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I'm not sure, but I'm almost positive that all music came from New Orleans.
—Ernie K-Doe, 1979

Cover by Bunny Matthews

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Boogie Bill's Video Voyage Down Bourbon St.

After Cox Cable capped the first installment of its Music City video documentary series with a live recording of bluesman Boogie Bill Webber and Mason Ruffin at the Absinthe Bar, Time Saver Records, Inc., sponsor of the program, donated a copy of the series to the Jazz Archives of Tulane University's Howard-Tilton Memorial Library. Bill Groom, General Manager of CCNO presented the series of thirteen tapes to Kurt Jerde, Curator of the Jazz Archives and longstanding member of the New Orleans musical community.

Walter Brock and John Scheurman were there representing WWOZ-FM (which simulcasts the performances every Wednesday night) and the local musicians' union, respectively. "A royalty contract has been established that will directly benefit the featured musicians every time these shows are aired," added CCNO 2 Executive Producer Jim Gabor, "which could mean substantial dividends for the players if we secure an arrangement for European distribution of the series. We were also lucky to have taped James Booker at the Maple Leaf Bar just a few weeks ago, which was his last recorded performance."

The November 4 Absinthe Bar taping was an interesting study in blues tradition, which has often been handed down from older black players to younger white guitarists on the contemporary scene. A slight generation gap was apparent when Boogie Bill and his accompanying harmonica player, Slim, joined Mason and the Blues Rockers for a few numbers. A satisfactory take of 'Johnny B. Goode' was eventually recorded, however. Even though Bill popped

Does Take Outsell guitar picks?

a string early in the number, The Blues Rockers sustained the groove with Mason improvising Chuck Berry licks to the delight of his older cohorts. Bill and Slim's solo performance was wonderfull eccentric, with Slim blowing wild to Boogie Bill's classic offbeat meter and authentic back porch Ninth Ward vocalizing.

"You know, this is the first time I've ever been down here to Bourbon Street," Bill said. "I was supposed to be leaving for Europe this morning, but I had a funny feeling about it, something just didn't set right. But I'm glad I came down here to play with these boys instead."

Preston Jackson, Trombonist, Dies At 81

New Orleans jazz trombonist Preston Jackson died November 12 at the age of 81. Jackson died in Blytheville, Arkansas, of heart failure while on tour with Kid Sheik's Jazz Band. Born in 1903, Jackson studied trombone under Honore Dutrey (who played with King Oliver) and Roy Palmer, before moving to Chicago in 1917. Jackson recorded in 1925 with Benny Young's Band and later with Erskine Tate. During the 1930s, he recorded and toured with Louis Armstrong and later with Jimmie Noone. Jackson also played on Johnny Dodds' last recording session in 1940. From the Forties until the late Sixties, Jackson led his own jazz band. By the early Seventies, Jackson had stopped playing altogether because of poor circulation and health. However, he moved to New Orleans where the warmer climate revitalized him and he returned to music, playing with Kid Sheik and other groups at Preservation Hall. Even though Jackson spent more time away from New Orleans than in, his playing always reflected the traditional sound of his birthplace. He was buried in Chicago.

—Almost Slim

A Day In The Folklife

The Folklife Pavilion at the 1984 World's Fair got lucky this summer when Mrs. Russell Long visited a special Smithsonian exhibition with a large French folkways section. Surely, there would be something like that at the Louisiana World Exposition? Not necessarily. Though an active steering committee had been formed in May and people like Nick Spitzer, Louisiana Folklife Program manager, had been beating the bushes since 1981 for the sponsorship, so far no help had been forthcoming. This was true, despite the wild success of a similar exhibition sponsored by Stokely Van Camp at the Knoxville Fair. Money was needed fast to ensure space. Otherwise, Louisiana's unique living heritage, including traditional music, would have to be sandwiched in with other entertainment programs, as space, funds and inclination allowed. It was looking grim.

Mrs. Long communicated her concern to her husband. The steering committee put together a five-minute tape/slide presentation and Senator Russell Long convened a group of corporate lumber representatives. He pointed out the merits a folklife pavilion would have to the people of the state and to their own corporate prestige. He got some nibbles, interest at the Fair staff revived, and Jean Lafitte Park put up the initial funds necessary to hold a site in the Fulton Street warehouse section. The wheels were in motion but the project still had a major drawback—no full-time director. In November, Missouri folklorist Jane Bergey came on to head the project. In addition to programming folkways for the St. Louis Gateway for the last several years, she is also experienced with a little known segment of Acadian immigrants, the French speakers of southern Missouri.

The folklife exhibition intends to offer a rich mix of traditional music. Plans are for two stage areas, one with a 400-person capacity and another smaller, more intimate setting. With about fourteen performances a day, the musical focus will shift from week to week. Some theme weeks under consideration include a Delta blues week, old time fiddling, East Texas music and zydeco.

In addition to music, the exhibition will include storytellers, indigenous food, architecture, accordion makers, weavers and more. According to Bergey, space has been staked out and the official announcement of sponsors is just around the corner. The envelope, please.

—Virginia Levine

Texas Rockers: Six Strings, Not Six-Shooters

Everybody knows about The Bermuda Triangle, but there's another one that extends from Austin to Galveston to Baton Rouge that's a lot more fun to get lost in. Once you get sucked under by its cosmic current of magic music, you may never find your way out.

A staggering number of great rocking R&B and blues artists came from the South Texas/Louisiana region: Slim Harpo, Juke Boy Bonner, Albert Collins and many...
others. Great guitarists like Sam "Lightnin" Hopkins worked the small clubs of the area with his insightful everyday songs and smoky voice. Mance Lipscomb, inkjetter, fingerpicking extraordinary, equally facile with a boogie, ballad or ranting rag played around Navasota, Texas for over fifty years. The Bayou Prairie has always spawned passionate players, from the days of T-Bone Walker and Pee Wee Crayton right up to Johnny Winter and Leroi Brothers and The Rockets.

The Rocket and Cold Cuts have both released albums on New Orleans' Black Top Records, while the Leroi Brothers have a debut LP on Amazing Records (also issued on Jungle) and a mini LP scheduled for release on, believe it or not, CBS. Jackie Newhouse, former Rocket bassist, now works the bottom for the Leroi, an electric quartet/quintet of blast furnace blues rockers. They contrast rather sharply with the sophisticated ice house cool of Anson and The Rockets, who played November 18 at the Maple Leaf Bar.

"Hundred of bands can play Otis Rush's "All Your Love," for example, but few can interpret his choppy guitar phrasing or plaintive vocal with such satisfying accuracy as Funderburgh and Co. When they shift mid-song from a jerky tango beat to their trademark shuffle, you can sense that here is a band with a finger firmly on the pulse of the blues heartbeat.

Meat The Cold Cuts is a not-so-recent release that is more than a little schizophrenic. The tunes can be neatly divided between straight ahead rockabilly tunes from bassist Kenny Bobo and jazzy blues from guitarists Jimmy Don Smith and Little Junior One Hand. Although they make great, dance songs, the rockers are not extraordinary cuts. They contrast rather sharply with the sophisticated ice house cool of Anson and The Rockets, who played November 18 at the Maple Leaf Bar. It also epitomizes the high quality production to be found on this album. The real gems here are rockabilly tunes from Jackie Newhouse, former Rocket bassist. Some of these are more than a little schizophrenic. The tunes can be neatly divided between straight ahead rockabilly tunes and jazzy blues from guitarists Jimmy Don Smith and Little Junior One Hand. Although they make great dance songs, the rockers are not extraordinary cuts. They contrast rather sharply with the sophisticated ice house cool of Anson and The Rockets, who played November 18 at the Maple Leaf Bar.

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Jumbo Makes Way For Fishnet

The old Al Hirt club has been converted recently into the Moulin Rouge for Las Vegas style shows, complete with showgirls and enough fishnet to wrap Manhattan. The current production from NYC, Follies on Broadway, duly splices together motifs from Guys and Dolls, Fiddler On The Roof, My Fair Lady and Jesus Christ Superstar concluding with an amazing disco version of Yankee Doodle Dandy. In between shows in the back bar, Decatur Street's own Becky Allen, with Harry Mayronne on piano, deliver the cheeky, lascivious and altogether good-natured atmosphere of Storyville gone by, in songs and soft shoe shuffle. Evidently, the lure of greasepaint was enough to make Al Hirt bypass his much publicized qualms about the French Quarter for his next - week he was seen catching the second show of the Follies in November.

Collect 'Em All

R. Crumb, the legendary San Francisco cartoonist/cultural/underground cartoonist, artist and musical archivist of some stature, has inaugurated the Eighties in classic high times style. The introduction of Crumb's Heroes of the Blues trading cards in 1980 brought his patented eccentric neo-realism and ironic sense of humor to bear on the likenesses of some 36 early blues greats. The selections span the well-known and the nearly forgotten—from Blind Lemon Jefferson and Skip James to Charlie Patton and William Moore.

The Early Jazz Greats series followed in 1982, highlighted by a change in his famous cartoon style to a new populist watercolor portrait idiom. Crumb has caught a whole new strain of nuance and expression. Reportedly, next in the trading card series, due to be finished next year, is R. Crumb on hillbilly stars. Impress your friends, confound your adversaries, surprise your neighbors at parties and Christmas.

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Ernie The Whip Dies, 'Never Bought A Drink'

Ernest Bringier, who came to be known in New Orleans radio circles as "Ernie The Whip," died this past month in Los Angeles, of heart failure. He was in his early sixties according to his one-time radio associate Larry McKinley. Ernie The Whip began his broadcasting career on WMRY in the early Fifties playing R&B records. (He also owned a body shop on Martin Luther King Blvd. were Lee Dorsey was discovered.) Blatz Beer was a regular sponsor of his program ("All the cats are switching to Blatz, all the kittens too") and he became one of the city's most popular black radio personalities. "It was amazing how popular Ernie was," recalls Larry McKinley. "He never had to buy a drink in a bar or a restaurant. He was a true personality in the era when personality was as important as music was to radio." He was buried in Los Angeles.

Who Dat Say Who Dat?

By now, we've all heard Steve Monistere's grid-iron hit, "Who Dat?" (the song that finally vaulted New Orleans music to the front page of the Times-Picayune) but only a chosen few were actually in the studio to watch history begin made. The participants in the hottest local sell in recent memory were (bottom row) Steve Monistere, Carlo Nuccio, Aaron Neville, Ron "Fit Bull" Swoboda, Regg Lewis, Louis Oubre and Art Neville. The bust, designed and executed by artist Coco Robichaux (who has been responsible for many of Tipitina's more transcendental posters and brochures over the years), will be cast in a new foundry deep within the Ozone Belt and dedicated at a celebration on Sunday, December 18 (the day—or evening—before Fess' birthday).

Prof. Longhair In Bronze

Although none of his own records were ever issued in gold-plated versions, a bronze bust of Henry R. Byrd, better known as Professor Longhair, will soon grace the Napoleon Avenue neutral ground, just outside the door at Tipitina's.

Big Bang/Waka Waka Smash Backbeats/Red Rockers

On November 13, 1983, the thirty-three-delux girls' model aluminum bat of white American reggae pinged resoundingly against the softballed head of white American pop rock. Sunday 13 was the fateful day that the Big Bang/Waka Waka softball powerhouse whacked upside the head of a spirited, but outdated, young Backbeat/Red Rocker team by a score of 13 to 2.

The BBWW hit machine was piloted by Big Bang percussionist George "Slugger" Terzis, whose homer-bashing prowess was surpassed only by his rifle-shot left field arm to second and his ability to meaningfully converse with teenage girls in colorful knit tops. BBWW pitcher Vance DeGeneres had a fair day signing autographs but a disaster on the mound. As the day wore on his lofting literally "degenerated" into cannon fodder for the power packed BBWW r.b.i. howitzers. Several of the BBWW top sticks used the November Wavelength cover photo of DeGeneres (shot by umpire Rico Esquela) for a batting target in their fiery pre-game pepper sessions. "We came to play ball and soil reputations," growled the spilling sluggers. "Why am I not having all the fun in the world?" misted the determined pitcher.

The BBRR offense never materialized, even after a miraculous base hit by right fielder Fred "Dread" LeBlanc. Hey, LeBlanc two, you have wasted your away listening to Bo Didd- dally records, mon," taunted the opposing bench in fake Rastafarian accents. "Your mothers like Ozzy Ostronel" screamed the BBRR cheerleaders in frenzied retort.

A Nasty Letter To The Editor

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Vance DeGeneres for his statements concerning our band, Nasty Nasty. We are now devoted Backbeats fans and look forward, with much eagerness, to their next record. The publicity was appreciated and if Wavelength ever does a cover story or an interview with us, we will be sure to return the favor. Maybe for the cover of their next album, they could write "Censored" across the front cover and it would sell out.

Thanx Again! Sincerely, Nasty Nasty
CAJUN COLLECTIBLES

Tired of paying exorbitant prices for Louisiana collectible records? A short trip down the highway from New Orleans uncovers a treasure of Louisiana bits, all under one roof.

Are you sick and tired of walking into your favorite local record store to find it’s been converted into a jazzercise boutique full of humping ladies and a lonely Pomeranian? Tired of paying exorbitant prices at used record stores for untouched vinyl collectibles? (Well, that $25 single of Myron Floren doing “Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White” was on pink vinyl in a white velveton sleeve, you muttered in a feeble attempt at justification.) Have your last more than another copy of Mantovani’s “La Platte is definitely a Cajun. Once you hit town, it’s almost impossible to not find the store; it’s literally a Ville Platte landmark. It contains the obligatory large screen TVs, burger bars, cheap Japanese guitars and Michael Jackson posters, but all that modern junk is worth tolerating once the sales girl hands you the singles catalogue.

