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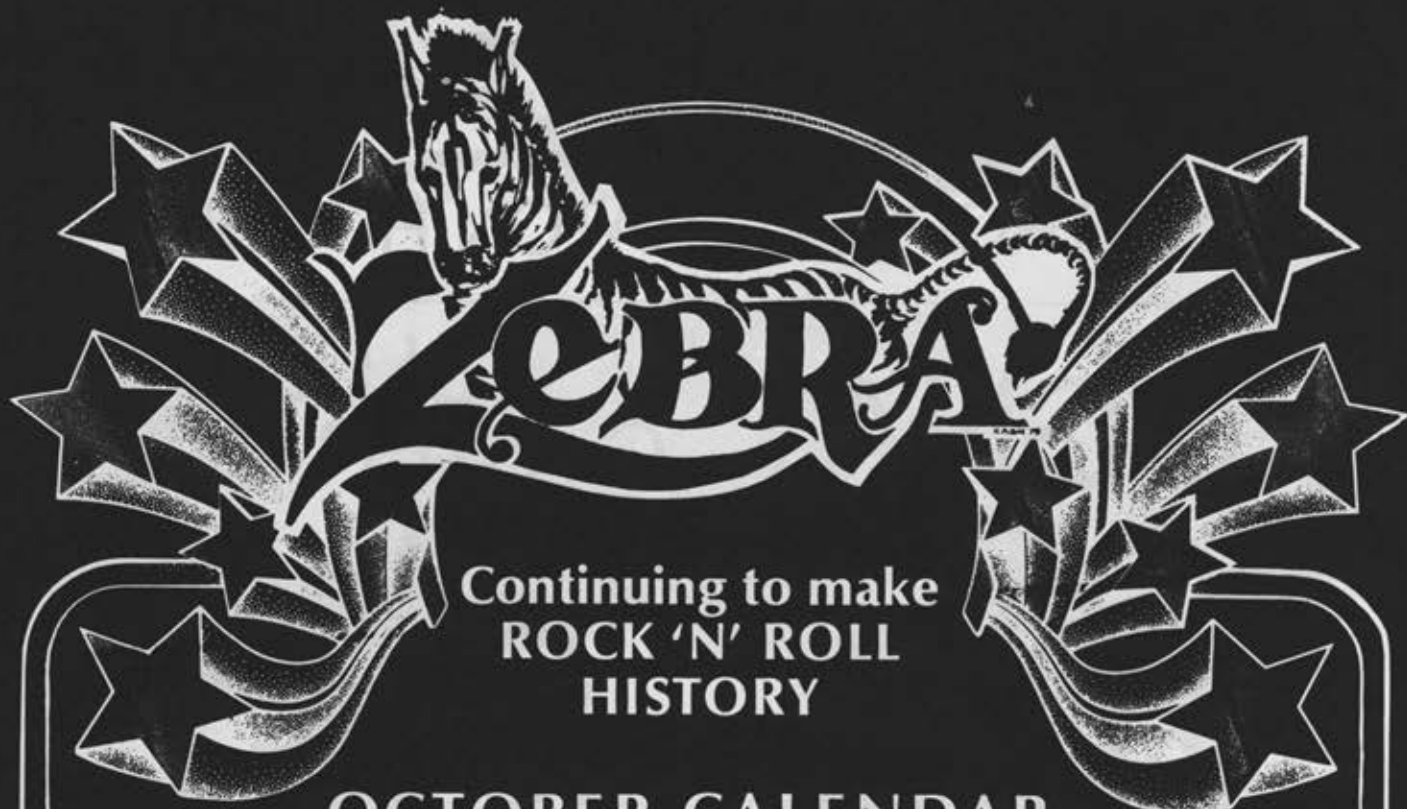
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OCTOBER CALENDAR

The Attic, Baton Rouge, LA.....	Oct. 22
Slick's Rock n' Roll, Lafayette	Oct. 23
Ole Man Rivers	Oct. 24
Southpaw's Sho-Bar, Shreveport, LA	Oct. 27
Face's, Baton Rouge, LA	Oct. 28
Hammond Social Club	Oct. 29
Spectrum, Thibodeaux, LA	Oct. 30
Palace Saloon (Halloween)	Oct. 31
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Wavelength

OCTOBER 1981 VOL. 1 NO. 12

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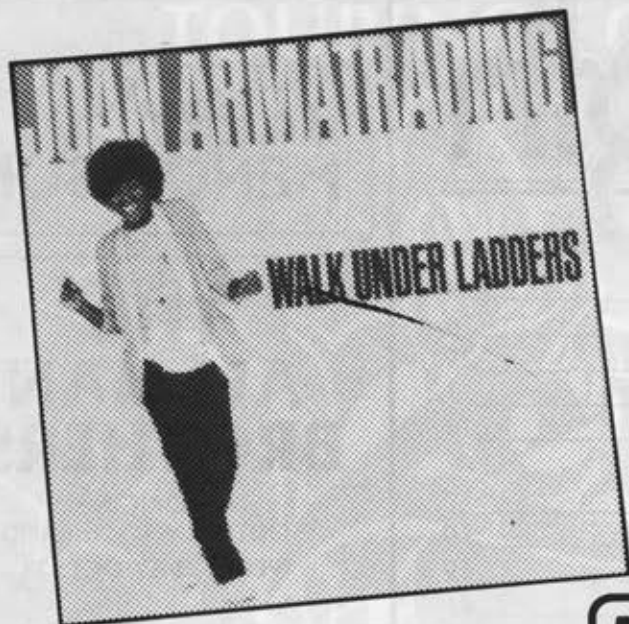


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Tipitina's Buys Its Building

Tipitina's, the uptown New Orleans live music club, appears to have a stable future after many months of uncertainty. The club, owned by over 60 shareholders, has made a down payment to purchase the building at 501 Napoleon it has rented since 1977.

The club had to come up with \$20,000 by September 15 to complete the down payment, and accomplished this by attracting numerous small investors to become new shareholders. It is still seeking investors so that it may make physical improvements to the riverside property.

Tipitina's general manager and treasurer John Kelley explained the move to purchase the building. "The lease that we were renting under was up at the end of 1981. Initially we had a one-year lease, then another one-year lease with a three-year option. This is our fifth year of operation.

"The new lease offered us by the landlord requested a substantial raise in rent. When we got around to negotiating a purchase price for the building, we realized that the note we would pay would not be significantly different from the requested rent. So we decided to try to raise the down payment."

The new investments do not immediately rescue the club from its annual fall shortages in working capital. "Because of old debts," Kelley says, "things are likely to remain pretty tight until next February. That is one of the reasons we are still seeking investors."

"But I think there is a lot of potential for making money that we have yet to explore. We've been approached by a group that wants to put in recording studios upstairs and come out with a 'live from Tipitina's' label. We want to work on the apartments upstairs and generate some office rental as opposed to live-in rental. Also, we want to start a booking service, both helping out-of-town acts get other engagements in New Orleans, and helping New Orleans acts get engagements out of town."

What changes, then would come first? "The restrooms," says Kelley. "We don't want to dress up the club — we all kind of enjoy its funkiness — but the restrooms need work. And then we would like to add refrigeration for the restaurant so we can buy in larger quantities and help keep prices down. But just establishing ourselves on firm financial footing is important."



Knight Studios Lands Gold Record

Knight Studios in Metairie was awarded their first gold record September 3 for Joe Simon's hit, "Love Vibration." Simon flew down from his home in New York last November to cut the disc at Traci Borges' Metairie Road studio, and within 10 months the record has sold more than 1,000,000 copies.

"I think it's safe to say this is the first time, in, oh, eight or nine years that a gold record has been entirely produced in New Orleans," says Borges. "Simon was very enthusiastic about coming here to do a record and is making plans to do some more recording in New Orleans."

Other than Regina Bennett, a Memphis keyboardist and arranger who worked most closely with Simon on the cut, all the sidemen were local people. "It was something to see him working with the young sidemen, going over the individual parts, and then standing on a box to conduct them through the track," recalls Borges. "The record was made relatively quickly and efficiently. Joe knew exactly what he wanted; he had it all worked out ahead of time."

The record was engineered by Bob Lawrence, Knight vice-president, and is available on Spring Records.

The Cold Hits The Road

New Orleans favorites the Cold have taken a major step in hiring Barry Mendelson to co-manage the band with longtime manager Bruce Spizer. Mendelson has been a concert promoter in New Orleans for some time, originally coming to town with the New Orleans Jazz basketball franchise.

Mendelson will work on the band's direction while Spizer will concentrate on legal aspects. Spizer commented, "We all agreed to get Barry involved with us."

The bad news for local fans is in the immediate future: the Cold has failed to confirm any of the tentative club dates it had booked in and around town this month. Instead, the band will travel.

"We want them to tour in other states in the south," says Mendelson. "The southern club circuit is familiar with the band, by word of mouth if no other way, and we are trying to get them in the 400-to 800-seat clubs."

"The idea is to have them work and record in the same state in the month of October. We are looking at Texas, Georgia, and Tennessee. The recording they will work on is a demo — the highest quality demo they can possibly do."

"The demos are to try to get a record deal. I can tell you that agencies and companies on both coasts are knowledgeable about the band and are interested in what the band can do in a major studio setting."

"The Cold has really done all a local band can do," Spizer adds. "It's time to hit the road."

Video News

The fall season promises to be a busy one for the home video market. After a slow August, some blockbuster releases are either on your dealers' shelves or on their way.

Bustin Loose and *Stir Crazy* with Richard Pryor; Neil Diamond's *The Jazz Singer*; *Car Wash* with the Pointer Sisters; *Dressed To Kill* with Angie Dickenson — a Hitchcock thriller; *Love At First Bite*; *Night Hawks* and *F.I.S.T.* with Sylvester Stallone; *King Of Hearts*; *Coming Home*; *Blue Lagoon*; *Hot Stuff*; *Uptown Saturday Night*; and more will be available for your home viewing.

Sony and Toshiba are ready to introduce their new lightweight portable Beta, VCRs. These portable Beta units will have all of the special effects that until now were only found on the expensive top-of-the-line home units.


When you play prerecorded tapes on your VCR, and the top two or three inches of the screen seems to drift sideways — there is nothing wrong with your VCR; this problem is called Skewing Error, and it can be adjusted by a qualified TV serviceman.

Clean the heads on your VCR every thirty to forty hours — or anytime that the machine has not been used for several weeks. Cleaning the heads is a simple process with the new cassettes that are now available. Insist that your dealer sell you a cassette that is non-abrasive such as the Allsop or Bib. If you have a Sanyo 9100-A, do not use the Allsop cassette — several of our friends have had problems with the Allsop and their 9100-A. The Bib is as good if not better. —Jay M. LeBlang

Welcome Back Arts Fest

Immediately following this fall's series of Brown Bag Concerts will be ARTS/FEST '81, October 24 and 25. The event, sponsored by the Downtown Development District, the Arts Council of New Orleans and the City of New Orleans, takes place in Lafayette Square, Boggs Mall and Gallier Hall and includes performances

This year's ARTS/FEST, which will be the biggest ever, will include the usual musical variety of classical, traditional and modern jazz, ballet and various other types of dance, Cajun music, country music and choral singing. ARTS/FEST is open free to the public.



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Wavelength's Complete Guide to the Bands of New Orleans

Your band can be listed free of charge in our November issue in a guide that will be referred to again and again by club owners, booking agents, out-of-town clubs, record companies, the media. Be sure your band is listed. Fill out the information in the coupon below and send it to us at Wavelength before midnight, October 10. Send a photo (nonreturnable) if you have one.

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

Please list our band in your November Band Guide

BAND NAME _____

TYPE OF MUSIC _____

BOOKING AGENT - PHONE # _____

MEMBERS NAMES _____

Urban Cowboy Music Festival

The Second Annual Urban Cowboy Music Festival will take place October 17 and 18 at City Park. The two-day music festival will include continuous musical entertainment performed by nationally known country performers, including T.G. Sheppard, Rex Allen, Jr., Lacy J. Dalton, Jerry Reed, The Kendalls, Hank Thompson, Marty Robbins, Ronnie McDowell, The Bellamy Brothers, Charly McClain, Lincoln County, Cedar Creek and River City Good Tyme Band.

In addition to the musical entertainment, the festival will feature mechanical bull riding competition and a mud wrestling exhibition.

Jazz Awareness All This Month

"Join the jazz network, it's Jazz Awareness Month."

This is the October motto of the Louisiana Jazz Federation, says LJF secretary Allison Kaslow. A non-profit corporation of recent origin, the federation is coordinating jazz events independently produced by more than twenty community organizations.

To offset the cost of a jazz awareness advertising campaign highlighting the October jazz events, LJF is simultaneously launching a fund-raising drive — through the sale of t-shirts, buttons, and records at project events, solicitation of membership donations, and solicitation of private business donations — to augment an initial grant from the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, and hopefully develop some working capital.

"We would like to see musicians have more input into arts coordinating around town," says Kaslow. "Obtaining grants is central to the purpose of our organization. Getting musicians involved in the process is one of many services we feel we can offer to individual jazz musicians. Beyond that, we can give local musicians a sense of acknowledgement. This is a great opportunity for local business people to support jazz. For too long, the musicians have been giving to the business community without getting anything back."

"We would like to bring the jazz community together, bridging the gap between traditional musicians and contemporary musicians," adds Patrice Fisher, LJF treasurer, from the office she shares with Kaslow in the Contemporary Arts Center. "And involving teachers and students is

very important to us. We are going to speak October 1 with all the teacher's resource coordinators in the school system, and we have the full support of the school system's cultural resources division."

Education is central to the thrust of the jazz awareness campaign. Loyola and UNO are both offering jazz workshop concerts for high school students in October, and a new 10-week Jazz Im-

provisational Workshop will hold its first class at the CAC in late October. Also, Harold Battiste and John Boudreaux will hold a unique workshop October 29 for college and high school musicians, a workshop culminating in a concert October 30.

In addition to various organizations around town, the clubs and radio stations are doing their part. The Maple Leaf, Tyler's, Tipitina's, Gino's, Woody Her-

man's new club in the Hyatt, the Absinthe Bar, and the Faubourg are all offering discounts to LJF members for October events. And radio stations WWIW, WTUL, and WWOZ are increasing or offering special jazz programming.

It all kicks off October 3 with an all-day concert in Jackson Square. For more information, call the Jazz Awareness Month hotline at 482-7185.

—Tim Lyman

October Jazz Events

Oct. 1 & 2 9:30 & 11:30 p.m. The Faubourg	Ricky Ford	Oct. 17 9 p.m. Maple Leaf Bar	The Night of Joy Jazz Band with Wes Nicks
Oct. 3 1 p.m. Jackson Square	Free Concert with Earl Turbinton Quartet, Patrice Fisher & Jasmine, Loyola Jazz Band, UNO Jazz Band, William Hill's New Orleans Jazz Ensemble, and Ramsey McLean & The Lifers.	Oct. 17 10 p.m. Hyatt Regency Hotel	Grand Opening of Woody Herman's club
Oct. 4 1 p.m. Jackson Square	NORD concert: the Razzberry Ragtimers with Neil Unterseher	Oct. 18 1 p.m. Jackson Square	NORD concert: "Celebration" with Bobby Lonere
Oct. 6 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: One Mo' Time	Oct. 19 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Jasmine
Oct. 7-10 11 p.m. Old Absinthe Bar	Widespread Jazz Orchestra	Oct. 20 & 21 Faubourg	Joanne Brackeen
Oct. 8 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Woodenhead	Oct. 22 2 p.m. Audubon Room	Loyola Jazz Studies Workshop with Loyola Jazz Faculty Quintet, Woody Herman, and James Drew
Oct. 8 2 p.m. Audubon Room, Woody Herman, and James Drew Loyola U.	Loyola Jazz Studies Workshop with Loyola Jazz Faculty Quintet, Woody Herman, and James Drew	Oct. 23 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Ellis Marsalis Trio
Oct. 8, 9, 10 9:30 & 11:30 p.m. The Faubourg	Art Baron	Oct. 24 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Ramsey McLean & The Lifers
Oct. 12 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Preservation Hall Band	Oct. 24 7:30 p.m. Boggs Hall	Jazz Street Party with Heritage Hall Band
Oct. 13 8 p.m. The Saenger	Chuck Mangione	Oct. 25 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: NOCCA Jazz Ensemble
Oct. 15-17 Faubourg	Eddie Harris	Oct. 25 8 p.m. Landmark Hotel, Metairie	New Orleans Jazz Club Jam Session (bring your instruments)
Oct. 15 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Joel Simpson	Oct. 28 2 p.m. Audubon Room, Loyola U.	Loyola Jazz Studies Workshop with Loyola Jazz Faculty Quintet, Woody Herman, and James Drew
Oct. 16 11:30 a.m. Lafayette Square	Brown Bag concert: Delgado Modern Jazz Ensemble	Oct. 29-31 Faubourg	John Scofield
Oct. 16 6 p.m. Gallier Hall	Louisiana Jazz Federation fund- raising party with Earl Turbinton Quartet	Oct. 30 8 p.m. CAC	Harold Battiste and John Boudreaux in concert
		Oct. 31 & Nov. 1 12 noon Louis Armstrong Park	New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation Mini-Festival: three stages, jazz, blues and gospel. Food and drink.

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THE PLAZA IN LAKE FOREST

2 FRIDAY—Rock 'n' roll legend **Chuck Berry** appears on *Riverboat President* for a special cruise along with rock bands **Ivy** and the **Topcats**. Call New Orleans Steamboat Company for times, 524-9787. Later tonight the **Radiators** return to the Dream Palace after a long absence. They start up about 11.

3 SATURDAY—Rock recording artists **Head East** will play tonight only at the Palace Saloon in West End Park.

4 SUNDAY—The French Market Corporation presents the **New Leviathan Oriental Fox-trot Orchestra** in a free concert at the French Market this afternoon from 2 pm. Tonight **Ray Charles** does two shows at the Theatre for the Performing Arts at 7 pm and 9:30 pm.

6 TUESDAY—Singer-songwriter **John Prine** plays *Ole Man River's* tonight. This is his only area appearance.

7 WEDNESDAY—Tonight is *Ole Man River's* 7th Anniversary Party with music by the **Sheiks**. Elsewhere *Tipitina's* begins a late night jazz series with **Ramsey McLean** and the **Lifers** starting up about 2.

8 THURSDAY—In Baton Rouge at the Centroplex two longtime pop favorites, the **Little River Band** and **Poco** combine for a concert that should be worth a drive. Closer to home, **Rockin' Dopsie** and his band return to *Tipitina's* after yet another successful tour of England and the Continent.

9 FRIDAY—It's a good night to catch the **Widespread Jazz Orchestra** at the Old Absinthe Bar, assuming all nine members fit on the A Bar's stage. **Widespread** is "a nine-piece swing style little big band," scheduled to appear there for four nights (7th through 10th).

10 SATURDAY—One of the most energetic performers you'll ever see, **Exuma**



brings his uniquely styled island rhythms into the *Maple Leaf Bar* tonight.

11 SUNDAY—Starved for funk? Head out to the lake tonight and catch **Tuff** with his mighty **David Barard** on bass, at the *Bounty*.

13 TUESDAY—Survivor of the art-rock genre **Ian Hunter**, former leader of **Mott the Hoople**, brings a flashy band into *Ole Man River's* on the night of the full moon.

14 WEDNESDAY—**Carolyn Odell** has added her brother **John** to the **Uptights**, making this fine pop band a five-piece (with three guitars.) Catch them tonight at *Tipitina's*.

16 FRIDAY—With an album in the national charts and having completed a tour of some big league markets, the **Neville Brothers** return for a weekend where it all began. They open a two-night engagement tonight in their old neighborhood bar, *Tipitina's* at *Napoleon* and *Tchoupitoulas*.

17 SATURDAY—Today at noon begins the **Urban Cowboy Music Festival**, a two-day event at the *City Park Driving Range* that brings together some of the top names in

country music, food, and lots of cold beer. Tonight the Palace Saloon presents **Leon Russell**, one of the Seventies' standout songwriters and performers. Jimmy's offers the **Fabulous Thunderbirds**, Texas' fine four-piece blues outfit. The Maple Leaf Bar premieres the **Night Of Joy Jazz Band**, a traditional seven-piece ensemble. No matter what kind of music you like, it can be found somewhere around town today.

18 SUNDAY—The Urban Cowboy Music Festival continues at 11 am today at City Park, and continues till dark. Here's a



partial list of the performers appearing over the two-day program: **Marty Robbins**, **Jerry Reed**, **T.G. Sheppard**, **Lacy J. Dalton**, **Hank Thompson**, **The Bellamy Brothers**, **The Kendalls**, **Ronnie McDowell**, **Charly McClain**, **Lincoln County**, **Edar Creek**, and the **River City Good Tyme Band**.

21 WEDNESDAY—A big week gets under way at the Saenger Theatre tonight with a concert by one of the most enduring rock bands in the U.S.A., the **Allman Brothers Band**, fresh from recording an album of new material.

24 SATURDAY—Heavy metal fans can get their rock at Ole Man River's tonight with those high-powered travelling boys **Zebra**.

27 TUESDAY—A band whose unique style of pop music has spanned two decades, **The Beach Boys** play the Saenger tonight, evoking memories of your first car, waxing down your surfboard, and your best girl in highschool, in approximately that order.

30 FRIDAY—The Louisiana Man himself, **Doug Kershaw**, performs on the *President* tonight only. The boat's big dance floor should be full of two-steppers.

