness a horribly scratched old South American RCA record of tangos that D. E. Bookhardt used to play with the windows wide open when we lived as neighbors in the same 8th Ward tropical paradise.

This wheezing disc was filled with passion — abismos de pasion! — while the new record sounds bloodless. And it is passion, after all, that the tango commemorates — by becoming its essence.

— Jon Newlin
Among its many releases, Mango Records recently issued two new dub albums, *A New Chapter of Dub* and *Raiders of the Lost Dub*. It's interesting to note that although both of these albums were recorded in 1981, the dub styles of the two records are a decade removed from each other. Dub has been in a constant state of redefinition, this element of experimentation allowing dub to be the most progressive form of reggae music. These two samplings by Mango in no way represent the overall picture of the music presently being made in Jamaica and England, but unfortunately they are a cross-section of the music that national and international labels deem as fit to be distributed to our favorite record stores.

Our first offering is by an English reggae band called Aswad. With their album, *A New Chapter of Dub*, we are in serious danger of terminal boredom. The only thing that saved me was Aswad's sense of humor in giving this album a title that implies something new in dub music. The album is nothing more than Aswad's earlier release, *A New Chapter*, with practically all vocals removed, and an occasional use of echo (in other words, dub as it was known ten years ago). What bothers me so much is that this record, which represents the earliest, least innovative aspects of dub, is picked up by a major label and distributed throughout the U.S., while dub efforts that might truly be called new chapters in dub remain on obscure Jamaican labels, never to be heard by most of us. This aside, Aswad is a good band that plays more in a Jamaican style than most English bands. Those who are interested might want to check out Aswad, their 1976 Island release, an album which highlights their strengths as a band.

*Raiders of the Lost Dub*, a compilation album, is guaranteed to bring us back to the 1980s. The clean production, song selection and thoughtful use of electronic effects make this album a winner.

There is a sameness to much of the contemporary reggae music that can be traced to the reliance on one or two commercially successful formulas. In my mind, this is epitomized by such albums as Sly & Robbie's Taxi anthologies, in which syndrums and electronic effects smack down on the beat like ricocheting gunshots, and the only thing that changes from song to song is the lead vocalist. Although many of these elements are to be found on *Raiders of the Lost Dub* (in fact, Sly & Robbie produce six of the album's ten songs), they sound more at home in the futuristic context of this album.

The science fiction effect is enhanced by the use of synthesizers both as lead instruments and for sound effects. In addition to the exciting use of electronic effects, the compilers of this album, Trevor Wyatt and Paul "Groucho" Smykle, have chosen to dub out on ten of the better songs of the last two years. Included are "Sinsemilla", "Moulding", "Sponji Reggae" by Black Uhuru, "Social Living" by Burning Spear, "'Moulding'" by Ijahman and "'Feel the Spirit'" by the Wailing Souls.

*Raiders of the Lost Dub* is a good example of reggae music that is innovative yet commercial, and it should come as no surprise that Sly & Robbie would have their hand in it. With the number of records picked up by major labels being so limited, let's hope that more of the future releases will be the calibre of this album.
**HOT SUMMER PLATTERS**

Zeke Fishbead tackles summer armed with some good albums and lots of cold beer.

How much foreign beer can I drink this summer? I don't know. (More than you.) Probably vast quantities if the record companies, large and small, keep squirting out LPs of a high danceability quotient. All the radio stations have been ablaze with “Do I Do,” the closing ten-minute opus from Stevie Wonder’s greatest hits plus package, *Original Musiquarium* (Tamla 6002TL2) and for good reason: the cut is a mother-roux of the most mother-rouxing dimensions, with Dizzy Gillespie thrown in for good measure. There’s a whole side’s worth of new material in this greatest hits package; noteworthy is “Front Line”-“They had me standin’ on the front line / But now I stand at the back of the line when it comes to gettin’ ahead.”