Many record buyers today don’t buy same with Dale and Grace’s “I’m Leaving It All Up To You,” which is backed with the similarly beautiful “Stop and Think It Over”; the Sir Douglas Quintet’s debut hit, “She’s About A Mover.”

Have you seen and tried the new Peavey SP Series two-way systems at Werlein’s? These P.A. enclosures utilize premium quality high- and low-frequency components.

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New Orleans Times-Picayune

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b/w Huey Meaux’s wonderful “The Rain’s Game”; or Bobby Bland’s “Turn On Your Love Light” b/w “I Pray The Fool”—the list goes on and on. Great tunes for under a dollar apiece and you don’t have to wade through all that flotsam to be found on your average long-player. With a tape-recorder you can make your own greatest hits compilations by artist, genre, location, or time period. Of course, some flip sides really stink like Billy Swan’s smarmambulistic version of “Don’t Be Cruel,” or the Mysteries’ “I Can’t Get Enough Of You Baby,” but if you just gotta have “I Can Help” and “96 Tears” you take the bad with the good.

Many of Floyd’s compilation albums are near-full with contagious cuts like Jim LP9001, one of the very popular Golden Dozen series. With this one you get both Dale and Grace hits, Rufus Jagneaux’s novelty classic “Opelousas Sostan” (“I can-near de juke box play, alon ave rox, bon ton roulet!”), Tommy McClain’s tender “Sweet Dreams,” Bobby Charles’ “One More Glass of Wine,” and the ultimate Cajun wedding reception song, “Mushita” by Cookie and the Cupcakes. Even Elvis Costello owns these records, so take his word for it, it’s cool.

Floyd’s has lots of Cajun humor records. Insiders will choose Dave Pettijean’s hilarious LPs over that redneck-in-coonass'-clothing, Justin Wilson. Dave does some rather offbeat skits like “Chuckens, Girl Scouts and Farming” and “Furniture Disaters.” If your taste runs toward the more risque form of comedy and you have a good working knowledge of Cajun French, check out the two None Helaire albums. If you don’t have a good knowledge of Cajun French, the “Conversational Cajun French” book and cassette tapes may be the ticket for your trip to linguistic Louisiana. It helps, I mean helps, to have a good teacher to go along with the tapes, to tell your cousin from your coonass and things like that. All these various items can be had by mail order; send for a catalog at P.O. Box 10, Ville Platte, LA 70586.

If you can make it through Floyd’s without completely draining the ole pocketbook, you might want to stick around Ville Platte for some down home grub and entertainment. The Pig Shack has pretty good seafood right on the main drag a few blocks up from Floyd’s, and after tanking up on a Saturday night you can get directions from anybody around on the best route to Slim’s Y-Ki-Ki for a wild night of two-step abandon to some of the area’s best zydeco bands. If there were only some way of exporting all this rural charm to an oft-jaded metropolis like New Orleans...maybe we could talk Floyd into opening a branch store in the Crescent City. Nah, it just wouldn’t be the same.

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LET'S GET CLASSICAL!

You're thrilled by the great symphonies, and you'd love to play them at home, but the classical section of your record store overwhelms you. Here's some suggestions on getting your own classical collection started.

Buying your first classical recordings can be a little like diving into a pool without testing the water's temperature. What may first look like a pleasant experience could in fact turn out to be a shock. Let's face it, walking into a record store and matching your taste I have compiled the following list of records, which I believe are good places for the uninitiated classical consumer to begin.

1. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos as recorded by Nikolaus Harmonicum (Telefunken 2635620). Excellent recording and very spirited playing on original instruments. There are many good recordings of the Brandenburgs but for my money none can quite stand up to this. (For the hopelessly insatiable audio nuts, this recording is not only digital but is also a direct metal master and should prove to be very impressive, even to you!)

2. Holst's "The Planets" as recorded by Herbert Von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Gramophone 2532019). For those seeking BIG recordings you usually can't go wrong with the Boys from Berlin. When a lot of power is needed behind a piece of music, no one can surpass Karajan. The Holst recording is only one small part of a huge catalogue of performances. For Beethoven, Richard Strauss, or any other grandiose pieces, Karajan and Berlin are the perfect choice. Stay away from the chamber music and the Baroque where they often sound like elephants in the china shop. If you're interested in breaking the lease, check out their recording of Richard Strauss' Alpine Symphony (DG 2532017).

3. Any of the recordings of the Mozart symphonies by The Academy of Ancient Music on the 'L'Oiseau-Lyre' label. This is the series of records which Time magazine reviewed as "the best of the year," with good reason. It is an expensive group of records (there are seven sets, three to four records a set), but if you have the cash it is well worth it. Volume six contains what are probably the more popular symphonies, but there probably isn't a bad groove in the entire twenty-three record series. Sell your car and buy them all!

4. Vaughan Williams, an orchestral collection performed by Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. (Argo 9296). Perfect music for your Walkman in Audubon Park. Rolling English countrysides at their best. Sunrise at Stonehenge, Castles on the Thames. You get the idea...now get the record. Marriner is perfect for this kind of thing. Practically anything with strings. His Four Seasons by Vivaldi (Argo 654) still stands above the many fine performances as the best by far.

5. The Unknown Kurt Weill. (Nonesuch 75019). Rare songs performed flawlessly by Teresa Stratas. This may be my favorite vocal record of the last couple of years. If you think you hate classical vocal recordings, you owe it to yourself to check this out. Absolutely wonderful songs including a great attack on the Shell Oil Com-

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pany, the album is a perfect first step into the world of vocalizing. None-
such, by the way, has changed their whole approach to record releasing in
the last couple of years and is now fast becoming the closest label produced
in the U.S. They are no longer contem-
plored, just being a good budget label
but now stress high quality perfor-
mances and good recordings (as well
as record surfaces) while still emphasizing
the presentation of the more
unusual and lesser known musical
works.

6. With Christmas coming up, I
thought I would use this space to
recommend what I consider to be the
best recordings of Tchaikovsky's Nut-
cracker and Handel's Messiah. There
are several good Nutcrackers as well as
Messiahs. For the Nutcracker, try An-
dre Previn's on Angel (3788 or 36990
for the suite only), or the Doni recor-
ding on Phillips (6047257 or 6500607
for the suite only). For The Messiah,
try the Marriner (Argo D18D3), the
Colin Davis (Phillips SC71AX300), or
the Richter (DG 270945). There are
excerpts available on single discs of all
the above performances. So much for
Christmas...Happy New Year!

7. If you must buy a copy of the
Pachelbel Canon there are some things
you need to know. 1. No two perfor-
mances are alike. Everyone who
records this piece seems to take dif-
terent liberties with it. They stick
strings, flutes, oboes or whatever, in
difficult corners and generally treat
the whole thing as if it were the final
chorus in "Take The Train." 2. The
one that was used in Ordinary People
was the RCA recording (FRL1-5468).
3. The only one which is the original
arrangement (that I know of) is the
Academy of Ancient Music recording
on L'Oiseau-Lyre (394). This one is my
favorite but will tend to make some
people gag since it is only performed
on three violins and a keyboard. It
does not sound like the G.E. light
bulb commercial, Ordinary People, or
a quick ride up to the fifteenth floor!!

---

**cinema**

**BY JON NEWLIN**

**HOLIDAY TURKEYS**

Without seeming too hastily oracular about it, I think we
can go right on and file 1983 away as a perfectly wretched year for
movies (not just American ones, ei-
er)—it's the reverse of a benchmark,
whatever that is, and although I've
tried to be careful about what crimes
against vision I inflict on myself, you
simply can't win. Just about the only
hearing trend (for lack of a more
endearing term) seems to be that
American movies are recovering some of
their sense of humor. Almost every
one of the enjoyable American pic-
tures this year have been comedies:
Vacation and Eating Raoul and Trai-
ning Places and Easy Money, and even
Zeig, are all head-over-
burdened with conceit, goofy-gro-
tesque to point of luxuriance, all one-
not-sambas, period pieces for the age
of Reganomics. Even their titles have
a sort of sour wistfulness that echoes
the title of Depression-mood comedies
(Nothing Sacred, Love Is Now, Soak
The Rich, Merrily We Live, Sing and
Like It. etc. etc.) The humor even
seems to cross into other genres-
Psycho II is only enjoyable when it's
played at a shabby low-laugh level,
and a picture like Larry Cohen's Q
(most idiosyncratic grade-C horror this
year)—about a zeebra-coal, for heav-
en's sake, nesting in the spire of the
Chrysler Building, occasionally dipp-
ing over Manhattan to gobble up sun-
bathing cuties by their penthouse pools
or hardhats working on high-rise

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hands) is one of the damndest things ever seen. Matt Dillon is a living (sort of) Caravaggio, sweating, bleeding, ripping, smirking, weeping, often simultaneously (I could watch him cry till the cows come home but there isn't near enough of this), and the picture is a swamp of camerawork and sound and lighting out of some 1929 Tobis Klangfilm or a 1954 Brakhage short about nocturnal despair, with lots of nutty angles and spitball editing—even, God help us, a use of Negroes as some sort of cheap exotica, the kind of thing one thought had flown away with Lew Leslie's Blackbirds (even an appearance by Queen Idia and her band) or with the mystique fostered by people like Nancy Cunard and Cocteau.

All of this elaborate wrapping conceals nothing more urgent than the question that wouldn't keep a moron awake nights. One side from the usual run (and it's a shame to use such an anachronistic lead singer drives his car off a bridge in the wee, wee hours and the body is never recovered. For those not familiar with Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Braddon and their imitators, the above plot device may have some novelty, but that isn't the issue here, nor is the general tired seediness of the production. Rimbaud is evoked by name (often), and Springsteen and Morrison are at least called on for a few raps on the table-top, but Eddie—this dumb-Adonis monument to musical art brut—is, at least as Michael Pare plays it, something like a brunette Joe Dallesandro, an amiable dimwit with nice arms and thick voice and a too solid jawline. The passing tapes of the "great lost album") are a plot device, not a musical milestone. A film like this ultimately asks too many large questions about the meaning of putting one's life into one's art, and answers the questions less well than, say, Orchestra Wives, a zestful 1942 B-musical about the tribulations of the dames married to the boors, buffoons and Lotharios in the Glenn Miller Orchestra.

A fleeting, smirking, weeping, often rapping, smiling, weeping, often silent, objets d'art, their producer won't let 'em— that their characteristic figures of semi-legendary stature, what do people do twenty years later when their group/record suddenly has as nostalgia; this item deals with a less morose brand of long-lost, but desperate to make Art—their producer won't let 'em—that their characteristic mannerisms are too rare, too hard to find.
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The innkeeper of a que Preven should have Madeleine's world's distance-flying record for women), LIJ there-Strangers On Standards teresting obscure Odject lin his last film and unhappily slammed by most critics, less siren Duvivier of Concha, which does n't help things, hat lace-and-tonoiseshould The get) gussied up for a change, and a

NEW Rounder Tuts Washingron on his first album. At confidence carne from intense co mpetition. New Orleans walking the standards solo ever line through thodox wyola

In this fine offering from Rounder The Devil plays so well. Two very different Devil French neorealist movement."

Professor which has ending the song in a most...
Traditionally, New Orleans jazz has not held the fascination for New Orleanians that it has for those farther afield. For decades, the dedicated have flocked here from Hamburg, Osaka and Cleveland with the zeal of pilgrims to see the town that spawned Louis and Jelly Roll and catch the music at its roots. Today, a dose of Dixieland is de rigueur for even the most casual tourists. But public recognition by the residents of this town which is altogether proud and casual and commercial in its handling of its cultural riches has fluctuated over the years.

For the last several, there has been a curious gap in the commemoration of New Orleans jazz. (We do have the white light arch to Louis Armstrong Park, bristling with incandescents, but the education visitors receive in that hilly domain is another matter.) On October 29, a major museum exhibition, *New Orleans Jazz,* opened at the Old Mint on the corner of Esplanade and Decatur, providing the storyline for the music. It's been a long time coming—thirty-five years after a fateful po-boy at Uglesich's and twenty-two years since David Brinkley put the first, scrappy little museum on network TV.

*New Orleans Jazz* chronicles the music's evolution, taking a particular look at the roots that produced such a vibrant hybrid. The show opens with a bandstand mural of the King Oliver band, lovely Lil Armstrong at the keyboard, surrounded by their instruments. Visitors are lured in by the sound of classics by the likes of the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra. The emphasis is historical, tracing influences back to the opera, voodoo, brass bands and brass. As a clip from the paper, the *Picayune,* 1839, informs,
Jazz was born alive and kicking in New Orleans and has been a restless youngster ever since. New Orleans Jazz, now on view at the Old Mint, chronicles the music that emerged here, uptown, downtown, and back of town. We can look back and remember, thanks to the musicians who made history and a number of New Orleanians who never played anything but a phonograph.

Going on to see Rex. Over their roast beef and gravy, a brilliant idea struck—why not form a club? As original member Perry said, "I was never that interested in clubs, but we wanted to get together more and have fun." Grinning, he adds, "Besides, we were hoping that with a group we could get a better deal when we went out to hear the music."

