Wavelength (July 1986)

Connie Atkinson

University of New Orleans

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Recommended Citation
Wavelength (July 1986) 69
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"I'm not sure, but I'm almost positive that all music came from New Orleans."
—Ernie K-Doe, 1979

**Features**

- Playing in the Band ............ 17
- New Orleans Bands ........... 19
- Jim Russell .................... 22
- Cinemax Dream Taping ........... 24

**Departments**

- July News ........................ 4
- Cabaret ................................ 8
- The Law ................................ 10
- Reviews .............................. 12
- July Listings ....................... 26
- Classified ............................ 29
- Last Page ............................ 30

*Cover design by Thomas Delean*
*Cover photos by Lynn Abbott*

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Wavelength is published monthly in New Orleans. Telephone: (504) 895-2342. Mail subscriptions: address changes to Wavelength, P.O. Box 6667, New Orleans, LA 70175. Subscription rates $2.00 per year (Canada). 10 per cent of the cost of each issue of Wavelength are remitted to the New Orleans Public Library. Subscription rates: $3.00 per year (Canada). 10 per cent of the cost of each issue of Wavelength are remitted to the New Orleans Public Library. Subscription rates: $3.00 per year (Canada). 10 per cent of the cost of each issue of Wavelength are remitted to the New Orleans Public Library. Subscription rates: $3.00 per year (Canada). 10 per cent of the cost of each issue of Wavelength are remitted to the New Orleans Public Library. Subscription rates: $3.00 per year (Canada). 10 per cent of the cost of each issue of Wavelength are remitted to the New Orleans Public Library.
Ellis Marsalis
On Sabbatical

Don't panic: contrary to a headline article in a local newspaper, New Orleans' jazz patriarch Ellis Marsalis is not abandoning the city. Marsalis is going to the Virginia Commonwealth in Richmond, Virginia, as artist-in-residence for a year or so. The rumors that he is leaving NOCCA for a better salary are unfounded. According to his wife, Delores, Ellis is taking this sabatical because he feels he has what it takes to pass on what he's learned and develop young rhythm sections in Richmond.

Actually, lately he has been a little disappointed at leaving NOCCA, finding that some of the kids are not committed to studying the music—rather, they want to become instant superstars like their teacher's sons. But, Mrs. Marsalis points out, "you can't talk negatively about the children of New Orleans," considering what they can accomplish despite all the hurdles they have to overcome. "Don't get me wrong. NOCCA has nurtured our children," she said, "and we love [director] Shirley Trusty Cory. It's just that, "at this point, jazz in New Orleans, and really in the whole country, is taking a back seat. It'll come around again in two, three years." In his first seven years at the school, Ellis was spoiled with a "great crop" of students, many of whom became professionals — including Stanley Stevens, Chris Severin, Julian Garcia, and the Jazz Couriers. But at this time, because he's at the midpoint of his life, Marsalis doesn't have time to wait for some of the kids to become focused.

So, the bad news is still true: Ellis is leaving the city. But the good news is that it's not forever: both Ellis and Delores Marsalis were born here, have ties that can never be severed, and they'll be coming home.

On other aspects of the clan, one of the most important changes is that Branford is not completely happy with playing on top of Michel Colombier's orchestral arrangements. The versatile saxophonist is also working on an acoustic jazz album, which should be released in September with Delfeayo producing. The project includes Al Foster, Ron Carter, Larry Willis, Jeff Watts, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Chic Mills, Hiram Mayfield, and Kenny Kirkland. Branford will also be going on a summer tour of Asia with Carter Foster, and Herbie Hancock.

Wynton Marsalis has just finished a new classical LP, Romances for the Soprano Saxophone, on Columbia Records. In an interview on the Today show, Branford was relaxed and funny as he discussed Sting, fame, and how his classical record came about. The record includes Debussy's "Isle of Joy," but according to Delfeayo, Branford is getting ready to sign a publishing contract with ACUFF-ROSE, a European company and are on their way to London.

"We got offers from three major American companies but turned them down because of the way the contracts were worded," Kruse explained. "But we stuck it out because we figure we would finally find the right offer. They [the offers] were an indication that we were on to something," he added.

Members of the band met when Kruse was a disc jockey at a Metairie nightclub. "Everyone sort of hung out there and pretty soon we all just got together and formed the band," Kruse said. "We have been together for about six or seven years now and we have all paid our dues by playing crummy places and sharing one hotel room," he added.

All of the band members have quit their other steady jobs in order to pursue their music interests in the band. "We decided just to have the band as our jobs because we all just wanted to hang around the band until it became profitable," Kruse said.

Kruse has done voice-overs and appeared in many movies such as Quiet Sunday and Cat People. He even performed many of the stunts in Cat People. "You know, I've done all of the frustrated artist stuff," he said. De La Cerda, the bass player, used to be a computer operator and Barra, the drummer, used to manage a Shell station. Brain Cailleau, the sax player who has only been with the band for a little over a year, has held jobs ranging from an auto mechanic to a professional blues player.

When not playing a guitar or singing, Kruse deals in guitars. "Ever since I was 15 years old, I've been a vintage guitar dealer. That is how I got to meet everyone in the music business. Whenever anyone wanted a vintage guitar, they came to see me," he said.

Recently, Kruse and his band
played a benefit concert for PACE recording studios. Kruse explained that his band got involved with the benefit because "the nice guys over

last spring, and a live album from that tour. "You called at a good time, man," he told me, his eyes shining with energy and enthusiasm.

The Tokyo tour was only the beginning of this good fortune. Back in '84, Sam was greeted at a Snug Harbor gig by a gentleman he had met at the Chicago Blues Festival. "You're a big star in Japan," he assured McClain. "I have all your records!" And sure enough, a few months later, McClain received a box of tapes with cuts even he had forgotten about. Finally, last September, the Vivid Sound Corporation invited him and guitarist Wayne Bennett to play for two weeks in Tokyo — with a Japanese rhythm section.

"I was amazed how serious they were!" McClain exclaimed. When he arrived, the band had already memorized all twenty-four songs for the tour, note-for-note from his old records.

His studio album, The Perfect Blues Companion, is already out on Orleans Records, Loria's label. The band includes local artists like Cyril Neville and WTUL DJ Ivan Bodley. It can be ordered through Orleans Records, c/o 1031 Ursulines St., N.O., LA 70016, or call (504) 525-1300.

And what of the future? McClain has chosen to stop singing at Ben Benny's Bar, temporarily, where he was a night fixture. He wants to put together a new band, a seven-piece powerhouse like the one he had overseas. And a band with a similarly positive attitude: "I'm tired of working with no Indians, all chiefs," he explained. "It ought to be natural to get respect from his musicians," he added. Managing personality conflicts and band logistics is not part of his job description, and this is where friends like Loria and co-producer Carlo Ditta help him out, supporting him in his efforts to get the recognition he deserves. "I do my best when I'm singing," as opposed to dealing with the business end of things.

Meanwhile, "I'm willing to work my ass off!" Looking around his comfortable living room, he agreed that things are going very well. "And I like the direction I'm going in right now."

"What direction is that?"

"Up, up, up!"

—Mark Kaufman

Dino Kruse

at PACE do us a lot of favors so we all agreed that we would return one of those favors."

—Lisa Taylor

Mighty Sam

If anyone deserves to sing the blues, it's Mighty Sam McClain. Not too long ago, he was literally starving for lack of work. But McClain loves to work, wailing himself into a sweat before even the first tune is over, and things are finally looking up for him. Once again he can sing for the joy of singing, not because he's living, the blues.

Yes, things are going pretty well for McClain. I visited him at the air-conditioned French Quarter apartment he shares with manager/agent/friend A.J. Loria (a.k.a. "King Nino"). He was a little paunchy in a plain white tank-top and gym shorts, still waking up at 2 p.m. But while I was there, the phone didn't stop ringing with news of potential gigs and musicians who want to back up this inspiring vocalist. And promises of more traveling and recording of opportunities. Still, the promises are less important than what's actually happened: a new record, a trip to Japan

Mighty Sam McClain In Japan.
Bolen:
Leaving His
Mark on NYC

Since moving to New York City from New Orleans 11 months ago, former Wavelength and Beaux Arts art director Skip Bolen has set out to take New York's art society by storm. To do this, the artist conceived of a plan by which to distinguish himself, and also gain the attention of Manhattan's galleries.

Creeping out in the early and often frigid morning hours armed with stencil in one hand and a can of black Krylon spray paint in the other, Bolen combs city streets in search of galleries on which to leave his mark—a self-portrait stencil with the words, "There's A New Kid In Town."

Since last fall, Bolen has been spraying these stencils on any walls adjacent to galleries in which he would like to see his own art someday. A few days after the impression has dried, Bolen follows up by sending each gallery a postcard with the same "New Kid" image.

"I'm a firm believer in the validity of art in public spaces," says Bolen, who has thus far avoided incarceration, "and stencils are a wonderful alternative to traditional graffiti."

Besides building a bit of intrigue with these stencils, Bolen has succeeded in attracting some gallery interest, "I received a letter from one prominent gallery owner welcoming me to New York—and also asking me to remove my stencil from a wall nearby," he laughs.