31 SATURDAY—The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation kicks off a big weekend of free music in Armstrong Park with an unbeatable lineup of jazz and R B including **Pete Fountain**, **Roosevelt Sykes**, **Luther Kent and Trickbag**, **Walter Washington**, **Ramsey McLean and the Lifers**, **James Booker**, **Percy Humphrey**, **Kidd Jordan**, **Fred Kemp**, **Ellis Marsalis**, and many more. The program is slated for Saturday and Sunday at noon each day, and it's all free. Tonight on the *President* it's a Halloween party featuring the **Cold** in their only local appearance of the month.



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THE TURNTABLE: SONY PS-LX2. Semiautomatic. Direct Drive. And competitively priced. But why Sony? Why not Pioneer, Technics, JVC, Kenwood, ADC, or a dozen others? The answer involves the motor, which is Sony's new "brushless and slotless" type. It turns with a constant and even drive torque, eliminating the distortion caused by conventional motors which actually turn in a series of jerks. Also Sony's "magnedisc servo" detects and corrects speed errors faster. Add to this a low mass, straight arm, and you have a fantastic turntable.

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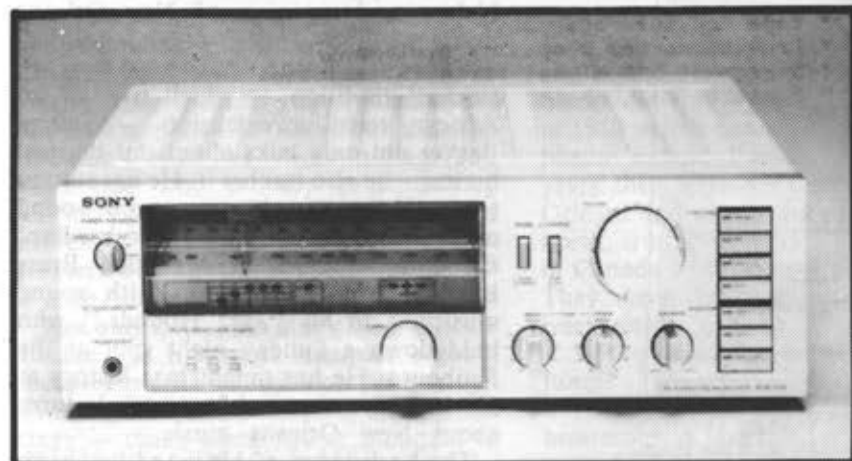
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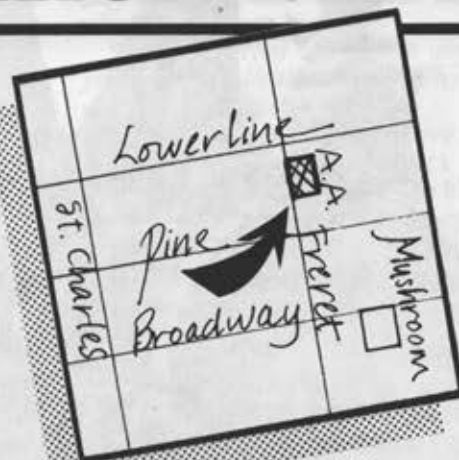


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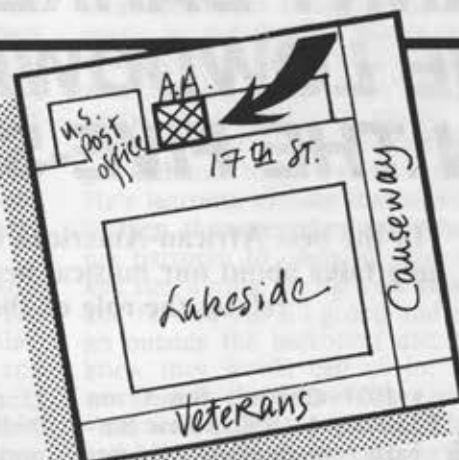


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By Kalamu ya Salaam

BERNARD HERMANN



DANNY BARKER- THE LOWDOWN ON THE FIVE-STRING

In the best African-American elder tradition, Mr. Barker not only talks about our musical heritage — he teaches it. Here he relates the role of the banjo in New Orleans music.

At 1027 Chartres Street, on January 13, 1909, Rose Barbarin, a domestic worker who was then married to Moses Barker and who later separated around 1917, gave birth to Daniel. No one knew it at the time, but it was an historic event. Strongly influenced by his step-father, Christopher Colombel, who was all-American (i.e. of mixed stock: "Indian/freejack/creole/cajun/mulatto"), Danny Barker would become not only an outstanding musician who played with and recorded with many different genres and generations of jazz musicians such as Dave Nelson, James P. Johnson, Benny Carter, Cab Calloway,

Lionel Hampton, Chu Berry, Sidney Bechet and Billie Holiday; but more importantly, Danny Barker. Possessing a strong educational background, he also became an important historian of Great Black Music who both documented and analyzed the art form he helped create.

Danny's step-father was a "French" baker who was born in Plaquemines Parish. "He was responsible for the loaves of bread baked like the French do. He put them in and took them out at just the right time so that they were all baked alike." Christopher took young Danny into the woods and taught him to hunt and shoot, and also taught him to be a man. "He didn't take no shit from

nobody. Kept his shotgun handy and would use it." He was also a minister — "it was fantastic how they consoled people" during the days when trouble was a way of life for black people. Partly as a direct result of his step-father's parenting, Danny Barker grew up with a pride about himself: he does not suffer the tragic disease of self-doubt nor the psychological torment of identity confusion — an infamous characteristic in many people of color in New Orleans. The importance of all of this is that the fiber of Danny Barker is an intelligent black man. Danny Barker is qualified to talk about the history and meaning of New Orleans music.

Steeped in the African-American "elder" tradition — which is itself an African retention/extension — Danny Barker not only talks about our musical heritage, he also teaches it. He has started two traditional bands composed of young musicians, is director of the Fairview Baptist Church Christian Marching Brass Band and currently works with young musicians in his "Jazz Hounds," who hold down a Sunday night spot at the Faubourg. He has taught jazz history at Xavier University, and frequently lectures about New Orleans music.

The back room of his wood house on Sere Street is bounded by the I-10 expressway, Imperial Court housing area and the St. Bernard Housing Project. It contains books, manuscripts, instruments, and other accoutrements of our musical history.

Danny Barker is also a music composer, playwright, fictionalist, published author (he co-authored *Bourbon Street Blacks*) and all-round man of letters. Perhaps at a later date, more of Danny Barker's life and writings will be displayed. However, this interview concentrates on Danny Barker the banjo player: how he got started and what role the banjo has played in the music.

When did you first see or hear a banjo?

I first saw it as a kid. I saw the banjo players in the jazz bands. There was a banjo player with most of the bands. They were respected as a part of the jazz band.

The banjo is an instrument that is copied from an original African instrument. It was one of America's most beloved instruments. It was on plantations, on riverboats, in parlors, it was in big cities, it was in minstrel shows, it was just about every place.

The banjo is a plantation instrument. It was the only thing people had for music. You couldn't get inside the big house to

play that man's piano. So you made a banjo and you played. Then, all of a sudden, in the Twenties and the Thirties, for some reason it was always pictured with slaves and minstrel men, and it got somewhat of a stigma. It became offensive to blacks. It became the symbol of the plantation and the blackface minstrel song. It got to be known as an Uncle Tom instrument and blacks began to hate it. But while they were hating the banjo, the blacks and some whites didn't hate the other things that went with the plantation, such as barbeque and watermelon. They didn't stop eating the different kinds of foods, but the banjo was the one thing that everybody sort of resented.

Why do you think that happened?

Well, I don't know, but if you're a black entertainer you've got a lot of things to go through. You've got the buck dancers, the tap dancers. And you've got the make-believe smile. When you hit the stage, you're suppose to put on charm, so you're smiling and showing your teeth. People come there to be entertained, so you entertain them. If you go down to the undertaker parlor to see about a death, you don't want one who's smiling. You want one who is very solemn, very serious. So it's part of the temper of your profession. A lot of people put down performers who have this charm . . .

Like Louis Armstrong?

Not only Louis, but many others. Louie Jordan had it. Lionel Hampton's got it today. He sells sweat. You have to get wringing wet. Perspiration is all over the stage — that's when you're supposed to be the ultimate. You see Sinatra, when he gets about half way through his show he unbuttons his shirt. That's show business.

But I played guitar, originally I played banjo. America was slow to pick up the guitar because it is a Latin instrument. But when they picked up the guitar they put down the banjo. The guitar had much more fullness and volume than the banjo. The banjo is a sharp instrument and an exotic instrument. Unless you played it, you wouldn't understand it. You get all kinds of multiple tones and sounds superimposed on one another when you hit a banjo. It just rings all over the place. All kinds of beautiful sounds come out of it, other than the plain chords you hit, because it is a clash of steel against bone, against wood, against skin. But I changed and went over to the guitar. Things stopped with the big swing bands in the Fifties and they went back to small jazz combos. I wanted to play New Orleans music when I was in New York, and if you played New Orleans music the gigs were good. There were a couple of banjo players around there who were doing real good. So, I decided to pick up the banjo again and play jazz — jazz versus modern jazz. I could have gone over with Diz and Parker and those people, but they were living too much of a frantic life with things other than music.

So you first heard the banjo when you were coming up and later returned to it in the Fifties. What was the instrumentation of the groups when you first heard them?

The original jazz band in New Orleans didn't have a piano. When I saw it around 1916 they had three voices: the cornet, the trombone and the clarinet. There were three rhythms: the string bass fiddle, banjo and drums with the extra large bass drum to give it a boom. It was fantastic what those guys could do with three rhythms. They didn't have a piano in most of the places back then. They didn't have mass entertainment like we have today. In the olden days, everything among blacks was generally on the weekends, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, mostly Saturday and Sunday. And the Monday night balls, sometimes.

There were many different bands: Buddy Petit's band, Kid Rene's band, Kid Ricard's band, Chris Kelly's band, Emanuel Perez's band, Kid Ory's band, King Oliver's band. They all went north and brought this music north, not whites, blacks did this. Freddie Kepper left here in 1910 with a band and went on the Orpheum circuit. For about eight or nine years they were headliners, not in New Orleans and not in the south, but in the north, from New York to California, and in Canada from Vancouver to Montreal. They were out for forty-nine or fifty weeks in the year.

So the banjo was up in there from the jump?

Yeah. Another thing, them bands was boisterous. A jazz band was loud and you needed a banjo to cut through to give that rhythm. You put a guitar in there and you couldn't hear it. Then when they put the electric in, the guitar could drown everybody. They've got guitars now with big amplifiers look like frigidaires, drown out the organ in the St. Louis Cathedral.

So, when you didn't have microphones and you wanted that rhythm in there, the banjo was the natural instrument to use?

That's right.

How did you learn how to play banjo?

I started playing ukelele first. The ukelele was a fad, during the Twenties. Gene Austin was a star. Ukelele Ike and all these people played the ukelele. It became part of the fad with the bob hair, the short skirt, and the high heel shoes. My aunt bought one, it was a banjo uke, and after awhile she put it down. There was a kid in my neighborhood, Ashton Murray, who is a schoolteacher today, he played it. I saw him and I liked what he was doing with it. I remembered my aunt had one, so I asked her if she wanted to sell it. She said, "Yeah, I'll sell it." I asked her how much. She said twelve dollars. I said yeah. She said, "Look, I'll sell it to you for half price." I said I don't have six dollars. She said well pay me fifty cents a week. You see, they made you pay something so that you would have respon-

sibility. They were teaching. Not that she wanted the money, but they wanted to get you into learning values.

So, I got this ukelele. I go round to Ashton and asked him to tune it for me. I watched him and how he was using his fingers. I worried Ashton to death for about three weeks, every evening after school I would go around there. There was another kid around named Herman Anderson who played well. He had more time and showed me the fundamentals, four or five chords in one key. After that I was a star, a professional.

I formed a li'l band called the Bouzan Kings. Bouzan means "a good time" in patois. It's a take off from the baaza, which is a "hum-bug."

So, you started off on the ukelele and you switched to the banjo. Why did you switch to the banjo?

Making money, See, you have to decide real quick when you're black in New Orleans in 1922. You see all the black people doing the hardest work. They're picking up ships on the riverfront, picking up them cotton bales. You see big trucks running through town. Black men in the hot sun stripped to the waist. Black men and mules, that's all you see doing the hardest work. Well, I weighed what, about ninety pounds. I know there was no way in the world I was going to be like Big John Henry. So I had to find something to do. Now there was cigar makers, and side trades like shoe makers. But I saw that you could get away from here and travel if you played music. I saw my uncles, my family is all musicians. I got four uncles who're playing, my grandfather is playing. Inter-related we have about thirty-six musicians in the family. So all we talk is music in my family. Who's away and who's coming back, who's doing good, who can play and who can't play, etc. So everything around me is music.

So my family started saying, well, he's got a chance to be a good banjo player. He's learning to play that ukelele good. So then, they started calling me to the corner barroom to come in there and play and sing a song. So I got six kids together and formed our li'l group and we would go outside the barrooms and play. We knew they would call us in. It always works with the drunks, they would say, "Give them kids a break. Y'all doing good." I would always cater to the drunks and say "thank you" twenty times. You learn the psychology of hustling.

We're still playing the ukelele. We go up to the Lyric Theatre on amateur night, on a Friday night. They had all these kids with talent would go on there on amateur night to perform. But they would get monotonous because the people would see them every week. Then here we come, and we're playing jazz and singing li'l songs. And we are showmen: we're smiling and putting on the charm. We didn't get a standing ovation but we heard so much whistling and screaming, and they gave us

SUNDAYS

FRIDAY, OCT. 2 - AURA

SATURDAY, OCT. 3 - MANIAXE

TUESDAY, OCT. 6 - ROULETTE

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 7 - CHROME

THURSDAY, OCT. 8 - VENDETTA

FRIDAY, OCT. 9 - THE CRAVE

FRIDAY, OCT. 16 - DEJA VU

SATURDAY, OCT. 17 - MELANGE

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21 - REBELS

FRIDAY, OCT. 23 - PERSIA

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the first prize, five dollars, and told us to come back next week. So here we are on the stage, the professional Lyric stage, and we become celebrated. Everybody in the neighborhood is respecting you and saying, "Hi, how're you doing man, where ya'll playing at?" They started hiring us to play at house parties on Sundays. We've got a program now. They give a party and they put us on a truck — and we don't have any big instruments, we've got kazoos — but everybody sees us and the news spread on that Sunday evening we're playing. We get a dollar, two dollars a piece. That's nice money for a kid. Everybody was giving us all the cake, ice cream and chicken we wanted to eat.

Then, one day, Kid Rene's banjo player is drunk. I'm on the corner looking on and the bass player calls me and says, "Get in the truck." The banjo player was on the corner, he had some bad wine or something. He tuned up the banjo for me and he says "come sit here and play." The kids in the neighborhood saw me sitting up there and he was relieved just to have somebody playing. I knew enough chords to play some of them things. When I got through they gave me two dollars and told me to come to the hall that night if the banjo player didn't get himself together. But I didn't go.

Why didn't you go?

Because I was a kid, I was fifteen. I didn't want to go to the hall to play with that band because I didn't think I was capable and I wasn't. The potential was there. That's how I learned.

Who influenced you stylistically as a banjo player?

Johnny St. Cyr who played with Louis Armstrong on the Hot Five records, the greatest jazz records ever made. That's who inspired me. If you're interested in finding out what he was doing, you should get the Hot Five and Hot Seven records. Do some homework if you're really interested.

How is it getting gigs now?

I can still take this banjo and go on the river and make money. They've got about six riverboats out there now. I know all the captains. If I want a job or if I want to go for a hustle — I can put on a red coat and a straw hat and get on that boat, play my banjo and pass the hat and come off there with a hundred dollars.

I'm an actor, but there's nobody in the world more militant than me. I'll tell you, and have told a lot of people, where to go, what to kiss and what else. I've quit more jobs because I don't take nothing from nobody. I'd say to Lu, "I don't think I'm going to last on that job long." She'd say, "Why?" I'd say, "I don't like their attitude." I'd say goodbye forever. And I don't go back no more. Ain't nothing about me is Uncle Tom. I just like this instrument and I play it, and make a buck with it. If I had a shovel or a hammer, I'm not in love with that, but if that was the way I made my living, I'd do it. □

By Nancy Weldon

HAROLD BATTISTE AT EASE

At his home in Los Angeles, one of New Orleans' most successful native sons discusses his life since he left home, and how he's helping to make the transition easier for new arrivals.

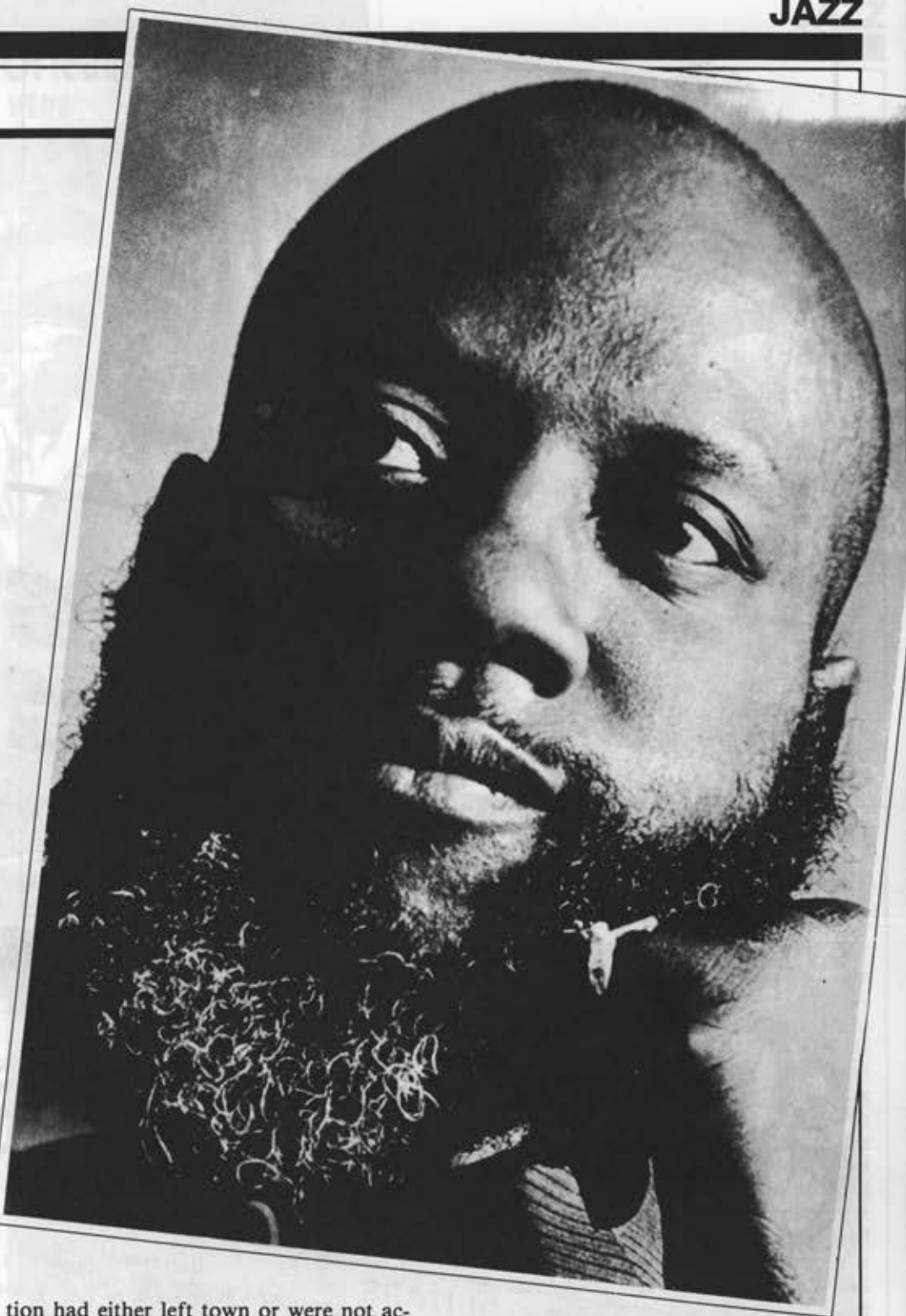
There are gold records on the walls and Zulu coconuts on the hearth of Harold Battiste's Los Angeles home — mementoes of his West Coast work and his New Orleans upbringing.

Battiste, who grew up across the street from the Dew Drop Inn, earned those gold records arranging hits like "I Got You, Babe" and "Baby Don't Go" for Sonny and Cher. At one time or another, he has also worked as music director for the duo's television show; helped produce and arrange three albums for Dr. John (*Gris-Gris*, *Babylon* and *Gumbo*); organized a musician -- owned record company in New Orleans; taught elementary school music; published a four-record set of jazz from 1956-1966; and, with other musicians, formed the National Association of New Orleans Musicians (NANOM).

Seated at his carved, round wooden desk in the music room office of his home, Battiste explains that the NANOM concept started about ten years ago on a trip to Europe.

"I met with people who were very curious about so many things about New Orleans people and performers. There was a lot of what I considered misinformation that they had, but they were always wanting to get more.

"And I suddenly realized that a lot of the people whom I had an opportunity to know, like Paul Barbarin and a lot of the older players — as they died there was a gap because so many of us in our genera-



tion had either left town or were not active in town and not perpetuating the history."