That week, Perry and the others did a bit of calling around, and the New Orleans Jazz Club was born, dedicated to "the preservation and fostering of traditional New Orleans jazz." Over the years, the club proved to be a focal point for jazz enthusiasts, hosting Sunday jam sessions, publishing the magazine Second Line, and drawing in jazz fans from around the world.

At the urging of original member Harry Souchon, the club decided to open a museum dedicated to the music in 1961. Over the years, Jazz Club members had accumulated quite a stash of photos, records, and memorabilia. New Orleans jazz was in its second revival period, with Preservation Hall having opened in 1960, Dixieland Hall going too. With more determination than funds, they secured a building for their use from D.H. Holmes. Holmes deconstructed the Quarter cottage from its original site on Bienville Street and moved it to a site just outside the city at the New Orleans Mint.

As long-time volunteer Helen Perry recalls, "We always had somebody in, mostly tourists—lots of Germans and Japanese. We always had music on. Danny Barker was on the staff and he would talk to the people as they came in. If he didn't know a fact, he could make one up, just like that. People loved him." However, rooms in the old Quarter cottages run small and after nine years, the Collection was cramped. When jazz fan Jim Nissakis, as the manager of the new Royal Sonesta, offered the club space above its Economy Hall, the Jazz Museum moved. It stayed at the Sonesta until the mid-Seventies when Nissakis was transferred. The Museum moved again to the Sonesta, but the rising costs in the French Quarter made it inevitable, but there's no reason to assume that the charm of the first struggling spot on Dumaine is gone. The shift is to be expected, it's almost inevitable, but there's no reason to assume that the presentation of New Orleans jazz shouldn't continue to refine itself. The Old Mint includes an audio-visual area and one would hope that it can soon be occupied by old jazz clips and documentary films and video. The old dial-a-phones had a virtue that shouldn't be dismissed; they let visitors choose and identify the musicians they were hearing. Some high tech version would be a great addition to the music that accompanies the show. There's a lot more gold in those hills, and a lot more music history in the archives. In the meantime, New Orleans Jazz does New Orleans proud. More New Orleanians should take a look at it.
Christmas Tunes That Should Have Been Hits

Please come home for Christmas... and bring the turntable.

BY VINCENT FUMAR

The risk of immersion in banal music runs high during the Christmas season. Whether it be "Please Come For Christmas" or "The Twelve Days Of Christmas," tedious reigns. Meanwhile, some of the finest works of this vast genre remain perennially little heard.

Perhaps it is the widespread yearning for musical familiarity that seems to reinforce the mawkishness of so many Christmas pieces. Certainly the most commonly heard works were at first merely precious. But time and repeated cover versions have done little more than make them exercises in sentimentality, or checklists of the season's decorous aspects. As a consequence of the annual demand for cozy standards, gems are lost in the shuffle.

Consider Amos Milburn's "Let's Make Christmas Merry, Baby." By all rights, it should have become an R&B Christmas classic. (It did reach the #3 spot in the R&B charts in November 1949.) With some of the finest piano he ever put on record, Milburn only brushes against the seasonal clichés, and instead pleads with his baby to let him "slide down your chimney," with promises of "a dolly, a chartreuse Cadillac and a diamond." It's too bad that Milburn never had the luck that his old pal, Charles Brown, had in this department.

Two Christmas beauties that somehow failed to gain much popular acceptance come from that Yuletide treasure trove, Phil Spector's Christmas Album. Both are by Darlene Love - "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)" and "Marshmallow World." The "please!" refrain of the former is considered by many Spector buffs to be Love's greatest moment on record, while the latter's majestically rocking arrangement always suggests a sleigh-ride collision between Nelson Riddle and Dave Bartholomew. For some curious reason, the Warner/Spector label's 1976 release of the album was in stereo.

No one would doubt the significance of the a cappella choral style in Christmas music. The recording world's two best exponents of the style have both issued Christmas albums. The King's Singers, an English sextet, released a George Martin-produced LP, "Songs for Christmas," in 1973. The group's stately articulation is heard on exquisite readings of "Morning Song for the Christ Child" and "Illuminare Jerusalem." Those masters of vocal harmony, The Singers Unlimited, recorded Christmas, an album whose vocal grandeur never fails to overwhelm. Much of the collection concentrates on the works of the late Alfred S. Burt, a jazz trumpeter who composed "Jesu Parvule" and "Ah Bleak and Chill the Wintry Wind." But their readings of "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" are simply of angelic perfection, and confirm that the Singers Unlimited are the most engagingly ornamental vocal group in the business.

Among Christmas oddities, the pop world has yielded "Rain, Sleet or Snow," a Paul Revere and the Raiders tune that sympathizes with postal officials and advises us to start sending our Christmas mail by the Fourth of July. And the devious Procol Harum offered the appealingly enigmatic "Shine On Brightly," a song whose demented narrator viewed himself as the Christ Child: "The chandelier is in full swing/As gifts for me the three kings/Of myrrh and frankincense, I'm told/And fat old Buddha carved in gold."

Perhaps the most unwarranted case of Christmas-pop obscurity comes from the brilliant English mimic Roy Wood. His short-lived group Wizzard released "I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day," an orchestral masterpiece of massed pianos, French horns, sleigh bells, a children's choir, and sledgehammer saxes. Wood managed to nail down the season with the same aplomb demonstrated on the Spector LP. The tune rocks emphatically from start to finish, and from the standpoint of sheer finger-popping splendor, Christmas never sounded so good.
Acoustic Christmas David Grisman (Rounder 0190)
Bluegrass and New Age music fans will want this.
Joining Grisman on versions of “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town,” “Papa, Won’t You Please Come Home,” “Blue Christmas,” and “Auld Lang Syne,” are Dan Caz and Mike Marshall, Bela Fleck and Rob Wasserman.

Popular Songs of Christmas and New Year (John Fahey) Victor 012
Fahey’s first Christmas album “Christmas Guitar,” proved to do so well that this year a brand new follow-up Christmas disc was recorded. If you like the first, you’ll want this one too.

Sound of Christmas (Ramsey Lewis) Chess 8510
Thankfully, Chess has seen fit to rescue this mid-sixties jazz Christmas classic. Ramsey goes through the best of the season, “Jingle Bells,” “White Christmas,” etc., in classic style.

Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite (London Symphony Orchestra) Everest 3111
I forgot this one last year and it should have been at the top of the list. I know next to nothing about classical music, but this piece of music has been associated with Christmas for what seems centuries.

Traditional Christmas Carol (Various) Folkways 23211
Seeger handles these traditional Christmas songs in his usual excellent style. This is one of the better seasonal releases.

Reggae Christmas (Various) Joe Gibbs 8077
What can I say? You just have to buy this one to find out. It features Dennis Brown, The Mighty Diamonds and others.

Voices and Bells of Christmas (The Boys Choir of Vienna) Olympic 8130
You don’t have to be from Austria to enjoy this one. From what my ears detect this has to be recorded by little angels in a 500-year-old church hidden somewhere near the Alps.

It’s Christmas Time Again (Various) Stax 8519
You could name this one the Merlous Christmas Soul Spectacular. It contains such Christmas Classics as Mack Rice’s “Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin’” and “I’ll Be Your Santa Baby” by Rufus Thomas. Other Stax artists include Johnny Taylor, Albert King, The Emotions and The Staple Singers.

December (George Winston) Windham Hill 1023
This isn’t strictly a Christmas disc, but it has the flavor of a cold, crisp winter day and that’s good enough for me. Anyone who enjoys Keith Jarrett will fall head over heels for George Winston.

The True Meaning of Christmas (Reno and Smiley) Starland 874
This is truly a magnificent album. This duo has always been one of my favorites: “hillybilly” exponents. These Christmas songs echo the traditional sounds of Appalachia.

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (narrated by Lionel Barrymore) RadioJ 1174
Bah Humbug! This will remind you of when you were a kid.

Pleas Come Home For Christmas (Charle Brown) Without doubt, “Please Come Home For Christmas” is the one R&B Christmas standard. Surprising.

“White Christmas” by The Drifters, “Run Rudolph Run” by Chuck Berry, and “Let’s Make Christmas Merry,” and the inevitable Charles Brown classic, “Please Come Home For Christmas.” Perfect for a rhythm and blues Christmas.

Jingle Bell Rock (Bobby Helms)
Probably the title tune is rock ‘n’ roll’s most popular, if not only, Christmas Classic, though I doubt you’ll ever hear it at Midnight Mass. Bobby runs through an even dozen tunes including “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree.”

New Orleans Christmas (Johnny Adams) This is probably the best of the lot. Johnny sounds just great in these rerecords of Christmas classics.

Guitar Christmas Album (John Fahey) This is a most pleasant album. A fine guitarist, Fahey performs acoustic versions of “Joy to the World,” “The Bells Of St. Mary,” “Silent Night,” and more.

Merry Christmas From The Jackson Five (Jackson Five)
These guys were just so cute. Fine Motor City versions of the usual assortment of Christmas faves. I’ll be listening to this December 25.

’Twas The Night Before Christmas (Harry Smith and the Clowns)
This is my favorite, and gets me in the Christmas mood. The record was banned when it was first released for its “blasphemous” renditions of sacred Christmas classics. Wait till you hear the Clowns work out on “Silent Night.”

Disco Noel (Mirror Image)
I’m just listing this, don’t go out and buy it. But if you do you’ll find the album jacket contains disco steps choreographed by Arthur Murray’s Disco Dance School, no less. Disco versions of “Joy To The World” and “Santa Claus Is Coming To Town” are included.

Gospel Songs of Christmas (Various)
Sunny renditions of Christmas favorites by the brightest of Gospel’s stars. James Cleveland gives out with the definitive version of “The Lord’s Prayer,” and Shirley Caesar does the same with “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear.”

It’s Christmas Time Again (Various) Stax 8519
Perfect if you plan to be spending Christmas in Memphis. Little Johnny Taylor, Rufus Thomas, Albert King and the Staple Singers will insure a soulful Christmas if you pick this bargain up. Mack Rice’s “Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin’” — my choice for Christmas tune of 1982 — is included here.

Christmas Was Born On Christmas Morn (Various) Historical 34
This is a collection of mostly pre-war country blues on the Christmas theme. But with Blind Willie McTell and Blind Willie Johnson featured, you’ll probably listen to this all year.

Merry Christmas (NRBQ) Rounder 4520
This is a four-song EP that contains NRBQ doing “Jolly Old St. Nick” and “Christmas Dream” plus (you guessed it) two more.

Bluegrass Country Christmas (Various) Starland 317
This is a collection of some of the finest country and “hillybilly” artists on the old King label. Quite a treat, this is one of Christmas’ best.
Guitar Slim: The ‘Performanest’ Man in the History of New Orleans Rhythm and Blues

By Almost Slim

'Slim was getting a fuzz-tone distortion way before anyone else. You didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix came along.'

'Slim was born Edward (Eddie) Jones, December 10, 1926, and is known to have at least one sister. Even though Slim claimed in his Special biography that Greenwood, Mississippi, was his birthplace, Hollandale, Mississippi, has also been suggested. No matter, Slim was raised in the Greenwood area, a rural region of intense cotton production in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. Times were probably tough, and likely Slim did his fair share in the fields, visiting Greenwood on weekends.

The first mention of Guitar Slim was six feet tall, 160 pounds, so he easily fit the colorful alias in the Louisiana Weekly. It stated: 'New Orleans' newest gift to the show world is Guitar Slim, held over at the Dew Drop. The New Orleans blues sensation has made a terrific impact on blues fans in New Orleans. Claims to be an exact carbon copy of Gatemouth Brown, the singing guitarist includes 'My Time Is Expensive', 'Gatemouth Boogie', and several other performances attributed to Brown by Brown.'

The comparison between Guitar Slim and Gatemouth Brown is indeed apt; it is interesting to note that he would draw his greatest influence from the Texas blues school, rather than the guitar players from his own state, Mississippi. 'Gatemouth's 'Boogie', 'Rambler' was Slim's theme,' adds Earl King. 'He listened to all of 'em and compiled bits of their style-Gatemouth, T-Bone, B.B. King. He left a lot of melodies on his solo. He used to play a solo that had a marriage to the rest of the song, rather than just play something off the top of his head.'

Earl also waxes when others suggest Slim was a poor instrumentalist and unable to even play without the aid of a capo, or as Slim referred to it, 'a choke.' 'Slim tuned Standard, but he used that capo to get the effect of open strings. You can't do that without that choke. I've seen Slim play many a time without it. He just used it for effect.'

Percy Stovall booked Slim during his early career. 'I used to worry him sometimes and hide his choke. He's runnin' around saying, 'Stove, where's my choke at? I can't find my choke.' I'd say, 'I ain't seen it, Slim,' and he'd be runnin' around tryin' to find it everywhere. Then just before he would go on, I'd pull it out of my pocket and hand it to him, and he'd say, 'Stove, I knew you had it all the time.'

Stovall is the first to admit that Slim was his favorite artist, but also points out he had his share of headaches with him. 'Man, he loved to drink, he'd do anything for a laugh,' says Stovall, shaking his head. 'If I didn't watch him all the time he'd miss his job. If he had a job over in Florida, I'd have to ration him. I'd make sure the valet gave him only a fifth of wine when he left New Orleans, another fifth in Biloxi, and one more by the time he got to Mobile. And don't nobody fool with Slim's wine or he'd be in trouble.'

One of Stovall's favorite stories concerning his early days of booking Guitar Slim took place in Monroe, Louisiana. 'Fats and Slim played a 'Battle of the Blues' at the Monroe Civic Auditorium. Man, the place was packed. Slim had told Fats before the show, 'Fats, I'm gonna run you off that stage tonight.'