Skip Bolen is represented by both the Mario Villa Gallery in New Orleans (where one of his pieces was exhibited with the gallery's group show in June) and Eagles Nest Gallery in Austin, Texas. Bolen was in town for the Mario Villa show as evidenced by the stencil art that appeared on New Orleans streets recently.

CBS Signs
Four N.O. Artists

CBS Records' George Butler, who signed Grammy-winner Wynton Marsalis of New Orleans, announced the signing here of four new New Orleans artists.

The new CBS signees include flutist Kent Jordan who has just completed his jazz album and will be recording a classical album in the fall; Donald Harrison and Terrence Blanchard—also sax and trumpet respectively, who will record in the classical idiom next year; and Harry Connick, Jr., an 18-year-old pianist from New Orleans, who will complete a demo in early June.

All four artists are graduates of the New Orleans Center for Creative Art (NOCCA), as were Marsalis and his brother Branford. "These musicians that have come..."
Couples Cop Prizes
In Cajun Dance Contest

Two-Step Fever hit forty-four couples on May 24, 1986, when they competed in the Cajun Dance Contest in Broussard, Louisiana. Four hundred people watched as couples did the two-step in Acadia and New Orleans areas. The entire contest was video taped.

The dance contest was produced by Acadia Open Channel for the purpose of documenting and preserving Cajun dance and music. The entire contest was video taped by AOC. Videos of the contest will air on AOC Cable Channel 5 in the Acadia area, Cox access channel 6 in the New Orleans area and in France. Winners of the contest are as follows: Best Overall Couple - Elgin and Evelyn Thibodeaux of Houma, LA. Best Female Dancer - Jeanine Kichrist of Lafayette, LA. Best Male Dancer - Randy Arcoreaux of Rayne, LA. Traditional Waltz - Elgin and Evelyn Thibodeaux of Houma, LA. Traditional Two Step - Randy Arcoreaux and Josie Clark of Rayne, LA. Cajun Jitterbug Turn - Scott Rogers and Diana Allemand of Breaux Bridge, LA. Interpretive Way Out (Tie) Johnny and Suzanne Chaillot of Crowley, LA and Aubrey and Anita Serpas of New Orleans, LA.

Jazz Fest Dates Set

With one of the most successful editions of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival just barely completed, preparations have already begun for the 1987 Jazz Festival. Quint Davis, producer of the festival, announced today that the dates for next year's event are April 24 through May 3.

"We try to be as consistent as possible with the dates," Davis said. "There are a number of different factors that come into play, but we like to start the festival on the last weekend in April and go through the first weekend in May. Those dates have been pretty good to us.

The recent Jazz Festival occurred during this same period and proved a triumphant success. Davis said that crowds turned out in record numbers at the Fair Grounds for the Heritage Fair, and the attendance estimate for the entire Jazz Festival surpassed the 250,000 mark. "We think that this year the festival brought more people to New Orleans than ever before," Davis said.

In the weeks to come, as festival books are closed, more information will be known as to the degree of the success of the festival. If there is a surplus of funds beyond that needed to produce the festival in 1987, the board of directors of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation, Inc., will determine ways to distribute the funds. According to a source at the festival office, no decision has been made yet because they are still paying some bills. However, a decision will be announced in August or September whether or not grants will be given to local groups and individuals for their projects in music and the arts. Festival sources say Wavelength will not be notified individually, but it "will be announced." Last year, the foundation gave away over $100,000 in grants and held a series of jazz concerts at the Orpheum Theatre and workshops in the public schools called "An Education in Jazz.

Stay tuned for further Jazz Festival grant information.

—Lisa Taylor

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According to Denise Austin, co-proprietor of the new True Brew Coffee House, 3133 Ponce de Leon, the Esplanade/Mid-City area is becoming "healthily Yupified." This was her preface to the fact that the music they have scheduled and will schedule in the future is "light, non-political, nothing wild, nothing crazy."

The True Brew is emphatically non-Bohemian, from its crisp pink and grey good looks to its slightly too-bright lighting. The focus of the room is a 15-foot long antique apothecary's mirrored display case that houses some 30-odd coffees and acts as a counter for the shop. Austin's husband found it in an old warehouse over on Tchoupitoulas. In addition to the good coffee menu, True Brew also serves a wide array of baked goods, with Angelo Brocato's Italian ice cream featured.

Jim Pilgrim, the acoustic guitar player/singer/songwriter who plays the True Brew Wednesday evenings from 8-10, is a soft-voiced balladeer who even made a couple of good jokes. (Did you hear the one about the lead-based Bain de Soleil I, designed to screen out 90% of radiation?) Even though they've stuck him in a naked corner near the bathroom, his style and repertoire clinched the coffee-house experience: a little reading material, writing materials, soulful honest reflective songs, and endless cups of java.

Ten years ago Pilgrim graduated from UNO. Before that he was from Atlanta where he'd been playing the guitar since he was a little boy. "My Dad used to play with bands so I grew up with that."

Pilgrim plays at the True Brew for free. During the day he works in marketing for a computer software company uptown. Recently his original tunes won him an invitation to the Kerrville (Texas) Folk Festival. He said he is proud of the fact that he's the only one selected from New Orleans. "Everybody in New Orleans is into R&B which is great, but New Orleans has always been a place that nurtured new music."

"You can make a psychological statement or a political statement without shouting it down people's throats. I got a degree in English so I tend to look at life from a literary sense. I'm a big fan of semantics, you know, signs and symbols and the ways that people live and work together. I try to understand relationships and turn it into something musical. It's almost like painting a picture."

"I do a lot of other kinds of music too. I'm trying to be an entertainer here. Trying to create an atmosphere. If you're playing a coffeehouse, you play coffeehouse music. You can still do music that moves you, but if you make too much noise with your guitar, you're not going to last long."

"There are a lot of fine songs out there and I feel it's up to the performer to find the ones that are truly gems, and present them to people. Maybe they haven't heard them before. Give
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5. **Previous Registration.** Previous Registration is self-explanatory. Only one basic copyright registration can be made for the same version of a particular work.

6. **Derivative Work or Compilation.** This is an important point for many local musicians often working with such compositions as "Hey Pocky Way," "Junko Partner," "Tee Nah." If this is a changed version or if this work incorporates one or more works that have already been published or have come from the public domain you should list it in this section. Or if you have written new lyrics for example to "Mardi Gras in New Orleans" or have changed the tune substantially and want to copyright your version you must insert the original title in this section.

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8. **Certification.** If you have collaborated on a work, only one of the collaborators must check the box as author. If you have given the rights to an agent, attorney, or another copyright claimant, they must check the appropriate box.

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Sonic Youth

Evol
SST Records

On this album, Sonic Youth have sharpened their sound into an eerie mixture of old King Crimson dirges and dissonant Mission of Burma. In fact, "Tom Violence" could well be "Lark's Tongues in Aspic Part Four" if it weren't for the vocals, which happen to sound a lot like Burma anywhere. The effect of the album as a whole is powerful and unsettling, full of nightmare images and disturbing, unidentifiable noises. But underneath the dissonance and feedback lie several haunting melodies, and some very pretty music. The result of this contrast is an album that is richly produced, both hauntingly beautiful and violently disturbed at the same time.

From the harshness of the chainsaw guitars of "Death to Our Friends" to eerie piano and whispered vocals of "Shadow of a Doubt," Sonic Youth paint a broad musical spectrum of mystery and uncertainty. There's even a nod at the Velvet Underground, a spoken word narration in "Enigmatically listed as "Madonna, Sean, and Me" on the album's back cover) , a true John Cale style on "Death to Our Friends," and even a nod at the punk lite, tawdry, psychedelic pop, Stravinsky, and dissonance and feedback, all part of Burma anyway.

The Ordinaires

Dossier Records

Imagine if you will a band that begins with traditional instrumentation, then adds two saxophonists, two violinists and a cello. Throw in music styles from many cultures, rock and roll, jazz of Captain Beefheart. They even include a surprisingly good rendition of Jimi Hendrix's "Manic Depression," to pay homage to their psychedelic roots. The bulk of the lyrics, like those of their Texas country parts, are largely satirical and disgusted, but when they do wax eloquent they turn in some real gems. "I work in a department store/ every day I deal with dorks" sings the lead singer in "Paradise," an anthemic four-minute attempt by him to tell his whole life story and explain his existence at the same time. Later he confides, "I'm running out of things to say/ Oh well, that's the way it is." Such insight makes You Kill Me an eclectic, unusual record that is far out and so diverse it will probably have something in it that virtually anybody can enjoy.