In 1979, Battiste and a number of other musicians — John Boudreaux, Paul Gayten, Plas Johnson, Tami Lynn, Ernest McLean, Earl Palmer, Bennie Powell, Mac Rebennack, Herman Riley, Charles Veal and Ronnie Barron — formed NANOM.

The group has been collecting information for a proposed encyclopedia of New Orleans musicians; keeping musicians in touch with each other; coordinating lectures and seminars like the one on business to be held in October at the Contemporary Arts Center; and helping New Orleanians with contracts and job connections when they hit the West Coast (referred to as the SAFE-LANDING project).

Battiste made his first move to L.A. back in 1956 after two years of teaching

music in DeRidder and New Orleans schools. ("My mother didn't want me to play music . . . She figured you gonna be a drug head, a dope fiend. No status. Of course, that's the stereotype. Our compromise was that when I went to college, I'd go into music education.")

He had few contacts then. "The three of us drove out here, me, Ellis Marsalis and Edward Blackwell. We drove on out here and we went by Ornette's [Coleman] house and set up the drums and started playing. Simple as that.

"My first music gig was playing at a place called Armand's, a little Mexican place. One night a week. For \$6 . . . a piece.

"I worked in a post office for about six months to pay the rent. After I did the post office bit, I realized — I said, 'Hey,



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I'm 2,000 miles away from home. I didn't come out here to throw sacks.' So, I just walked off one night."

The group cut a demo, and elected schoolteacher Battiste as the likeliest salesman, sending him off on a round of record company visits — cold, with no contacts.

The response? "Well, cold," Battiste laughs. "But I had no preconceived notions about what was supposed to happen, so I just went 'Say, hey, this is a record, we're playing, we'd like to make a record.'" The demo songs finally did come out on Coleman's first album. Eventually, Battiste hooked up with Specialty records, helping on a tune being prepared for Sam Cooke. (The song was "You Send Me," a hit he says was traded away by Specialty and eventually released on another label.)

Battiste was hired as an A&R man for Specialty, and sent to open a New Orleans office for the label. Then he and some other musicians (Melvin Lastie, Red Tyler, John Boudreaux, Pete Badie, Roy Mantrell) formed the A.F.O. (All for One) label.

He wanted to show that musicians could produce and own their own work. "A lot of it was racial . . . I'm saying, 'Hey man, if they say we can sing and dance, we should own it. You know, we don't own the booking agencies, we don't own anything. All we do is sit here and play, and everybody else owns it. My purpose was to build a model so that talented people could own more of what they did — of their own talent."

He says A.F.O. produced the hit "I Know" and then other small companies opened. But Battiste had had enough of business, and came back to L.A.

After a stint as musical director for the *Sonny and Cher Show*, he started producing the four-record set of *New Orleans Heritage Jazz*, released in 1976.

"Since that time, I've been gradually starving to death promoting New Orleans," he says sardonically. "So, I decided to stake my little claim where my heart was." In New Orleans.

He now hopes to release, before Christmas, six more albums of New Orleans "heritage music" featuring artists from the Fifties through the early Seventies, including Nookie Boy, Willie Tee, Nat Parrilliat and Tami Lynn.

Battiste is also working on a two-hour segment of New Orleans music for a KPFK radio special scheduled for September here in Los Angeles. And he's developing a seven-member group to play live New Orleans music here.

He still has high hopes for the New Orleans sound and its music industry: "My perception — now, I hope I'm wrong — is that in New Orleans now there's becoming a greater and greater cadre of what I call 'foreigners,' people from New York, people from other places, who recognize the value of what is in New Orleans and who are bringing in the type of expertise needed to use it . . . So it'll be done. My hope had been that it would be done by us, by New Orleans people." □

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GEORGE FINOLA THROWS IT BACK

Though he must put up with those who have it jazz backwards, the cornet king of Bourbon Street has definite, even definitive ideas about his art.



By Don Lee Keith

Last Monday night at the Blue Angel, a couple of tipsy-tushed tourists came down with a bad case of alumni fever just as the band was about to round out its midnight set. The noisy duo tried to interest the couple in front of them in a verse of the Notre Dame fight song, but that couple seemed preoccupied with the cornet solo of band leader George Finola. Finally the first woman downed what was left of her third stinger, pushed herself away from the table, whistled once, clapped twice and tried to kick a field goal. Her shoe came off. It sailed whizzingly past the heads of the couple in front and struck Finola just south of his cummerbund.

The number finished, the cornet player reached down and picked up the shoe and hurled it furiously back toward the smacky-mouthed owner. Then he bowed and followed his band, the Chosen Few, off stage.

Fifteen minutes later when the next show got underway, the two rowdies and their rah-rahs had made their way back out into Bourbon Street but the couple in front had stayed. In fact, they were still there at 2 a.m. and the last show was over.

They came up to George Finola. Said the woman: "You know something, we never cared particularly for jazz before."

Replied Finola: "I'm so glad you like it. But tell me, what jazz have you been

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- October 21 Delta Festival Ballet
- October 22 Comedy Showcase
- October 23 Ellis Marsalis Trio 11:30-12:15
"Bourée" Cajun Band
12:15-1:00

listening to?"

The woman said, "Oh, we've got two or three albums by Chuck Mangione." And her husband added, "Plus one somebody gave us by Maynard Ferguson."

Three quarters of an hour after leaving the club, George Finola had traded his tuxedo for jeans and had shoved upward the windows onto the balcony of his Royal Street apartment. He'd switched on the phone answering machine for his messages. He'd taken out his contacts and put on his glasses and had dished out helpings of Nine-Lives Tuna and Egg for Leroy, the big black one, and Marvin, the big white one.

He put on a record, adjusted the volume and went out on the balcony to check on the Confederate jasmine and the morning glories and the hollyhocks he brought back last summer from the hills of South Dakota. Then he popped a cold Moosehead and slid into a low-slung lounging chair at just about the time that Bix Beiderbecke slid into "I'm More Than Satisfied."

For most fellows who had put in a full night's work, the moment would have been an easy one, soothing. Not for this horn player. He fidgeted. He fidgets a lot, particularly when he's got uneasiness brewing. Mt. St. Helens was like that, they say.

Any uneasiness regarding career isn't likely to befall Finola these days. His professional security is established. At 36, his credits belie his boyish image. Hundreds of customers come to hear him play every night. His five record albums continue to sell briskly. The nation's press appreciates him: *Esquire* called him "the finest musician contemporary New Orleans has produced"; the *New Yorker* said he has Beiderbecke's "blessed tone"; the *Chicago American* predicted, "His records will become collectors items." He has his own successful band.

He also has his own notions, often strong ones, and he generally reacts accordingly.

Was that it? Was his uneasiness, in this case, due to the incident earlier that night involving the boisterous Notre Dame fans?

He bolts upright at the suggestion. "Are you kidding? I'd almost forgotten about it. Their kind doesn't deserve respect because they show none. I only wish my aim had been better. Between her eyes would have suited me fine. But you can bet that couple will think twice before they treat another performer like they were treating me." Then he relaxes.

"No, I knew what to do about those two. It was the second couple I didn't know how to react to. It wasn't their fault they'd been led to believe that Mangione and Ferguson play music they might enjoy. I didn't know if I ought to feel sorry or sad, but now I realize I should have been fucking mad. I mean mad about the

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reasons for the misconception those folks have.

"Just look at this shit!" He fumbles beneath a nearby table and brings forth a page from a tabloid publication.

"This afternoon I was throwing out some old papers and noticed a big spread on the Kool Jazz Festival they had here. Not one of those things they advertised had the slightest relationship to jazz, except in the sense that jazz employs improvisation, and some of those people improvise. There was even one guy being treated as a jazz person who's a throwback to the beatnik coffee-house poetry reader, with free form improvisation in the background.

"In another publication I counted four contradictions in one article. The writer referred to Pete Fountain, who is a jazz-based popular clarinetist, saying Fountain had been playing 'Dixieland Jazz.' In the same paragraph was something about Al Hirt, 'who describes his work as pop commercial with a combination of Dixieland and Jazz.'

"Now what does that mean? Dixieland AND Jazz? Saying Dixieland and Jazz isn't so much a contradiction as it is, oh, like saying Bread and Carbohydrates.

"The end result of all this, however, is bafflement and misconception. Most of the blame, naturally, belongs to those on the periphery of jazz who are taking advantage of its newfound respectability — witness the government grants — and who find it all too convenient to forget how it all came about.

"Jazz, of course, started out as a participation form, as dance music. It conveyed its emotions immediately to the people. Only later was it to become a concert idiom, departing from its traditional forms. By the 1940s, elements of jazz began to be utilized in big band scoring, which is certainly the antithesis of real jazz — improvisation. Then after a while it became more hybridized in concept — bebop and Dizzy Gillespie and such — into something intellectual that appealed only to musicians. They were the only ones who could understand it. Or pretended to. Then, when the musicians suspected that bebop might be getting too familiar, they progressed to progressive, which was simply an extension of bebop. And in the 1960s and 70s, the form became something even farther out: free form.

"Meanwhile, somewhere along the way jazz had more or less committed suicide by becoming too non-commercial, too introspective, for anybody.

"Throughout the time, the various forms were being practiced concurrently, of course, and still are, but it has been only in the fairly recent years that distinctions have been buried beneath misconception. Jazz, rock, rhythm and blues, Dixieland, the writers who write about them, the editors who pick the listings, they seldom know what — or

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which — they're dealing with. Rather than learn, they go right on fostering confusion and ambiguity of terms, and the connotations are changing so often that the typical reader, least of all, knows what the hell is what."

Suddenly, as if goosed by a cattleprod, Finola sits up, his spine rigid, his head cocked slightly to the side. Then he's on his feet. He lopes to the end of the bal-

cony and gazes briefly in the direction of the corner. Then he rushes back, plucks the empty Moosehead from the table, and announces: "It's time to go inside." As he leaves his balcony, he adds, "And it's time to switch from beer to something stronger."

From the corner come the sounds of two voices attacking a tune. The woman is louder. "Fight, fight for old Notre Dame . . ." □

GEORGE FINOLA'S DEFINITION OF JAZZ

"To paraphrase a local writer, 'Jazz is an improviser's art. In this art the improviser's emotions are translated into sound.' Whether or not any particular improvisation can be regarded as jazz is subject to many criteria, too numerous, too linguistically elusive, too variable in any one context to be judgmental without possessing a precise understanding of something that can only be imprecisely defined at best. Writers have tried for the 64 years of written commentary on jazz to accomplish the definition of jazz in hundreds of books, and no one has succeeded.

"There is of course the remark by Fats Waller, and a similar one by Louis Armstrong that, 'if you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know.'

"The quote has been utilized frequently to evade giving direct answer to the frequently asked question, 'What is jazz?' Any person knowledgeable about jazz already understands: he can tell you what the music isn't, he cannot tell you what jazz is.

"Only by exposure to the broad spectrum of what is and what has simply been 'called' jazz can one become sufficiently experienced to make a distillation of the elements of the music to arrive at a fairly viable connotation of what jazz means. Still, he will not be able to define it for you. If the greatest practitioners of the art and the greatest musicologist in the seven or eight decades of its history have not been able to define jazz, it would be foolhardy for me to try to do so.

"I can, however, delineate some basic guidelines which should reveal my personal feelings about what aesthetic requirements confine jazz to the exclusion of other varying related music (which generally share only one common element — improvisation.)

"The intellectual perceptions of the improviser — his sense of form, structure, inter-relationship and development of musical ideas all subject to the improviser's intent and individual conception relative to those of the other improvisers in a group context — all of these considerations (and more *observed by the listener* as they take shape spontaneously in the improviser's creation — all of these considerations are the minimum rules of the road. The more concern and respect the improviser shows for these aesthetic impositions determines the quality of the finished product. This, of course, says nothing about three overriding elements: the will to stringently obey these self-

imposed guides, basic talent and emotional sensitivity.

"As true jazz has endured through the years, it has not changed. Only hybrid forms have come into being, confusing the general public because they have resulted from musical experimentation by musical elitists who do so for the sake of experiment rather than for any intrinsic value which deviation from the established forms may produce.

"And with each succeeding 'developmental' departure by these most often social as well as musical nonconformists, the guidelines previously mentioned have invariably been observed with diminishing concern.

"The laxity of respect for considerations of form, structure, relationship of parts to the whole and to each other — to name a few essentials — has made each departure revolutionary (though it may be) but not evolutionary, in a constructive sense. We are left now with nowhere to go but back through the history of the music to try to salvage something of what made The Real Jazz beautiful and appealing to the popular taste of the nation, as was the case in the 1920s and 1930s. It is still the earlier forms which have greatest universal appeal. And just about anyone can prove that if he assesses it honestly. They don't pay \$100 for John Coltrane records in Russia; they do for Louis Armstrong classics.

"'New' music is always regarded as avant garde. The term usually is relative. Today's final, suicidal gasp of what began as jazz will be the last avant garde movement. It is a form unto itself rather than a chronological description of an evolving music. With its notion of free-form, there is nowhere else for the so-called jazz avant garde to go. It has tried to survive by camouflage-fusion-jazz/jazz-rock.

"If the public is ever again to perceive jazz's value as a great art form on a scale which can once again support its proliferation and survival, it should forget everything it has ever read about jazz and go back to the music itself. Learn about it and feel it in its beginnings, but in the sounds, the music itself, not from the literature.

"And draw your own conclusions, form your own opinions based on historical understanding of where this music came from, where it should be going and what it really means. And you, too, can say, 'If you have to ask, you'll never understand.'"

—G.F.

By Jason Berry



DONN YOUNG

EARL TURBINTON AT HOME AGAIN

What leads a man from the heights of the jazz world back home?

Earl Turbinton, at 40, has been around the world and performed with enough first-class musicians to handle himself well wherever good jazz is played. Turbinton plays saxophone with various modern groups, and is no stranger to the bouncing lines of funk. His performances draw good crowds as a rule, in part because there is comparatively little avant-garde jazz played here.

Turbinton has toured or recorded with B.B. King, Professor Longhair, Gatemouth Brown, Josef Zawinul, Cannonball Adderly, and Earl's own younger brother, Willie Tee. At just about every turn of the twenty-odd years Earl has played professionally, he could have found a niche to fit neatly into — but he always moved on, driven by the passion to play jazz *beyond* jazz, taking the idiom past the modern into new regions of improvisation.

Earl admits there've been sharp rocks and potholes along his road. But he is far from bitter. A jaded realist, perhaps; seasoned pro, veteran of the front lines, or what-you-will. He was earning good money when he left BB's road tour in 1972, after a year of international travel. "I had a girl in every port," he says with a wry grin. "Paris, Japan, you name it."

But New Orleans exercises a strange influence over her native sons. They go off, some for years on the road, in cities where the marquees are brighter, the money bigger. And inevitably, most of them return, as if drawn to the haunting plea of some aging mistress, nestled in erotic back regions of the heart. Earl lives today in a modest, second-floor apartment in Carrollton, with many plants on the balcony. He drinks a lot of orange juice, and was reading a biography of Charlie Chaplin the day we spoke. His opinions on the mess of New Orleans music are strong; to be sure, he's certainly paid his dues. Riffs of muted anger occasionally trace his observations about the musical economy. But there's a deeper force at work in his artistic constitution, something of the strain of a philosopher.

In his time, Earl Turbinton made a substantial contribution to the idea that's precious to him yet today, a musical *community*, nourished more by talent and improvisation than scrapes for the buck. In 1968, he founded the Jazz Workshop, and with a few resources kept the baby alive long enough to reach a flock of young people.

Like other tales from Turbinton's back pages, the Jazz Workshop began as a bare germ of an idea. And his first impressions

of music are very much a part of it. "I was born on Saratoga Street between Euterpe and Terpsichore . . . and at the end of that street, Saratoga, as it ran into Felicity, was a place called the Blue Eagle." The family lived there until he was seven. The Blue Eagle was like a magnet. "Whenever my mama would send us to the store to get something, they would have people like Guitar Slim, Gatemouth Brown, B.B. King, Bobby Bland, and those female impersonators, groups like Mattie Campbell and the All-Star Review, faggots in drag, snakedancers and stuff like that, and the shake dancers, that whole thing."

On weekends, bands came through the street on the back of flatbed trucks, advertising dances and circuses. The man next door played records of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, but bebop then was viewed by many blacks "as dope fiend music." Wilson Turbinton, two years younger than Earl, was pounding the piano by the age of four. Earl didn't pick up the horn until was 11 or 12. An aunt had "an almost brand-new alto saxophone that had been sitting under the bed for years." Willie and Earl painted a house for four weeks with their father. "When we finished the paint job, I got the sax."

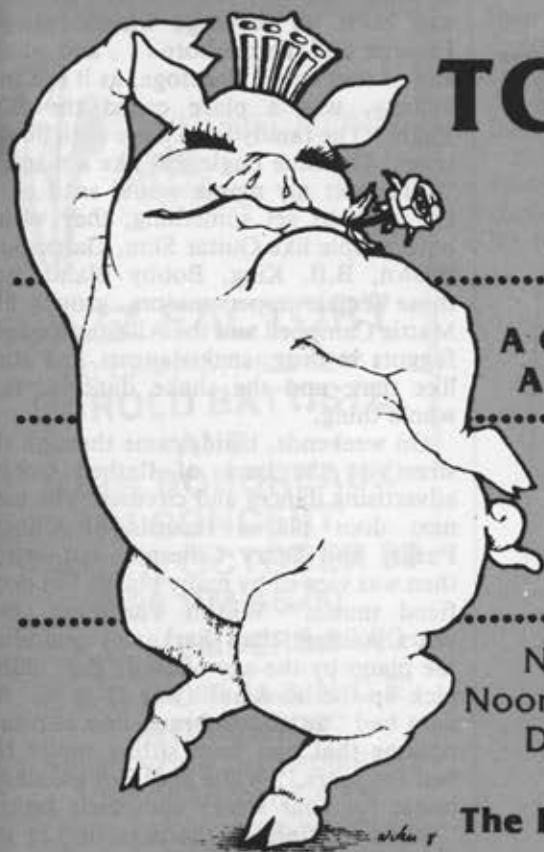
Earl Turbinton, Sr. had played trombone before his marriage, and although Mrs. Turbinton sang, neither was a professional musician. But the boys headed into music early on. Earl's first teacher was a Professor Victor, who taught in the public school system but taught privately on the side. "He had a house which must have had a thousand instruments, tubas, maybe twenty or thirty saxophones, twenty or thirty trumpets and trombones.

"You'd bring your own mouthpiece and Professor Victor would say, 'Go in there and get an alto or, till you find one that feels good to you, play all these horns.'"

Earl continues: "He had a way of arranging big band charts, I mean, this is gonna sound unbelievable, but after I had been playing about two months, I could play melodies to a lot of popular tunes. He had a system where he wasn't teaching me to read — music was written on manuscript paper, right? But he also had a numerical system, where he'd write out the chart that's 1/2, or 1 and 3, 1-2-3-4-5-6, or whatever the number of fingers for that particular note was. And this man had arrangements down by Count Basie and Duke Ellington."

This was in 1953. "We would play dances; after I'd been taking music lessons two months, on Saturday and Sunday, we'd go to old folks homes and play for free, I mean for hours, things like 'April in Paris,' 'Stardust,' and those sorta things . . . And I didn't know that I didn't know how to read music."

He learned quickly upon encountering Clyde Kerr, Sr., a distinguished pro-



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essor, when he hit Priestly Junior High School. Kerr asked him to play scales. Earl didn't know what they were. Kerr started humming, and Earl, who'd been exposed to "ear-training" by Professor Victor's records, showed his stuff. Kerr, understandably befuddled and somewhat amazed at the youngster's ability to carry melodies, started teaching him the conventional way.

He went back and confronted Professor Victor, who "evaded it, in a sense. I don't know if he was crippling a lot of kids, or whether he was just a person with an ingenious method of teaching . . . But what it did, maybe I already had that ear anyhow, it developed my ear to the point that most songs I heard on the radio, I could hear and play them, and I think that was due very much to Professor Victor. It was like 25¢ a rehearsal and we stayed all afternoon with big band rehearsals."

It is often forgotten that, as late as 1968, New Orleans was very much a racially stratified city. In few clubs did blacks and whites gather to hear music. Through the Sixties, Earl played in a band with Willie, David Lee on drums, and George Davis on guitar. Willie's R&B hit "She's Just Teasin' You" made them popular on the fraternity circuit. But Earl's deeper love was progressive jazz.

In the early Sixties, Ellis Marsalis, Alvin Battiste and Harold Battiste, among others, were playing a modern jazz style which Earl claims was as good if not better than the reigning work of Davis, Coltrane, Mulligan and the Adderly brothers. But little of this local jazz was recorded. (Marsalis' album, *Monkey Puzzle*, was an AFO number.) One afternoon in late 1968, Earl played at a French Quarter art gallery owned by Leonard and Luba Glade. (Luba was an art critic for Figaro and the States-Item during the Seventies.) He told Luba "how disgusted I was at playing in real funky environments and some of the bars, and to be playing very serious music . . . in such decadent environments."

Jules Cahn, a friend of the Glades, was sensitive to Earl's concerns. Cahn, an avocational photographer who has filmed thousands of feet of Mardi Gras Indian celebrations, gave Earl use of a building in the 1100 block of Decatur Street for a nominal rent. And Earl went to work, fulfilling his dream of a musical environment away from drink and drugs. Werlein's and another store, Educational Gateway, contributed instruments "that were not appealing to the eye, maybe dented or very distorted in color, but functional, and I knew kids, like around Central City . . . different areas of the city, they were just beating on paste-board boxes or humming or singing or dancing, you could see the rhythm in them or other things there. But I knew there was no way they could get an instrument."