'So Slim went on first because Fats had hit records out. Slim just tore 'em up. The place was goin' wild. Slim walked off the stage with his guitar and went out the back door of the place and got in a car, still playing. Everybody wondered where Slim had gone. When it came time for Fats to come on, Fats just told the people, 'Ain't gonna be no battle tonight. You just saw it.' So Fats just played his regular show.'

By 1951, the record companies had been beating about this wild guitar player in New Orleans. Imperial approached first, and Al Young produced four sides on Eddie Jones at the J&M Studio. The session was rather chaotic, originally producing 'Bad Luck Is On Me,' and 'New Arrival,' but the record sounded and sold poorly. Imperial wouldn't ask Slim back to the studio, but still issued the remainder of the session when Slim hit the big time, using his alias instead of Eddie Jones.

Slim's next record was a different story. Percy Stovall arranged a session with Jim Bullet in Nashville, producing the popular 'Feelin' Sad,' in 1952. David Laste played sax on the tune and remembered the circumstances that surrounded the session: 'We was working at the Kitty Cat Club in Nashville, and me, Huey, Little Eddie Lang, and Willie Neutel did the session with Slim. 'Feelin' Sad' was a good little record, it had a church sound to it. We worked pretty good off it.'
When Slim came in off the road, he stayed upstairs at the Dew Drop. "Slim liked to be where the action was," chuckles Earl. "In fact you knew Slim was back in town, 'cause early in the morning, around seven—eight o'clock, if he was tanked up, you'd hear them amps and P.A.'s going off. People'd be calling the police, 'cause you could hear Slim three blocks away! And here's Slim up in his room with his shorts on, goin' through his stage routine."

"And Slim's room was something else, man," laughs Earl. "If you went up there, there'd always be about seven or eight different women up there. He'd have his songs written with eyebrow pencil on pieces of paper tacked to the wall."

Earl also recalls that Slim bought the first Les Paul guitar in New Orleans. "Slim was playing one of those big hollow boxes like T-Bone had. But when the solid boxes came out he got one right away. Slim said the hollow boxes were too big, and they didn't give him enough room on the stage. He couldn't control the feedback that was comin' out 'em. So he dealt with the Les Paul."

By 1953, Guitar Slim was one of the biggest draws on the southern R&B club circuit. The responsibilities of managing and booking reverted to Slim's landlord, Frank Pania, who owned the Dew Drop, while Percy Stovall concentrated on building up a larger roster of performers. Pania also took it upon himself to find Slim a new band. He hired the Lloyd Lambert band from Hosea Hill's Sugar Bowl in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Hosea was a friend and business associate of Pania, and paired Slim with the band for a series of road dates. Lloyd Lambert claims that Pania was responsible for introducing Johnny Vincent, then a Specialty A&R man, to Slim. Vincent was impressed enough to convince his boss, Art Rupe, to sign Slim to a recording contract. Vincent recalls that "Slim was supposed to sign with Atlantic, but this was one artist I just had to get. He was fantastic. Slim wouldn't let anyone outperform him. I wouldn't let him out of my sight until he signed with Specialty."

October 16, 1953, Slim entered the J&M Studio to record what was to be the biggest record of his career, "The Things That I Used To Do." Backing Slim on the session were Gus Fontenette, Charles Burbank and Joe Tillman on saxes, Oscar Moore on drums, Lloyd Lambert on bass and Frank Mitchell on trumpet. Vincent claims he had to bail Ray Charles out of jail to arrange and play piano to complete the personnel.

When Vincent says, "Slim was hard to record," he has lots of support. Tales of Slim's recording sessions are many. Vincent claims that it took "all night" to record "The Things That I Used To Do." Engineer Cosimo Matassa says "all day," and Lloyd Lambert reports it took "two days." Nonetheless, the musicians were obviously gratified when it was over, because Ray Charles is clearly audible yelling "Yeah!" in relief in the last bars of the song.

According to Earl King, the idea for the tune came to Slim in a dream. Slim related to King that in the dream he was confronted by a devil and an angel, both of whom held the lyrics to a song. Naturally, Slim chose the devil's song and it turned out to be "The Things That I Used To Do."

Vincent sent the tapes of the session out to Rupe, who was less than impressed with the result. According to Vincent, "He told me it was the worst piece of shit he'd ever heard. He said, 'I'm gonna put it out, but if it don't sell, you start looking for a job.'"

The public disagreed with Rupe, to say the least. Immediately after its release, both Billboard and Cashbox made it the pick of the week. Cashbox commented, "a slow southern blues rhythmically chanted by the blues shouter... great vocal with the proper blues styling and this side is headed for sales... top notch."

"The Things That I Used To Do" stormed the charts. It topped the R&B charts for six solid weeks,
and ended up the biggest selling R&B record of 1954. The record caught the imagination of the public: the lyrics, sung in Slim's impassioned gospel-like style, struck a chord in everybody's imagination. For many, the real appeal of "The Things That I Used To Public" is the fact that it was the novel guitar approach that Slim took, as Earl King explains: "Slim was gettin' a fuzz tone distortion way before anyone else. You didn't hear it again until people like Jimi Hendrix and eventually the biggest selling R&B record of 20.

"Believe it or not, Slim never used an amplifier. He always used a P.A. set, never an amplifier. He was an overtone fanatic, and he had these tiny iron cone speakers and the sound would run through them speakers and I guess any vibration would create that sound, because Slim always played at peak volume. That's why it was hard to record him, because of the volume he was accustomed to playing—'cause let's face it, if Slim was playing you could hear him a mile away.'

Lloyd Lambert agreed that Slim played as loud as he could. "He had this tinny sound," says Lambert, "that he'd get by turning all the bass controls on his guitar and amplifier as low as they would go, and turn up the treble controls as high as they'd go."

With the number one record in the country, Frank Pania booked a full itinerary for Slim through the South, and bought him a brand new Olds 88. Slim promptly got drunk one night and ran into a parked bulldozer, wrecking the car and sending Slim to the hospital. "Slim weren't too good a driver," laughs Lambert. "He didn't hurt himself too bad, the doctor just told him to take it easy for a month."

Pania decided to send Earl King out to impersonate Slim on a number of dates, and apparently got away with it. Even though King went along with the charade, he admits he was never actually Slim. "When I got back to town, the first person I saw was Guitar Slim," laughs Earl. "He was walking down LaSalle Street with a hospital gown on, a guitar under one arm and an amp under the other, yelling, 'Earl King, I heard you been out there makin' me. If you want my name I'm gonna sue and I'm gonna kill you'!"

Slim was back on his feet soon, and ready to hit the road for a tour of the northern theatre circuit. Since Lambert's band already had Lawrence Cotton on piano, Slim had to split with Huey Smith, an event which likely saddened both of them.

One of Slim's first stops was at the Apollo Theatre, where he shared the bill with the Spiders. Earl recounts a story told to him by Chuck Carbo (one of the Spiders), about Slim's initial performance: "When it came time for Slim's turn to conclude, they closed the curtain on Slim, but Slim decided he wasn't finished. Instead he just stepped in front of the curtain and continued playing."

Eventually Slim's popularity became too much for Frank Pania to deal with, so he turned over Slim's management to Hosea Hill, who ran his own popular nightspot in Thibodaux, The Sugar Bowl. Consequently, Slim spent a good amount of his time in Thibodaux, which nestles Bayou Lafourche.

Guitar Slim's next release, "The Story of My Life," was a powerful follow-up and came from his initial Specialty session. Once again Cashbox spotlighted it by giving it their weekly award and calling it "another powerful item. His mournful tale is accentuated by the chanter's stings and impressive guitar work."

Lambert still relishes the days of the mid-Fifties barnstorming the country. "We had the best band out there," he affirms. "Fats, B.B. King, even Lionel Hampton—we could cut 'em all.

"We had trouble following Slim at first 'cause Slim'd always jump meter, but it got to where we'd just jump right with him and it would sound fine. Slim was a showman and a musician. He'd have purple suits, orange suits, green suits, with shoes and hair to match. He'd make motions and faces that would drive people berserk. You couldn't hardly get into the place when he was playing."

Earl King agreed: "You could play Slim at the Dew Drop and get a mob of people, and the next night play him in Shreveport in an adjacent Jefferson Street with a hospital gown on, a guitar

Continued on page 40
Bernadette Kerrigan’s grandfather fiddled at the Old French Opera House, her parents composed ragtime classics and she pounds the skins in an all-girl band. Bernadette is 82.

By Bob Randall

I had lunch with my friend Bernadette the other day. Bernie and I had a pleasant visit, and as the waiter poured coffee we talked of her career in music. Enthusiastically, she told me how glad she is to be keeping busy in a city that has always harbored more musicians than it could ever support. She is the drummer for an all-girl group, she says, and they work often. Trouper that she is, Bernie also finds time to do spot engagements as a solo pianist.

Now at face value, there is nothing odd or unusual about any of this, but I listened with a curious wonder anyway—my friend Bernie, drummer, pianist, musician, is 82 years old.

Bernadette Kerrigan, formerly Kelly, Peterson, was born in New Orleans in 1901, back when the Crescent City actually was just a crescent. Widowed twice, Bernie has five children, and a veritable herd of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She hails from a background that reads like an abbreviated history of this city’s musical heritage. Her grandfather was a first violinist in the Old French Opera House; both parents were composers of popular music. Her mother, in fact, is reputed to have penned many of the ragtime classics that are still well-known today.

“There’s no way to prove that,” says the soft-spoken Bernie. “Back then you wrote a song and sold it to a publisher for maybe fifty dollars, and then it wasn’t yours anymore, you see.”

Back at her home, Bernie seats herself before an ornately wrought upright piano that is undoubtedly a priceless antique.

“This was my mother’s piano,” she says, and then plays the classic “12th Street Rag” for me. She delivers the piece with an authenticity that defies description. Stunned, not so much by her skill as by the anachronism that has just taken place, I ask the obvious question:

“Bernie, did your mother write that?”

“Well, we can’t prove it, you see.”

She doesn’t say anything about “12th Street Rag,” and the talk turns to other things—her brother, for instance, eighty-five-year-old Harold Peterson ran a music store on South Broad some years back, the store, according to the story, where Pete Fountain got his first clarinet.

The heritage continues. Bernie is pleased to tell me that a daughter, Theresa Kelly, has studied and performed opera, and has a Carnegie Hall recital among her accomplishments. One grandson is a rock musician/songwriter, and another is a church cantor.

Gradually, the conversation swings back to Bernie’s own endeavors, such as her group. Called Ethel Merwin’s All-Girl Band, the group is comprised of six ladies, mostly elderly. The group dedicates itself to benefit work, for the most part, such as performing for senior citizens’ gatherings, and nursing homes. Paid performances are occasional, and the girls never fail to please. Bernie’s solo work is of a similar nature: benefits for the Golden Age Club, sing-alongs at nursing homes, and more.

“It’s what keeps me young,” says Bernie, smiling, seeing those people happy, seeing them smile.” She pauses for a moment.

“People don’t smile enough anymore.”

She’s right, you know. There are too few people left in the world like Bernadette Kerrigan, and that’s a shame; her kind has ever been an inspiration.

Play it again, Bernie.
James Booker: Music As A Mysterious Art

By Bunny Matthews

"Harlequin without his mask is known to present a very sober countenance, and was himself, the story goes, the melancholy patient whom the Doctor advised to go and see Harlequin—a man full of care and perplexities like the rest of us, whose Self must always be serious to him, under whatever name or disguise he presents it to the public. And as all of you here must needs be grave when you think of your own past and present, you will not look to find, in the histories of those whose lives and feelings I am going to try and describe to you, a story that is otherwise than serious, and often very sad."

—William Makepeace Thackeray, 1851

James Booker’s death, according to Dr. Frank Minyard, Orleans Parish coroner and freelance trumpeter, occurred at 11:32 p.m. on Tuesday, November 8, 1983 as Booker, in a wheelchair, waited to be admitted to Charity Hospital, where the pianist was born on December 17, 1930. The morning after Booker died, The Times-Picayune/States-Item ran a front-page obituary. The story, by Vincent Fumar, was headlined "Piano Prince of N.O." James Booker dies at 43."

On the same front-page, there was a large front-column photograph of Aaron Neville and a group of New Orleans Saints in the recording studio, cutting "Who Dat?" and an Associated Press story that Bill Allain had won the Mississippi gubernatorial race.

Because he was a first offender, Booker was freed after serving half his sentence. On June 23, 1970, at a hearing before Judge Bernard Bagert, Booker was denied a motion he had filed "to suppress evidence" and on the same day, as advised by his attorney (Jerome Weinberg), Booker pled guilty to a lesser charge of "attempted possession of heroin." Judge Bagert sentenced Booker to two years at hard labor at Angola. The 34 days Booker had already spent in Orleans Parish Prison were credited to Booker’s sentence. While serving time, Booker worked in the prison library, taught himself yoga and was allowed to play the piano. Because he was a first offender, Booker was freed after serving half his sentence.

Booker’s wake was Thursday evening at the Rhodes Funeral Home on Washington Avenue, formerly the Tivoli movie theatre. Whereas Professor Longhair’s wake was something of a three-ring circus with the curious and bereaved snapping at the body with Instamatics and Nikons, Booker’s hearse was driven slowly down Airline Highway to Providence Memorial Park in Metairie.

On the same evening, the New York Times printed its obituary, headlined "James Booker; Was Called Piano Prince In New Orleans."