Defunkt has a giant single out (Hannibal HNS 31201) which is light years more funky and alive than their initial release. Both sides are about ten minutes long but the funk keeps on working long after the record’s gone. The Defunkt battalion, led by trombonist and lead vocalist Joseph Bowie, is aided and abetted by brother Lester, the Great Pretender, on trumpet, along with Clarice Taylor, heppin’ out on the vocals. One side is “Strangling Me With Your Love,” done on the first album (but not to death, as it is here). The other side, “Razor’s Edge,” puts out like a French . . . (you know what I’m trying to say). The shit fries. Kicks. Crosses state lines. All intents and purposes. Excuse me for going free form but one of the guitar players (Kelvyn Bell or Richard Martin) just dissected my prefrontal with some razor-sharp lines. “I’ve given up a lot, but I ain’t gonna give in.” These guys comin’ to play at Jimmy’s, serious?

Also on Hannibal records is Shoot Out The Lights (HNBL 1303), by Richard and Linda Thompson, easily their best work since *Pour Down Like Silver*. The production is bare bones, letting the voices and the guitar ring through. And what incredible guitar Richard can play! There’s spiky, spine-tingling rushes on the title track and “The Back Street Slide.” And without overproduction to get in the way of the guitar sounds, you can really hear the subtle chordings on “Just the Motion” and “Did She Fall or Was She Pushed.” Linda’s singing is water-clear and Richard’s writing is dark and compelling.

If you’ve never heard of the group Japan, Epic records just released an LP that gathers cuts from their several European albums (ARE 37914). The lead singer sounds vaguely like early Bryan Ferry with chops, but the overall sound is very much their own. Very kinetic, funky stuff. XTC is also now on Epic. Their new LP, *English Settlement* (ARE 37942) is moving towards a different mix for them: softer, more acoustic, but even more rhythmic. “Jason and the Argonauts” and “Melt the Guns” both feature long, almost dub-like sections.

The long overdue live Talking Heads album is finally out, entitled *The Name of This Band Is Talking Heads* (2SR 3590). It’s a double, covering four shows in as many years — only the last two sides feature the expanded group. “Psycho Killer,” from 1979, is superb, Byrne whipping out some killer guitar. The expanded group spins a rich loom indeed. I especially like the longer versions of “Cross-eyed and Painless” and “Houses in Motion.” Adrian Belew belew-ing it out on the old fender. “For a long time I felt without style or grace.”

Zeke Fishbead
True Democracy
Steel Pulse
Elektra 60113

Steel Pulse's new album, True Democracy, represents something of a watershed movement in the growth of reggae in the United States. True Democracy on Elektra-Asylum is the first reggae album on a major American record label where the producers have allowed the band to actually play without making needless overtures to commercial black radio. The session was recorded in, of all places, Aarhus, Denmark, quite a distance from Kingston. Steel Pulse demonstrates throughout the album its unique style of reggae, faster paced than most with sophisticated vocal and instrumental stylings that never ignore reggae's roots.

Steel Pulse leaves no time to get bored; you're confronted with a clever transition from lead vocals by David Hinds into choruses by keyboard player "Bumbo" Brown and super percussionist Phonso Martin as amply demonstrated on "Chant a Psalm," a happy piece of Rasta rejoicing. Every song is a happy sounding, well-crafted piece of dance music. But beware — there are plenty of messages here from Steel Pulse ranging from attacks on violence in "Find it Quick" and "Blues Dance Raid," to invectives against women of easy virtue on "Leggo Beast," and alcohol on "Maw No Sober." The only troubling lyrics come in "Worth Its Wait in Gold," which immediately grabs your attention with a barrage of drums, percussion and keyboard work followed by superb vocal arrangements, singing "liberation, true democracy, one God, one aim, one destiny." We'll get the chance to ask Steel Pulse about this sentiment when they come to Tipitina's on July 27th.

— Shepard A. Samuels

Zodico
Louisiana Creole Music
Rounder 6009


Here's an interesting disc that serves as a sampler of Louisiana creole music. Compiled by Nick Spitzer, the album collects a diverse range of the music, investigating the very roots of "Zodico" (yet another different spelling) particularly with the Ardoin and the Carriere Brothers, who employ a fiddle and perform the more traditional waltzes and even one-steps.