Earl Turbinton hit the streets. He talked to kids in Gert Town, found

youngsters here and there, carried them down in carpools to the Jazz Workshop, and there the quartet would play, then break off into small groups to instruct the youngsters. Turbinton wanted the Jazz Workshop to become a communal gathering place, something like Preservation Hall, with no beverages sold, a purist's haunt. Johnny Vidacovich, then a drummer in his late teens, drifted in after gigs to learn the craft in dialogue with older professionals. But the dream soon became a hardship. Money was a barrier. The musicians Earl had counted on didn't come, for lack of an economic incentive.

Earl went to New York in 1970 and hooked up with Josef Zawinul, the European pianist. He went into the studio and views his finest recorded statement as those tracks on the album *Zawinul*. But here again, luck eluded him. He was living in an apartment (rent-free) owned by Walter Booker, a pad where Miles Davis and other modernists rehearsed. The place was his as long as he wanted it. Before *Zawinul* was released, he got a call from B.B. King to join a trip to Japan. Zawinul and others wanted him to stay. A new band was being formed to play modern jazz, if only Earl would stick around. But the chance to see the world was too good to pass up, and Earl followed B.B. down global pathways far from home. He's quick to add he had one hell of a good time when not on stage.

But the work was artistically confining. B.B.'s instrumentalists had short, rigidly-followed solos, with the focus on the blues master at all times. While Earl was touring, the *Zawinul* LP hit the jazz world with the force of thunder. Later, in California, Earl heard his named praised by a dee-jay after a cut from the album — "that New Orleans saxophone player we're bound to hear more from." But by the time *Zawinul* had formed Weather Report, Earl was through with B.B. and on the way home to New Orleans. "I'm not bragging," he says with some detachment, "but the fact is, if I'd stayed in New York, I'd be playing sax with Weather Report today."

Turbinton's work is strong in the lower and middle-registers, fluid in blues-based improvisations, with surprising tenderness in certain of the mannered solos. Perhaps these are traits of a man who still holds fast to the dream of a common language. If a single theme pervades the movement of Earl Turbinton's professional career, it's a deep belief in the artistic integrity of modern jazz, and the city of New Orleans as an artistic environment.

The great Charlie Chaplin, whose biography the jazzman was reading before our interview, summed up his worldview in a clean terse statement that captures the essence of Earl Joseph Turbinton, Jr.:

"I am at peace with God. My conflict is with man." □



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Lenny Zenith and RZA

By Steve Alleman

Everybody likes RZA. Since its inception over two years ago, RZA has been wowing audiences throughout the city and its surrounding area. Pop fans like them because they write catchy tunes; punk fans like them because they play fast much of the time; funk fans like them because they do interesting things with rhythms. They play a few ballads, a couple of rockabilly songs, and at times they even throw in a touch of old fashioned psychedelia. Still, the kind of success that brings in the big crowds has eluded them so far. And no one can quite figure out why.

Drummer Jimmy Negrotto described the origins of the band and his meeting with singer/songwriter/guitarist Lenny Zenith. "I met Lenny at Trinity's where I was a DJ, and we talked about music some. Then I ate at Jonathan's one night, and Lenny was doing the piano man bit. Barbara Hoover told me that Lenny was looking for musicians; I called him and we got together. We got a bass player and played for a couple of months, and then we added another guitar player. Both of those guys left the band earlier this year." At this point Ray Ganucheau and Charlie Wehr were added; both of them sing and play bass and guitar.

Lenny admits that there were some differences in musical taste, at least at the beginning. "Jimmy and Charlie are really old rock 'n' rollers; they like the Who, the Stones, the Kinks. I didn't even get into those groups until about two years ago. Since I'm younger than them, I was always listening to more recent stuff, like Elton John. Now I realize that those are really great groups, but I wasn't there when it was happening, and I still haven't been able to listen to them that much. A large part of rock 'n' roll I've only heard just recently."

Zenith is sort of the focus of the band; he writes most of the material and sings

most of the lead vocals. But he's also quick to point out the contributions of the other members. "One of the things I don't like too much is the focus on me. It started out as a joke — 'Lenny Zenith and RZA' — but people don't realize how much of a group effort it is. Okay, I write most of the songs, but then everybody else contributes. If it weren't for the others, some of these songs would never exist. We never wanted it to be *my* band; it's just *the* band."

Ray Ganucheau, who plays bass most of the time and occasionally switches over to guitar, is also a songwriter. In fact, his song, "Breaking Up," has become one of RZA's best numbers. Describing his background, Ray said, "I've played all kinds of gigs and been in a lot of different bands — cover bands, soul bands . . . I was in a band called the Senators. I had seen RZA once or twice, and I decided to give it a shot because they were doing original music, and that's what I'd always wanted to do. We've been playing together since about April."

Charlie Wehr is the most experienced member of the group, with fifteen years professional experience behind him. He was at one time the lead singer in Vince Vance and the Valiants, but he became disillusioned with his musical career and gave it up for a while. He plays mostly guitar in RZA, although he says, "I played bass for about ten years; that was my main instrument. Now I play a Fender guitar, a Mustang. It's real old, and it has those single coil pickups for a real clean sound. I love the way it plays, especially since I put heavier gauge strings on it. It doesn't go out of tune and it gets more sustain. I have a twelve-string Rickenbacker, but I don't play it that much, only on about four songs. It goes out of tune a lot, but I'm going to start working it in more."

The newest member of RZA is keyboard player Matt Scoggin. He was brought into the group by Ray Ganucheau, who says, "I've known Matt since high school, and he's a real talented musician. We've tried to get together occasionally, but it never quite worked out. I think the keyboards will add a lot to the fullness of our sound. Lenny writes a lot of his stuff on the piano, and the transposition doesn't always come across too well. Also, to me it sort of legitimizes the band. All guitar bands are kind of boring, with every solo a guitar solo."

Matt has a Yamaha electric grand piano, a Farfisa organ with a Leslie speaker, and a Pro-One synthesizer, and this versatility should really help out. He says, "I started out on piano, and that's kind of my main instrument. But I've been picking up on organ, and that should come pretty quickly. Now I'm going to have to learn how to program that synthesizer, because I've never really played one a lot."

The difference between the old RZA and the new version of the band is quite striking, as anyone who has seen both will tell you. There's been a great leap forward

in general musicianship, although there are still a few rough edges from the addition of the new members. According to Negrotto, "When we first got together, we just had so much material to learn. We haven't really had time to sit back and play around with each other, because there's always been some kind of pressure on us. If Ray and I could jam together for a month as a rhythm section, it would really gel. But I think people can see that they're improving, that the effects are beginning to show. The thing is, instead of just rehearsing, every time we get to a place where we could lay back, somebody's got a new song. And we love to work up new songs."

It is RZA's original music that most people come to the clubs to hear. They estimate that they now have about forty original songs, with at least five or six waiting to be worked on. The numbers alone are impressive, but it should also be said that many of these songs tend to stray away from the traditional, boring, teenage love stuff we've all heard enough of to last us forever. For example, there's "Daddy Don't," which is about child abuse, "Signal 30," which is about drunk driving, and "Summer School," which is about, well, summer school.

Another important factor is that the songs don't all sound alike. RZA tends to try unusual things with rhythms. Negrotto commented, "We like to change everything up to keep it interesting. Not by conscious choice, but for the sake of the song. Like Ray has a song called "Breaking Up." I play a drum beat on it that's real straight and kind of hard. And then the song switches to a real light, dancy, reggae feel. To me that's interesting. It's as interesting to play it as it would be to listen to it."

Most new bands have to make some hard decisions about playing cover songs early in their careers. Usually they either feel that they have to play covers to be popular, or else they simply don't have enough originals to play a whole set. This was never a problem with RZA since, ac-

ording to Negrotto, "when I started out, the whole idea was to play all originals. And when I grew up, people always said you couldn't do that. And I said, forget it, I can do it. I'll do it if I have to play to four people at Jed's forever. Now we play some covers — good songs that we decide to add to the repertoire — because we're more confident now. Those songs are five percent of what we do. Unlike other bands that slip in some originals, we do mostly originals and slip in some covers."

Lenny says, "We do so few covers just because we have so many originals. Somebody in the band's always got something new to show us. We'll decide to learn, say, "The Letter" by the Box-tops, but then we'll get so absorbed in learning new stuff that we don't get around to it. The cover material is important, and we acknowledge that. But we just get so caught up in originals and trying to arrange them, because it's so much more fun. We don't really have enough time, especially since we've been playing so much recently."

Another noted characteristic of RZA is their sense of spontaneity. I don't think anyone would call this band slick, and their looseness is part of their charm. Bassist Ray Ganucheau says, "At first we started out with a set, like all the bands do. But that just didn't work. I think what you've got to do is get audience reaction, find out what they're thinking. Are they really getting down, or is everybody going to the bar? What's the deal? You've got to pace your set that way."

Zenith elaborates. "Not too many bands of our genre go for spontaneity. They get into this thing of trying to be ultra-professional. Our show lacks a lot of discipline; we're very loose onstage. I'd like to tighten up the show, but I also like the relaxed attitude, which is really the only way to go when you're creating something. The songs have already been written, but when we perform them, we're creating a different thing every night — a different feel, a different atmosphere. And if everybody's relaxed onstage, the audience is bound to have a good time. Our sound changes a bit much. It's more stable now than it used to be. It was inconsistent, and we're still trying to perfect our consistency."

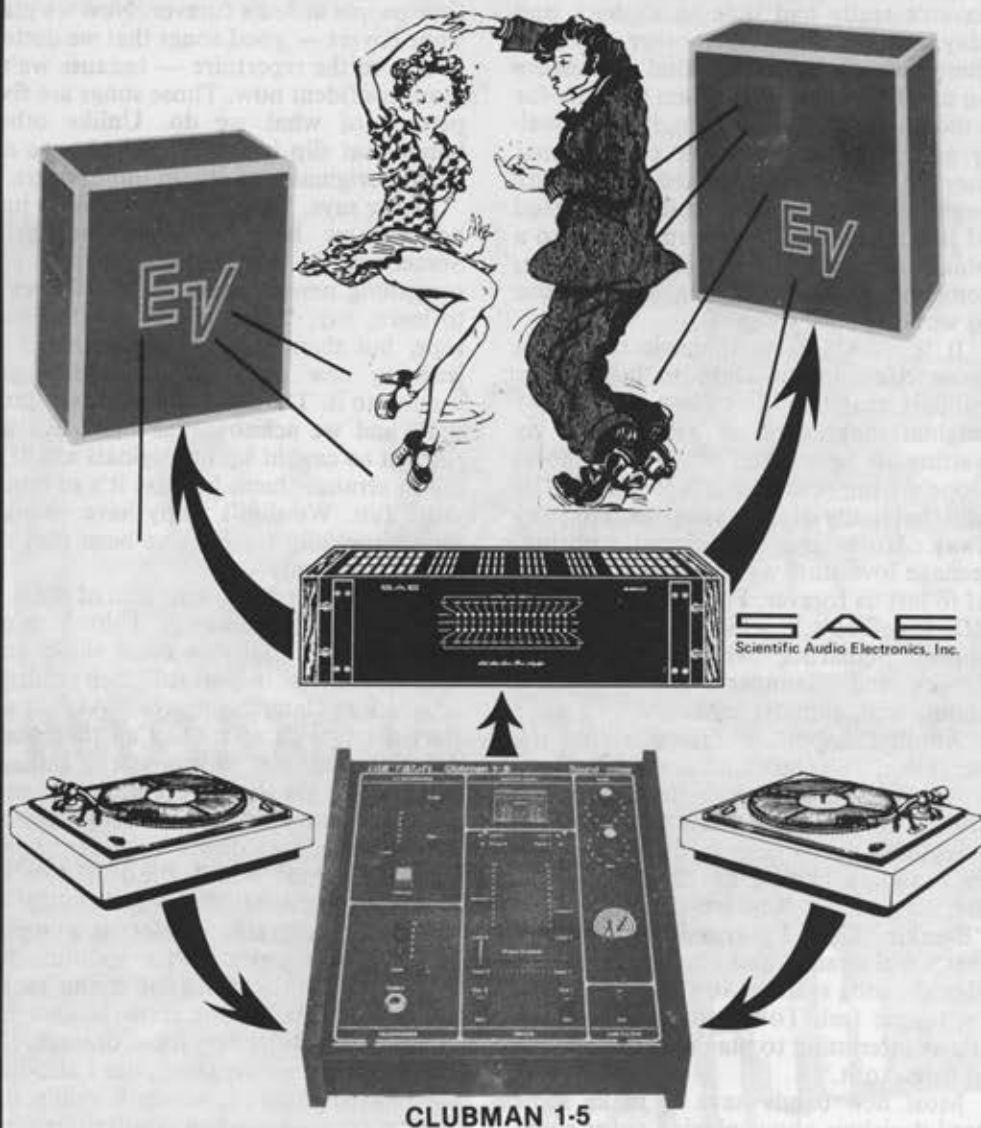
Unfortunately for people who have never seen the band, there's very little RZA available on record. They have a song ("Can't Never") on the *No Questions, No Answers* compilation album, and the song on that record called "A Little Too Much," credited to the Cheaters, is actually by guitarist Charlie Wehr. Radio station WEZB-FM also has a compilation LP coming out, and there will be an RZA track on it.

Drummer Jimmy Negrotto talked about recording that track and about recording in general: "We were in the studio at the last minute to make a tape which we thought was going to be a demo. But they took what we sent in. So what's on the album isn't up to the level of what we would've released. At least it's on the



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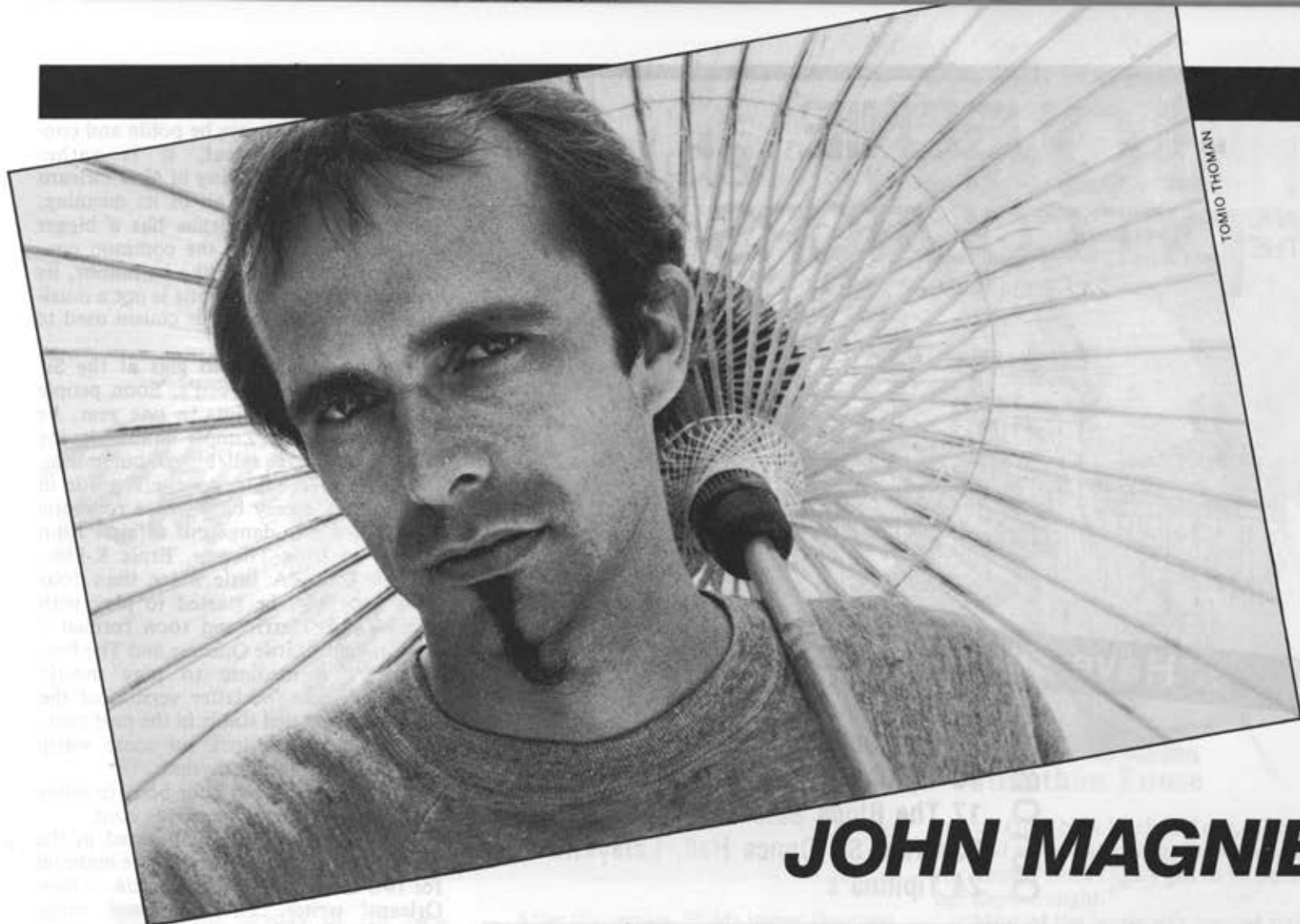
album, and we'll get commercial airplay, which will help us. But we would've put out a better product if we'd known what they expected. We were disappointed and glad at the same time.

"For a while we thought we'd put out a single like everybody else, but we don't know if it's really worth it. It can be like beating your head against the wall. Like, so what, someone puts our single on a jukebox in the Flame'n'Burger on Veterans Highway. Anybody can make a single; all it takes is money. We could make a single, and it could be great, and it wouldn't make any difference. There's a company in Baton Rouge that's interested in doing something with us. We're considering doing that instead of just doing it ourselves. I'm personally not that interested in singles. I grew up listening to albums, and that's what I've always wanted to do. Plus, we're not pompous enough to think that we can just go in and do it just like a live gig. You need a professional. In an industry as large as this one, there are people that know what they're doing. We want to draw on that experience. If the sound of the record isn't professional, it doesn't matter how good the song is, it won't be able to compete on the radio. And most local records don't sound too good at all."

The band's goal now is to continue to broaden its audience. They recently acquired a P.A. system, which allows them to gig around town more independently than before. They've started playing a lot more recently, too, sometimes as much as five nights a week. So if you haven't had a chance to see them yet, now's the time. In my opinion, RZA is one of the best bands in town, but I've been amazed and appalled at how poor the turnout is for some of their shows.

Ray Ganucheau says, "At least since I've been in the band, I can say that people seem to like us. The press has been great, telling people to come see us. But I think people take us for granted. Everyone says they really like RZA — well, then come to the gigs, man. Why don't we see you? Come and hear us play."

Commenting on the band's future, Jimmy Negrotto said, "I think the bottom line on RZA is that we've got the best songs of any local band and the best vocals. We still haven't mastered a definable RZA sound, but that'll take some time. From my viewpoint, we're not really successful, other than in relating to each other musically. I don't think we're successful at all. We all still have to keep our regular jobs, we haul our own equipment, we still go through more bullshit than other bands that are half as competent as we are. It's all a matter of perspective. Keep the perspective on the music, and it'll all work out eventually. I figure this is the best shot I've got, and just the chance to be able to make a comfortable living as a musician is enough for me. We have the potential, and we're willing to wait, because we know that it'll happen someday." □



JOHN MAGNIE

Percolator pianist John Magnie was fated to be an Orleanian. That he emigrated here from Colorado seven years ago is merely a case of divining the natural course of events.

By Lise Cousineau

Middle of May. A blue Chevy van. The Percolators, a band of Louisiana musicians, are traveling out of New Orleans. John Magnie, the leader of the band, is in office at the steering wheel.

*"Good people who took this trip,
I am pleased to set your worried mind
at ease*

*There is no destination, so you see
There can be no mistake, just leave it
up to me*

*Go and have your fun,
I can drive this boat as well as
anyone"* — "I Can Drive This Boat"

A few lazy hours to chat on the way to Austin, Texas, with the captain on board. John Zimple Magnie, songwriter, piano player, singer swept away from Colorado some seven years ago in the meanders of the Mississippi river to his "sleepy bear underground," New Orleans, where so many songs incubated.

*"When the women are as cold as ice to
me*

*I don't lose my time on pain and misery
I just go where they'll be nice to me
In the sleepy bear underground"*

— "James Brown Told Me So"
His right shoulder always shrugging with satisfaction, his blue eyes glow as he

recounts: "Well, I don't know why I came to this town! I'm supposed to be from here! My parents just didn't know. I came to New Orleans without thinking of it. I always listened to southern music; Professor Longhair had something I couldn't resist. The black music seemed less tamed than the white, the black vocalists more unlimited."

"As a young man, I let fate determine my future. My instincts and my dreams led me wherever. Something was missing in my life, I couldn't figure it out. I made good grades, was president of my classes, I liked mathematics, drawing and I enjoyed daydreaming. I played trumpet in junior high, a little harmonica but nothing too serious, and I touched architecture for a while."

Two days later, night off. The cooking of a nice dinner in a borrowed kitchen.

"At the age of twenty-one, I had to go where fate was pulling me," says Magnie. The desire to create musically whipped him. Long-winded project: he actually started to play piano and write songs.

"Mama and papa were neither pleased nor convinced," says John. "When you see through your parents eyes, you feel guilty and think you are always mistaking." He went on anyway in so-called error.