The unsigned piece noted that Booker was known in New Orleans as a flamboyant pianist and that, among other things, he had recorded his first single ("Doing The Hambone") in 1953, impersonated Huey "Piano" Smith on tour during the late Fifties and served a one-year jail sentence during the Sixties for possession of heroin. "He was rediscovered in the 1970’s," the Times said, "and became a major attraction at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival in and in Europe, although he rarely played in the United States outside of New Orleans."

Actually, Booker served his one-year jail sentence in 1970 at Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. On January 30, 1970, Booker was observed removing a plastic bottle containing a white powder from his coat pocket by a New Orleans police officer and was arrested at the Dew Drop Inn on LaSalle Street, not far from his Aunt Eva’s House. Booker was charged with possession of heroin.

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Booker did not look very good. He looked like a body that had been dead for a couple of days and his face bore the usual uneasy countenance. Even alive, he sometimes looked dead but then when you saw Booker lying there looking as utterly respectable as the mortician’s skill allowed and the grim faces passing before his body and the floral arrangement that utilized his ‘Classified’ album cover as a centerpiece and the ubiquitous, sopha-toned portrait of Jesus on the altar—a picture that is well known to every child who has ever been through Sunday School, the mourner sensed that Booker would've dug the proceedings. The music—Muzak piano versions of songs such as "Oh, Danny Boy!"—might’ve bothered the deceased, but Booker would've really loved the idea of his friends and relatives—all of them in their best clothes—arriving at one time to see him, to pay their tributes.

At the end of the wake, a middle-aged black man dressed in a pink, three-piece polyester suit briskly walked down the center aisle, introduced himself as a minister and told those present that it was important for them to go to church. Then a younger black man stood up and sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Finally, Booker’s 82-year-old Aunt Eva knelt before his coffin and sobbed: "I tried to talk to you, I tried to talk to you..." The last time she had seen Booker alive was two months before when she went to the Maple Leaf to hear him play. Eva left during the first set without speaking to him.

On the next morning—a cold, gray Friday morning, Booker’s hearse was driven slowly down Airline Highway to Providence Memorial Park in Metairie. His coffin was placed in a crypt and the mourners departed. Gene Hall, the New Orleans singer, bashed Booker’s death on astrological factors—citing that Pluto had entered Scorpio (or "Scorpius," as she called it) and such an event only happens once every century always causing large numbers of deaths. Booker would be back, she said, the next time it happened.

Friday afternoon, veteran record dealer Jim Russell, who had known Booker as a teenager, confessed that a conversation with Booker could give a person "chills." "Booker," said Russell, "was a man who lived 430 years in 43 years."

Leaving Providence Memorial Park, this writer recalled the evening when I encountered Booker at the Maple Leaf and asked him if it was true that he was really going to go to Chicago to tape a program for educational television with Mac Rebennack. Booker laughed: "I might go as far as Airline Highway."

In person, Booker could be a little like having the entire Bacchus parade march through your living room. A few hours with Booker was a demanding experience, a draining experience and usually, an enlightening experience.

One rainy afternoon, he arrived to see me and I...
was busy—too busy for Booker’s shenanigans and conspiracies so he departed in a taxi, leaving me with his cane and a stapled manila envelope rubber-stamped six times with his “Creative International Associates” logo. Booker told me to hold on to it and that I would know when the time was “right” to open the parcel.

About four years later, when Booker asked Rounder Records producer Scott Billington to ask me to compose the liner notes for his “Classified” album, I assumed that the time might be “right” to unveil the artifacts which represent a slice of his existence circa-1978-79. catalogued thusly:

1. A color postcard with two scenes of Mason’s Motel Americans on Claiborne Avenue. It is addressed to a friend in West Germany, signed “Booker—The Piano Pope’ and reads: “This is the place when you come to play the festival—stay here and you’ll never leave.”

2. A Creative International Associates business card, printed in green ink. Booker’s address is given as “New Orleans, Louisiana.”


4. A 1968 receipt from Mighty Duke’s Tavern with the telephone number of a sax player on the back.

5. Assorted business cards and phone numbers written on slips of paper.


7. Two panoramic-view-of-Canal-Street color postcards. On one of them Booker has used a blue ballpoint pen to draw arrows emerging from the top of the Bank of New Orleans skyscraper, the roof of which features a giant “BNO” sign. The arrows evolve into musical notes over Carondelet Street and then, centered over Canal Street—the heart of the city—Booker has printed in vertical letters: “Booker of New Orleans,” corralling his B, N and O with quotation marks.


9. Four sheets of lyrics, in Booker’s handwriting. One is in blue ballpoint ink and the other is in pencil.

The inked sheets, for a song titled “Take Your Time (And Live),” dated “4-11-78” and credited to Booker and a name that looks like “WuBuKa,” contain the line, “Remember them the way you’d want them to remember you.”

During the same period, Booker was arrested three times for public drunkenness—August and November of 1978, and September of 1979.

A 2 p.m. on November 11, 1978, I interviewed Mac Rebennack in his hotel room at the Hilton. After nearly 45 minutes of reflection and commentary, he got around to his mentors and, of course, Booker: “That’s how I learned from Huey [Smith] and Fess. Allen [Toussaint] and Booker played much more correctly and they were more properly trained in the piano, and naturally, more classically-oriented. I’ve never had any delusions of playing that stuff.

“Booker, being like the child prodigy he was when he was so young and to have gone through all he’s been through over the years—that’s he still amongst us, is to me, great. I don’t think any different than any of the rest of the guys in the business. It’s like a part of the tradition of New Orleans to not be a
good businessman or to be a worse businessman than the average cat.'

Two months before my conversation with Mac Rebennack, I conducted an interview with Booker, who had just returned from an European tour that had taken him to Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, the French Riviera and the Montreux Jazz Festival, where Booker proudly announced, his Swiss album, "James Booker Alive!" had won the Grand Prix award for best live recording. Honorable mentions, he pointed out, were awarded to Ray Charles and Otis Rush. In either Copenhagen, Denmark or Oslo, Norway (Booker couldn't recall where), he had slipped and fractured his elbow while going through the airport.

I only used bits and pieces of the interview in a subsequent article (Booker's apparent impression, at the time, was that the public needed to be constantly informed of his adventures, which didn't always fit into my various editors' scheme of things) and I never transcribed the entire interview tape. What follows is most of the 45-minute interview, with commentary.

Booker began by urging me to interview Earl King, "because he's very frank and very honest. I'm proud of him for being like that because I remember when he was not very frank or very honest." Booker then accused King of once taking some of his material and turning it into songs "where I couldn't even recognize 'em when I heard 'em."

Booker proceeded to handleader Dave Bartholomew.

"When I started out in the business, everybody used to tell me not to fool with Dave Bartholomew because 'Dave does this' and 'Dave does that'... I saw Dave producing different record sessions and how he handled 'em. I went to his house, counted his Cadillacs and I said, 'Well, if that's the way you do it, then shit, me and Dave is gonna be partners."

"Now the less a man tries to convince me of how honest he is, the more confidence I have in him. If a man lets me know he's tricky, I know he's honest enough to let me know what I'm dealing with. If a man tells me that he doesn't dig a person that indulges in trickery, it makes me wonder if he's honest or not or is he actually the trickster that's tricking the trickster?"

The situation with record companies—not only record companies but booking agents, personal managers, producers, anybody you gotta sign up with—how can I remember what's on eight pages of contract, eight pages of another contract, eight pages of another contract and sign something saying, 'I will not violate this agreement—everything is cool?'

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"The most important thing is the sales clause and guaranteed release. You can put five clauses on the contract and have it very, very flexible because those five clauses can have subclauses—maybe three of 'em. I'm for revolutionizing the music business. Let the tables turn a little white."

"Music is a little bit at a standstill now (the Number One song on Billboard's Pop Chart the week of the interview was Taure of Honey's 'Boogie Oogie Oogie'). You can't tell the difference between a record that was made this year or a record that was made last year all the time. Some of 'em sound like that's the same song you heard last year at such and such a month and then when you find out who it is, it's a different person singing it. Or maybe it's not a different person singing it—maybe it's a different song and a different person singing it and it just sounds like another song that came out last year that was successful. Music is a tricky business, man."

I asked Booker if he had ever met Charles Levy, the New Orleans attorney, now deceased, who had handled the careers of Dave Bartholomew, Fats Domino, and Chris Kenner. I wanted to know because Mrs. Chris Kenner, the recording artist's widow, had recently been released from St. Gabriel Women's Prison (where she had served time for..."

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sort of unholy, psychotic tantrum on the spot, was paid his fee and bid adieu.

"He shouldn't have squawked about that," Booker said. "I don't like people squawking over petty change.

"They talk about principles. The principle of what? Principle is one thing, feeling is another...

"I have respect for contracts but there's always an exception to quite a few rules. If you're qualified to be an exception, that's something that's quite natural to draw resentment and all kinds of negative responses and it's very difficult to deal with and for this reason, I've been just about on the brink of insanity three or four times. I've never been really, really totally insane, but I've felt as though I was standing on the brink of insanity at times.

"I can feel it when it comes on. My brain gets certain signals just like heart trouble. You get signals when you've got heart trouble. Your heart beats a certain way. When you've got rheumatism like I've got, you get pains through your muscles at times. So I usually keep myself kinda posted on what time it is. It's time for a brighter day because we've had a whole lot of the other way.

The subject of managers and booking agents arose:

"All this for control. Uh uh. They say my biggest difficulty is that I cannot be controlled or that I'm too difficult to be controlled. Oh, I can be controlled. I can be controlled very, very swiftly if the circumstances prevail in favor of the better half. I consider the better half to be my financial advantage, where I can call out a few shots.

"Don't get me in a studio and tell me to do this, do that, do the other. If you know how to do this, that and the other and a little bit more, I wouldn't have to be sitting there screaming and hollering like somebody hit me in the head with a cue stick.

"If a manager gets a commission to be a manager—to give you advice—you're the performer, but you're also the boss, right? If so, why do the powers that be want to dictate to the artist as if he were in Moscow?"

I reminded Booker that record companies are capitalistic enterprises. Selling records and selling toothpaste—what's the difference? There's little regard for the artist...

"Little regard for the artist—that's the punchline of this whole interview. Little regard for the artist, no matter how big he is or what.

"A friend of mine, a very good friend of mine, Richard Perry, who produced Ringo Starr, he told me one time, 'I don't like lawyers, I don't deal with lawyers.' When I had to file a claim against Ringo Starr to get my proper earnings for the one song that I did with him—'Hold On'—around $1,909, Ringo didn't want to pay it because Richard had advanced me about $760 and Ringo felt we should be even because that was a hell of a favor. And it was a hell of a favor.

"Richard Perry was real, real hung up behind my music because he told me one time he remembered when 'So Swell When You're Well'—he produced it—he said, 'I remember the night I met you, Booker, you came and staggered over to the piano and you played some of the most fantastic stuff I've ever heard in my life!'

"Music is a mysterious art, to start off with, and people that's really good at it—at an elaborate, mysterious art— they get a little taste of the mysterious so they have mystical, mysterious attributes but it's whether or not they're aware of it that's important.

"Let me tell you something, man, every generation that has ever come up has always revolved around the older generation. This happens in the music business, too, and the reason it only comes sometimes from professional envy—that motivates a whole lot of things. Professional envy has some good sides to it, if it's dealt with a certain way.

"Look at the politicians. They have their share of..."
Booker's Life and Achievements

By Jon Foose

He was born to James Booker Jr. and Ora Cheatham Booker, December 17, 1939, in New Orleans. His sister Betty Jean was six years older. James Jr. was a tall dark man much older than his country. She was fair-complexed; an early fean.; res., wife.

Orleans. His sister Betty Jean was six years older.

Cheatham Booker, December 17, 1939, in New

He was born to James Booker Jr. and

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1953; they played R&B numbers popular on the radio. His sister introduced James to WMRV deejay Ernie "The Whip" [who died this November] and the fourteen-year-old promptly played "Lawdy, Miss Claudy." Soon he had his whole combo broadcasting. New Orleans was a fertile field for James Booker. As older musicians heard of his ability, they called him to sit in and play. He gained entry to the inner circle of artists.

Edward Frank: "He had great technique and a good blues feeling even then. He was different, very gifted, not sure of himself "cause he was young, but everywhere he would go, he would play. He had said, because people would insist on it. Dave Bartholomew asked me about James "cause he had heard about him, and one day Dave called me down to the studio and James was there."

"Doing the Hambone" (which Bartholomew had written) appeared on Imperial. It didn't sell, but at fourteen James Booker had a record to his name. "I went to Xavier University Junior School of Music, I was in the tenth and eleventh grades," Booker explained. "In the twelfth I didn't go at all, 'cause I was playing more in nightclubs, with people like Earl King, Smiley Lewis, Shirley and Lee." Still, he did well enough to graduate.

The organ had become popular in the emerging rock music of the period, due to the Bill Doggett hit "Hound Dog." "I was a pioneer in New Orleans on organ. With guitarist Earl King, James started the first organ group in New Orleans in 1955. Later he joined Joe Tex for a road tour; through Tex, he met Johnny Vincent, and recorded a lively organ instrumental for Ace called "Teenage Rock." Things went fine until Booker discovered Vincent over-dubbing Joe Tex lyrics on the tune, calling it "Open
the Door.” Booker exploded. Vincent backed down, and released it on the flip side, under the name ‘Little Booker.”