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REVIEWS

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updated without losing its appeal.

Sampy ought to turn some heads as he continues the tour into the bayous with “Ma Coeur Casse,” a stunning blues, and “La Pishache a Tante Nana,” a knees-up two-step. Wilfred Latour also contributes the rolling “Bonsoir Two Step” which suitably closes out the album.

Excellent notes (24-page booklet inside!) and photos make this a requisite purchase for Cajun music buffs. Check it out, mon ami.

— Almost Slim

**Genuine Houserocking Music**

**Hound Dog Taylor and the House Rockers**

Alligator 2747

What a fitting tribute to a man “who couldn’t play shit, but sure made it sound good!” I’ll forever have etched in my mind Hound Dog playing at the speed of light boogie, with a smile plastered on his face with his foot stomping as an irate club owner furiously tries to get him to stop playing because it’s 45 minutes after closing time.

I’m glad to say this album is at least as good as the other Alligator albums released when Hound Dog was alive. And Hound Dog made some of the best blues recordings in the Seventies, with the support of drums and one other guitar!

As for the music, it’s predictably gutsy and infectious. Side one is best, opening with the Elmore James-like “Ain’t Got Nobody,” and a fine shuffle, “Send You Back To Georgia.” Two fine instrumentals are also included, the best being “Fender Bender,” led by Brewer Phillips, the House Rockers’ other guitar star. Undoubtedly the album’s highspot is the impassioned “My Baby’s Comin’ Home,” an absolute classic, and I do mean classic track.

The high standard is carried onto side two opening with the chilling “Sun Is Shining,” where Taylor really lets his guitar whine. “Phillips Goes Bananas” just about describes itself, with guitar riffs flying out of every direction.

“What’d I Say” has never sounded stranger in Hound Dog’s approach. The same can be said for Phillips’ broken version of “Kansas City.” The final tune is the old delta standard “Crossroads” which is given the usual House Rocker all out flavor.

Get this and give yourself a treat.

— Almost Slim

**Otis Redding**

**Recorded Live**

Atlantic 19346

Boy, I was really surprised to see this one. These recordings were made at The Whiskey A Go Go in 1966, with The Big O’s regular touring group.

The quality of these recordings is
flawless, capturing Otis at his soulful best. Otis really was a dynamic live performer and this album is proof.

There isn't a bad cut on this disc, believe me. Otis powers his way through such familiar tunes as "I Can't Turn You Loose," "Security," and the superb "I've Been Loving You A Little Too Long." It's also great to hear some of his lesser known numbers, "Chained And Bound," (chilling guitar) "Destiny," and "Good To Me," given the masters treatment. The real surprise on this lp is his version of "A Hard Days Night" which Redding gets soulful on.

This is a fitting tribute to Otis Redding, I can't think of anyone who wouldn't want this one.

— Almost Slim

The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music
Selected by Bill Malone, Ph.D.

This is the collection that won Tulane University's Dr. Bill Malone a Grammy nomination last year.

Dr. Malone is a history professor at Tulane whose books Country Music USA and Southern Music: American Music broke academic ground in a field previously considered undeserving of scholastic attention. Here Malone has selected 143 recorded performances, according to a complicated hierarchy of criteria, that to him best represent a complete overview of the history of recorded country music. Each of the eight LP discs in the collection is classified regionally and chronologically, with the exception of one disc devoted to the sub-style known as bluegrass, which he felt was stylistically distinct enough to warrant its own disc.

The recording quality is excellent, and each song's significance is detailed in a well-presented accompanying brochure which also features a rather personal interpretation by Malone of his early encounters with the music via his own family and regional ties. He notes also the unintentional omission from the collection of performances by two important country musicians Waylon Jennings and the late Elvis Presley. (Fortunately, recordings by these two individuals are easily available elsewhere.) These omissions are due to legal and copyright complications rather than scholastic oversight on Malone's part, but some insist that by omitting rock and R&B-influenced performers such as Jennings and Presley, Malone untruthfully overemphasized country music as being a purely white, rural, southern cultural manifestation. I tend to agree with Malone that, despite some black influence on certain instrumental techniques, country music is (at least originally) a product of the white rural southern culture formed primarily from Scotch-Irish fiddle music and ballad-singing.