—James Lien

No Means No

You Kill Me
Undergrowth Records, UGI-302

"Body Bag," the first song on No Means No's five-song E.P. You Kill Me, features a bizarre mixture of the raucous energy of hardcore with the flakiness of early Frank Zappa and the Mothers. The music on the rest of the E.P. is a mutant blend of frantic Dead Kennedys and the quirky psychedelic jazz of Captain Beefheart. They even include a surprisingly good rendition of Jimi Hendrix's "Manic Depression," to pay homage to their psychedelic roots. The bulk of the lyrics, like those of their Texas country parts, are largely satirical and disgusted, but when they do wax eloquent they turn in some real gems. "I work in a department store/ every day I deal with dorks" sings the lead singer in "Paradise," an anthemic four-minute attempt by him to tell his whole life story and explain his existence at the same time. Later he confides, "I'm running out of things to say/ Oh well, that's the way it is." Such insight makes You Kill Me an eclectic, unusual record that is far out and so diverse it will probably have something in it that virtually anybody can enjoy.

—James Lien

The Del Lords

Johnny Comes Marching Home
EMI-America

Country twang and rockabilly out of the Big Apple. Pelase don't confuse this quartet with Boston's Del Fuegos, for while their music is just as hard driving, just as boot stomping, just as ass kicking, their lyrics are what sets them apart. Scott Kempner's songwriting never leaves out hope, never allows despair to over-
whelm, never leaves the listener with a bad taste in the mouth.

On this their second album the band enlisted Neil Geraldo (husband of and producer for Pat Benatar) to produce some punk that was missing from their debut LP (1984's Frontier Boy). The effort was well worth it and the result is songs full of clanging, chiming guitars over roots-rock steady bass and drums. What you remember the day after listening to this album are the feelings in the words, the undying hope, the everlasting optimism, the concept of dreams only dying if you let them die.

There are three songs with love in the title: “Heaven,” an Elvis-style rocker, lets everyone know there are better things to come; “Drug Deal” is an awesome instrumental seemingly written with Miami Vice in mind; and “Dream Come True” sums up the band’s attitude and the theme of the entire album:

It’s a song about freedom
About swimming against the tide
About doing whatever you want
Every single day of your life
About following a dream
Not an album for gloom-mongering nihilists; this one keeps the faith as the Del Lords join the forefront of the roots rock revival.

—Brian Wayson

The Del Lords: Country Twang from NYC.

The Beat Farmers

Van Go

MCA/Curb Records

Speaking of Beat Farmers, here is this band's latest effort and a fine one it is. Hailing from San Diego these guys play a wide variety of styles well. They can also be very funny. Really, just look at the title of the album, their touring van is covered with Van Goghish paintings.

Their styles range from scorching Delta Blues influenced tunes to psychedelic pop to rockabilly rave-ups to Johnny Cash-esque foot tappers. The lyrics range from the maudlin in “Road to Ruin” to biting as in “Deceiver” to the dangerously funny in “Gun Sale at the Church.” Yowza! More music than human beings should be allowed to have (just kidding). The Beat Farmers have harvested a bumper crop this spring, come take part in the bounty.

—Brian Wayson

Butthole Surfers

Rembrandt Pussyhorse

Touch and Go, T&GLP#8

From the very start the Butthole Surfers carved their niche in American music as a band to be reckoned with. Over the course of their three E.P.’s and one album they have continually redefined and expanded their sound while still clinging to their basic premise of music that is steeped in Texas psychedelia and racial ritual.

This album, their second full length LP, has the Buttholes incorporating a more diverse instrumental lineup than ever before; in addition to the usual scorching guitar work of guitarist Paul Leary (unfortunately no relation to Tom), the twin psychobilly drum attack of brother-sister duo King and Theresa, and the bullhorn-Beefheart scatalogic blues ravings of singer Gibby, one finds the addition of pipe organ, violin, and piano to the Butthole Surfers' arsenal.

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Mojo Nixon and Skid Roper

**Frenzy**

Restless/Enigma

The myth grows larger still. Mojo Nixon is as insane as they come. These two gentlemen (a courtesy title) play the most wildly demented version of rock 'n' roll imaginable. This record is a lyrical free-for-all that holds back no punches. The album begins with these lines:

I married a bigfoot,
I gave birth to my mother-in-law,
Dorner wants his kidney back...

and the side-splitting hilarity never lets up until side two has ended. Mojo isn't afraid to attack anyone or anything as evidenced by "I Hate Banks," "Stuffing Martha's Muffin" dedicated to Ms. Martha Quinn of MTV (ugh there's that weird again), and "The Ballad of Wendell Scott" who is a legendary (?) southern stock car racer.

Stranger than the songs are a few of the instruments "played" on the album including the sonic live jug, the washboard, and the infamous stick drum. The presskit claims that Mr. Nixon hails from Pigfoot, Louisiana, and met Mr. Roper at an Arkansas Women's prison and received their start in San Diego. Reality, however, would indicate that the boys are really Beat Farmers gone incognito in order to pursue dementia. Buy it to discover why Peter Buck (of REM, remember them?) calls these guys his favorite band.

—Brian Wayson

The Straw Dogs

The Straw Dogs were the F.U.'s from Boston, but they had a problem. The F.U.'s were also a band out of San Francisco. What to do, what to do... Change your name to the Straw Dogs, release a five-song mini-album and hope for the best. Well they aren't the best but they're competent. Five boisterous, crank-it-up hardcore-mania songs. Gonna slam, Gonna slam, Gonna slam. These five kids like their music loud, fast and heavy. They don't even take themselves seriously, so why should you? I've just about covered it... oh yeah it contains a new version of the F.U.'s "hit" "Young, Fast, and Irrepressible"... pass the Anacin please.

—Brian Wayson
Finally, someone tied everything together—MIDI, SMPTE and the tape recorder—in one smart package. The company is Fostex and the product is the Model 4050. Much more than an autoloctor, it provides a level of automation never before available.

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MEETRONOME

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Everyone should be in a band—but no one, especially in New Orleans, should depend on it to make a living.

By Bunny Matthews

Everybody should be in a band. Nothing beats the feeling of sequestering yourself, three friends and a bunch of amps into a garage that reeks of burnt motor oil and dangerous acids, jamming hard on three chords while the world outside just keeps on keepin' on.

Why spoil such a dreamy situation with disturbing notions of success? Success, given its literal rock definition, is exemplified by Madonna's current dilemma: if every 15-year-old in the world looks like you, your own looks have to change in order to avoid the horror of encountering yourself in continual replication.

Ideally, one's music and one's wage-earning should be two separate and remote beasts. Making a living from music (or any other form of art) usually strangles its purity; the rent is due so you play garbage to get the funds.

Robert Irwin, the California philosopher/artist, confessed to his biographer that his living was made by gambling on thoroughbreds: "Pursuing the questions which art provokes is a long-term activity that necessarily needs to be free of short-term measures and rewards. In order to maintain a natural balance and continuously develop the ability to make reasoned observations and decisions, it is necessary that you take very good care of yourself, since you are the crux of it all. I'm always very kind to myself. I indulge myself in lots of ways. I give myself lots of room for mistakes and contradictions. And I spend a lot of time entertaining my personal fantasies and playing the games I enjoy. I don't let money questions get to me. It's just a matter of good health."

Unfortunately, most musicians believe in the myth of the Overnight Sensation—that Mr. Big Bucks will catch their set one night and from then on, it'll be champagne flowing from every tap. This is a possibility and likewise is winning a million-dollar lottery and/or stepping into the street and getting mowed down by a cement-mixer. Anything can happen but it rarely does.

Success, to musicians, is playing music for money. Those musicians employed by day as doctors, lawyers or car salesman like to keep it secret. The only respectable profession is playing music in a bar on Saturday night. Anything else is an embarrassment, unless you're out shooting a video with Godley and Creme or recording under the direction of Elvis Costello.

In New Orleans, musical success is somewhat tougher than it is in, say, Kansas. Kansas is a great place to be from if you're really serious about music (rock music, you understand). Kansas is nowhere, it means nothing (unless one recalls the band known as Kansas, which after some success, recorded in Louisiana and fell from commercial favor).

If a musician is from New Orleans, he is expected to be good—good and funky. America does not like funkiness. It will tolerate small doses—a bit of Prince maybe, less threatening and much whiter than James Brown, who can only sneak in through Sylvester Stallone's backdoor.

In rock, it's bad enough if you're American (the English being the true innovators). You certainly don't want to come on provincial.

When you're young, you could care less about what city circumstance has tossed you into because your hometown is never good enough. It's a prison...
CONTINUED FROM 17

...and your legal guardians are the sadistic wardens. No teenager is ever going to think, “What a wonderful city I live in. It has history, culture, architecture. What a joy it is to live here!”

The thought machine-gunning through the grey matter of youth is “This town sucks! There’s nothing going on.” The only way out is via the tail end of a lofty electric guitar solo.

Zebra, moderately successful (two videos shown on MTV), rarely if ever mentioned in interviews that they were from New Orleans because in their particular semi-metallic field, IT DIDN’T MATTER. It would conceivably be detrimental. In your heavier rock forms, a technological purity—and obsession with equipment—is paramount. It is the Caucasian Fantasy of Smooth Antiseptic Love, a fantasy not likely to come true in New Orleans, where music is coated with mildew. Heavy Rust, not Heavy Metal.

New Orleans isn’t really cool anymore. New York and Los Angeles have tasted our food, Sniffed around. Exported it, imitated it, faked it and now, they’re gonna forget it. Just as soon as they wipe out the redfish population.