In 1958, Booker hit the road with Shirley and Lee. He had a talent for imitation, and gravitated to Huey “Piano” Smith, who didn’t like to tour. Thus Booker went on the road with Bobby Marchan and the Clowns, playing piano as Huey Smith. He was also moving heavily into studio sessions at Cosmos, feeling that the structure of school would help. But when Dee Clark came to town needing an organist, James dropped out of school to tour. Because of financial difficulties, the group split up, and Clark sold the band organ to Don Robie. Edward Frank found session work for Booker at Robie’s studio. James worked with Duke/Peacock talents Junior Parker, Bobby Bland and others. His own recording, “Gonzo,” a rocking organ instrumental, surprised many people by climbing to number ten in the R&B charts of 1960. Edward Frank suggested the title, which was Booker’s nickname. (“Gonzo” had been the lead character in the movie The Pушки.” The flip side was called “Cool Turkey.”

The heroin references elicited producer Robie, which Booker and Frank took as a fine joke. James Booker was a bit of a gypsy; his restlessness is reflected in the early Sixties. He toured the west with Roy Hamilton’s show and B.B. King. Then he toured with Lloyd Price, Joe Tex again, and Wilson Pickett. Then “I went down to Bourbon Street and played at one club called Papa Joe’s and the guy heard me play and he bought three organs ‘cause he had two other places, Madame Franchise’s and Poodle’s Patio. I played all three of those places every night and, when it got to taxing my body, I called on Dr. John and taught him how to play organ. That let him be my understudy. That’s how he started playing organ.”

His deepening dependency on drugs put him at odds with the law. He was arrested and found himself in the company of Chris Kenner at Angola State Penitentiary. On release there was more session work. Fats Domino was on the road a great deal now, and Bartholomew hired Booker to put down piano tracks for “Fats is Back” in 1968. An exceptional Domino-style piano appears on Booker’s “I’m Ready,” released on the Reprise label.

Booker left New Orleans for New York. In the early Seventies, he did session work for producer Mike Stoller, who sent Booker to Nashville to work at Starday-King studio as a session pianist. His reputation on keyboard spread among musicians around the country. He recorded with Maria Muldau, Ringo Starr, Aretha Franklin, the Doobie Brothers, and the Grateful Dead.

In 1975 he went to Spain, played a music festival in Barcelona, dazzling the audience with his rocking boogie version of “Malaguena.” He was now working to rid himself of his addiction. Of those years, he said, “It started like a nightmare and ended like a dream—because you know overcoming the addiction itself is a dream. It’s every junkie’s dream to square up. Some pursue it, some don’t. I found every reason to pursue it because I had so much to look forward to and it seemed to be a stumbling block. I found out after I did kick it, I had a few other problems, personality-wise. When I was coming off of methadone in 1976, I found I was very paranoid. I got placed in Charity Hospital on the third floor mental ward. I had two nervous breakdowns between January and March. Then I came to the Eupepe Center and I was on the tail end of de-toxing the methadone and it was quite painful. It was quite a drastic experience. I wasn’t sure I could do it.”

He did do it, and late in 1976 R&B historian Norbert Hess arranged a European tour, which resulted in two live albums, The first LP, James Booker/The Piano Prince of New Orleans, features several Booker compositions. “One Hell of a Nerve” has an interesting history. New Orleans has long had fruit vendors, who drive small trucks through the neighborhoods, hawking their produce. Booker: “I remember listening to the watermelon man: ‘I got watermelon, I got cantaloupe, I got okra and shrimp.’ That influenced me to write a certain style of music. I wrote ‘So Swell When You Well’ from that. And there’s another I have. ‘One Hell of a Nerve,’ and it really gives you the sound of the man going behind the watermelon track [to sell produce].”

The only thing that’s missing is the cowbell that the horses used to have.” Booker achieves the effect by an octave-spanning yodel.

You know I love you, honey, from A to Z. But something about you, I seem to worry me.

Today you love me. Tomorrow you don’t.

Sometimes you will. And I know sometimes you won’t.

You so swell when you’re well (three times)

But you just stay slick so long!

Late 1977 found James Booker at the Boogie Woogie and Ragtime Piano Contest in Zurich, Switzerland. His performance resulted in the LP James Booker Live, first released in Europe. It won The Grand Prix de Disc de Jazz for best live album of the year, which James accepted at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1978. (In the U.S., Rounder Records released it as New Orleans Piano Wizard: Live!) Of all the artists in New Orleans, James Booker is the most difficult to characterize. He resettled in the city in the late Seventies and became one of the most popular musicians on the performing circuit—if not always a predictable one. When the crowd was right, when the music surged, the man was a wonder to behold. To some, Booker was known to create a cold, sardonic wall.

Booker’s brilliance was tempered in the flame—the painful struggle of his addiction literally embodied the Junktors. Booker recorded “Junko Partner,” an updated version of the old piano anthem on his first LP. The poetry and imagery, set to pulsing blues-and-boogie beat, are vintage Booker.

Down the road

Come a junko partner.

He was loaded, he was loaded, located as can be.

He was knocked out, knocked our loaded,

And he was singing, he was singing.

He was singing this-a song to me.

If I had, if I had,

If I had one million dollar—

I wanna tell ya, wanna tell ya.

Wanna tell ya what I would do.

I would buy, I would buy.

Land around Angola.

And grow a nice weed farm till 1992.

I want donkey, whiskey.

Whiskey when I’m thirsty.

I want water, water.

Water when I’m dry.

I want my lover, lover.

Lover when I’m lonely, right now.

And just a little, burn, burn.

Burned right before I die.

With a little cocaine, cocaine.

Cocaine on the side.

WAVELENGTH DECEMBER
Steve Masakowski, jazz guitarist and inventor, exposes New Orleans to sounds from Mars

BY YORKE CORBIN

The sweet smell of commercial success has so far failed to descend upon any of the artistically potent jazz composers stirring about the city. The small audience that New Orleans normally musters for contemporary jazz events has heard some striking music these past few years, and out in the big world the advent of Wynton Marsalis has generated more public excitement than anyone concerned with either jazz or New Orleans would have dared hope. But the gulf between Wynton’s success and the recognition accorded his home-based peers is large (as is the distance between jazz and pop stardom: the first Wynton Marsalis album has sold about 125,000 copies; double that figure would make a modest pop hit). Sniffing out jazz trends is a pastime in which few Orleanians indulge.

Patrons of the perfume department at D.H. Holmes, however, caught a whiff of what’s happening a few weeks back. Floating through the store were the strains of Steve Masakowski’s mellifluous jazz guitar, perhaps the pleasantest promotional idea any local department store has devised in recent memory. One jazz scene hanger-on who happened to be ambling about the store at the time looked up in astonishment to see Masakowski, whose usual persona suggests a serious intellectual with a sardonically humorous edge, playing gentle riffs for the perfume seekers. With his chunky frame encased in a rented tux, Masakowski’s improbable Fu Manchu mustache seemed a touch of the surreal. “Now I’ve seen everything,” the jazz head muttered. “I guess you have,” the guitarist noted sagely.

Steve Masakowski plays an instrument of his own devising—the keytar. It’s a keyboard for the left hand arranged like a guitar finger board, interfaced with a polyphonic synthesizer. Because there’s no picking involved, the right hand is free to fire notes, ed a touch of the surreal. “Now I’ve seen everything,” the jazz head muttered. “I guess you have,” the guitarist noted sagely.

Steve Masakowski takes the quirks of making a living as a contemporary jazz musician in stride. Supporting himself as a private teacher, sideman, and astute grant-getter, Masakowski leads one of the most adventurous jazz groups in the city, Mars. He has just released his first album, also called Mars, which sounds like a canny mating of intellectually challenging music with an accessible, commercially-attuned approach. The third release of Prescription Records, the contemporary New Orleans jazz label, Mars will not have the advantage of major label distribution, which means that Masakowski remains several big steps away from connecting with a large audience. What we’re looking for at the moment is solid evidence that he is determined and able to take those steps, one after another.

“You have to make your breaks yourself,” he says flat out. “You have to pull your own strings—especially in New Orleans. I’ve been getting my business frame of mind together; I’m seeing with the whole group of contemporary musicians here, that’s one factor that’s necessary for people to get to the point where they can start breaking away from the New Orleans scene, doing things on a higher level.”

“In the beginning, it’s an uphill battle. You have to get to a certain point where people start becoming interested in you. But I feel like the New Orleans musical scene is on the verge of becoming prosperous and beneficial for everybody. Every separate band of personality—everyone who’s working for a higher goal—is closer than they’ve ever been before to quality, to getting recognition that would put them on a different level.”

Conscious that he has a lingering reputation for negativity about the local music scene, Masakowski is straining a bit to sound positive. But it’s worth looking at how he has steadily applied himself to the...
task of making his musical ideas, which tend toward the advanced and esoteric, a force to reckon with on the highly conservative New Orleans scene. A New Orleans native ("no one believes that") who studied at Boston's Berklee School of Music, Masakowski returned home to pursue two separate musical paths.

First, he fell in with the hip young players who were making Tyler's jazz club the center of the local jazz scene in the late Seventies; the emphasis there was on instrumental flash, showy virtuosity. Masakowski's skills gave him ready entree to that circle, but his understated playing seemed to set him apart. Meanwhile, he was exploring a different territory, advanced composition in the contemporary classical mode, under the tutelage of Dr. Ben Braud, the noted composer who heads the music department at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts.

About three years ago, Masakowski began to emerge as a composer in his own right. He formed Mars as a vehicle for experimenting with electronic effects, combining his new music studies with his jazz background. Mars began to present club audiences with carefully thought-out compositions that sometimes played hob with listeners' expectations, as synthesizer-generated electronic sounds travelled outside the normal boundaries of jazz. As might be expected, Mars has been slow to build an audience in New Orleans.

"I would never go out to try to find a steady gig situation for Mars," Masakowski explains. "On a weekly basis at Tyler's, it wouldn't work. It's more conducive to a concert type of situation. You have to look forward to particular gigs and try to make them interesting—totally different."

That sounds like the resigned Stoicism of a struggling avant-gardist, except that Masakowski has in

The Story Behind The Label

Packaging uncompromised music, despite its voice-in-the-wilderness overtones, is usually a collective affair. Such is the case with the fledgling Prescription label (of which Mars is part) as viewed by one of its founders, Ramsey McLean.

"Anthony Braxton once told me that there was no such thing as a good record deal," he said. "What we're trying to do is put out the best contemporary music that New Orleans has to offer. It's an artist-produced label. It's really more of an umbrella than a formal record company. It's nice from the standpoint of control. Things now aren't the way they were six or seven years ago, when minor companies marketed new artists. Record companies today are interested in people who have produced for them in the past. Now they're buying catalogs and re-releasing things, like Elektra/Musician."

McLean's Prescription entry, The Long View, which is in the final production stages, is a duet with Tony Dagradi, and should be out before the year's end.

"All of the music is totally original," he said. "The more original the material, the higher the level of musicianship. On this album I play cello. Tony plays tenor, soprano, flute and bass clarinet. Actually I play bass on one tune. We recorded it in the playhouse at Longue Vue Gardens. It was recorded acoustically. We used the room, it should sound big. There's no studio that offered that quality. I'm going to keep picking out places like that."

McLean's first album, "History's Made Every Moment," was recorded at the Faubourg, so apparently the idea of working in a studio still holds no appeal for him.

"I just think it's got to be live or it's not a jazz record," he said. "For authentic quality, it's got to be taken live. It has to be done with everybody playing together. You can't play it separately. You get the edge this way."

"We'll have 1,000 copies pressed. Michael Cusca will do the liner notes. If we have four records out on the same label, we'll have a catalog of contemporary New Orleans music, which will help us to deal with distributors, European companies and mail order. The strength of that will be greater than any individual could do." (Also on Prescription are the IAQ's No Compromise.)

The first album received favorable reviews and helped put McLean on the musical map. He compares it to The Long View with a terser frankness: "The first one did well critically. The new one doesn't sound like the first one; it's thematically unified. I like duets. It's like a solo but you have a friend. It's not nightclub music. It's a highly compositional record. But it's not a stiff kind of formal. Some of it's pretty abstract. The production is better, the material about equal."

—Vincent Fumar
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danced at the edge of a viewer's powers of springs to the fore. This art provides its audience with a fact managed to deliver. And if his performances in recent months are a reliable indication, he may be ready to break through to a broader audience. This year's jazz fest found Masakowski collaborating with a talented visual artist, John Graubarth, at the Snug Harbor jazz club, which has emerged as the place to hear the freshest new music (some would say the most exciting art) that New Orleans has to offer. On a screen behind and above the band, Graubarth projected a shifting, overlapping series of images that danced at the edge of a viewer's powers of concentration, seeming to resolve themselves into coherent visual statements, then dissolving to begin a new chain of association. Masakowski and his band (some of whom seemed to chafe at the task) insinuated their music into the consciousness of the audience; depending upon where one's attention was more fully directed, the imagery, or vice versa.

In subsequent performances, most notably at the Longue Vue Gardens concert series, Masakowski, Mars and Graubarth have refined and expanded their concept. Besides the considerable art involved, there is a trick: juxtaposed with the flux of musical ideas is an intimidatingly complex style of music that seems to arise from the flux of visual imagery, the element of intellectual play in what might otherwise seem an intimidatingly complex style of music springs to the fore. This art provides its audience with a surprisingly easy means of access, a way to focus one's conscious attention that gives subliminal influences free play.