At any rate, this collection of music is outstanding in all aspects: recording
quality, material selection, explanatory notes, and packaging. It is an entertaining and most informative introduction to country music for those who wish to learn about it. Veteran record collectors should also be interested by the inclusion of so much vintage recorded music currently unavailable elsewhere.

The only real problem with this collection is its lack of local availability. Even the seemingly stiff price for the boxed set ($54.95 plus $2.49 handling) is competitive on a per-disc basis, especially considering the rarity of so much of the material and the outstanding quality of the enclosed notes.

The records have to be ordered from the Smithsonian, either directly from Washington D.C. or through their record distributing office at P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336. You can't browse through the collection at a local record store; however, anyone with any interest at all in country music should consider this collection an indispensable addition to their music library.

— Patrick A. Flory

Little Ted Taylor and McKinley Mitchell
Perkins Lounge, Kenner
May 15, 1982

None but the most ardent R&B fanatic has heard of McKinley Mitchell. As for little Ted, I would have guessed he was merely cashing in on the once popular Ted Taylor name. But I thought both might make an interesting evening of entertainment nonetheless. So at the urging of Mr. Cleon Floyd (King’s uncle), we made the trek out to Kenner.

Perkins’ has long been a hot spot for black entertainment in Jefferson Parish. Upon entering the lounge you see a long bar on the right with a number of tables hidden in the darkness opposite it. The bandstand divides the bar area from a rather spacious back room. The club could hold 500 people on a good night. But this evening there might have been only fifty or sixty, so we managed to get seats near the bandstand.

Once we settled in I was surprised to see the band led by King Edward, a quite tasty guitarist I’d once seen at The Playhouse in Jackson, Mississippi, whose 4-piece combo was just finishing off a string of Tyrone Davis-type warm up numbers. I was further surprised when the human mountain seated next to us lumbered to the bandstand and turned out to be Little Ted — the 510 pound blues singer!

But this cat was a giant of a blues singer (no pun intended). His voice swooped and rose through sizzling standards like “Driving Wheel,” and the more obscure “I Need You So.” When he got into “I Can’t Take It No More” I thought he’d honestly shatter every bottle of T.J. Swann behind the bar. I don’t know who this guy is but even Johnny Adams would

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be hard pressed to stay note for note with him.

I'd already had my money's worth when Little Ted finished his all-too-short set, and it wasn't even star time. But McKinley wasn't to be outdone even by a quarter-ton of filet of soul. McKinley hails from Jackson, and is a veteran of the southern R&B circuit. He's made a string of excellent singles over the past two decades, and is best known for his 1978 hit "End Of The Rainbow."

Dressed immaculately in a white karate-styled leisure suit, he powered into a version of "You Know I've Tried" which brought screams from the ladies seated at the bar. McKinley proved to be an expert at manipulating the audience as he got everybody into the show singing, clapping, shouting and running up to the bandstand snapping Polaroids. McKinley performed a potpourri of his hits with "Mr. Music Man" "Run To Love" and of course "End Of The Rainbow" drawing the loudest approval.

To be honest, the band wasn't the greatest (the drummer kept dropping his sticks and missing time) but they managed to play with enthusiasm, a quality that I'd begun to think was becoming extinct after two weeks of a number of so-so sets out at the Jazz Fest. If you ever have an opportunity to see this pair, spare no amount of trouble to do so. Live music lives.

— Almost Slim

Dave Edmunds
Riverboat President
June 5, 1982

Welshman Dave Edmunds brought a fiery quartet of English rockers to the Riverboat that left the audience limp, but well satisfied after an obligatory third encore.