With music, there are no redfish to annihilate—only musicians. You don’t need nets to catch musicians. They surrender voluntarily.

Musicians want the deal above all else. Anything short of murdering a near relation is kosher in order to secure this once-(or-twice) in-a-lifetime opportunity to become finan­cially indebted to a giant industrial conglomerate run by computers that never sleep and never dance.

Mason Ruffner, signed to a major label record deal, was recently hyped in Rolling Stone as “The Blues King of Bourbon Street,” as absurd an accolade as has ever been hung on a musician. Bourbon Street has never had an indigenous blues scene (nor has New Orleans). Ruffner is a native of Texas. If Exuma moved to the West Bank, would he then be “The Reggae King of Marigot?”

Of course, Ruffner is not responsible for what’s written about him or how he’s sold by the company. He is now a box of cereal. If he doesn’t catch on with the kids within a reasonable period of time, he will be off the shelf—replaced by the newest flavor.

The Neville Brothers have experienced the nightmare of securing a position on the pop record shelf and then getting stuck at the cashier, never quite checking out with the great masses. It will be a feat worthy of Iacocca if the Nevilles are successfully marketed by their latest label—a collection on Atlantic and Rounder.

Before we go any further, allow me to emphasize that music doesn’t have a whole lot to do with this. We are talking about marketing.

No one with ears would ever dispute the wonder of the Nevilles’ sound but how are you gonna sell ‘em to the little white punks with $200 skateboards? The only black person they’ve ever seen is J.J. Jackson and he’s been replaced by a black woman with an English accent, thus making the White Youth Corps even more confused.

The way to sell the Nevilles—and you already know this—is through videos. Except wait—the Nevilles are not great beauties. No problem... remember the Fabulous Thunderbirds?

The Fab T-Birds, barely months ago, were caught in the same trick bag as the Nevilles: a series of albums on different labels and intimate knowledge of most of this nation’s bars. How would they

New Orleans isn’t really cool anymore. New York and Los Angeles have tasted our food. Sniffed around. Exported it, imitated it, faked it and now, they’re gonna forget it. Just as soon as they wipe out the redfish population.

ever conquer the teens? True, they were fabulous, but cuddly? Sexy? When was the last time you saw a cuddly, sexy, bald lead singer on Solid Gold? (No fair counting Phil Collins.)

Video didn’t kill these radio stars—it created them. The Thunderbirds are in the video...a little. You don’t notice them because the screen is usually bursting with female crotches in tight cut-off jeans, a virtual macho parody of Duran Duran’s “Girls On Film” video.

Bryant Gumbel loved it. Prisoners love it and summoned the ‘Birds to command performances. The Teens loved it and Kim Wilson and associates flew to the top of the pop charts. And—supposedly—no groovy person digs the blues in 1986.

I beseech thee, however—do not muddle thine head. O young musicians, with success. It is a poly­tyrene Cadillac, a diamond pinkie ring that’s actual­ly studded with slivers of glass from a broken Pepsi bottle. It is the home of Fats Domino, the most successful man in the history of New Orleans music. It’s supposed to be a mansion, stuck behind a super­market and some fried-chicken places amidst the poverty of the Lower Ninth Ward and not far from the neo-barbarism of the Desire Housing Projects. It’s supposed to be Home Boy Comes Home but it looks ludicrous with its fake “security” cameras and three-toned wrought iron fence. Is this what selling a billion records gets you?
PLAYING IN THE BAND

Uncle Stan & Auntie Vera

There are at least two outstanding aspects of the New Orleans' rock band, Uncle Stan and Auntie Vera: they're fun and they're serious. This may seem like a paradox, but anyone who's caught them live at Jimmy's, Tip's, or the Jazz Fest, to name a few performances, knows that their listeners always have a good time. What you might not know is that the musicians themselves are having some serious fun.

One of the things they don't take seriously is their name. Although it's tempting to think of dynamic Elizabeth Bennett-Armstrong, with her vocals, sax and keyboards, as "Auntie Vera," and then guess at who the heck "Uncle Stan" is supposed to be, the name doesn't refer to anyone or anything—it's a group effort, and it's the effort that they take seriously.

For example, not too long ago, they had to grapple with a personnel shift: their rhythm guitarist left the band, taking his songs with him. With only two weeks until their next gig, the band had to make up a 70% loss of material. But they thrived under the pressure. "It was a great project," says bassist/vocalist John Barr. He's comfortable in the Broadway apartment he shares with drummer Glen Perroux, leaning back in the sofa and stretching out his long legs. Though relaxed, he's also eager and articulate, and seems to be today's informal spokesman. "We had a great time with it," he continues. "We made goals like, 'OK, today we're gonna write two new songs... And we did it. We were quite tickled with ourselves.'" The band laughs, still tickled.

With the need for new tunes came the increased opportunity to combine their varied backgrounds and talents. For instance, despite Barr's powerful rock stage image, he privately teaches classical and bass guitar during daylight hours. He feels his classical background lends him a certain analytical approach to songwriting.

In contrast, guitarist Steven Hill "is a melody whiz. Put two chords in front of him and he'll come up with a melody and lyrics like that." "What kind of background helps you to write lyrics so quickly?" I ask Hill.

"Schizophrenia," Barr interjects, and everyone laughs again. Hill is the only one without formal musical training — "a natural," having worked it out on his own.

He mentions that he spent a lot of time listening to progressive music: some Genesis, but more along the lines of Yes and King Crimson, "half of whose lyrics you can't understand," but liking the sound of the words anyway. Not surprisingly, the others agree that progressive music is their common denominator. Sometimes they let themselves jam out in odd meters and different keys, "just to get our ya-ya's out," Hill smiles, and often simplify and smooth out the foolishness into a new song. Although their commercial music is obviously working well for them, "we talk about doing a 'head music' album of just outrageous stuff." More laughter.

Success is not going to stop these guys from having fun.

Glen Perroux actually started as a classical guitar player. Although he was into progressive music, too, he studied classical music and jazz at Loyola, during which "I sort of turned my back on rock, looking down at it... I dunno, I got inspired by some of the great composers... I got on a real serious 'Wagnerian' trip for a while..." Barr jokingly points out that "a lot of Perroux's percussion is Wagnerian. BOOM! BOOM!" Perroux, dark-haired, burly and quiet, continues, "I took almost a year before I let rock music affect me again like it used to..." Laughing at their earlier, "educated" ground of Barr, she studied music at the University of Texas, and played in some jazz bands there in Austin. She and the others also took some voice lessons.

Their geographical and non-musical backgrounds are varied, too. Hill is the only native New Orleanian, and works as assistant manager at Mushroom Records, Blond, lanky and intent, he was originally lighting director for the band, but last September joined on guitar and vocals, to everyone's delight. Having known all the tunes already, "I just had to find out the chords... I learned all the songs in about four days."

Barr is from Tulsa, Oklahoma, and in addition to teaching, does some modeling. Initially, he went into a talent agency to submit a tape, but the receptionist took one look at his tall, well-built figure and composed manner and told him to sign up. He's been featured as a Miller-Lite clown, a chef catching "fresh fish" straight out of the stream, and a D.H. Holmes underwear mannequin. "It's not something I take real seriously," he says, a little embarrassed by his friend's laughter, but "it can be good money, quickly."

Bennett-Armstrong is from Austin... "and I think Delaware... I'm always a Yankee in her... somewhere," Barr muses. She runs a woodworker's office. Perroux is from Calgary, Alberta (Canada) - he came down in 1974 for school, like it and stayed. Now, he's also a purchasing agent for an electrical company on the West Bank. "I'm a weird," the others giggle. But really, with all these 'normal' day jobs, none of them fit the stereotype of irresponsible, cocaine-addicted rock musicians.

And their non-musical income is the key to their success: They can afford to do things right. In fact, all of the money they make as a band goes back into the band: road crew, equipment upkeep, advertising and promotion. As a result, when they get to a gig, the P.A. and mikes are already set up, the lights are primed, and the place is packed, "it's a whole production," Barr says proudly.

One reason they draw such crowds, aside from musical excellence, is through the efforts of manager Elizabeth Fontaine. Except for some part-time work here at Wavelength, she works solely for the band, and represents no one else. When I mentioned that I had heard the Stan at Jazz Fest, she eagerly said, "Oh, you caught us there?" She's been with the group since it formed in '84, rather than posing as some distant accounting authority, she's an integral band member, and the musicians obviously like her being there, too.

Another bonus is their sound quality, thanks to the talents of crew member and engineer Richard Bird. Bird's gift is especially apparent on their new "doub- le A-sided" 45, which features "One More Night" and "You Could Be Mine." (You can order the records for $4 apiece through P.O. Box 3928, Metairie, LA 70009. Attr. Elizabeth Fontaine, or call Elizabeth at 504- 838-8750.) And the help of
lights engineer Mike Seelig and stagehand Chris Basselin is invaluable. Their professionalism belies the image of greedy rock stars. Since the musicians don’t pay themselves, “you don’t miss what you never see,” says Hill. But if you have extra money, you spend it on luxuries, and if your favorite luxury is to make great music, why not let it pay for itself?