"None of it's a new idea," according to Masakowski. "I really believe that electronic music is the music of the future, and as with all music that is new on the scene, people have a hard time relating to it, appreciating it. I think having visual effects will help people digest the music. It gives the music a clearer emotional perspective."

Masakowski relishes the challenge of engaging an audience. Surprisingly, he makes a virtue of the fact that conservative New Orleans audiences necessitate an extra effort on the artist's part. "One thing good about New Orleans is that there's always something you can do—little goals, little projects that are good things to work for. That's why I've been down here so long."

"I keep thinking about moving to New York. I even talked to Branford Marsalis about it. He seemed to think that Wynton would never have gotten the deal he got with CBS if he hadn't been in New York. And of course, the people in high positions in the record business would never have heard us if he'd stayed here because they're never down here. But at least down here there are things that you can do with grants, etcetera, that can be artistically rewarding that people in New York don't do. There's not a whole lot of competitions for grants here."

Grant and prize money have gone to support some of Masakowski's writing, and he has a substantial grant to spend on a second album. The one he has just released was largely written under a patron, the father of one of his guitar students. He produced it himself over a couple of years, employing one nationally known musician, saxophonist Dave Liebman, and what Masakowski calls "a New Orleans all-star band. I used different people for different things—three drummers, two keyboard players. It's all my compositions, and it's a cross-section of different things. I'm into a lot of different things, which is good and bad as far as marketability is concerned. I think for a first album it's important to show what you can do, what your strong points are."

Steve Masakowski's strong points recall those of one of his regular collaborators, pianist Ellis Marsalis, his partner for the Monday night duets at Tyler's that for the past year or two have been the most rewarding regular jazz gig in New Orleans. Like Ellis, Masakowski is a virtuoso player, a challenging composer and a man with sufficient intellectual detachment to produce fine work at a steady pace in an environment that too often discourages the musical talent with which New Orleans is almost haphazardly blessed. Masakowski's first album, to be reviewed here next month, makes a convincing case that a smart jazz man can pull together the right elements from the New Orleans scene to send the city's musical force hurtling toward a new audience and into a new year.

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WAVELENGTH DECEMBER
CONCERTS

Thursday, 1
38 Special, Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum, ticket information at (600) 388-8010.

Saturday, 3
The Neville Brothers, Steamer President, Call 524-SAIL.
Rich Little narrates Puck and the Wolf with the New Orleans Symphony, also on the program: his tribute to MGM and press conference. At the Orpheum, admission information from the Symphony's office, 525-0500.
The Messiah, performed by the Jefferson Community Chorus at Immaculate Conception Church on 7th Street in Metairie, information at 833-3336.

Sunday, 4
Frank Federico and his band, French Market, free.

Wednesday, 7
The Sophie Newcomb Memorial Concert, part of the Music at Midday series, participants are the Talam and Newcomb Chorus, Rogers Memorial Chapel, noon, free.

FESTIVALS

Thursday-Saturday, 1-3
Christmas Festival, Monroe. Information at (318) 322-3461.

Saturday, 10
Christmas Comes Alive, Lafayette. Information at (318) 961-0693.

Friday, Saturday, 2-3
Three States Arts and Antiques Festival, Shreveport. Information at (318) 222-9122.

Saturday, 3
Candlelight Tour of Clinton, Clinton. Information at (504) 683-5594.

Sunday, Saturday-3-4

Sunday, 4
Annual Victorian Christmas, Franklin. Information at (318) 829-3631.

Saturday, 10
Homer Christmas Festival and Parade, Homer. Information at (318) 927-3271.

Saturday-Sunday, 10-11
Louisiana Crafts Christmas Fair, New Orleans. Information at 504-922-5227.

LIVE AT THE MUSIC

Bistro Lounge, 4061 Tulane Ave., 882-9773. Fridays and Saturdays: Ruben Gonzalez and his Salsa Rhythms, from 10.


Bonaparte's Retreat, 1007 Decatur, 561-9473. Ralph Cox, every day except Sunday.

Boulevard, 1926 West End Park, 282-9144. Certainly the darkest and most "intimate" of W.E. clubs. Fridays and Saturdays: Harvey Jones and Friends.

Bronco's, 1409 Romain, Gretna, 388-1000. Every day except Sundays, the Mississippi South House Band.


Dorothy's Medallion, 3232 Orleans. Snake-dancing, excellent line of dixieland in motion for Botero-eyed girl watchers.

The Nutcracker, Tchaikovsky's ballet—exclusively a family favorite—about the lurid and sordid things that went on after lights out in 19th Century Russian household, at Christmas time. Call 527-3370 for information.

Saturday, 31
New Year's Eve Blues Festival and is there a better time to do it? Riverside Centropix, Baton Rouge, with B.B. King, Bobby Blue Bland, 2.Z. Hill, Denise LaSalle—who needs noisemakers?

Madama Butterfly by the New Orleans Opera Association, Dec. 7, 8, 10.

Bobby Bland at the Riverside Centropix, Baton Rouge, Dec. 31.

Lady B J at the Snug Harbor, Dec. 23, and a special farewell concert at the Saxony, Dec. 18.

Pinkerton, you may as well get it over with. Conducted by Ello Boncompagni, information from the New Orleans Opera Association at 520-2270.

Thursday, 8
Joan Rivers, Saenger Performing Arts Center, 525-0502. Anyone planning to attend this is advised to steal a look at the December issue of Hustler magazine for a "cosmograph" (as they called them in the Twenties) of Joan Rivers' Nightmares.

All We Are Saying... a music and film tribute to John Lennon, and a benefit for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. At Toliolita's details at 899-5114.

Friday, 9
Holiday Favorites with the New Orleans Symphony, as well as the Symphony Chorus, the Children's Symphony Chorus and Lisa Trapani narrating, Stein, information at 525-0500.

Jeffrey Osborne, Saenger, 8 and 11. Ticket information at 525-1022. X. Steamer President (although it might be more appropriate to hear them while steaming down the Orinoco or even the Sow) details at 524-SAIL.

Saturday, 10
Johnny Rivers, Steamer President. Call 524-SAIL.

Saturday, 11
Brass Quintet, at the French Market, free.
Michael Franks, Saenger, 525-1052. I like Michael Franks OK since anyone who likes Lou Donaldson Roussou is OK with me and he is a little unbelievably welcome, but don't you ever wonder if this guy ever gets upset and shouts and stumps around?

Tuesday, 13
Dan Fogelburg, UNO Lafayette Community. Ticket information at 286-7222.

Wednesday, 14
Stray Cats, Saenger, 525-1052.

Friday, 16
Stray Cats, Mississippi Coast Coliseum, details, at (600) 388-8010.

Friday, and Saturday, 17
Amahl and The Night Visitors. Menotti's opera about a little lame boy who entertains (partially unaware) the three Magi during a pit stop on Christmas night. with details at 525-0500.

Saturday, 17
Ronnie Dio, formerly with Black Sabbath (and he is any relation to Madre do Dio?), with Huntlin Pie opening. Saenger, 525-1022.

Sunday, 18
The Desire Community Chorus, at the French Market, free.

Caroling, by candlelight, beginning at 6 in Jackson Square.

Farewell Concert for Lady B J, Saxony, 1717 Canal, beginning at 6, information at 581-4466.

Wednesday, 21
The Messiah, performed by the New Orleans Symphony, Orpheum Theatre, 526-0500; but aren't you starting to wonder why someone doesn't maybe do Berlioz' L'Enfance du Christ at this season? (kinda creepy but our favorite Xmas music anyway) or even perhaps Bach's Christmas Oratorio?

Irma Thomas Christmas Special, 9 p.m. on Channel 12. Irma performs such works as "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen", Bring A Torch Jeannetts Isabella, Frosty The Snowman, Angel  We Have Heard On High and many others; advance notice is that it's a killer.

Wednesday, 28 to Friday, 30
New Orleans City Ballet, Theatre for the Performing Arts, Wed.28 through Fri.30. The Nutcracker, Tchaikovsky's ballet—exclusively a family favorite—about the lurid and sordid things that went on after lights out in 19th Century Russian household, at Christmas time. Call 527-3370 for information.
Adams and Walter Washington with the House Band. 


Fairmont Court, in the Fairmont Hotel. 539-7111. Tuesdays to Saturdays, Judi. Dajian occupies the piano bench from 9 to 10. 

The Famous Door, 339 Bourbon, 522-7626. Masonic. Friday and Saturday nights, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. 

Holly Aldandge, 529-9812. Everyone of note, from Art Adler’s Jazz Band (see his brother’s name in this issue) and班子 who also enliven weekends afternoons from 4 to 8. 

Fol Cate, 505 Guillemard Blvd, Grena. 322-0756. Mondays and Tuesdays, Rockin’ Russ. Wednesdays and Saturdays: Big Jive and the Nightly Fifities. Fridays and Saturdays: Gloria and gravy with Jimmy Simons and Janie Grice. 

544 Club, 544 Bourbon, 523-8611. Wednesdays through Saturdays, Gary Burren and Feelings. 


Pete Fountain’s, in the Hilton, 528-4274. Pete Fountain played his band, at 10 nightly, one show only and reservations probably a good idea. 

Gazebo Cafe and Bar, 1018 Decatur, 522-0932. Alfonso, ragtime piano each afternoon and again as night is falling, Saturdays and Sundays: John Ryan’s New Orleans Rhythm Band makes a little more noise. 3:30 to 6. 

Houlihan’s, 523-7412. Like music of a jazz nature outside on weekdays from 7 to 11 a.m. Fridays; the music moves inside on weekends and starts two hours later. 

Jimmy’s, 8200 Willow, 866-9549. Thurs: 1 through Sat: 3. The Radiators. If Zeke can get there in time from his part-time job as Kiki Kragle at the Aziale Gardens Shopping Center, Espanola Way. 


Maple Leaf Bar, 8316 Oak, 806-9550. Tuesdays and weekends, and her Boughs of Holly, Wednesdays. Mason (he thought Delta Blues were sad songs and a hardtime ballads) Saturdays: Bruce Lewis and the Lovebirds. Thursdays: Bruce Lewis and the Lovebirds. 


Mansions, 515 N Rampart, 525-0844. Mondays through Saturdays: Marguerite Montgomery from 11 a.m. until 3, and from 5 to 7. Tuesdays through Saturdays, Lee Allardge from 10 until 2 a.m. Thursdays through Tuesdays: Janis Medlock from 7 to 10. Fridays and Saturdays: Sandy Hanson (no relation to Monte-Halos) from 11 until 4 a.m. Mondays: B Airay from 10 until 2 a.m. 

Monster’s Dance Hall and Bar, 327 Lyons, 859-9100. Wednesdays, The Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble. 


Old Post Office, 400 Downing Rd., 522-9602. Call for listing. 


Penny Post, 5110 Darnell. Sundays, always open mike. Check the board as you enter. Give them the dates you enter for details of who’s playing when. 


Pops, Room, 2114 St. Charles Ave., 523-8939. Along with Galatoire’s and K- Paul’s. one of the three places in town that consistently draws a long and deserved line outside. The only amenities are the musical ones. Sundays: Harold B. Williams and the Olympia Brass Band. Mondays and Thursdays: Kid Thomas Valentine Tuesdays and Fridays: Kid Sheek Colar. Wednesdays and Saturdays: The Humphrey Brothers. 


Seaport Cafe and Bar, 424 Bourbon, 525-0881. Tuesdays through Saturdays, Sally Townes. 

711 Club, 711 Bourbon, 525-8379. Tuesdays through Saturdays: one man Symphony Randy Hebert, preceded Thursdays through Mondays by Al Broussard. 


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Clarence Gatemouth Brown: The Original Peacock Recordings (Rounder 2039)

Duke Robillard & The Pleasure Kings: (Rounder 3079)

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December Music Schedule

Regular Wednesday Feature
Amasa Miller — 9 PM

Regular Thursday Feature
Dejan's Olympia Serenaders — 9 PM

Fridays — 11 PM
2nd — Emily Remler
9th — Ellis Marsalis
16th — James Moore's Urbanites
23rd — Deacon John & Lady BJ
30th — Al Belletto Quartet

Sundays — 5 PM Concert
11th — The Dirty Dozen & The Survivors
4th, 11th, 18th — Li'l Queenie — 9 PM

Bar Open Early — 4 PM
Restaurant open weekdays 5 PM—12 AM
Weekends til 2 AM — Sundays Open 4 pm

Wavelength/December
ed and everyone else in the place is bomb- ed and jovial, even the strangers at their table, and God, you just know it's going to be a miserable 1938, and he's glowering over an old dress so she could look mildly fancy and he would be Proud (she spent the whole day before)

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Bas Clas & The Batteries
Fri.
Alison & The Distractions
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The Backbeats
Fri.
The Mysteries
Thurs.
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Fri.
The Upbrights
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813 Rue Toulouse
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Gerard Depardieu as a (no doubt loutish)  
nacing from the wars—which reminds us of  
Claude Jarman Jr.) are reunited .  
he most wanted to make : a Middle Age s  
Country . Sun.12 : Joan Crawford night  
Saracens and locking their wive s into their  
cavalry troops, much  
Wilder ,  
which is pretty clinical to begin with , and  
Betsy Palmer , who thoroughly deserves it)  
involves family life, the restaurant business ,  
Carson ,  
Zachary  
proves that she was one of the great  
frenetic opening night of Mildred’s  
which is in its highly rarefied way ,  
Wedding  
but  
relatively laughless comedy. Ruth Hussey  
Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie as  
865-5143 .  
Thurs.8 :  
the picture magaz ine.  
New Wave vampires and  
51. , 523 - 1216.  
mild booki s h sort and a s omewhat s trident  
Pussycat ,  
I recall correctly,  
McLaglen ,  
522-7852 . Wednesdays through  
Sun.5 :  
Irish low  
and  
John Ford—always  
by prolifi c  
Bill (who last we heard, was  
der B .J . Robinson (who last we heard, was  
au thor, about the Gulf Coast widow Serfina  
and her worship for her deceased truck-  

drive stuck on her problems when she  
meets what might be a similar man, her  
daughter and a sailor (and a (symbolic) goat  
and two sleepy West Point boys who make her  
life profoundly miserable. Call the theatre  
for performance dates and times .  
Toulouse Theatre, 615. Toulouse.  
522-7852. Wednesdays through Sundays at  
7:30. Please be advised, which threatens to  
become New Orleans’ answer to The Fantas- 
tics, beginning at 7:30.  
Tulane Theatre (off Ernst and McAlister)  
sos this must be the Phoenix Playhouse.  
Menagerie, by Tennessee Williams’ play about  
a somewhat defeated Southern belle, her  
crippled daughter, her moody-dreamy son  
and a gentleman caller. A lovely play that  
has been overshadowed by the subsequent  
turns taken by Williams’ work (the late A  
Lovely Sunday for Crewe Court) is a return,  
not totally successful, to the style and to  
St. Louis itself as a setting.  
Man and a Snake by Ernest "Popeye"  
Reed at the Gasperl Folk Art Gallery.  