Resplendent in a Sun Record's t-shirt, Edmunds had the crowd in the palm of his hand from the opening bars of "Crawling From The Wreckage." Edmunds continued to play an exciting string of his hits. He and guitarist Mickey Gee took turns outdoing each other with smoldering guitar solos.

Keyboardist Geraint Watkins all but stole the show with his thundering piano volleys and downhome accordion on Rockin' Sidney's "You Ain't Nuthin' But Fine."

Edmunds played a smattering of material from his latest D E 7th LP including "Me and The Boys," and Chuck Berry's "Dear Dad." Naturally in New Orleans Edmunds had to play his rework of Smiley Lewis' "I Hear You Knockin.'" Of course no one was left in their seats.


— Almost Slim
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PUBLICATIONS WANTED: All music and/or dance publications (books, recordings, magazines, etc.) for our music section. Send to Wavelength, P.O. Box 3253, New Orleans, LA 70152.
Police Reports. Some ink stole Leon "I Want to Be Seduced" Redbone's cane during his recent stint on the Riverboat President. There is a reward for any information leading to the recovery of Mr. Redbone's walking stick—no questions asked. Contact the New Orleans Steamboat Co. at 586-8777. Our very own Radiators will be recording most of their third epee in Chicago with Freddie Breithberg in a studio that was financed by the President of the Board of Jovan, purveyors of fragrances and scents, and the sponsor of last year's Stones concert. The studio is in the basement of the Prez's mansion. The Radiators will be playing the Chicago Festival on August 8, and it says here—on the doorstep of the Chicago Tribune on Friday, Aug. 6.

Across the Atlantic, the British have been preoccupied with the unpleasantness in the Falkland Islands, but their abiding interest in the New Orleans sound continues unabated. On the charts for the week of June 5 are not one, but two, count 'em two, versions of that hardy perennial "Iko Iko." At 54 with a bullet is a treatment by Natasha, and at 75 with a bullet is another, different group, the Belle Stars. Also charted is a single titled "Papa's Got a Brand New Pigbag" by the group Pigbag, apres James Brown we suppose. Number one on the Rockabilly charts was "Shirley" written by Baton Rouge's own John Fred. Speaking of the U.K., Wavelength received a nice mention in the London Observer Sunday Magazine last month. In an article entitled "French Leave on the Mississippi, Polly Pattullo slips away to New Orleans," is the following: "Read the excellent magazine Wavelength to find out who is playing where, rather than depending on tourist handouts." Thank you, Polly. Speaking of good press, down beat magazine had a good story by Joel Simpson on Tony Dagradi (whose latest album Lunar Eclipse will be released momentarily) and a notice about Noah's, the new jazz club in town.

Word reaches us from Pensacola, Florida, that the single "I Could See It In Your Eyes" by the Lafayette-based band Atchafalaya has received number 36 on the charts at WNVY. The single was added on May 24 and reached this position after only four days based on the top 100 most requested songs. Atchafalaya's first album, One In A Row, is scheduled for release sometime next month.

The dates for this year's sixth annual Festivals Acadiens have just been released. September 18 and 19 are the days to mark on your calendar for this mixture of food, music, and crafts held in Lafayette, Louisiana. The festival is currently billing itself as The Capital of French Louisiana. The Deep South Writers Conference is also held at this time and each year hosts several nationally known authors. Me, I'm goin'... And our own New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival's 14th annual celebration has been set for April 29 thru May 8, 1983. That leaves you with barely over three hundred days to get prepared... Sorry to see The Moths flitting away. Their farewell concert at Tupelo's in May only whetted our appetite... Club news: The Palace Saloon is now The Peddlewheel, and Klibert the DJ at Fletcher's spins the platters better than anyone behind a console. Had the young suburbanites shakin' it to "Whip It Baby" by the Daze Band long before any of the local radio stations added it to their playlists.