“I think it’s why we can continue to put on what we consider a professional show, as opposed to some garage band that has to go on and struggle. We’re all partners,” Barr states, serious again. Also, “We feel a sense of responsibility just to the city. Meaning, if bands start making it, being here can put this place on the map.”

All told, Uncle Stan and Auntie Vera has an attitude that’s collective and focused: work at it seriously, garage band that has to go on and struggle. We’re all partners,”

Continued from 19

 Reality Patio

T

he four members of Reality Patio sprawl on the floor of a cottage on Burdette Street that Kevin Otto, the group’s keyboardist and sometimes vocalist, is renovating with his father. “My Dad loves the band,” says Kevin. “And he’s 70.”

What these boys want is respect. They say it’s a struggle to get any in New Orleans. “If we went to New York, got drunk, picked up some weird disease, then maybe we’d come back to some support,” says Rick Sinai. He’s the group’s guitarist, main vocalist and James Dean look-alike.

All four are in their early twenties. Rick and Kevin, who have fresh-faced pop star looks, know each other from Ridgewood Prep. Mike Williams, the tall gangly bass player, went to East Jefferson and met them through a mutual friend. The drummer, Cary Bonnagaze, a Baton Rouge native (who

Dash Riprock

one of the most determined and hardest working bands in New Orleans is Dash Rip Rock, a trio that plays everything from folk music to driving rock ‘n’ roll.

In the past six months, the band has toured twice (most recently with The Flies) using a $1200 van for transportation. (“We bought it one day and left for Baltimore the next, without having the engine checked.”)

Determination and work have begun to produce results for the group, which formed just two years ago. In February, Dash was signed by 688 Records, and in March, appeared on MTV’s The Cutting Edge. This month, the band will travel to New York where they’ll represent 688 at the New Music Seminar.

The agreement with the Atlanta-based 688 means that Dash will appear with the Fleshtones, among others, on a compilation album to be released in August. In October, 688 will release Dash Rip Rock’s debut album which should emphasize the band’s folky, more sensitive side. “Right now, we walk the line between southern folk and kick ass rock’n’roll. Eventually, we’d like to evolve into more of an artistic country music band... like R.E.M. or Rank and File,” explains Bill Davis, the band’s guitarist, lyricist, and lead singer.

Such an evolution would be natural. While Davis loves Southern rock bands like Z.Z. Top and Lynard Skynard” he grew up listening to, and playing, country music. “The first band I was in was a country group. I played bass with a bunch of old men,” recalls the Ponchatoula native. In high school Davis “fell into the FM tragedy zone” until he saw the Normals open for the Police. Hearing fresh New Orleans bands like the Normals, the Blue Vipers, and The Cold inspired Davis, then a journalism student at L.S.U, to join the Human Rayz, a Baton Rouge “intellectual punk” band.

After receiving a master’s degree and leaving Rayz, Davis formed Dash Rip Rock with Hoaky Hickel, from Scooter and the Mopeds. In New Orleans, Davis and Hickel hooked up with Fred LeBlanc, the drummer for the Backbeats and the Mistreators. When LeBlanc joined, the band “improved 80%” acknowledges Davis.

The new group decided to hit the road so that they could set themselves apart from other local bands. In order to do this, Davis quit his 9-5 job which he describes as having been “scary.”

Words like “scary” are used frequently by Davis, a likable guy who talks about his band and its recent accomplishments with genuine enthusiasm. His face
lights up when asked about being on The Cutting Edge. That was "the most exciting thing... we were nervous but we were drinking so it was fun..." After the MTV show aired, attendance at Dash Rip Rock's show shot up. "We began to attract a younger crowd," admits Davis, who wrote his graduate thesis on MTV and its effect on kids. With the younger crowds came giggling girls who, according to the down-to-earth lead singer, make the band "real uncomfortable."

While Dash Rip Rock draws audiences from Ruston to Washington, D.C. who enjoy the fun live shows, the group continues to combine fast-stomping rockabilly with Davis' sensitive lyrics. "A lot of the songs are based on short stories by southern writers. Flannery O'Connor really knocks me out."

in this crowd ever heard of James Brown??" he yells before launching into "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag." With his ultra-confident stage presence and cover-boy looks, you'd expect Blaylock to be everyone's stereotypical rock 'n' roller: party all night, sleep all day.

Wrong. It's Monday morning at the hushed, cool Oil & Gas Building on Tulane Avenue. Clusters of men in business suits wait for elevators in the lobby. Upstairs, the office of Bruce A. Blaylock could belong to just about any lawyer. There are framed diplomas on the walls, a metal filing cabinet, huge plant, a wooden desk and in-and-out box—the works. Neither these nor his gray pin-striped suit nor manner—decidedly earnest—give any indication that this attorney strums in a rock 'n' roll band.

Blaylock, a Washington D.C. native, received a B.A. from Tulane, then graduated from its law school in 1982. So far he hasn't had to neglect music for law or law for music. "What ends up compromised," he says, "is sleep."

The Petries, named after Dick Van Dyke's television family and inspired by Rob and Laura's style, began when Vance Degeneres approached Blaylock and drummer Steve Fisher, who were with Lenny Zenith, and asked them to form a band with him. Elliot Kelly became keyboardist and they "auditioned and auditioned" before finding "three girls who can sing, look good, and dance." When Degeneres left for Los Angeles, he was replaced by bass player John Meunier, "funkiest white boy I know" who used to play with Blaylock in Oyster Licks. Blaylock says the three women, Heidi Jensen, Martha Leggett, and Laura Frerer, "make working conditions more pleasurable. Each one has a lot of creative talent, and it's just the first band for each of them."

Before Degeneres left, he wrote most of the songs. Now they are penned by Blaylock, Meunier, and Frerer. When asked if his legal practice influenced his songs, Blaylock replies, "Only the blues."

He's referring to his early days of mostly criminal practice, before his switch to mainly general civil. "With criminal, when you finish a jury trial, it's always extremely dramatic, whether you win or lose. You feel for both the victim and the accused; it's always like you've left a piece of your soul in the courtroom. The stakes are too high."

He still spends plenty of time in court, balanced with plenty of time on stage. Neither career is inherited. "No one in my family plays music or practices law. They all went to Duke and live in D.C., waiting for Bruce to give up the guitar." He grins. "Never happen."

Hayes Ferguson

The Petries

Thursday night at Jimmy's. The club is packed and steamy, like the inside of a sponge, but on stage a hip septet, the Petries, look cool. The three men and four women wear mainly black and white outfits straight from London-in-the-Swinging-Sixties. They're opening for a national act, Modern English, yet from the size and rapt attention of the audience, mostly collegiate-gone-funky, you'd think they were the headliners. Their nonchalant attitude adds to the illusion. And leading the band in nonchalance, in sidling around stage, shimmying and exchanging asides with band members, is guitarist Bruce Blaylock. He's the one who introduces the band members and announces the songs. "Anyone
The history of rock 'n' roll as told by... 

W ho was that strange man in a flaming red shirt flailing his arms at you from your MTV screen on The Cutting Edge last March while playing obscure New Orleans oldies and preaching the TRUE history of rock 'n' roll? Anybody who has ever tried to buy an old record in New Orleans knows him as Jim Russell, whose Magazine Street store has been a mecca for record collectors from around the world for the past 17 years. Russell's customers have included Paul McCartney ($1770 worth) and Bruce Springsteen ($177 worth of obscure R&B).

As amazing as the number and rarity of Russell's records are his stratospheric prices and his bizarre stories of having started (it seems) virtually everybody in Fifties rock 'n' roll. Little Richard ("I started the Beaties/Stones/etc.") ain't got nothin' on Jim Russell.

Now, at age 66, Russell is retiring, closing his store, and "giving away" his oldies at half price. It seems a good time to discover the truth behind Russell's claims. Here, then, is the history of rock 'n' roll, according to Jim Russell.

I took an announcer's course in my home town of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which lasted about a year, and I sent them my tape with the idea of going to a station at WAND in Canton, Ohio. This was in January 1950. The first thing we were playing in Ohio was country & western.

Then the promoters started to come through with the race [rhythm & blues] music, that's when I started to like it. But when I started to play it, the owners told me to lay off, so I did.

When the promoters continued to come through, because it was starting to catch on in places, I was beginning to like it more and more. So, after six months, I said, "I'm gonna see what happens." So I started to play it. That's when the owners poured down the window, 'Get that off the air!'

He couldn't get in the control room because I had locked it. I was in that particular mood that day. They called the fire department and they chopped the door down. I'm thinkin', 'What the hell is this?? I thought we just got rid of Adolf Hitler!'

He told me, 'You're fired, man. Goodbye. See you later.' That's when I took the news to Alan Freed. We had been friends because we had a sister station in Akron, Ohio [WAKR]. Freed wasn't doing as well as I was, playing country & western music. I grabbed Alan and I said, 'Look, Alan, why don't you start playing black music, because my phone's been ringing off the hook when I slip it in.' So we went in and talked to the station owner, and he said, 'We've got a '5' Hooper rating. If you can enhance it in some way or stay the same in 30 or 60 days, we'll stay on the black music.'