ART  
Aaron-Hastings Gallery, 1130 St. 
522-5885. Through Dec.8:  
Talkahowse painter, Geoffrey Ladainia.  
Sat.10 through Jan.5: Spooky figurative  
stuff by Jacksonville artist Patricia Way,  
described by Our Art Critic as "Vietnam  
veteran nightmires."  
Academy Gallery, 5326 Magazine.  
955-6111. Sat. through Wed.31: New work  
by longtime Newcomer faculty member  
Pat McAlister.  
Through Dec.8: paintings and sculptures by  
Ida Kohlmeyer. Sat. through Jan.5: paintings  
by Adrian Deckbar, whose clarity of  
ideas so far is excellent—but like my  
wedding ring!" Sun.19: Bringing Up Baby,  
which is in its highly refined, perfeclionist  
way—"the most successfully good and  
true at the film where Gary Grant tells May  
Robson—upon greeting her at the door  
and finding his brown-haired woman  
with so much hair you’d have to include  
Tennessee Williams’ The Rose Tatoo,  
Roanoke, 102-2161. Through Sun.16:  
Victims and Violations, a creepy pre-holiday  
show in a sweeping genre we’re partial to  
suppose you’d have to include all those mery  
and ecstatic marathons in here (in  
renaissance ballet scenes, etc.), with  
contributions by nine national and  
local artists including Leon Goost, an  
amateur at big  
figured images. Peter Dean and Peter  
Gill, in the basic gallery, ceramicist Jody  
Bonangero and photographer Susan  
Austen, and upstarts, State of the Art:  
Mississippi.  
Delgado Fine Arts Gallery, 483-4308.  
Through Tues.6; glass art by Deborah  
Smitz, Sally Rosenbaum and Cynthia  
Butler Rase.  
Galeries Juli et Lefargue, 2119 Decatur.  
945-7379. Through Thurs.29: George  
Dureau's Most Famous Model, fifty  
photographs of human-torsos-eyes-wonder  
B.J. Robinson (who last we heard, was  
in prison in New York for running a gang  
of subways pickpockets—the idea of  
crime as art is almost Brechtian,  
taken over the last five years.  
Galeries Simontet Senn, 2727 Prytania.  
893-2425. Through Dec.8: new works by  
painter/performance artist Jasse Pome-  
bouc, who on Sat. 3, will present a perfor- 
mance piece And The Mick Kept Me Awake  
(Eulid). Sat. through Jan.5: Christmas  
Show/Minatures, among other works by  
Galeries S. artists.  
A Gallery For Fine Photography, 5432  
Magazine. 891-1002. Through the end of  
the month; platinum prints and photographs  
by Philadelphia pioneer P.H. Emerson.  
Gaspert Folk Art Gallery, 831 St. Peter,  
522-6373. Through the end of the month;  
sculpture and marble sculptures by Ernest  
"Pop Eye" Reed.  
Historic New Orleans Collection, 533  
Royal Street, 523-4692. Wed.7 through  
Jan.27: Sugar Bowl: 50th Anniversary Ex- 

hibition, a show of memorabilia of happier  
times when Tulane Stadium was still a  
local attraction. Among annualized不仅,  
photographs, and a 30-minute film.  
Galler House, 1110-32: Royal Street  
through Ethnography (and no later, one hoped),  
Christmas weekend, showing what ex- 
pert fun Christmas was among those  
Victorian Victors using items from the (Galler  
House collection.  
Longue Vue Gardens, 7 Bamboo Road,  
488-5448. Decorative arts; Sat. and Sun.  
10 and 11: Christmas weekend with tradi- 
tional music and decorations. Fri.18: a lec- 
ture and demonstration on antique dolls in  
Christmas (or holiday) drag in the  
(Quinlan) by Mary Anne DelBois Blanc.  
Louisiana State Museum, on Jackson  
Square and elsewhere. Tues.13 through Dec- 
ember, an 1960 Christmas reenacted in the  
Lower Pontalba. At the Old Mint on Espa- 
rade, New Orleans Jazz and Carnival in  
New Orleans. At the Presbytere, continu- 
"Spirit World: Photographs and Journal by  
Michael F. Smith, Six City Sites and Louis- 
iana: Exploration and Settlement, which  
covers life in nature.  
Mario Villa Gallery, 3000 Magazine.  
897-8711. Sat. through Sat.24: sculpture by  
Brian Borrello as well as a Christmas  
group show.  
New Orleans Museum of Art, City  
Park, 498-2531. Through Jan.15: A  
Myth of Annual Leaves: Japanese Art from  
the Kurt and MillyGetz Collection. A  
Classical Approach to Photography by  
Leslie Gill.  
Optima Studio, 2025 Magazine. 922-9625.  
Through Thurs.8: paintings by Robert  
Ruelle and Mimi Kunnick. Sat.10 through  
Sun.18; a show of undergraduate work.  
Panel discussions second Wednesday of  
each month.  
Tidelas Foley, 933 Royal. 522-7728.  
Through the end of the month: a group  
show of artists on the Gallery’s roster  
for running a gang  
UNO Fine Arts Gallery, Lakefront Cam- 
pus, 329-6455. Through Wed.8: sculpture  
by Julia Withers. Sun.11 through Jan.27: A  
show of undergraduate work.
Guitar Slim (cont'd from page 20)

Parish] and get the same mob. Even the people who knew him to say 'Hi' to in the streets would think shooting.

one of the overflow houses. When he came in off the road he that it took a lot of convincing on woulJ be ridiculous. When the Cadillacs came out nothing of driving

Werd on Slim's death was slow getting back to New Orleans. The Louisiana Weekly was a full week late in its announce ment. "Somebody knocked up on my door and said 'Slim's dead,'" said Earl. "I said, 'Man, that can't be true. People like Slim don't die. They're still here when I'm gone.'"

booked to leave New Orleans by authorities to see if drugs were involved in his death. House Island eventually paid the fare to fly Slim's body back to Thibodaux for a massive funeral at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Guitar Slim now lies in an unmarked grave next to his benefactor, House Island.

Earl King gives some insight into the last days of Guitar Slim. He is survived by several common law wives, and a number of children, one of whom plays guitar in the small clubs around New Orleans and who keeps Slim's name alive. Hardly a year has passed since his death when someone doesn't record his music. King's 1982 version of Slim's anthem, "It Hurts To Love Someone" only reinforces the timelessness of his work.

Almost everyone is adamant about what would have been Slim's life if he were alive today. "He'd been on the scale of a B.B. King or a Ray Charles," says Earl. King. Lloyd Lambert states simply, "No question about it. Guitar Slim would have been the biggest.

Booker (cont'd from page 21)

professional envy for each other, in spite of their friendship. I don't know how to phrase this but

unorthodox? The last time I saw Jerry Wexler, he had very high compliments for me. "Whatever faults a man can find with me, those faults exist all over—not only in the entertainment industry but in every and each business there is. There are times when my biggest fault gets to be getting on the telephone. I might call Jerry five times a day but the man is so busy—he's somewhere, he might be in Cairo, Egypt, or something."

"I don't know whether to take a crap or go blind because it's totally beyond my comprehension why I know some of the biggest people in the world and I have not made $10,000 a week in my life and they all do. I think they're only doing it because they're scared and the most unique thing they've ever heard. Everybody writes nice things about me."

"It's incomprehensible to me. I don't have any combination of faults that the average entertainer doesn't have, and I've never taken a loan company. You're a loan company that's loaning me money—don't tell me you're not a loan company."

Booker mentioned that Jerry Wexler had got him some work connected with the soundtrack for Louis Malle's Pretty Baby, shot on location in New Orleans and starring Brooke Shields. Booker called Wexler's "a little bite."

"Why can't a man like that," Booker asked, "who tells me how great I am—why can't he help me? Is it because of my attitude? Is my attitude so
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Fri. 2 - Gatemen Brown
Sat. 3 - Little Bob & the Lollipops
Fri. 9 - Exuma
Sat. 10 - Beausoleil
Fri. 16 - Deacon John's
New Orleans Blues Revue
with Earl King
Sat. 17 - Zachary Richard
Fri. 23 - TBA
Sat. 24 - Charles Neville
House Band
Fri. 30 - Rockin' Dopsie
& The Twisters
Sat. 31 - New Year's Eve
Party with Marcia Ball
Mon. 5 - Tomcat Shaka

1983 Band Guide

In February, Wavelength will publish its annual Band and Booking Agent Guide, a comprehensive list of the working bands and musicians in the New Orleans area, with all the pertinent information—addresses, phone numbers, members' names, what kind of music, agent's name, and anything else you might want to add.

After almost a year, we still receive requests for last year's Guide from people who are looking for bands, and since Wavelength goes all over Louisiana and the Gulf South, club owners and bookers in other cities and states often want to find the bands they read about in Wavelength. Don't miss out on a job because a club owner can't find you.

To get your band listed, fill out the form below (use an index card if you don't want to mutilate your copy of Wavelength) and send it to us as soon as possible. Along with a black and white photo (non-returnable) if you have one. A listing in the Band Guide is free, of course. Deadline: January 1.

Wavelength, P.O. Box 15667, New Orleans, LA 70175

Please list our band in your 1983 Band Guide.

BAND NAME __________

TYPE OF MUSIC __________

BOOKING AGENT-PHONE NO. __________
MEMBERS NAMES __________

New Orleans, Premier

The Time...Five Years After The Nuclear War.
The Survivors...Post-Nuke Thrill Freaks
Lookin' For A Kick.

"The Rocky Horror of the Eighties"
- The Movies

"Unorthodox sci-fi...Surrealistic."
-Variety

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New Orleans Steamboat Company

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Fri. 9 - X
Sat. 10 - Johnny Rivers
Sat. 17 - Ivy
Sat. 24 - Christmas Eve Moonlight Cruise
Sat. 31 - New Year's Eve Party
All Concerts aboard The President

525-6311 (wharf)
566-8777 (office)

For more info call 524-SAIL

Wavelength/December
It takes a lot of pull to get the funkiest band in the world to play on your birthday, but Ziggy Modeliste, being the drummer for the Meters, has a little pull with that group, so on Zig's birthday, December 28, there will be a Meters reunion at Tipitina's. Everybody's invited....

Doug Kershaw was named Louisiana's Official Ambassador of Music by the State Legislature. Don't miss him if you have the chance....

The Dynamic Beau Jazz Band's new album, "The Best of the Best," is now available at record stores around the world. The band has been hailed as "the most innovative jazz group in the world" by critics and fans alike.

Marcia Kavanaugh's new single, "Just for You," is already making waves on the charts. Listen to it today and get in on the ground floor of this incredible talent.

The Fabulous Thunderbirds have just released their new album, "Rock and Roll," which has been described as "the best rock album of the year" by music critics around the world. Don't miss out on this incredible talent.

One of the most popular bands in New Orleans, Persis, has broken up. The band's drummer, Traci Borge, has formed a new progressive country band under her stage name, "The B.S. Band." Borge recently recorded an album for one of the most popular record labels in the country, and it has been described as "a masterpiece." Don't miss out on this incredible talent.
## DECEMBER 1983

**MUSIC STARTS AT 9:30 MONDAY—THURSDAY**
**10:30 P.M. FRIDAY—SUNDAY**

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<td>ALL WE ARE SAYING</td>
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<td>KIDD JORDAN'S ELEKTRIK BAND</td>
<td>SPENCER BOHREN</td>
<td>ALLISON &amp; THE DISTRACTIONS</td>
<td>SLEEPY LEMON</td>
<td>A tribute to John Lennon &amp; other artists in a benefit for CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament)</td>
<td>LOS LOBOS plus special guest BOURRE</td>
<td>THE RADIATORS</td>
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<td>&quot;PROFESSOR LONGHAIR'S MEMORIAL MAMBO&quot;</td>
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<td>The Original METERS</td>
<td>DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND</td>
<td>THE NEVILLE BROTHERS</td>
<td>THE RADIATORS</td>
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