*"Hum, hum . . . it takes a lot of confidence
to throw away your mind
and a lot of common sense
to walk through the jungle blind"*

— "Hum, Hum"

John went to school for a few semesters and practiced four, five hours a day. "It wasn't discipline, it was obsession. I felt I was old. Musicians of my age had been playing for six, seven years."

He discovered that Bach, in the eighteenth century, used the same ingredients as the jazzmen and bluesmen use nowadays with a few different notes in the cadence. Nothing was new but the way to lay it out. "At first, I tried to write new music. It wasn't interesting at all, it was forced. The originality of the music is in the touch, the expression, the personality you give it."

A streak of instrumental solo gigs was the trampoline in Denver. Soon, he realized he needed to sing, to breath. "After a few nights, I had a sound system and a microphone." Then, musicians would come and sit in. John played with a few bands, blues mostly.

"Colorado has a nice active outdoor life but I found it drab, without intensity. The emphasis is on being a cowboy or a skier. (Music is background for riding

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your horse.) To always be polite and considerate is not real, it is rather hypocritical!" Still living in New Orleans where mischief takes all of its meaning, John says: "New Orleans has a bigger community of artists, the common conversation is creative. I like its humor, its artistry. Around here if one is not a musician, his brother is or his cousin used to be."

Again he played solo gigs at the St. Charles Inn and at Ford's. Soon people gravitated around him. In one year, he had three Johnny Zimple bands playing original rock 'n' roll/blues/soul music. He also played country western music in some dimlit, sleezy bars where romantic affairs turn into dangerous affairs. John backed up Irma Thomas, Ernie K-Doe, Deacon John. A little more than four years ago now, he started to play with singer Leigh Harris and soon formed a band named "Little Queenie and The Percolators," a medium to play mostly original songs. The latter version of the band has remained stable in the past year. They all together lock up some warm overtones and funky rhythms.

John's music draws your body to move and touches your sensitive cord.

John Magnie also collaborated in the production and the writing of the material for two albums with Ron Cuccia, a New Orleans' writer. Those released songs show the natural artist and his constructive power.

Somewhat impulsive but subtle, John Magnie, thin, smooth, fine featured man, entered the race at a slow pace. He is on the verge of a sprint after working regularly in New Orleans; New York and Texas audiences have welcomed him quite often in this last year. He says: "I'm now in the middle of this trip with record companies and eventual managers. It seems to be the right time to record a Li'l Queenie and the Percolators album and expand, make some kind of money."

*"Wild native dance won't die
they'll be kicking their feet up high . . .
but working for peanuts is getting old
native heart is bitter and cold."*

— "Wild Native"

Magnie believes that fantasy and humor can fade the roughness of the "wear and tear" race track from New York to Los Angeles.

"Music must be communicative: rhythm, groove, plus a little insanity. (Boredom and mediocrity are depressing)" adds John.

A week after the fructuous tour in Texas, John Zimple Magnie sits in a living room; gazing the piano, he asks suddenly: "You want to hear my first song? It took me two and a half years to write it." He begins to play a beautiful, mellow song in a Ray Charles manner, called "I Want To Keep My Doors Opened."

He innovates with a true warmth, a colorful, inconsiderate phrasing and a frolicsome touch. He keeps his secret simple!

Frank Fields

Rhythm & Blues



—Jonathan Foose

In the heyday of the New Orleans Fifties R&B recording, the studio player most featured on bass was Frank Fields. Fields was born in Plaquemine, Louisiana, on May 2, 1914, and began his musical training early. His half-brother, Joseph Butler, ten years Frank's elder, had graduated from a California music conservatory and taught young Frank the basics. Frank recalls, "My brother played sax and played mostly classical music. He played a lot of Jerome Kern and Gershwin pieces."

Frank began playing guitar, banjo and ukulele — only later would he begin his long love affair with the big bass. "The first band I was in was called the Five Brown Babies. We started out playing sweet tunes like the Mills Brothers or even Guy Lombardo's type of music. You had to play that type of music — pretty, soft music."

Fields' family, like most rural blacks at that time, was relatively poor, and young Frank had to work. "We had to help out," Frank recalls. "By the time I was 14 or 15 I was working on the spillway. I was a lumberjack during the time of the 1927 floods."

After high school Frank joined the navy and made his first trip to New Orleans. While stationed at the naval repair base across the river at Algiers, Frank began playing in the Navy Band. "I was playing tuba, guitar, and bass violin, as well as bass. You had to play more than one instrument in the Navy Band. Ninety percent of the band was from New Orleans and we played a lot of jazz."

After the service, Fields joined the great band of Dave Bartholomew. Built on the style of Louis Jourdan's Tympani Five, the band rehearsed for six weeks and then began to play. They were an instant success. They worked continuously in the city as well as on the road. At one point, Frank recalls doing 35 straight nights with no nights off at the famous Bronze Peacock in Houston.

In 1949, Dave left the band to take an A&R position with Deluxe Records. At this point the members of his band were introduced to the world of the studio musician.

Frank Fields had done his first recording session some thirteen years earlier, before he left Plaquemine. Frank remembers, "My first recording was around 1935 for R.C.A. Victor on a wire recorder. We only had about four pieces. We had Clyde Bell, who finished at Southern University, and myself. I can't remember the rest of the guys. They were all popular tunes that we recorded. I never heard the recordings. We did about 50 takes on four or five tunes. It was rough to record this way. I remember it was a release when we could erase and dub over."

Soon the success of Fats Domino and Roy Brown caused great interest around the country. The New Orleans recording sound was catching on. Fields recalls the golden years: "I played on about ninety percent of Fats Domino's recordings that he did here, as well as Smiley Lewis's things, with Huey Smith, all of them. At that time this was the recording capitol for that kind of music. Guys would call

you up from New York and say, 'I'm gonna send so and so down. Be in the studio for three o'clock. She's got to be back for her show tonight.'

"Most of the music was created right in the studio during the session. Very seldom would we rehearse. You didn't get paid for rehearsals so we would just create while the session was going on. We did a lot of sound tracks for Jax Beer that went all over the country. They would dub in voices like Roy Brown. Even Louis Jourdan dubbed his voice on our tracks."

The scene started slowing down as the capricious recording industry changed its focus away from New Orleans. Fields was now playing in the fine band of Paul Gayten, as well as doing his studio work. As the recording energies waned, Fields left the Gayten band and played for Edgar Blanchard and the Gondoliers, touring navy bases and army camps around the South. After tiring of the road, he returned to New Orleans and joined the young band of Sugar Boy Crawford and the Cane Cutters. Frank reestablished his recording contacts and once again was back in the studio.

By the early 1960s the music scene was changing away from the energetic R&B that had flowed in New Orleans and Frank returned to his earlier musical roots. He joined the Tuxedo Jazz Band of Papa French where he remained until the late Seventies.

Frank Fields now plays in the Kid Thomas Valentine band at Preservation Hall and works dates around town with other amalgamations of players. At 67 years, Fields is satisfied with his long career that has spanned several generations of musicians. From the earliest wire recording to the fancy multitrack studios of today, Frank has left his basic mark.

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5

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12

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6

The Radiators
2 am
Ramsey McLean
and the Lifers

13

25c draft
Irving McLean
and Radar
2 am
The
Astral Project

7

Zeke Fishhead
2 am
Ramsey McLean
and the Lifers

14

The Uptights
2 am
The
Astral Project

8

Rockin' Dopsie
and the Twisters

15

Satisfaction

9

Radiators

16

A&M recording
artists
**Neville
Brothers**

10

Li'l Queenie
and the
Percolators

17

A&M recording
artists
**Neville
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18

Woodenhead
Show starts at
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20

25c draft
The Stereos
w/Fingers Taylor
and Jimmy Buffet's
The Coral Reefer Band
Earl Turbinton
Quartet
2 am

21

Woodenhead
Earl Turbinton
Quartet
2 am

22

Exuma

23

Radiators

24

Li'l Queenie
and the
Percolators

25

Woodenhead
Show starts at
8:30 p.m.
no cover

26

no cover
Spencer Bohren

27

25c draft
Godot
and
Export
Mars
2 a.m.

28

Stephanie
Seiberth
Mars
2 a.m.

29

Spectrum
w/Lady B.J.

30

Irma Thomas

31

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FRANKIE FORD

Frankie Ford's name will forever be chisled on the monument to rock 'n' roll for his unforgettable version of "Sea Cruise," a record that embodied the true R&B sound of New Orleans.

The recording success he achieved in the late 1950s and early '60s established him as a true blue, all-American rock 'n' roll idol. Frankie Ford headlined caravan shows, had his own fan club, appeared regularly on *The Dick Clark Show*, and of course sold millions of records. Had not Uncle Sam interrupted his career, Frankie might have reached the heights of, say, Fabian, Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell or Jimmy Clanton. Quite an accomplishment for the son of Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Guzzo of Gretna, Louisiana!

Frankie's records of that period differed greatly from those of his smaltzier contemporaries. Employing the cream of New Orleans R&B session men, his work disproved the idea that New Orleans

records couldn't sell outside of R&B markets. They were driving rock 'n' roll numbers that demanded to be listened to.

If anyone is a born entertainer it is Frankie Ford. He began appearing in public at five, and studied dance and voice until he cut his first record at 17.

Certainly Frankie is still a first rate entertainer, but musically he is about as far away from "Sea Cruise" as one can get. Five nights a week Frankie plays the piano bar at Lucky Pierre's, a rather notorious Bourbon Street bar. He plays four hour-long sets from 10 pm to 5 am behind an oversized brandy snifter that is, as a rule, filled with generous tips. His set usually features "MacArthur Park," "Tie A Yellow Ribbon," "Feelings" and the like. Though he sticks to standards and usually politely declines to do his rock 'n' roll hits, his voice is surprisingly strong and expressive.

This interview took place on consecutive evenings between sets at Lucky Pierre's, a week before his 29th anniversary as a professional musician.

I guess we should get the basic questions about your background out of the way.

I was born here in New Orleans, August, 1939. I've always lived here. I went to St. Joseph's grammar school in Gretna, and then I went to Holy Name High School in Algiers.

I used to play and sing in the backyard when I was six. This lady said to my mother, "You know, he's better than some of those kids I hear on the radio every Sunday. You ought to see about sending him to lessons."

So mother looked it up in the phone book and called out to Scram Studios, out on Canal Street. For the next couple of weeks, I started vocal lessons.

Was there any type of music that caught your ear?



How did the first record do?

It became a regional hit, and strangely, it got some airplay in Philadelphia. So I was booked in Philadelphia for the Georgie Woods Show at the Uptown Theatre. I got there to rehearse, and it was a completely black theatre, and Georgie says, "Oh my God, you're white!" And I said, "Well, we can't all be perfect!" So he said, "This is a completely black theatre, I just don't think it'll happen." So I said, "I'm not gonna take your money if I'm not gonna work. But why don't you let me rehearse?"

It was the Doc Bagby Orchestra behind me, and for my opening tune I did "Hallelujah," the Ray Charles thing. That had not hit except with blacks up north. So from then on I was on the show. So I worked a complete black show, and then went on to work the *Dick Clark Show*, too. That was in '58.

How did "Sea Cruise" come about?

I was working in Philadelphia, and [Ace Record owner] Johnny Vincent and Joe Caronna were in New York at a record convention, and we flew back to New Orleans on a Sunday.

On the Tuesday night after I got back, Joe calls me and tells me, "Get down to the studio; we have a track we want you to cut." While I had been in Philadelphia the track was cut for "Sea Cruise." It was to be Huey Smith's follow up to "Don't You Just Know It," but Huey and Bobby Marchan were having problems. Johnny saw me performing Huey's things and thought I sounded just like Bobby.

I walked into the studio and had not heard "Sea Cruise." I didn't know any of the lyrics. Huey sat down with me and wrote out the lyrics. The first thing we cut was "Roberta." Then we cut "Sea Cruise." We had two mikes in the studio — me on one, the Clowns on the other. Johnny sped the tape up just a little bit so I sounded like Bobby.

Was Huey upset about you getting credit for the record?

You see, Huey didn't travel, he just stayed home and produced records. So they told Huey to just create another artist, and he did production on it. Johnny told him he didn't need the record because he already had "Don't You Just Know It" in the charts.

Then what?

Well, "Sea Cruise" sat around for awhile; they didn't release it nationally until they released it locally. It was on the charts here, but then fell off. But it went back on when they released it nationally. From then on, POW!

I signed with a packaged show that featured Chuck Berry, The Skyliners, Frankie Avalon, The Impalas, and Rod Bernard. Before "Sea Cruise" I was billed down at the bottom, but after that I was up in the big letters.

We worked from January to June. Had two days off! Travelling in a bus. We started in New York [AUTHORS NOTE: Frankie named a page of cities from coast to coast] and ended in Shreveport.

Back to the studio?

Right back. The next thing was



How did the records on Ace come about?

Well, a friend of mine who is named Paul Marvin cut a record for the Deluxe label, and then one for Verve. His manager was Joe Caronna, who had a record distributorship here in New Orleans. Ace owned that. So Joe asked Paul if there were any other acts he thought were good. He said, "Well, yeah, there's a friend of mine in a band that's real good." So Joe Caronna came across the river to a band rehearsal one night and asked if we were interested in cutting a record. I said, "Yes definitely."

Three or four weeks later, he called me and said, "Can you be down at the studio this afternoon?" I went down and he asked if I had any original songs, and I played two songs that I had. So he said, "Okay we're gonna cut that." We cut "Cheatin' Woman," and "Last One To Cry."

I just couldn't believe I was working with Charles "Hungry" Williams, Robert Parker, Frank Fields, Red Tyler, and of course, Huey "Piano" Smith. I was in perfect awe!

When the record came out, we had to travel, and a lot of the guys in the band had jobs and didn't want to. So Joe formed my first professional group, which was Paul Stahli, drums; Earl Stanley, bass; Leonard James, tenor; and Mac Rebenack [Dr. John], guitar.

Mac's your cousin isn't he?

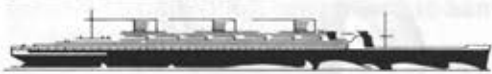
Mac's about a second or third cousin. I'm not exactly sure, but I think his grandmother and my grandmother are sisters.

What else did you cut on Ace?

"Time After Time" and "Chinatown."

What about the "Morgus" record? [See this month's rare record]

Ha! It was kind of a hush hush kind of thing. We cut it in the block where the Marriott is now. Bev Brown, who was a DJ, had a small studio in that building that they used for vocal promos.



Then the type of music was "Hit Parade." There was WDSU and WSMB, they were the only stations around. They played Jo Stafford, Kay Starr, Sinatra and Perry Como. Then later I remember listening to Poppa Stoppa when I was still in grade school.

Where were you singing then?

Someone suggested I go over to the Parisian Room on Royal Street. Every Tuesday evening Tony Armarico had an amateur contest. Every year all the winners would get together, and then that winner would be on the *Ted Mack Show*.

When I was eight I won the contest and went on the *Ted Mack Show*.

When did you start working with bands?

My first year of high school. I started with a band called "The Syncopators." We had four horns, and played mostly top 40. But I remember the sax player and I got together and learned "Hearts Of Stone" by the Charms. I guess that was '54 or '55. That's when the music started to turn over instead of being strictly top 40, stations like WNOE started sneaking in black records.

We started turning around, too. By '56 we were completely a rock and roll band.

Did you go to see any of the black performers?

Well, I remember sneaking into the Joy Lounge when I was underage, and hiding in the corner, so we could hear Sugar Boy [Crawford]. Then we'd go across the river and stand outside the Labor Union Hall when Ray Charles was working, or Little Willie John, because we couldn't get in. I saw Huey Smith at the auditorium and Fats Domino too.

Sometimes I'd see them around the studio on Rampart Street because we used to cut demo records there.

For anyone in particular?

No label in particular. The vocal school I used to go to used the studio for professional recordings, so the band did demo records down at Cosmo's too. That was about '56.

the Radiators



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Jed's

Friday 9th
Tipitina's

Saturday 10th
Jimmy's

Friday 16th
Maple Leaf

Saturday 17th
Dream Palace

Thursday 22nd
Jimmy's

Friday 23rd
Tipitina's

Saturday 24th
Jed's

Friday 30th
Maple Leaf

the new orleans Radiators



WORK DONE
ON PREMISES

How did you come to leave Ace?

I was growing then, working clubs. And they didn't seem to want to go in any different direction. I had to fight to do "Time After Time." Johnny just couldn't think in that direction. He had always cut R&B, and rock 'n' roll.

Was there a question of money or royalties?

We really thought there were more records sold than the statements indicated. They were hilarious, just hilarious.

How did Spinet records come to be?

Well, after Joe Caronna left Ace, we got together with this topical thing "Chinese Bandits." We figured we'd start our own label, and maybe get something going. Huey and I got together and made a deal; anything he'd record, or I'd record, we'd share. But because of our label affiliation we couldn't use our names.

It was a fun thing. We made a little money, guess we had four or five releases.

There's an interesting story behind "Chinese Bandits" isn't there?

Yeah. Joe called me one day and said, "Look, LSU's gonna be #1." So I came up with the chorus, and we got together.

Now the white labels you wrote about [AUTHOR'S NOTE: last month's rare record], they weren't bootlegs; they were the originals! They were handwritten by me and Joe Caronna. They were pressed in Chicago. They didn't have any labels, but we told them to send 'em on! We couldn't even get a stamp, but the stores said, "We don't care, just send 'em." We had to put each one on a turntable to see which side was which! That was the original.

We got a thousand on a Saturday, and had to hand deliver them to the stores

see, Joe Jones had cut the song for two different labels, and they put injunctions on one another and couldn't get the records out. So Dave called me and said, "Can you sound like Joe Jones?" I said, "yeah." In fact, they had originally brought the song to me and I didn't like it. Dum-dum. See, I was trying to work into a nightclub act. We cut the record on Monday, using the same musicians that



FRANKIE FORD
ACE RECORDS

GENERAL ARTISTS CORPORATION
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worked on Joe's session, maybe one different. They were shipped on Thursday.

When people came in the shops and asked for "You Talk Too Much," they didn't know who it was by, so they bought mine. Quite honestly I probably made more money on it than "Sea Cruise."

FRANKIE FORD CHART RECORDS

Date	Pos.	Wks. on Chart	Title	Label
2-15-59	14	17	"Sea Cruise"	Ace 554
8-9-59	97	2	"Alimony"	Ace 566
1-24-60	75	6	"Time After Time"	Ace 580
10-2-60	87	4	"You Talk Too Much"	Imperial 5686
3-26-61	72	5	"Seventeen"	Imperial 5735

because the distributorship was closed.

How did Imperial come into the picture?

Joe Banashack, who distributed Imperial, told Joe "I'll talk to Lew Chudd [president of Imperial] about Frankie." So Imperial paid me front money, and that's how Dave Bartholomew became my producer.

What was Bartholomew like in the studio?

What can you say about a guy who had 50 million records to his credit? He knew how he wanted things done. I didn't question him. You can't argue with success.

You had a couple of hits on Imperial too, right?

Well, we had the cover on "You Talk Too Much," which sold like crazy. You

I also had "A Man Only Does," which was a chart record. "Seventeen" was a chart record too. I had "If You Got Trouble," kind of a walking thing like "Sea Cruise," that didn't sell too well here but was popular in Europe.

What kind of jobs were you working?

I was still touring. One-nighters, clubs, show bars. Didn't carry a band, because most clubs had a house band. We'd just send the arrangements ahead, and then do a few run-throughs.

Then what?

I guess it was in 1962, I was riding pretty high. Then I got a greeting from Uncle Sam. It wasn't the idea I didn't want to go, but it was just a bad time.

What was the service like?

I was in Fort Leavenworth for basic

training. I finished second in my class. Then I spent a year at information school. I was assigned to the Soldier's Chorus. We did shows and concerts. In January 1964 we went to Japan, Vietnam, and Korea. In fact, I extended for a little bit to be on the 1964 *Bob Hope Christmas Show*, in Korea.

What happened when you got out of the service?

I got out in January 1965. At that time the English sound had invaded. The studio moved from Governor Nicholls to Camp Street. Very few sessions were going on out of here. No one knew where to go or what the music business was gonna do. All the clubs that were rock and roll had guitar Bands.

Imperial had sold out, so I had no record company to go back to. I stayed here till October 1965, and moved to San Francisco till 1967.

When I came back I brought a song back to Ken Elliott (Jack the Cat) written by Eddie Marshall and Ronnie Scholare. Eddie had written "Venus" for Frankie Avalon. We got Allen Toussaint to help us with the "I Can't Face Tomorrow," session. That came out on Doublemoon, which was Ken Elliot's and my label.

Where were you working when you got back?

Clubs. I worked the Ivanhoe, a piano bar here on the Street [Bourbon Street]. The second day there I got a raise and the owner brought me down the street and said, "We're building this club and if you'll stay, I'll give you another raise and I'll move you up here and put you with a group." That's how the Backstage came about.

With the exception of the year at the Fountain Bay, I've been on the Street, working as a single.

I guess you like it?

I've built up a following; all the clubs I've worked in are intimate, with a pretty elite clientele. They just don't stumble in off the street.

What about records during the Seventies?

The biggest thing I had was "Blue Monday," on ABC, but they killed it. ABC changed presidents about three times. It was going on the charts, but Three Dog Night had a record and they pushed it, and scrubbed "Blue Monday." It was a good, good record.

How did ABC get hold of you?

Papa Donn Schrowder called me up in Nashville, So I went up there to cut it.

I leased a record to Paula, one side of it that I produced I cut in Memphis. The other side, "Piece of Mind," was cut in Chicago.