Rocky Mountain News, a tabloid published in Denver, Colorado (where else?), featured a nice spread on lee jazz, New Orleans style, in a recent issue. The three-page spread featured photos of N.O. legends James Booker, Allen Toussaint, Aaron Neville, Irma Thomas, and Zydeco legend Clifton Chenier. That's a lot of legends in the space of only three pages. Writer Bob Cataliotti did a nice sidebar on twenty-year-old Wynton Marsalis (in print it's always twenty-year-old Wynton Marsalis) and his older brother Branford who have been the beneficiaries of much media coverage during the past six months. Don Snowden pretty much stuck to reviewing the Jazz and Heritage Festival which he gave a rave, natch. And who could this be: "You would expect to run into a lot of colorful characters here, especially where the Jazz and Heritage Festival is concerned, and the Crescent City doesn't disappoint on this score. It could be the little old lady rollerskating through the French Quarter streets in a ratty mink stole..." What about the duck?... One of our favorite dance bands, Red Beans and Rice, premiered a thirty-minute "video" shot earlier this year. It's a "tongue-in-cheek" (as opposed to brass-in-pocket) look at the "Beans" called "Wanna Dance," and uses their album as a soundtrack. It was produced by Pro-Motions of Lafayette, it has 22 dancing parts, and it was choreographed by Cissy Whipp-Dafford and Becky Valls. This gem is scheduled to be aired on Lafayette TV SOON. Check your local newspaper for listing's, as they say...

Dr. John's recent lp excursion into New Orleans piano styles, Dr. John Plays Mac Rebennack, generated only minimal excitement here, but critics in other parts of the country are raving about Mac's departure from pop... Jazz is alive and well in Denver radio! Since KADX-FM dropped its commercial jazz format back in December to become the fifth country station in the Denver market, the former underground rocker KFML-FM changed its calls to KKJZ and is now playing jazz. When you pass through Denver check out KKJZ on the AM band.

The official unofficial word from Inner City Records is that the company has declared bankruptcy but has no plans of going out of business. Meanwhile, records from Jasmine and Woodenhead are hanging in limbo... WWNO debuts a new jazz programin July, Chasin' the Bird, Saturdays at 10:30 pm, will be hosted by Brad Palmer and promises lots of meat 'n' potatoes.

The Monsters are back after a month of inactivity with some personnel changes. The boys' new single is "Calling Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine, Dr. Howard?"/"Elmo the Eel"... The Rock-A-Byes' new single is "Blue Love"/"Other Neighbors."

A sixty-second spot for Dixie Beer performed by the Neville Brothers won the top gold award at the first International Radio Fest in New York June 2-4. "There's Nothing More New Orleans Than Dixie Beer" was conceived by senior copywriter Bill Pemble for Ogilvy and Mather Advertising's Houston office.

Lou Ann Barton, in town recently, sat in with Mason Ruffner and the Blues Rockers at the 544 Club... The Radiators have added a sixth member, conga player Glen "Kool" Sears, formerly of Irving McLean's band.

Jim Reese has been named p.d. of WNOE-FM succeeding Charlie Marcuc... RZ's headed for dates in Birmingham and Atlanta... Frankie Ford's latest single "Growing Pains" was a pick hit in a recent Billboard... Shelley Pope, the Black Pope, is now in Mobile, Alabama, where he has resurrected Ernie K-Doe's "Hotcha Mama."

Lonnie Brooks, a.k.a. Guitar Jr., was cancelled this time around in New Orleans, but made up for it with a solid show and a packed house in Lafayette... London calling?! England's Flyright Records has agreed to lease Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets' Talk To You By Hand album produced by Hammond Scott.

Dr. John was in town recently to do some PR for Popeye's Fried Chicken... Lee Dorsey opened The Warehouse for the Clash; watch for more on Lee soon.

The Uptights are looking for a new drummer... James J. Coleman, Sr., is the new chairman of the Symphony board. Replacing him as president of the Symphony society will be H.D. Graham, Jr., the former vice-president.
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SERIOUS GUITARIST NEEDED FOR ROCK BAND MUST BE CREATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE NATIVE. CALL DAVE AFTER 5 PM.

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