I'm the one that taught Freed never to sit down in a studio. When I took him over in Akron, I pulled his chair out and put in a Perry Como-type stool, so that he would sit high and use a megaphone on commercials and on some of the records he was playing, by bringing the volume down and making a lot of crazy sounds. That's how we got a lot of commercials sold on the station, because we used chains, broken glass, everything that was new to the industry then, we did at the Akron studio.

"I went back to work at WAND again. I was playing rhythm & blues, because the owner saw what Alan Freed was doing. He had to be hit over the head with a pole. When Fats Domino's tunes came through, that's when Mr. Wilson said, 'Now, that sounds more like it!'"

"Within 60 days Freed and I put on a show with about 20 artists at the Akron Amusement Park. We got 1,000 black people with two dollars in each hand, shoving it in. That's what skyrocketed Freed right away. That night was the beginning of H-I-S-T-O-R-Y, because we never booked a white artist in the next ten years unless he worked for nothing."

Russell recalls that Freed next went to WJW in Cleveland because his WAKR contract stipulated that he could not work a radio station within 60 miles... He also remembers putting on several other shows with Reed and his manager, Lew Platt, and though none specifically other than an Akron Armory show with Pat Boone, Bill Haley, and the Chordettes that bombarded Cleveland rock 'n' roll historians with time on their hands would do well to research those shows.

"A promoter came through with MGM Records who was a close friend, and he said, 'Man, we got a sure thing. We're gonna make $750 besides our $750.' And I said, 'Who you got?' He says, 'Hank Williams.' And I said, 'Oh, man! I know this is gonna be great, because he's the best one on my show!' We booked him at the Canton Memorial Auditorium, where the [Pro Football] Hall of Fame is now. And he died on the way to our concert! [History books confirm Hank Williams died January 1, 1953, en route to Canton, Ohio.]

"I was connected with Lew Platt and Alan Freed all the while until he got to New York. Then Lew wanted me to come to New York with him, so I did. I just took a hiatus of a couple of months and went over there. I got sick as soon as I saw the way they were operating over there, because that's when all the unsavory characters entered into the scene, and it became a whole new ball game. The "Big Boys" kept Freed and said 'either/or' for me. So little ol' me who didn't like the sight of guns said, 'I'm leaving.' And I found a perfect place to hide."

Russell possesses a fascinating letter from the late Lew Platt, dated February 22, 1956, which begins, "Because of my need for cash to protect myself, I deemed it advisable to sell part of my interest in Alan Freed..." It also accords Freed of going "pop."
under the pressure of "several of our associates" and ASCAP Music Publishers. Platt was by this time managing the very popular DJ "Hound Dog" Lorenz of Buffalo, New York.

Russell finds choosing Cleveland as the site for the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame because of the late Alan Freed (who popularized the name "rock 'n' roll") laughable. Says Russell, "He couldn't even keep time to the records with a phone book!"

When I arrived in New Orleans [fall 1955] I saw exactly what I was looking for—nobody out at night. It was a Sunday night, I recall. At seven o'clock the streets seemed deserted. I heard some noise going on towards Bourbon Street, and there was some jazz down there. I didn't like jazz, so I went back to my hotel. I was convinced this little town was it.

"There were no young people doing anything. I called several churches and several schools and asked them if they would like to have a dance. So I talked to one and I got a good reception if we accept our best friend, Larry Regan. It snowballed onto Larry McKinley, Okey Dokey and a half dozen others. Before you know it, within the next six months to a year, I was managing 18 disc jockeys and taking them on dances every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Then WTIX throws me a couple of disc jockeys, and they started playing the same kind of music the other stations were playing, to get into it.

"But anyhow, those were the days when all the recording artists from this city had their records played. Those days produced all the big ones and some of the little ones." Poppa Stoppa backs up Russell's claim of influence with the disc jockeys.

"I met Jim before 'TIX went to rock 'n' roll. He came over one day when I was doing my show and said, 'You wanna make some extra money at night?' I said, 'No, I'm tired when I get out of here. Besides, people listen to me on the radio, but they don't want to see me.' He said, 'No, we'll do some record hops. We'll make some money.'

"WTMR didn't pay much. If it wasn't for my mother and father, I wouldn't have been able to live.

Kessler Air Force Base in Biloxi, when he asked Jim to manage them; the time on a Larry Regan dance program on WVUE-TV he kept a radio disc jockey engineer from cutting off Ray Charles doing a live, ten-minute version of "I Got A Woman"; picking up Professor Longhair, Smiley Lewis, etc. for his sock hops; telling a teenage Irma Thomas at the Peacock Club to "go see Cosimo"; the time Fess had drank so much he could just whistl when recording "Big Chief", finding Aaron Neville's "Tell It Like It Is" in a trash can at Cosimo's and taking it to all his old DJ's; and, as late as last year, sending a copy of Jean Knight's "My Foot Toot" to old friend Jimmy "Boots" Clin- ton, now and DJ at KDKA in Pittsburgh, and receiving an order back (for Isaac Bolden) for 30,000 copies.

Russell says the reason most of the big rock 'n' roll package shows bypassed New Orleans was because of segregated venues like Municipal Auditorium, though he claims his sock hops from 1955 to 1964 attracted 6 million teens—a lot of Clearasil!

"When the Beatles moved in in 1964 it all disintegrated in a hurry, because there were no saxophonists in the band the Beatles had. Devastating violence came across the country and everyone flocked to it.

So I had to do something. I went into surveys for radio stations, and then I opened this store in 1969. I've been here 17 years now with all my memories; all my oldies and all my artists. When I want to hear them I don't have to pay for a booking. I just put them on and listen to them. Smiley Lewis can get me out of the dumps, Bobby Mitchell, some of Dave Bartholomew, and Hank Williams, Sr.

"But I have 300,000 records here, 10,000 78's, 35,000 albums, 250,000 singles of all artists from the beginning of time to the end of time.

"And I can't go on forever. I would like to be the Abominable Snowman, but I don't think the Lord's gonna allow it.

"I want all you people to come down. You don't have to buy anything. Just say, 'Hello, Jim, thanks for being here on Earth.' And I'll hug you and remember you as long as I live."
When Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis and Ray Charles get together to play, you better believe a whole lot of shakin’s goin on.

by Rick Coleman

What has 264 keys, is 2/3’s bayou-bred and 100% legendary? Would you believe Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Ray Charles on a Cinemax special together? As executive producer David L. McBurnett says, “I dare anybody else to put these guys together.”

McBurnett, who lived in New Orleans for several years before moving to New York, is not exactly know for pulling off musical coups successfully. A Meters reunion and a Neville Brothers show he filmed at the Saenger in New Orleans in 1980 were financial busts. “I'd sell it cheap,” he jokes. It does help, however, that his wife is an executive at Cinemax/HBO and his friends include Al Embry and Bob Vernon, who help book Jerry Lee Lewis and Fats Domino, respectively.

The concept of the special has been done before in New Orleans—in Stephenson Palfi’s 1982 film Piano Players Rarely Ever Play Together (now available on video tape), which combined the talents of Professor Longhair, Allen Toussaint, and Fats Washington. “What Stephenson did was somewhat of an inspiration to me,” McBurnett admits, “as I was an inspiration to him with the Meters and Neville Brothers shows. It's a variation on the theme of Piano Players. But, at the same time, it’s not that they rarely ever play together, it’s that they never play together.”

Getting back to the roots of the music was very much the concept of the concert—not just New Orleans roots, but also blues, boogie woogie, and country. A song suggested by Ray Charles for the three-piano finale was Hank Williams’ “You Win Again,” previously recorded by all three. A blues jam in rehearsal was dropped in the final program.

But it was to New Orleans that they came, literally—to the home of Fats Domino for a pot of gumbo swimming with crabs, before launching into two days of Tabasco-fired music. At rehearsal, third generation Rolling Stone Ron Wood admitted, “I can still feel Fat’s gumbo burning on my jugular.”

“Fats is New Orleans,” says McBurnett, “I sometimes think he’d rather cook than play.”

The program was named “Fats Domino and Friends,” presumably to emphasize the New Orleans roots and to pay tribute to the first of all rock ‘n’ roll legends, because the interests of the producers largely lie in New Orleans, and partly because spending much of his time at home and out of the limelight, Fats hasn’t received the recognition of late the other two have. According to McBurnett, “Ray is doing this for Fats.”

Coming to New Orleans was a homecoming of sorts for Ray Charles and Jerry Lee Lewis, as well. Charles played New Orleans constantly in the 1950s. Local promoter Rip Roberts, who booked both Charles and Domino (on a couple of occasions together), suggests that Charles may have been even more popular with the black audience in New Orleans than Domino. Charles also developed a friendship with blues singer Guitar Slim while here in 1953, arranging Slim’s Fats Domino beat gospel confession “The Things That I Used To Do” (a number one R&B hit) and recording Slim’s soulful ballad “Feeling Sad.” The success of Slim’s record undoubtedly encouraged Charles to record his legendary gospel-blues style. Rip Roberts, whose son Rip, Jr., is Fats’ valet and whose granddaughter is married to Ray Charles, Jr., insists that Charles calls him up to this day when he’s in town for spicy Creole gumbo.