What about those country records you cut in Nashville?

I cut that stuff with Cinnamon. I got a little nibble. I started in country before it was fashionable, when it was selling.

What about the movie, American Hot Wax, that you appeared in?

Fred Gallo, who was the executive producer for *Rocky* and *Car Wash*, called

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and said, "We want to use 'Sea Cruise' in the movie, and would like to know if you'd like to do it. But we have to know about your weight and if you have your hair." I sent them pictures, and they sent me the contract.

What about the Midnight Special?

That was an oldies show with Frankie Avalon. I was at the Gateway then.

I remember you had the wildest afro I'd ever seen.

Yeah, they couldn't get over it; it didn't compute. I was the first white boy in town with a bush. That was 1970.

You've got an album ready to be released right now, don't you?

We've just cut an album out at Sea Saint. We're waiting for the release date. It was backed by the Southern Yat Club. After doing the show at the Rivergate for them last year, they said, "Why don't we think about cutting something?" I said "Yeah, I'm very interested." I'm very pleased with it. In fact, I'm trying not to jump up and down! There are some great things on it. It's a different flavor—a little blues, a little funk and a little country. It's an old-time New Orleans session.

You're going to England this year too, I believe?

Right, in November. I'm really looking forward to it. Every song I'm gonna do is a New Orleans song.

Wow, I'd like to see that! How long have you been here at Lucky Pierre's?

I've only been back since the first of the year, but I was here four years before that.

You've never played the Jazz Fest, have you?

No.

Does it bother you that you've sort of been ignored by your hometown?

No, no it doesn't. When I go other places, — Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis — the reviews are great. A lot of people *only* work the Jazz Fest.

There was a story in the paper about the 100 best musical attractions in New Orleans recently in the *Picayune*, and I wasn't even mentioned, not even mentioned! But hey, there was a lot of people in there that don't work all the time and aren't as fortunate as I.

Obviously you consider yourself a successful musician.

I've been in the union since 1957 — but I consider myself an entertainer, not a musician. It's a combination of everything. I love to work, I'm like an old plow mule. I tried to take three months off last year, but after four weeks I started gong bananas.

I feel I'm successful in as much as I can pick and choose where I work. I've one of the finest jobs in town. I get up to shave in the evening, go to work and I say, "Hey, this is what you've wanted to do all your life." What's there to complain about? I'm happy to be doing what I was trained to do all my life. I love it and I make a great living. What else can a person ask for? □

IRVING McLEAN

"To keep people geared forward . . . this is why I'm writing my songs. Too many people are lax, lazy, their minds dead . . . sleeping. Wake up! That's what I want to say to the people. Listen to the song of the steel drum now. It's a bell ringing, saying Victory. I sing happy music."

Get ready New Orleans for a heavy dose of the Caribbean. Irving McLean, steel drummer and songwriter/arranger, is prepared to unleash his music, his message, and his band, Radar, on this world in turmoil. Fortunately for New Orleanians, a 17-year odyssey that has taken McLean from Trinidad to North and South America, Europe and the Middle East has temporarily paused in New Orleans.

Born in Las Cuevas, a small fishing village on the northeast coast of Trinidad, McLean was surrounded by the music of one of the world's most unusual instruments . . . the steel drum. The culture in which he grew up placed great value on the musician. Musicians raised the people's spirits with happy songs while at the same time speaking the truth in the songs' lyrics. And at Carnival the musicians were everywhere, along every country road leading into the city of Port of Spain. To be a musician was to command respect. In addition, being a musician offered the chance to travel.

McLean learned to make and play most of the native instruments of Trinidad, but to him, the steel drum was most magical. The melodic steel drum (or pan), made from a 55-gallon oil drum, was relatively new, having been first designed in 1945, one year before McLean was born. After World War II, the steel drum began to appear alongside more traditional carnival rhythm makers like the bamboo-bamboo drums and crude pans like buckets and pie tins.

Initial reaction to steel bands (an entire orchestra of steel drummers) was negative because of the noise of the pans and the gang-war-like rivalries between bands. But as McLean grew up, steel bands were quickly becoming the main sound of Carnival. The musical pioneers of these instruments were achieving fame as well as making some of the most exciting music ever to be heard on the island. McLean, as a young boy, watched these craftsmen, and occasionally managed to get one of the drums they discarded. In this fashion he learned to make and play the round-note steel drum.

By the early 1960's, McLean was making a name for himself in the village of Maravel, playing regularly at the Rock



MICHAEL P. SMITH

with his steel band, the Humtones. During this same period private companies began sponsoring steel bands, touching off fierce competition among steel drummers. When the great steel drummer Herman "Rock" Johnson split from the Pan Am Northstars (led by Anthony Williams) to form his own band, the British West Indian Airways Sunjets Westside Symphony, he recruited McLean.

McLean's training now took a new direction; he learned to make and play the spider web steel drums, the latest trend in pan design. Featuring a different shaped striking surface for each note, outlined by two rows of indentations for greater control of overtones, the spider web was causing a sensation because of its unique, new sound. The creators of the spider web design were Anthony Williams and Herman "Rock" Johnson, and their bands, the Northstars and Sunjets, were the only bands featuring these new drums. All the other bands were using the round note or Invader style drum, named after designer Ellie Mannelle's band, the Shell Invaders (see June '81 *Wavelength*). Consequently, the two bands were in great demand and were sent on world tours for many years by Pan Am and BWIA. McLean travelled and recorded with the Sunjets in countries on almost every continent.

Their achievements included a 15-week engagement at Radio City Music Hall in New York City, performances in front of the leaders of many different nations, and several record albums on Columbia.

With the Sunjets, McLean polished his drumming, performing and drum-making. At the same time, though, he began to realize that a large steel band was not the best way for an individual to communicate his message to an audience. Shortly after Johnson left the Sunjets, McLean quit and moved to New York. In New York he designed and made a full orchestra of steel drums, from a four pan bass set to single melody pans. He then



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brought together several natives of Trinidad living in New York to form a steel band. This band performed infrequently, but was of high calibre, taking first place in the Steel Band Contest held at Madison Square Garden in 1972. Shortly after this, McLean decided to go solo, beginning a new stage in his career, travelling from city to city performing mainly for festivals and hotels.

On the festival circuit, McLean played alongside of such greats as Larry Coryell, Herbie Hancock, and Ramsey Lewis. The majority of his travels were in the U.S. but he made occasional trips to the Middle East, Hawaii and Canada.

During this period he began to put down his personal thoughts into the form of song lyrics. Believing that events in his life were bringing him to an important crossroads, he began to write music to his lyrics and started to search for a band that would be a suitable vehicle for his journey. One of his yearly trips to New Orleans to play at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (he has performed every year since 1976) resulted in a musical collaboration that promises to be instrumental in developing the next stage of his career. At the 1978 Jazz Fest he met and performed with a local New Orleans band called Keystone. While Keystone was not a Caribbean band, several members were heavily into reggae and soca (a contemporary form of calypso). With Keystone, McLean began to experiment with some of his original material, culminating in his 1981 Jazz Fest appearance at which he and the band played an entire set of his music to enthusiastic audience response.

Consequently, in order to further explore the potential of this collaboration, McLean has moved to New Orleans and has been hard at work putting together and rehearsing a full band. To the rhythm section and keyboards from Keystone (now defunct as a band), McLean has added a crisp horn section, a clean lead guitarist and a choppy rhythm guitarist.

For the first time, McLean is forging his music with his message. Song titles such as "It's Survival," "We Are The Roots," "It's Not Fair," "Livin' It Up," and "Bustin' Loose" give an idea of his direction. Not content with the resigned complaints about social injustices or the dead-end cynicism evident in so much of today's music, McLean presents his belief that fairness, clean living and positive thinking will change the world.

And one can't help but believe it when watching McLean in action. He's a positive force to be reckoned with.

McLean's immediate plans are to finish work on his first album with Radar and, through local performances, contribute energy and a new musical direction to New Orleans before taking Radar on tour. Then McLean, the musical prophet, will take on the world. Tracing his accomplishments from his roots in Trinidad to New Orleans today, its reasonable to expect that he'll achieve his goal. □

—Gene Scaramuzzo

IN PRAISE OF THE SAD RECORD

Waller forgets his wisecracks, Armstrong shows a sombre side, Bechet sets a forlorn image . . . and we are treated to an touching and unexpectedly sad song.

Why, oh why, are certain jazz records so goddamned sad? I don't mean what you might suspect I do: certain standard plaints, composed with one ear cocked to the lachrymal duct and one to the royalty division of ASCAP — Stormy Weather or Ghost Of A Chance or Once In A While or Can't We Be Friends? or My Last Affair or Body And Soul or Supper Time or All Or Nothing At All or Baltimore Oriole or Shoe-Shine Boy or Somebody Else Is Taking My Place or I Must Have That Man or I Cried For You or Since I Fell For You or five or six thousand others.

Nor do I refer to records by artists whose lives are inextricably bound up with the music they produced (lives cut short early, lives plagued by bad booze or bad dope or jail stretches or race prejudice or unsatisfyingly complex sexual adventures) — the collected oeuvres of Bunny Berigan or Robert Johnson or Bessie (There Ain't No Place For a Po' Ole Girl To Go) Smith or, undisputed monarch of the tear-stained terrain, her nibs Lady Day in such classics for head-in-the-oven listening as "Fine and Mellow," "Lover Man," "Willow Weep For Me," "One Never Knows Does One?" or "Good Morning Heartache" — although, oddly, Holiday is the rare singer who, when she is happy, has a smile in her voice, an ability perhaps as much histrionic as musical.

The Sad Record is another matter entirely from this wallowing in the slough of someone else's self-pity, or our own — prompted by either the sharkish elbows of some clever songwriter or outside knowledge of a tragic career. The Sad Record comes about most often when an artist who usually comes across as totally remote from despair releases a gust of passion, when joyousness is uncharacteristically subdued for unfathomable reasons — Mildred Bailey's version of "I Thought About You," James P. Johnson's piano solo "Strawberry Rhyme," a Fats Waller record where Waller temporarily forgets the wisecracks, pianistic or verbal, and turns declamatory and goes to work on a sentimental number like "Let's Pretend That There's A Moon" and suffuses it with a gloomy alienation and the mental



Sidney Bechet

tableau is that of romantic overtures made in a night-in-the-desert landscape, as barren as a Tanguy painting, filled with indifference and rejection. These abrupt shifts in expected style — Waller, on "Night Wind," asking the chillingly melancholy question, "Why is Lover's Lane filled with shadows?" — lead to a kind of aural shock treatment. We get used to stylist whose styles are ossified, petrified and institutionalized, and whose handling of any sort of material is marked by the same old pair of elbow-length kid-gloves which become frayed and soiled and filled with holes but are never discarded.

Another kind of Sad Record is the local variety which summons up Vanished New Orleans in a three-minute mirage. For instance, Jelly Roll Morton, abetted by Baby and Johnny Dodds in "Mister Jelly Lord," which conjures up Bellocq ladies in their peignoirs capering through tortuous Storyville corridors, becoming increasingly ectoplasmic until banished by the final pop of the cymbals.

Finally, the great examples of Sad Records are those difficult to define — in which the melancholia could well be caused by that old chimera that haunted Henry James to the end of his days, Tone Of Voice. Some of this has to do with clarinets and saxophones and their use as instruments of tragic-musical-inflection. (This has been going on for some time and continues — two local records of not particularly great age bear this out: Van Broussard's "Winter Wind" is the saddest record made by a Caucasian in Louisiana precisely for this reason, and Aaron Neville, whose sable-fallen-angel tones provoke an instant and intense nostalgic eye-watering, made his saddest record of all in "Every Day," not so much for his stentorian poignancy with the letter-from-a-road-gang lyrics but from the windy moan of the accompanying sax.)

Louis Armstrong — that perennially dapper ballroom-dance champ and spokesman for a diet of tomatoes and lemon juice, red beans and rice and Swiss Kriss, mouth always gleaming in a saurian smile, that master of Olympian high-notes that have an almost mystical ecstasy about them — made a number of records that show a darker side: impassioned

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readings of "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Solitude" and "Tomorrow Night (After Tonight)." But only one of his records qualifies as an oddball, genuine Sad Record — his 1927 "Potato Head Blues" made with the Hot Seven. A sombre emotionalism undercuts a record that should be a genuine hot-mama classic. Why?

The song itself is a standard upbeat and eminently danceable tune, but Armstrong, ever the innovator in this period of his career, plays against the beat, the solos by Dodds and St. Cyr are appropriately subdued and only the uninitiated or inebriated could mistake this for the usual jazzbo-strutting. Armstrong is indeed showing off here, but doing it in such a startlingly creative fashion that the moment after the solos when all the instruments enter in harmony is genuinely tragic and hair-raising simultaneously. Armstrong's almost magical ability to make a fast blues into a lament using subversive musical devices within a traditional framework is as much an index of his greatness as those crowded clotheslines of high notes from his later, flashier 1930s period.

Another New Orleans master, Sidney Bechet, of the snake-charmer's tones on the various reed instruments of which he was a peerless virtuoso, made in the fall of 1941 the authentic jewel among Sad Records, a throwaway original tune entitled "Georgia Cabin." The image evoked by title and song is of a lonely rusticity — miles away from juke joints or dance halls or gas stations or funeral parlors — in a dark night, the cabin boards supporting vines of honeysuckle or wisteria that haven't yet overtaken the porch, the rockers and perhaps the tire swing, the R.F.D. mailbox, some wind in the trees (enough to make the kerosene lamps flicker), the greens and onion and side meat on the stove, the linen curtains . . . but what incredible plangency of Bechet's playing, in long, modulating phrases that end with embellished effects that are something like watching a flower open and knowing that if you touch it, the blossom will shrivel, bruised and unforgiving. Two long refrains follow Willie the Lion Smith's nearly-suspenseful unresolved piano introduction, and after Bechet's first solo, he returns to twine — vine-like — around the trumpet of Charlie Shavers, which has a high neighing tone that almost matches Bechet's soprano sax and clarinet. The continual byplay between Bechet's final serpentine chorus and the staccato punctuation of Shavers is masterly, and the record ends with a false-happy-ending vamp. The sadness of the record resides solely in the tone of Bechet's reeds, which have an almost voyeuristic sophistication — he creeps around this cabin but never sets foot inside the door. (Was this the creole Bechet's disdain?) He didn't need to — the forlorn, isolated musical image is established, and with his embellishments, has become indelible. □

—Jon Newlin

TAMI LYNN: WILD HONEY

Her career has taken her to the Big Time, backing up Sam Cooke and Dr. John, but this lady is not about to be "just another New Orleans musician who went away."

A memory which stands out in my mind when I hear the name Tami Lynn dates back to Mardi Gras 1979 during the New Orleans police strike. I had booked Dr. John for a one-week stand at Rosy's and it was our windfall that with the cancellation of the parades, much of the Mardi Gras partying focused upon the double-header with James Booker and Dr. John.

However, there was another shining star there that night — Tami Lynn. As commanding as was Dr. John's appearance. I kept finding my eye wandering over to Tami Lynn's department, as one of the two female vocalists giving that extra bit of soulful believability to Dr. John's "Wild Honey." Not only could this lady sing, but she had a commanding stage presence, which meant that she added at least as much visually and aurally as anyone on the stage that night. Tall, slinky, good-looking and soulful. I surmised that she must be one of those slick Los Angeles ladies. As it turns out, Tami belongs to New Orleans even though she has been living in Los Angeles for quite some time. Her story is worth knowing in light of her considerable talent and also because she is on a sabbatical of sorts in the Crescent City presently.

Tami originally planned to come back to New Orleans to put together a musical play serving as a tribute to the late blues singer, Dinah Washington. The Dinah Washington project is somewhat of an obsession with Tami. She has spent a couple of years researching Dinah's life and successfully presented a modest facsimile of this production at the Contemporary Arts Center a couple of years ago. Somehow, that project is temporarily on the back burner again. In the meantime, Tami is serving as a debut performer at the opening of New Orleans' newest music club, Gino's. Gino's is an after-hours club where things get under way after midnight and the party keeps going to daylight on Magazine Street (recently home of the Dunn Inn). This engagement is almost a trip into the past for Tami, as she is once again re-united with Red Tyler, the man who started Tami on a musical career. Tami indicated this would be predominantly a jazz gig. I certainly hope they mix in a little rhythm and blues,



HAMMOND SCOTT

as I find her brand of R&B to be more scarce than good jazz in New Orleans.

Since you are likely to have an opportunity to see the exotic Miss Lynn perform, this is a good time to give you a quick sketch of her interesting past activities.

Tami began singing in the early Sixties when she jumped at the chance to take vocalist Angel Face Kenley's place with the A.F.O.'s at the Joy Tavern. She remembers her fright quite well at her audition with a group composed of some of New Orleans' heaviest musicians of the day: Red Tyler on saxophone, Chuck Badie on bass, Smokey Johnson on drums and Allen Toussaint on piano. As Tami remembers, she had no particular style and dwindling confidence even though she was mainly singing material by Sam Cooke, Dinah Washington, Nancy Wilson, Dionne Warwick and Ben E. King.

Well, Red Tyler hired Tami and took her under his wing. These were quite exciting times for her as she was working with the basic band featured on most of the Fifties and Sixties hit records by the City's considerable stable of rhythm and blues recording stars. Tami recalls, "The music scene here was so great; you had a 22-year-old James Black, Ellis Marsalis in his twenties, Willie Tee about 19 years old, Toussaint in his twenties, Aaron, Art, and Charles Neville in their twenties, a young Eddie Bo, young Tommy Ridgley, Chris Kenner and a younger Professor Longhair. Everywhere musicians sat in on each other's sets. I miss that; it seems now that the musicians are either afraid or too jealous to invite you up on the bandstand."

Tami's first record was written by Red Tyler and was entitled "Baby." Even though she was barely more than an amateur at the time, Lynn still fondly remembers that first record. As she puts it, "When I listen to that record now, I hear a young girl with an untrained, raw

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With Halloween on the horizon, you'll be hearing this more often. With all the fuss lately being made about Morgus, I thought it was the appropriate time to cover this. There's no need going into Morgus's T.V. show, so let's get down to the disc.

The tune itself is a simple Fifties rock 'n' roll number. The best lyrics go like this:

"On Saturday night when I go for my date,

*My baby and I just sit and wait for —
Morgus the Magnificent.*

We don't go out to roll and rock.

We get our kicks from the House of Shock.

He's got shaggy hair, and a graveyard stare.

Vampire blood spilled everywhere."

Of course there was no group called Morgus and the Ghouls. The line-up on

Continued from page 43

voice yet a voice with so much strength. In fact, I wish I had that strength today. I mean, today I sing smoother, hipper, I play in between the chords, what you call a hip artist today, but I wish I had that strength." In the years that followed, Tami recorded many singles and it was during this time that she first worked with Mac Rebenneck as songwriter and pianist on many of her records.

Even though Tami Lynn has recorded many singles and three record albums (one produced by Jerry Wexler for Atlantic Records), and even had a chart hit in England entitled "Runaway" which did reach number one nationwide, most of her career has been as a studio back-up vocalist on other artists' records. She is featured throughout Aaron Neville's *Tell It Like It Is* LP, many of Dr. John's albums, as well as being heard in Sam Cook's hit records "Shake" and "Change Gonna Come," just to name a few.

While appearing on many hit records as a background vocalist, Tami toured with the A.F.O.'s around the country for several years. It was during this time that she regards having lived the "highlight" of her career when she appeared in New York City on the same bill with John Coltrane at Birdland and met many of the greatest names in jazz nightly.

The late Sixties saw Miss Lynn follow former New Orleans resident and now famous musical arranger Harold



the record was Mac Rebenneck on guitar, Frankie Ford on vocals, Leonard James on vocals and sax, Huey Smith on piano, and Paul Stahle on drums.

The disc marked the debut of the 18-year-old Mac Rebenneck, whose smouldering guitar solo added to the wild atmosphere of the session.

Released in April 1959 on Vin (a subsidiary of Ace), the record was a local chart entry that same year.

The record was also issued by Morgus and the Three Ghouls. A copy in good condition runs close to ten bucks.

(Thanks to Tad Jones for the complete session line-up.)

—Almost Slim

Battiste's, move to California to continue his studio work.

In the early Seventies, Tami made England her home for about five years. Upon returning to the United States, she had her hit record in England which came from a session she had done six years before. However, she chose not to return to live in England. Instead, California was once again home for Tami Lynn where again she worked extensively with Dr. John and had a minor hit backed by Dr. John entitled "Majo Hanna."

Talking to Tami Lynn is never dull; she seems always in a positive frame of mind. With Tami, you never hear crying about being ripped off. She believes that "being taken by someone is the pain of growth and learning — the price you pay for ignorance. It's only sad when you remain ignorant."

Asked why she has returned to New Orleans besides trying to do her musical tribute to Dinah Washington, Tami typically had her answer ready. According to Tami, "I came back because I don't want to be just another New Orleans artist who went away; I want my second line. Also, there are a lot of younger musicians getting into the scene and I want to be part of it. Then again, I often come back to New Orleans to re-group. It's good to have your home folks stroke you. It gives you renewed strength. Finally, I have to admit I love New Orleans and I love the musician's here."

—Hammond Scott



GOODBYE, SNOOKUM

Though underappreciated, Snookum Russell was a musician's musician, an important figure in the proliferation of jazz.

Isaac Edward "Snookum" Russell died on Tuesday, August 11, 1981, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Snookum was one of those very important catalytic individuals in jazz history who never received his due recognition. He was an important, though often underappreciated, contributor to the proliferation of jazz.

Snookum Russell was a pianist. He started off playing bass, hence his emphasis on a strong left hand. He had been involved in jazz since he was a child, and he told stories of being stranded on a bus when his school band was going to play a concert for Indians! He chose Duke Ellington as a model for his band, which he started while he was in his teens. However, as he said, when it came to playing the piano, "all I could hear was Waller." No recordings were made of his early bands, but he assured me that the Ducal stamp was on everything "until it came to the piano solo, when it was pure Fats." It must have been quite a sight, seeing this young, diminutive fellow surrounded by surrealistic arrangements, and

then coming to a piano solo with both hands going in all directions at once in the best stride tradition.

Snookum Russell is probably best remembered in the annals of jazz history as an ivory hunter. Snookum led a territory band in the Thirties and Forties that played "all over, but mainly from Kansas City on down and throughout the South." The band worked a lot out of Florida, and among the luminaries who later went on to jazz stardom that Snookum discovered were Ray Brown, Fats Navarro, J.J. Johnson, Tommy Turrentine, and Joe Harris.

Snookum used to recall "battles of the bands" that were quite prevalent in those days. When they played against Lionel Hampton's band, after Hampton "knocked them out with 'Flying Home,' Ray Brown threw a sheet over the piano and we really stood them on their ear when we started playing."

The importance of a territory band has always been, to my mind, underappreciated. Dave Dexter has written elsewhere of this phenomenon in part. But suffice it to say that if there weren't



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territory bands, jazz would not have been heard in many small hamlets, villages, and towns that couldn't afford to hear name bands. There were fine territory bands; for example, in the early days, the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks. Snookum's band played to primarily black audiences in the South. The territory bands have been compared with the old baseball minor league "farm systems." Milt Hinton had always been thankful that an ivory hunter pointed him out to Cab Calloway. Many jazzmen would have remained undiscovered and certainly not had the playing time or experience had they not paid their dues in the territories.

Snookum recalled all of his "children," as he called them. I think his favorite was Fats Navarro, who he still thought was the finest trumpet player he ever heard; and Tommy Turrentine, brother of Stanley Turrentine, was quite underrated in his opinion. J.J. Johnson was "the best; he always played like he does now," he used to say, and Joe Harris "did a better job for me than he did with Dizzy's band." Ray Brown was "an extension of my left hand," and "he remembered me."

The highlight of Snookum's life was his playing for a gala for the French consul in New Orleans several years ago at the Theatre for the Performing Arts. He'd always been known as a "reader" on Bourbon Street from the time he played intermission piano at the Paddock Lounge. Lavergne Smith says that many times she would learn tunes from instruction given by Snookum. Therefore, when they needed a jazz pianist to read the music being played by the symphonic strings, and yet improvise, the call went out for Snookum, because, as he put it, "Snookum could not only read, but Snookum could play!"

Snookum Russell was probably also the last musician to see Fats Waller alive. He and Snookum spent an evening hitting a jug on a train the night before Waller died. I wrote several years ago that the spirit of Fats Waller was alive and well and in the hands of Snookum Russell. In his last days, when he played at the Gateway Hotel, you could still hear the spark of Waller in Snookum's playing. Snookum made a few single records in the Forties, which have long been out of print. He led a quartet locally with Hollis Carmouche (whom he also claims to have "discovered"). He worked at Easy Eddie's for a while in the Fifties as a solo pianist. He did make some recordings for Wallace Davenport's My Jazz label under his own name and backing Don Albert. Unfortunately, his recording legacy is insufficient to reflect the true value and worth of this individual. Davenport says he may have some more material to release; I certainly hope he does.

Snookum Russell was not only a seminal figure in the proliferation of jazz and in jazz history; he was a very sweet man, and I, for one, will miss him. So should we all. —Rhodes Spedale

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ANIMATION COMES OF AGE

First there was Walt Disney, then Fritz the Cat. Now comes Heavy Metal, and signs that the art of animation has emerged into a golden adolescence.

Once upon a time animated features were made for kiddies under twelve. Walt Disney carved his empire from this territory, and the major Hollywood studios never seriously challenged his claim to the "full-length cartoon feature." Until the last decade, only *Yellow Submarine*, a melange of animated sequences set to Beatles songs that looked as tasty and sweet as Viennese pastry, scored any popular success like that of Uncle Walt's productions.

The Disney studio still holds the franchise for the G-rated audience, but that juvenile constituency is shrinking — witness the disappointing gross of this summer's *The Fox and the Hound* — while there is a steadily growing teen market for the R-rated comics that a new generation of animators has been turning out with increasing frequency. In the first nine months of 1981, Columbia released two animated features, Ralph Bakshi's *American Pop*, a survey of popular music since the turn of the century, and *Heavy Metal*, a movie edition of the adult fantasy magazine published by the *National Lampoon*. While the Bakshi film floundered at the box office, *Heavy Metal* pulled bigger numbers than the studio anticipated. But this sci-fi/fantasy flick was plugged into adolescent stirrings just as Bakshi had once been when the animated *Fritz the Cat* in 1972 ("It's X-rated and Animated!").

No one had ever heard of Ralph Bakshi until he obtained movie rights to the popular R. Crumb comix. During the years of the Great Hippie Migrations, comic books had become every bit as "unwholesome" as educators had always warned, and the best of the lot was R. Crumb's *Head Comix*. One of the key phrases of the late Sixties, *Keep on Truckin'*, was popularized by Crumb, and for a time was the hip alternative to "Have a Nice Day" (shudder). A generation brought up on Dell Comics *Are Good Comics* and *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies* was ready for the stronger stuff. *Fritz the Cat* made a bundle; it was the year of the Cat. The Disney mouse seem-



ed to have met its match in this horny pussycat.

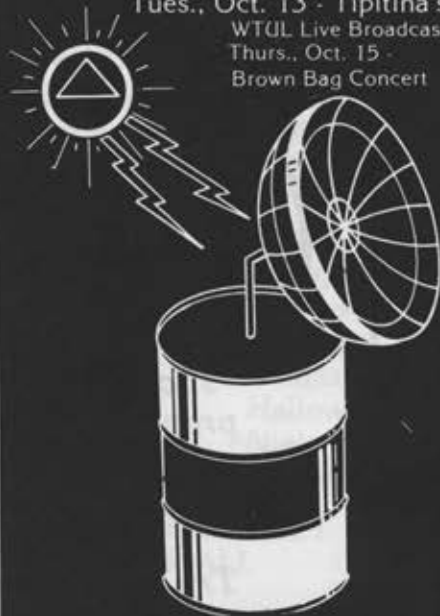
While it's encouraging to see someone other than the Disney studios producing animated films, one must regrettably acknowledge that Bakshi's R-rated features are not the grown-up equivalents of his G-rated predecessors. I made a heroic struggle to sit through *The Lord of the Rings* but abandoned the effort after nearly ninety minutes — and I can sit through just about anything. Bakshi's survival, at least partially, hinges on the fact that he has had no serious competition. If only his talent was commensurate with his ambition! Earlier this year, Bakshi took a century of popular music, incorporating everything from "As Time Goes By" to "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" and from "Swanee" to "Purple Haze," to make a statement about the quality of the American Dream. In an article in *Film Comment* Bakshi states: "The American Dream is realized in the freedom we have, not in the success we achieve. Success takes our lives. The struggle for success saps all our energies and when you get it, what do you have? You have the pressure of remaining there, and you have the crushed bodies of friends and family who were sacrificed along the way. *American Pop* is about trying to make it in America."

It's also a downer. His four generations of musicians don't take even a passing moment's pleasure in their art. It's just another body drug that kills in the end. You also sit there wondering why it was ever made as an animated feature. Bakshi makes extensive use of rotoscoping — a process he first employed extensively in *Wizards* whereby much of the action is shot as a regular feature with actors and then traced over by animators — but that's not what makes it seem so unnecessary as an animated film. He simply makes it a decorative effect. *American Pop* gains nothing from being animated.

By contrast, *Heavy Metal* is a pleasant

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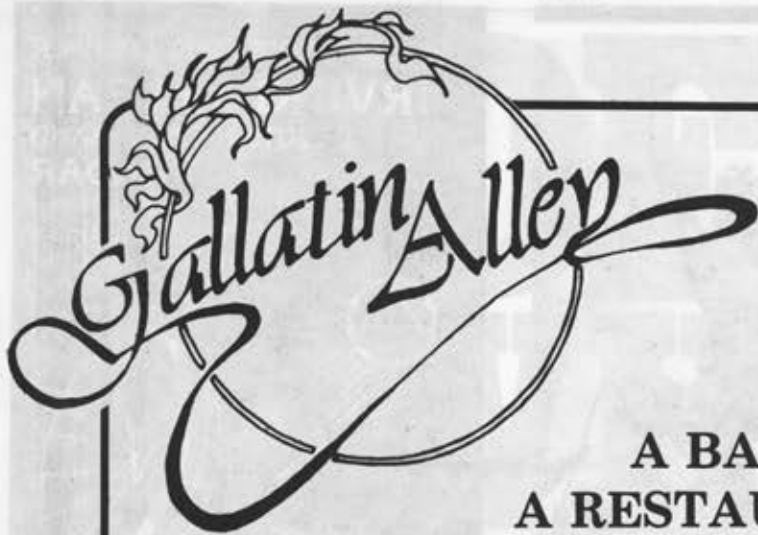


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surprise; it's the first major non-Bakshi feature to be released by a major studio in the field of animation. It's promotion was heavily tied to a two-record set by some of the leading practitioners of the genre: Blue Oyster Cult, Black Sabbath, Nazareth, Cheap Trick, Journey, and curiously enough, Grand Funk Railroad. Surprisingly the music is mixed down rather low for much of the time, so much so it becomes almost subliminal—Heavy Muzak. Most of the film could only be described as lurid, aggressively so, and all the better for it. After all, we are in the realm of adolescent boy fantasies, never a very dignified place to be.

Six segments are loosely held together by a glowing green sphere that bounces from one episode to the next. We literally follow the bouncing ball. Dubbed the Loch-nar, it represents "the sum of all evils . . . whose power infects all times, all galaxies, all dimensions." But really, it just keeps turning up like a bad penny.

The first segment is also the best; it's almost a riff on John Carpenter's live-action cartoon, *Escape from New York*. A cabbie named Harry makes his way through a New York that is little more than rubble and refuse, human as well as inanimate. Then one day he picks up a fare, a curvaceous cutie who has this mysterious green sphere that everyone wants badly, a latter day descendant of the Maltese falcon perhaps. She enlists Harry's help to sell the object only to betray him after she has the loot in her possession. Or so she thinks. While there is a melancholy twinge to this episode it is as understated as the mayhem is overstated.

The next sketch is the ultimate teenage male fantasy of finding oneself transformed into the penultimate specimen of muscled manhood. It's jokey enough that only a doctrinaire opponent of American Macho could really object. And there's a witty bit about a Jewish secretary from the Pentagon taken up in a spaceship and making it with a bantam-sized robot. After an evening of terrific sex, the robot proposes marriage. Our Jewish princess complains that she doesn't quite feel right about the whole thing. His reply is that earth women all feel guilty about achieving orgasm with mechanical aid.

The final episode strains for a mythic confrontation between Good and Evil, Good being personified by a futuristic Amazon dressed in a scanty S&M leather outfit, and Evil by a gargantuan fellow with a buzzsaw for a hand. Graphically, it's very handsome, but the encounter tends to drag on for an unconscionably long time.

Yes, this is every bit as tasteless as it sounds, but it's meant to appeal to horny adolescents, and it makes good on its promise. And it takes the audience places animation has never been before. The art of movie animation itself may only now be in its adolescence. □

—John Desplas

JIMI HENDRIX: MAINLY THE BLUES

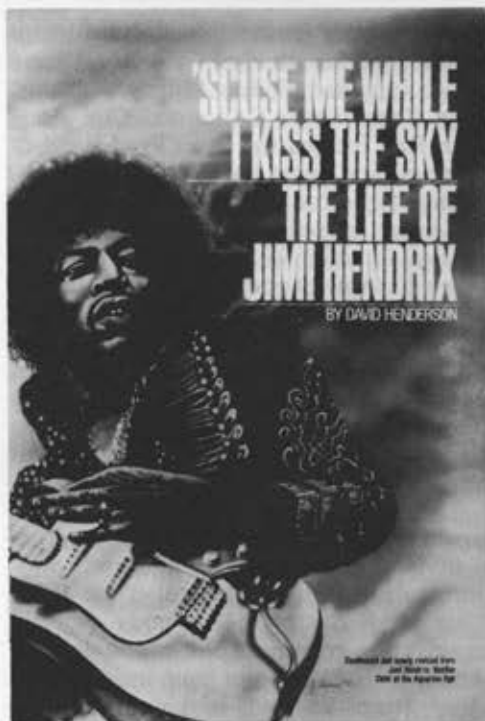
*'Scuse Me While I Kiss The Sky:
The Life of Jimi Hendrix*

By David Henderson
Bantam paperback, \$8.95

All of America's (and much of England's) popular music of this century is indelibly marked by the blues and blues performers. However, because of the racism that pervades every aspect of our lives, the significance of this blues contribution is, as much as possible, hidden from popular audiences. But books such as this one, written by David Henderson, an excellent African-American poet, are helping to correct the historical distortions implicit in most "official" assessments of life and culture in the modern world, particularly in the world of the music called "rock."

In a very important sense, this new "condensed and revised" book is analogous to an excellent mix of basic tracks. While the hardback was good, the revised book is gripping. Just as *Electric Ladyland* is the only album completely produced by Hendrix and, because of the excellent post-recording production work, achieves a higher all-around musical quality than the later work which Hendrix never got to put the finishing touches on, this book bears witness to the importance of a good mix. Condensed is perhaps the best way to describe what Henderson did to hours and reams of taped and written documentation — *Kiss The Sky* distills everything down to its essence. Although some beautiful moments are left on the editing floor, both the book and the reader benefit.

The main value of Henderson's creation is threefold: it is extremely well researched, and thus offers a multifaceted, rather than solely opinionated, interpretation and exposition on Jimi Hendrix and his music; it is creatively written by a poet and thus does more than documents — it evokes the intensity of the Jimi Hendrix experience and elicits an emotional response from the reader; and it is written from a Black perspective which affirms Hendrix as an archetypal extension of the blues tradition and also



presents the truth without moralizing. Anyone who loves rock and/or Jimi Hendrix should buy this book, which reads like a good record sounds — the beauty of some passages, the revelation of certain facts, the painting of personalities (both meshing and conflicting), will make your heart beat faster.

Research. In the coda Henderson lays it out: "More than five years of research and writing went into this biography. I traveled to London, Amsterdam, Seattle, Vancouver, New York, and Los Angeles and conducted over one hundred interviews. Reams of press material were collected, studied, and charted, as well as related articles, tape recordings, and books. The music of Jimi Hendrix was my active inspiration and abides as such.

Two important items dealt with are Jimi Hendrix and his relation to both the race issue and black women (as opposed to sex with women, black or white). While in London early in 1967, when Jimi was making his first waves, a friend of his, Ram John, criticized Jimi in front of his date, Monika Dannerman (the woman who three years later watched Jimi slip from sickness to nausea to unconsciousness and eventually to death). John shouts: "They treat you like a nigger freak, the 'Wild Man of Pop,' they call you, the 'Wild Man from Borneo.' And you go right along with it. You're stupid, man!" Later in his career, when he was permanently and antagonistically estranged from his management, which still legally controlled him and his music, Jimi Hendrix would yearn to break away from the freak image, to more closely associate himself with Black people, and to actively participate in supporting social causes such as the Black Panthers and the anti-Vietnam peace movement. But he would be unable to. A particularly poignant and essentially tragic reflection of this dilemma is delineated in Jimi's "firing" of black drummer Buddy Miles, and his

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Dylan has always moved in mysterious ways. Both horizontally and vertically.

On *Shot of Love*, Dylan struggles with his heart. The song "Heart of Mine" deals directly with this theme and it echoes throughout the songs. Dylan attempts to draw a line between compassion and desire.

"Heart of Mine" has these lines: "Heart of mine, be still/You can play with fire, but you'll get the bill." So Dylan is trying to still his desires. "Don't be a fool, don't be blind"; "Don't let her know you love her." The music is stop and start, Bob drumming out some nice piano. The stop and start of the song mirrors the struggle with desire. "The only trouble for you is if you let her in." There's a feeling of beautiful sadness, an inevitability of desire, of love: the current of desire, even unfulfilled desire, in the flood of our minds creates a wave that we can spurn but we can't deny. Beautiful song. Dylan's admonishments to his heart overturned by the jerking wash of the music (aided and abetted by three drummers).

So an ambiguity has been set up (is Dylan conscious of this?). The attempt will be made to draw a line between compassion and desire, but leakage and spillage will occur, and so, too, ambiguity.

"Property of Jesus" — doesn't that tittle piss you off? — moves in a declaratory march, Dylan defending his Jesus-belief as his way of finding compassion. "You've got something better/You got a heart of stone." Another reference to the heart. Curiously, the expected tone of castigation seems to twist upon itself, with Dylan castigating himself to the music's celebrant strains.

"Lenny Bruce" is a slow reverent folksy eulogy Dylan sings in an understated manner, the accompaniment providing a quiet chorus. Shifting from dogma to truth. The quote from Matthew on the inner sleeve: "Thou has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." And this from "Lenny Bruce": "He showed the wise men of his day to be

nothing more than fools." What is the relationship between wisdom and truth? Is it wise to seek out truth when the truth is of a disturbing nature? (Remember Oedipus.)

And what does truth have to do with dogma? In "Deadman, Deadman," Dylan sings, "What are you trying to overpower me with, a doctrine or a gun?" Questions abound. Even in his homage to a summer love, "In The Summertime" (a mellow tune with fine harmonica), Bob asks, "Did you respect me for what I did/Or for what I didn't do/Or for keeping it hid?"

Dylan over the years has ducked expectations, never being comfortable with what someone else might want him to be. Within his professed Christianity, he now struggles with desire and compassion, shifting from dogma to truth. The truth is in the heart and the truth is never easy. And this world is absurd.

A quote from Walter Kaufmann is appropriate: "One takes care not to go to heaven, nor to descend to hell. One believes neither in purgatory nor in purification. One can neither face nor forget reality, neither weep nor laugh. One squints, grins, and gradually the heart freezes." —Zeke Fishhead

Resurgence!
David "Fathead" Newman
Muse 5234

In a time when many good jazz musicians are being turned into products by record company executives, it should be hailed from the rooftops when an artist shakes off the commercial shackles and returns to the heart of the music. Perhaps I should say the music of the heart. That is the best way to describe David "Fathead" Newman's new album, *Resurgence!* on Muse Records.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Newman back from his recent lapse into the commercial drivel that some companies are passing off as jazz (witness his last three lp's on Prestige). With the exception of these last albums, Newman has had a rich musical career. Coming from Texas and having worked extensively in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, his sax playing strikes me as a fusion of the blues of King Curtis and the delivery of Illinois Jacquet, yet with the soul of David Newman. Soul is an important word to bring up here, as it has always been a striking element of Newman's style. *Resurgence!* is a reminder of the times when the word "soul" meant depth. It is a soulful album with an overall easy feeling, not an easy listening album that you would find in the soul racks in the record stores.

Newman had soul when he got his start playing as a teen with Red Connor's band in Texas. Touring with T-Bone Walker

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and Lowell Fulsom further developed his musical personality. Newman was a natural for the Ray Charles band at the end of the Fifties and briefly at the beginning of the Seventies, and recorded his first album as group leader with that band and with Ray on piano. Add to this his work with King Curtis and Herbie Mann's Family of Mann, and it comes as no surprise that *Resurgence!* is a soul-filled session.

A more complementary group of musicians cannot be found than the band Newman chose for *Resurgence!* While pianist Cedar Walton keeps a low profile, necessary because of the size of the ensemble, his warm melodies and rich blues style are a welcome presence. Newman's association with Walton goes back to when both were in their teens, so the unit of expression between them throughout these tracks is no surprise. Walton contributes his composition "To the Holy Land" to the session, which features some very fine solo work by fellow Texan and guitarist Ted Dunbar.

Trumpeter Marcus Belgrave is Newman's sideman on the sessions, as he was in the Charles band. While Belgrave's solos contribute to the easy, soulful mood of the session, the blending of his tone with Newman's on the melody (particularly on Hank Crawford's "Carnegie Blues") has a warmth and richness that really leaves you smiling inside. Belgrave adds "Akua Ewie" to the songlist.

The versatile Buster Williams adds the bottom end on the session. Having backed the likes of Lee Morgan, Nancy Wilson and Miles Davis, Williams is comfortable with both the bop and cool idioms. His versatility proves essential to this album, which flirts with both styles.

The hard bop influences of drummer Louis Hayes are put to good use in *Resurgence!* Hayes' work is not flashy, but it has the punch that is the final impetus driving the music to its mark. That mark is the enjoyment by and appreciation of meat and potatoes jazz fans who currently despair seeing their music watered down.

Other selections on the album are "Everything Must Change" and Newman's "Davey Blue" and "Mama Lou."
—Brad Palmer

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MCA 5233

Bobby "Blue" Bland (let's not forget the "Blue" next time, MCA) seems to go from strength to strength. As a bluesman, Bobby's popularity is matched only by B.B. King, and at last he is becoming known to wider circles. As a result, his recordings have been getting more sophisticated production jobs — or perhaps more subtle "process" jobs. Those of you who, like me, have been



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waving Bland banners since his Duke Record days know what I mean.