Jerry Lee Lewis, of course, if from Ferriday, Louisiana, what some would call “lower Arkansas delta,” but don’t doubt that a lot of New Orleans style has crept into his music. He has recorded three of Fats’ songs and nearly the entire hit list of Little Richard, his predecessor in piano bashing. Stuck McGhee’s 1949 blistering anthem to getting plastered on Rampart Street “Drinkin’ Wine Spo Dee O Dee” pretty well sums up the New Orleans-Killer connection. While not recorded in New Orleans, it was New Orleans who made it a massive R&B hit. It became the first song Jerry Lee ever sang in public that year and a standard of his repertoire ever since. In Robert Cain’s book on Jerry Lee, Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On, Jerry Lee’s close friend Cecil Harrelson recalled how Jerry Lee, taking a bus to New Orleans at age 16, playing “the joints,” and paying for a demo at “B&J or J&B Studio—undeniably Cosimo Matassa’s J&M Studio. It was, says Harrelson, the “first time he ever recorded anything on wax.”

With all this in mind, the Cinemax concert is not only a mind-buster marquee-wise, but also for the exposure of a generation of American music from the roots up, in the place where much of it began—a triumph of heritage over consumerism and a once-in-a-lifetime event.

It seemed that even some of the participants couldn’t believe it when Paul Shaffer, musical director for the special, was heard mumbling “Ray Charles... Ray Charles... Ray Charles...” on Late Night with David Letterman a month before the concert.

So when Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, and Ray Charles walked into the Storyville Jazz Hall on Wednesday, June 4, they awed even a jaded, over-privileged press corps.

Never mind Ron Wood, never mind Paul Shaffer. Certainly no one noticed the architect of the big beat, Dave Bartholomew, sitting in a back pew (Storyville
Never mind Ron Wood, never mind Paul Shaffer. . . the three greatest piano players in rock 'n' roll were in the building.

almond sax section from Fats' band went almost unheard. Then non-singers Shaffer, Wood, and Jordan butchered Ernie K-Doe's "A Certain Girl." Hopefully somebody will torch this film before airing (Burn! K-Doe! Burn!).

The band also played for Ray Charles in a good, but far from peak, set. Though, even on an off night, Ray Charles doing "I Got A Woman," "Drown in My Own Tears," and "Hit The Road, Jack" is a "10" on anybody else's scale.

The grand finale was incredible, with Fats and Jerry Lee ripping barrelhouse boogie (something which both their styles are based on) on "Lewis Boogie," "Jambalaya," and "Swance River Boogie." Unfortunately Ray didn't sing and the volume on his electric piano seemed too low.

Also, the Louisiana two-thirds of this show is going on the road (see below). Do not miss it to save your life.

FATS DOMINO AND JERRY LEE LEWIS

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Then came the New Orleans anthem "The Saints" with Dave and the horns second-lining around the stage for the 10,000th time and Fats' piano tour-de-force "Sentimental Journey" with piano bumping.

Jerry Lee followed with a roteking "Great Balls of Fire" which matched rehearsal, a mournful "She Even Woke Me Up To Say Goodbye," and yet another astounding rendition of "Whole Lotta Shakin'." Thankfully, for Fats, the Killer only had three songs.

Ron Wood sat in unobtrusively with Jerry Lee's band and stayed for the next, ill-advised set in which Wood, Shaffer, former Jazz Crusader and Bobby Bland guitarist Roy Gaines, ex-David Letterman drummer Steve Jordan, and ex-Bee Gees bass player Harold Cowart from Baton Rouge formed an impromptu band. Their version of Gary U.S. Bonds' "New Orleans" was ruined when the necessarily
**July Listings**

**Concerts**

**Friday, 4**
July 4 Bash, at Mark's Warehouse, 7877 Forsythe, from 2 p.m. Bands include: Victorious Circle, LSD, The Descendants, Life Sentence, Short Dogs Grow. Information from Mary at 388-9591.

**Saturday, 5**
Steve Wonder, UNO Lakefront Arena.

**Wednesday, 9**
Julian Lennon, Saenger.

**Tuesday, 15**
Public Image Ltd., featuring Martin John Lydon, MCA/Atlantic Auditorium; Ticket Master.

**Saturday, 19**
2nd Annual Chunky Rhythm 'n' Blues Festival, Richardson Farm in Chalmette, Musapop-pi, from 4 p.m. still. Performers include: Ous Clay, Nappy Brown, the Dict, the Gospel Temptations, John and Bob, White Noise and all from Homestead Productions. 2012 Avenue, Mandeville P: 39301.

**Sunday, 20**
Sanatana, Saenger and mighty tenttive too.

**Sunday, 27**

**Live Music**

**French Quarter**

**Artists Cafe,** 608 Ursuline, 523-9358. Caption: Tam, heavy metal, moss nights.

**Bayard's Jazz Alley,** 701 Bourbon, 524-9200. Jazz Undergound every night, from 8.

**Blue Room,** in the Fairmont Hotel, 527-7111. Dancing, dinner, dinner and drinks. Wed 2 through Thurs. The Four Aces, from 9 to 1 a.m. Their acts are known as Albert and the Four Aces. Wed 16 through Thurs. Captain Layler. From Wed: 30 the bluesy hoedown of Maria Madda. Reservations.

**Brew House,** Jackson Brewery, Decatur St., 523-9941. Call for daily listings.

**Captain Monday's,** 325 Howard Ave., 527-2457. Mondays: Jam Session with the Natives, 8-11 p.m. Thursdays, guest artist playing acoustically during the same hours.

**Dancing on the Beach,** 524-9100. Wednesday's, 6-10 p.m., Fonsage, 9 p.m. Thursdays, Terry Lee, 9-1 a.m. Fridays, Terry Lee, 9-1 a.m. Saturdays, Brian Soland, 9-1 a.m. Thursdays, Terry Lee, 9-1 a.m.

**Gaelic Room,** 523-9380. Thursdays, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Saturdays, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sundays, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Mondays, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Band.

**Half Audi:** 400 Bourbon. Call for daily listings.

**Romantic Diversion**

**Maple Leaf Poety Readings**


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Fridays at 9 and 11:30, Sundays at 8, 10:30 and 1 a.m. at Ernst Cafe. 600 Perkins. 520-8554. Comedians imported from overseas (no wonder). 9:30 p.m. a 10 p.m. Wednesdays, local talent show nights. Call or for remainder of month's performers.

**July 1-20**
La Fete National Festival of Food and Cookery, staged throughout the city. Tuesdays, the Festival Forens, Sheraton Hotel, 5 p.m., followed by a jazz parade through the French Quarter. Weds, 2, 9, 16. Great Women Chefs at the New Orleans School of Cooking, Jackson Brewery, 6:30 p.m. $15 per session. Thurs.3: Chef, Fisheye & All That Jazz, Bourbon Orleans Hotel, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Fri.4: Brouhaha Bash, Brouhaha Cafe, Jackson Brewery, followed by fireworks on the river near the Natchez departing thirty minutes before the pyrotechnics are scheduled (516-9777 for crane information). Fri.4: Sun.4: Chef in the Square, Jackson Square, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., a vast outdoor food tasting. Sat.5, 12, 19: Scope of Life Tours, various to the various spices and coffee houses of New Orleans. (516-4413 for more information on this.

**July 2-30**
Photo exhibit surveying the Civil Rights movement through the work of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on display at the Andrew Sanchez Center on N. Claiborne from July 2 through 15 and in the Xavier University library from July 16-30.

**Saturday, 5**
An evening of WFV wrestling, at the Superdome from 7:30 p.m. and including no doubt such features as Hulk Hogan, the Iron Sheik, the British Bulldogs, Jake the Snake Roberts, the Junk Yard Dog, Rocky Steamboat, George the Animal Steele (the bald guy with the green tongue who eats the turnbuckle), Randy Macho Man Savage, Nickolai Volkoff, etc. etc. Ticket information at 506-3000.

**Saturday, 12**
Diana Moore, author of a book on prehistoric Louisiana women, will discuss from 2 p.m. at Culturaus Parental Empire, 3900 Ernest Street, in Lake Charles.

**Monday, 14-Saturday, 19**
Classic American Wine Week, six vertical tastings with dinner featuring different winemakers consecutive nights. Wines include both vintage staff and barrel samples of unreleased wines. Noted local chefs will prepare meals to accompany the wines and conversation. $40 per person for the series. At Pilgrams, 3212 Magazine Street, information at 895-6471.

**French Market, 514 Bourbon, 524-7611.**
Mondays, Terry Lee, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturdays, Mike Burns, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sundays, Bob Sloane, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.


**Hilton Hotel,** 521-1224. Sundays, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., Chuck and Chris and the Basin Street Six in the Courtyard Restaurant. Fridays, 4-8 p.m. in the Piano Lounge, Cajun Play and the Summertime Blues.

**Landmark Hotel,** 514 Bourbon, 524-7611. Mondays, Terry Lee, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturdays, Mike Burns, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sundays, Bob Sloane, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Maison Bourbon,** 601 Bourbon, 523-8818. Thurs.-Tues., 2, 207-713, Sat., 4-8:45; Sunday, 207-713, 12-12 a.m. Sun., 9:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Sun. Thurs., 207-713, 12-12 a.m. Sun., 9:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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Hulk Hogan—a good boy who always makes the sign of the cross before he enters the ring (like a boxer played by John Garfield in an old movie)—and one of the WWF monoliths who will be crashing into the ‘squared circle’ at the Superdome, Saturday July 5.

Carrollton Station, 8140 Willow, 885-9100. Mostly blues or blues-related. Call for July's line-up.


Upontown

Barney's, 938 Valence, 895-9405. Most Mondays; J. Monké'd. Most Wednesdays and Sundays: JD and the Jammers: Schedule subject to change, but you might look for Cyril Neville's Upontown All-Stars here on Tuesdays; other regulars: Paul and the Poncles, Charmaine Neville, Blue Lunch.

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Academy Gallery, 5334 Magazine, 899-8111. A group show including work by Chris Chris, Susan LaRocco, Marge Lykes and Tim Boudreau.


Bienvenue Gallery, 1800 Hastings Place, 523-5089. Closed for the summer.

C.A.C., 900 Camp. Closed for the summer.

Carol Robinson Gallery, 4537 Magazine, 895-6130. A group show of gallery artists including spray paintings by David Goodman.

Duplantier Gallery, 818 Baronne, 524-1071. Through the summer: a group show of gallery artists; summer hours by appointment only.

Eggart, 895-6130. To the career of Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Through the summer: a group show of manuscripts, theatre and opera programs, sheet music, posters, libretti, portfolios, paintings, photographs, decorative arts and furniture and a generous amount of Newcomb pottery and Woodward work. At the Mint: Marie Gras in New Orleans and New Orleans Jazz, two large and self-explanatory exhibits, as well as a recently added exhibit on Louisiana's black heritage.


New Orleans Museum of Art, City Park, 485-2631. Through Sun. 21: paintings by American masters (Homer, Hopper, Sargent, O'Keefe, etc.) from the famous Theater Borsini collection, located in Liguori (it may be the world's largest private collection, though the American stuff is a recent addition: Thyssen bought much of this American work from or through Andrew Cropo, the Manhattan art dealer implicated in that really repulsive S.A.M. scandal). Through Thurs. 28: Important Indian Miniatures from the Chichiln Collection. Also: 100 Years of New Orleans Art, a catalog for the permanent collection.

Le Minorx Group, 508 Pelican Aven., Algiers Pkwy., 361-1735. Group show of gallery artists including Dennis Ferris, Tony Green, Mary Lee Egbert, Glen Weaver, Jack Miller and Charles Pfister.

Louisiana State Museum, on Jackson Square and elsewhere. Through Aug. 31: Morris Henry Hobbs: Paintings and Graphic Works. Facing the 4th at 6:30 and on Mon. 28 on Dutch painting.

Passell-Baker Gallery, 822 St. Peter, 524-7252. Closed for the summer.

Tilden-Poiley, 4119 Magazine, 897-5300. Group exhibitions of gallery roster artists throughout the summer.

U.N.O. Gallery, laketractc campus. 206-6493. Through Mon. 28: sculptures by Clark Hurst. A group show of American masters (Homer, Hopper, Sargent, O'Keefe, etc.) from the famous Theater Borsini collection, located in Liguori (it may be the world's largest private collection, though the American stuff is a recent addition: Thyssen bought much of this American work from or through Andrew Cropo, the Manhattan art dealer implicated in that really repulsive S.A.M. scandal). Through Thurs. 28: Important Indian Miniatures from the Chichiln Collection. Also: 100 Years of New Orleans Art, a catalog for the permanent collection.

U.N.O. Theatre, Sat. 5 through Sun. 26: What the Butler Saw, Jo Garon's scabrous comedy. Fri. 18 through Sat. 26. Only An Orphan Girl, which sounds like a barnstormer to us. Performances at 8 on Thursdays through Saturdays and at 2:30 on Sundays.

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**Last Page**

Thank God it’s “in” this year to stay in America and not go anywhere interesting, since no one in New Orleans can afford to venture farther than the Five Mile Bridge. We can all tell our pals in NY and LA that we’re afraid of terrorists, that’s why we’re not going anywhere this summer...although if we were nervous types we wouldn’t live here in the first place. It’s a summer to relax and enjoy what we’ve got around our own neighborhood, and it’s fashionable, too. For instance, around our neighborhood, there’s a new band Skin Sect, recently described as the “wild underbelly of Final Academy exploding in screaming neon shards.”

Beat that in Lisbon...Meanwhile, up would James Comiskey and Benny Jenkins of Woodenhead and Denise Alvarado of Siren have formed Jamma...Woodenhead has added two new members, bassist Paul Clement and drummer Mark Whitaker...Two Louisianas groups Beausoleil and the Ardoin Family have been chosen to play in the Festival of American Folklife this month in Washington D.C.

Al Farrell, whose band with horn section was one of the treats of the Jazz Festival, is taking his act on the road to Kansas City’s Club Emporium July 18, 19...Chris Foreman of Atchafalaya invites anyone and all of you who are in Panama City Beach, Florida July 31-August 5 to see the band and to do the P.C. at Spinnaker’s on the beach...The Look, formerly of New Orleans, is now the Big Easy and is in San Diego finishing an EP in LA at Rusk Studios for IRS records. In the fall they will do a Midwest Tour of Colleges across the USA. O.K.

The Shrewsbury Kid is back! Now that you can finally get Tommy Bridgley’s first recordings on album (The Early 50’s In New Orleans on Pathé), you can also get him vintage 1986 (“She Turns Me On” b/w “Boogie Train” on Maison de Soul)...Robert Palmer, whose first hit was Allen Touissant’s “Sneakin’ Sally Through the Alley,” has an electronic version of Earl King’s “Trick Bag” on his top ten R&B LP, “Trick Bag” was also recorded by Johnny Winter last year.

This year’s Third Annual Chicago Blues Festival turned into a great big music party for the over 200 (that we counted) New Orleans musicians who made the trek to the Windy City. Highlights of the festival include Rolling Stone’s guitarist Keith Richards joining Chuck Berry on stage for six numbers to close Friday night. Fridays also had Memphis Slim, Slim “Mud” Murphy, Bo Diddley and Willie Dixon, Saturday featured Otis Clay, Dr. John and the Neville Brothers closing the show. With attendance over 220,000 Saturday the Nevilles got a great response from the Chi-Towners, but the New Orleans musicians were disappointed at the Nevilles for toning down the funkiness they play in New Orleans for a more middle of the road rock sound. Sunday closed out the fest with Pop Staples and the Staple Singers and John Lee Hooker doing a solo set. After the fest at night the Chicago blues bars jumped into action with two New Orleans faves playing: Biddy Mulligan’s hosting Dr. John and Fitzgerald out in the western suburb of Berwyn having the Radiators for two packed nights.

Louisiana folk traditions are featured in a new book, Louisiana Folklore: A Guide to the State, compiled by the Louisiana Folklore Program. Marit Gras Indians, Kassaiti pine straw baskets, north Louisiana quilts, pirogues, and more are discussed in this resource directory edited by Nicholas R. Spitzer, former Louisiana Folklore Program manager and presently a researcher with the Smithsonian Institution. The guide is not for sale, but it’s available to parish public libraries, university libraries, and parish school boards.

(I Am the Blues) Monsieur D’ has a new single out on Nitrate Records called “Hurricane” b/w “Rice and Gravy Fever” produced by Art Neville (who also plays synthesizer on “Hurricane”). J, who recently worked as an extra on the movie Angel Heart, had stars of the picture, Robert DeNiro, Charlotte Rampling and Lisa Bonet drop by Benny’s to check the act.

Meanwhile, many of New Orleans musicians aren’t afraid to travel: former members of the Guatemalan Ensemble Acustico recorded half of their upcoming bambu album at C.R.S. studios in New Orleans. Patrice Fisher of Jasmine drove a van with them back to Guatemala City, where she will perform for a month. Through drummer Herlin Riley, percussionist Mark Sanders joined Ahmad Jamal for a two-week stint at Fat Tuesday’s in New York. Ricky Sebastian is touring Europe with John Scofield...The Olympia Brass Band has gone to perform in Nice and The Hague. When you hear Herbie Hancock’s new album, listen for the percussion—its New Orleans’ own Rafael Cruz.
Happy hour 2 p.m.-8 p.m. 50¢ drafts, $1 longnecks, $1.50 hiballs

Tip's is available for private parties

- Monday: 50¢ Draft, $1 Longnecks, $2 Pitchers - Lil Fat Tuesdays: $1
- Red Stripe, $1.50 Rum Boogie — Wednesday: 2 for 1 Shooters — Thursday: Longhair Coolers — Friday: 75¢ Hiballs 2-8 p.m.

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