This set is predictably smooth and laid back, sometimes almost smoochy. Bobby sings with strength and conviction, proving why he is still a favorite of all the "sisters." Lots of mellow horn breaks and strings set up the disc's mood. A polished Monk Higgins production, I'm sure it's what they were after, with a nod to the title track.

If you're into Bobby "Blue" Bland, or just dig blues ballads, give it a spin. If not, leave it alone. I don't have to say that; readers invariably do.

—Almost Slim

History's Made Every Moment Ramsey McLean and the Lifers Prescription Records 1

A common way of closing a positive review is to recommend the album's purchase. For this album, that's openers. The recommendation extends beyond jazzers, and the beloved jazz supporters. If you're a new wave raver, get this record. If you're a symphony goer, get this record. If you're a rhythm and blues buff, a country swinger, a cajun two-stepper, a musical whatever, if you've never listened to jazz, get this record.

McLean is a brilliant and unusual composer. This line-up of Lifers is the best yet; their performance says so. The music here, if allowed, will make the imagination grow. The feelings behind the music and the power that made this album will likewise make you rich, if you listen. Instead of watching a made-for-TV movie about a football player with cancer and what the human soul is capable of in times of crisis, give an hour's attention to this album. It too is a story of the spirit and the struggle. Perhaps the football player is real, but the movie is not. In McLean's case, the album is directly the benign growth of his reality.

It had been coming for a long time, but it was finally on Halloween of 1980 that Ramsey McLean, with the financial and production partnership of his drummer, Al Fielder, decided to make his own album. This is significant, and will spread through the Eighties, has in fact already spread through the Seventies in the form of small non-artist-owned record companies. Big companies will only bankroll the sure bets. Grant monies have been severely trimmed. Horizons are shrinking nationally, and vegetable gardens are springing up in backyards. Artist-made albums have a cleansing effect on the industry, particularly if they are cleanly made. This one is.

Two of the tracks were done in the studio, but the bulk of the album was recorded live at The Faubourg. Amazingly so, I might add, since it was recorded direct onto a two-track machine. That means no remixing, no overdubbing, no

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extra nothing; just the facts, ma'am. It is an especially impressive fact when listening to the mood pieces "(Everybody Needs) A Little Rest" and "Burning Instructions for Angel Wings." Both are marvelous coordinations of vast and spontaneous sounds. The inspired engineering came from John DuBois and Jimmy Ford. I can hardly find fault except to say that McLean's tone is occasionally too fat, losing its edges. I doubt that the overall sound could have been any brighter without spending five or ten times what this album cost. They obviously compensated by concentrating.

The prime inspiration and greatest glory of this album is in McLean's superlative compositional ability. He writes melodies beautiful enough to become standards, yet he avoids the standard AABA form and its oh so predictable order of solos. The piece may only have an A section, and the improvisational intro may be longer than the piece itself, as in "The Painter." He will throw in bars of free time, as in "Go For The Throat," or have a deep and reverently romantic arc of music climax in a bawdy blues figure, as in "Still (There's A Mingus Among Us)." He lights his arrangements with splashes of humor and surprise, but not off-handedly. The total effect is spiritual, visionary, and visual.


The visual is the most immediate fun. "Go For The Throat" begins with a blob of bass on the floor. It's a beat for stomping cigarette butts in a hotel hallway. Tony Dagradi's bass clarinet, a creaky ol' veteran detective, enters, and snoops out every corner of the melody. Dagradi is great at chasing crooked notes; this is one place where his solo could have been up more in the mix. Larry Sieberth's piano keeps sneaking looks through cracked doorways. When he does come in, it's for his best performance on the album. He's all over the place, tying and untying loose ends in a geometrical pattern that, like an Escher print, looks in upon itself. He has a climactic scuffle with reverberating clusters that brings him right back to the head. The song is a killer.

"The Painter" is a duet between McLean on cello and Dagradi on tenor. It's a slow reverence from the middle of sound. "Bwe-bop" is a sassy gallop written by Larry Sieberth. It's the only AABA form on the album, except that, where the solo would go, in the B section, Sieberth has written a melody, and where the melody would usually be, in the A sections, Siebert has left it unwritten. It's a difficult concept to play in time, and Fielder keeps it moving well.

Sieberth plays a panoramic synthesizer on "(Everybody Needs) A Little Rest." It's a beautiful mood piece, true to its title, and, as I said before, amazing that it was done with no overdubbing. It's a vista-vision travelogue of wavy mountain tops and oceans on the moon, the saxophone like an eagle refracted in an outer-space sunset.

McLean wrote "E.T. All" for Earl

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Turbinton. It begins with some very expressive free stuff between McLean, Fielder, and Mark Sanders on percussion. It sounds like the coded language of mound-building termites. The song itself seems to raise up on the entire Serengeti plain.

About "Still (There's A Mingus Among Us)." too much cannot be said. This is a good version, though I've heard better. Still, it is some of McLean's best writing. One listen will convince you that he was born late; he should have been writing music for Humphrey Bogart movies.

And Sieberth should be doing sound for science fiction movies. "Burning Instructions For Angel Wings" has everything weird you could possibly want, including Siebert spraying WD-40 into the mike, and it all connects; it's all held together by Fielder's merciless drumming. And when the nuclear winds settle, a baby sax is left, as if something got away born before the last grey note fell.

You don't have to understand jazz to understand this album. If you've ever built a car or boat in your backyard, or had a baby, or did anything that you spent years dreaming of, talking about, thinking of, and practicing for, then you already know what this album is about, and you will know yourself better because of it.

—Ron Cuccia



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Jumpin' Jive

Joe Jackson
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Joe Jack calls this jumpin' music. I kinda think it's cool. But hot, too. Dig my drift? I'm poolside anywhere I roam with this platter making the chatter: city streets, mountain peaks, midnight creeps.

I hear tell Joe Jack got into some serious trouble with the wavoids in New York City this summer, coming out on stage, bristling with horns and the sorts of World War Two jive that permeates this new record. Guess they're really not going out with him. Any goat worth his song knows the most revolutionary move one can make, once one is set up as a maker of revolutionary moves, is to do the oldest trick in the book. (Dylan wrote the book: folk to electric, electric to country, country to non-originals, non-originals to movie star, movie star to Jesus freak.) So what we got here? A good time. I'll have one. (Make that a double, Mr. Scrub.)

Joe Jack acknowledges the "main inspiration" for this dizzy disc as Louie Jordan, not the guy who wants you to drink somebody else's bad water, but one of the hippy-est makers of happy music this wretched world has ever known. When Benny (why'd they call him Benny?) Goodman was swinging scoops of vanilla during the big one, on the other side of town the flavors were running wild. Yeah, sure, everybody cooked in those daze, but

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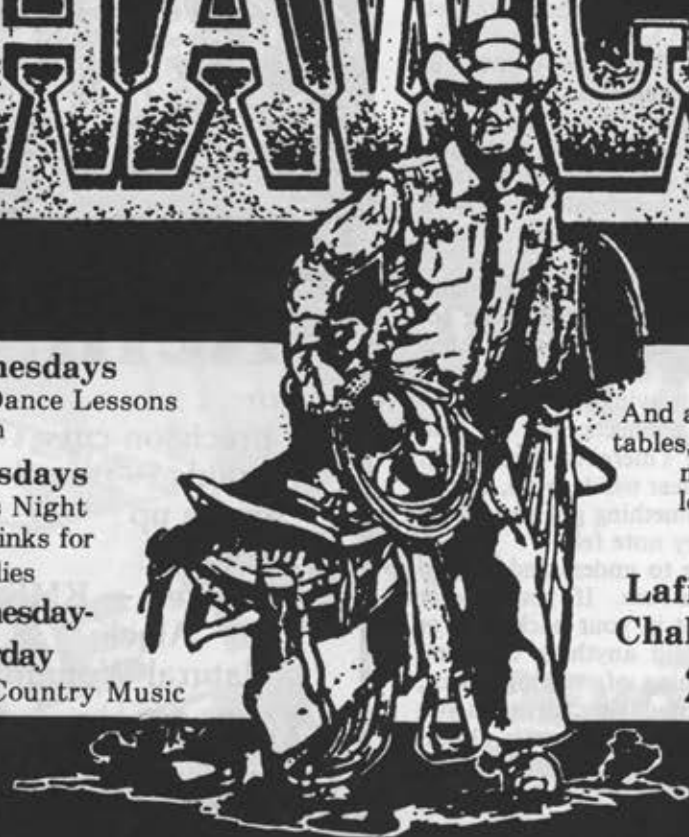
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Louie Jordan fried his fish and every night was Saturday night. Louie put humor in music, he found the cold spot and made it a hot spot. Just check out the titles of the Jordan ditties Joe jacks up on this here record: "Jack, You're Dead," "Five Guys Named Moe," "You Run Your Mouth and I'll Run My Business," "What's the Use of Getting Sober When You're Gonna Get Drunk Again," and "You're My Meat." See what I say?

Say what you see: this is a party record. It's fun in the sun. The horns are hot. Good attitude on the piano. Rhythm section is fist in glove. Joe Jack lifts the vocals from the old records, but he sure doesn't sound like he's in a museum. (Who could, delivering lines like, "I want to talk about your yams and your big fat hams/Fat and forty but lordy, you're my meat.") If you wanna be picky, screw Joe Jack and latch on to the originals. I'll join you.

Soon as I get out of this pool.

—Zeke Fishhead

Quinella

The Atlanta Rhythm Section
Columbia FC37550

The Atlanta Rhythm Section has always been more melodic than most southern rock groups (as befits a band that was, in an earlier decade, the Classics IV), but their last couple of albums tended to take this to an extreme. After peaking in the late middle Seventies, ARS suffered a major drop in record sales and concert attractiveness, and there was even talk of breaking up if things didn't get better. Hassles with their old label, Polydor, didn't help. Basically, the guys looked and sounded like they were ready for retirement and social security.

The new album, *Quinella*, pulls that foot back out of the early grave. Without sacrificing the melodic element — which is, after all, ARS's distinguishing characteristic — they have restored the

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punch that all southern bands are supposed to have. Side one in particular boogies along, culminating in "Higher," which is downright hard-rocking, carrying on the ARS tradition of goodtiming songs like "Boogie Smoogie" and "Champagne Jam." Perhaps the best tune on the side is the title track, the story of a long-time losing gambler who finally cashes in. Some metaphor for the band's recent career.

A theme throughout is that of the outsider. Not the cool rebel of many southern rock tunes, ARS's vision is of a genuine loner, one who can't even get in touch with the society that rejects him. Begun in "Quinella" and "Alien," this motif is furthered on side two in "Outlaw Music" ("Rhinestones lose their glitter/Cowboys let you down/And Luckenbach is just another town") and "Pretty Girl." I could do with a bit less sentimentality, but at least it doesn't sound plastic and packaged like so many current releases. The second side is generally more mellow than the first, but usually avoids slipping into the blandness that marked some of their previous cuts.

This is not an epic album, but it is a good effort by a very listenable outfit. Ronnie Hammond's voice is as raggedly smooth as ever, and if bassist supreme Paul Goddard never has a chance to really get down, the guys still roll out a fine backbeat. I liked side one better, but both sides are worth a few spins on the ol' turntable.
—Keith Twitchell

The Men In Black At Jed's September 12, 1981

Is it humanly possible to spit on the stage, bend over to retrieve a pick from the floor, and look extremely cool, all the while playing the guitar, and not miss a beat? If you caught the return of the Men In Black at Jed's, you know it is.

Playing to a full house, the Men In Black hammered out three frenetic sets of what can best be described as an intellectual frontal attack on the central nervous system. Duval Russell on guitar and vocals, Jay Hagman on keyboards and lead vocals, and drummer Jimi Fuse exhibited the kind of showmanship and musical ability that clearly reveals the group's enthusiasm for its material.

Russell, dressed entirely in black of course, was energy personified; his striking talent for pounding out hard, fast rhythms and manic guitar leads was at its best. Although he claims to have mellowed out a bit compared to previous performances (after all, he only spit *once*, and no more than two beer bottles were hurled from the audience), his current stage presence is anything but mild.

Most evident in the murky chords of "Exorcism," keyboardist Hagman's

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ability to emit dark, somewhat mystical sounds is the perfect complement to Russell's prowess and Fuse's forceful percussion accompaniment. Hagman's vocals, ranging from bizarre animal noises to demonic screams, are powerful and compelling — even when the lyrics aren't perfectly audible, the statement is.

This "heavy mental," sometimes-described-as-new-wave-or-punk band definitely enjoys making music, and judging from the audience response, people definitely enjoy hearing it. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like we'll be honored with their presence for a while, since Russell plans to return to San Francisco shortly, without Hagman and Fuse. But who knows: one day the Men may be back — In Black, of course.

Opening for the Men In Black was Rick Connick's (a.k.a. Rockin' Rick) new band, the Sponges. (Rick also played with the Men In Black for a short time, a couple of years ago.) This Beatles-inspired pop band put on a highly entertaining show, performing some Beatles covers and some originals. David McGee on guitar and vocals and Micky Fisse, also guitar and vocals, look a bit like young Beatles; the band definitely has the British/pop appeal of Liverpool-in-the-60s-on-a-Saturday-night . . . or Hamburg-in-the-60s-on-a-Wednesday-night . . . or New Orleans-in-the-Eighties-in-a-time-warp. Sitting in for drummer Keith Posey, who broke his hand the day of the gig, was Willie Fatus, who certainly deserves credit for learning The Sponges' entire agenda in a two-hour rehearsal on the day of the show. —Tanya Coyle

Leader of the Pack Walter "Wolfman" Washington Hep' Me 147

A mixed bag indeed on New Orleans bluesman Walter Washington's debut album. It's sort of blues with a touch of funk, but the "touch" is more like a push at times, which in turn turns into a shove. The result is an album that can best be described as "today's blues." On most tracks Walter sings and plays powerfully, with some traces of originality.

The album's opener, "Get On Up," is a catchy funk tune, incorporating whistles and even a wolf howling! But it wears thin near the end of its seven minutes. Walter gets down to the blues business on "You Got Me Worried" and "Sure Enough It's You," both above average performances with snappy horn arrangements and strong guitar breaks from Washington. "Lonely Days" closes side one in a Teddy Pendergrass mellow vein. Ho-hum.

Side two finds Walter in a George Benson/Wes Montgomery groove on "Good and Juicy." In between the annoying synthesizer, Walter manages some fine jazz guitar stylings. On "Girl Don't



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You Ever Leave Me," Walter concentrates on his singing on this modernistic ballad. Nice but really not very memorable, since the tune is done straight with little emotion.

"Nobody's Fault But Mine" is a shade on the rougher side and Walter really lets loose. The lyrics are ear-catching and Walter seems more comfortable on this up-tempo blues. The album closes with the old Bill Dogget classic, "Honky Tonk." It's hard to do a bad version of this and of course he doesn't let us down, getting in a few of his own licks to maintain an interesting groove.

Washington deserves a second look if you're into contemporary blues of the 1981 vintage. Interestingly this is Walter's first recorded effort in over ten years.

—Almost Slim

The Front At The Beat Exchange September 5, 1981

Comprised of artist/musician Skip Bolen, bassist Larry Armstrong, drummer Bruce Raeburn and guitarist Carlos Boll (the latter three being former members of the now-defunct Driveways), along with Star Irvine and Mike Staats handling the visuals, The Front is without a doubt one of the most progressive groups in New Orleans.

Three 10' by 20' projection screens formed a semicircle around the stage, with three slide projectors and one 16mm movie projector providing the visual content. Opening the show with Bolen's "Kill That Bad Art," the screens suddenly came to life with assorted slides, photographs and graphics, all in exploding color. The visuals were synchronized with the songs, as in the second number, "Pink Zone"; great splashes of pink with abstract blobs and slashes of black and white provided the stimulation of seeing the music as well as hearing it.

Although the visuals are half of the performance, the music itself, all composed by Bolen, could easily stand alone. With the tight professionalism of Armstrong, Raeburn and Boll, plus some improvisation during a couple of the numbers by Spencer Livingston (of Ballistics fame) on sax and Bill Loner on synthesizer, the sound was fresh and, as they say down in Houma, slightly "ah-vant gaud, dahling." From the rocking "Conversing" to the jazz/pop sound of "Static Mind," it was never boring. The band has one ballad, "Candy," an interesting contrast to the fast-paced beat of the rest of their material.

Unfortunately, there were some technical problems that made some of the vocals inaudible, and similar difficulties with the visuals that necessitated having blank screens the last half of the performance; not an uncommon occurrence, especially considering it was only the

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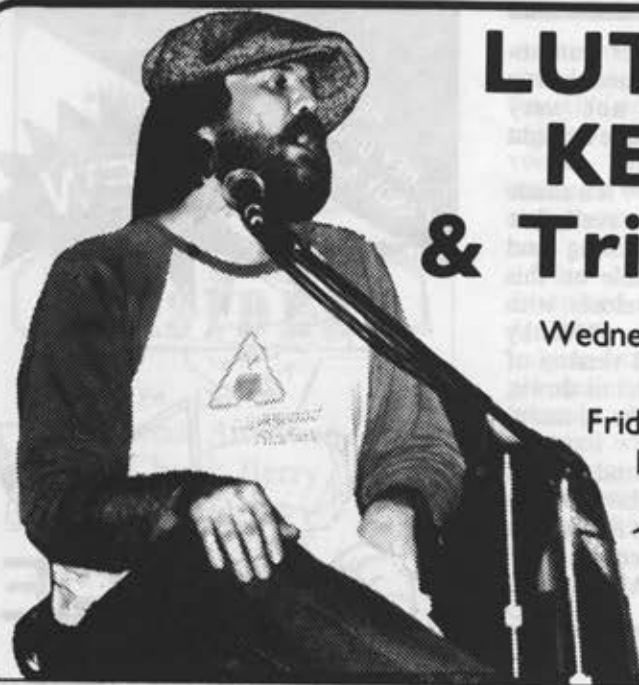
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group's third appearance, the first at a generic (no-name) party in Bolen's studio back in June, and the second at Jimmy's on the Fourth of July.

The Front is attempting to pave the way for more creative music forms in New Orleans, and anyone who is interested in the unique stimulation provided by this group will want to be a part of it.

Let's hope we see more of The Front in the future.
—Tanya Coyle

Tattoo You Rolling Stones RS 16052

When the band often called "The Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Band in the World" decides to get down to playing rock 'n' roll, it's definitely time to start celebrating. Instead of fooling around with slightly pop versions of other musical genres, the Stones have gone back to doing what they do best — rocking down, with that occasional snatch of soul/R&B blended in.

To begin with, the music is much, much better than at least the last half-decade's worth of Stones tunes. Within the context of real rock, an elegant variety is achieved, even though no single song stands out. Unlike *Emotional Rescue*, *Tattoo You* seems a solid, whole entity: no gimmicks, no weak spots or throwaways, less affectation. You can dance to it, you can listen to it, you can do all kinds of other nice things to it.

Jagger's voice isn't getting any less burned out, and some of the squeaky chorus-type background vocals are annoying, but a couple of numbers on the second side show that he still has that touch, that ability to caress a vocal with a switchblade edge that is his trademark.

Nor do the lyrics have that tone of clever rudeness ("You're such an actor you don't need acting school" just seems flat); perhaps it is appropriate that the song I liked most musically, "Slave," is the one I liked least vocally. But at least the words aren't so contrived and superficial, and their simplicity can be a disguised virtue on tunes like "Black Limousine." Wonder of wonders, women even appear in a non-sexual role in one tune, "Waiting on a Friend," a classy song that even NOW would approve of.

But the music, the music — it's just fine to hear the Stones getting down and doing it again. The rhythm section is as tight as ever, the guitars ride along in style, and Rollins' sax elevates several passages to classic Stones levels.

I really like this album (and was prepared not to) and beyond doubt it is a major pleasure to say that about a Stones album. It's hard for a long time rock 'n' roller to go around putting them down — I hated myself for a week after reviewing *Some Girls* — but no such problem with *Tattoo You*. The greatest living rock 'n' roll band lives on.
—Keith Twitchell

Quarter Note

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Fri 10/2 Savage White
Sat 10/3 Interpol
Wed 10/7 Vendetta w/Blitz
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Fri 10/9 Aura
Sat 10/10 Amethyst
Wed 10/14 Vendetta w/Export
Thurs 10/15 Penny Lane
Fri 10/16 Melange
Sat 10/17 Persia (N.O. #1 Rock n' Roll)

Wed 10/21 Amethyst
Thurs 10/22 Persia (N.O. # Rock n' Roll)
Fri 10/23 Oz
Sat 10/24 Vendetta
Wed 10/28 Vendetta
Thurs 10/29 Amethyst
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The Sheiks have signed a major record deal with an LP due out around January. Tracks were done at Seasaint, produced by Skip Godwin and arranged by Wardell Querzeque. The band has been touring Chicago and the Midwest. Lead singer Michael O'Hara was recently married here in New Orleans with his minister father (who by the way is Chuck Berry's minister) flying in from St. Louis to officiate.

Fingers Taylor, harmonica player for Alabama's most famous working musician (Jimmy Buffett, of course), is planning to move to New Orleans. Welcome . . . Looking for good music in the afternoon? The Businessmen, playing their own original tunes, can be found at the Old Opera House on afternoons from 2:30-7:30 Mondays through Fridays.

Performance Magazine is planning to come to town in November to check out the musical scene here for a big spread on New Orleans in one of its later issues . . . Opening for the Men In Black were the Sponges, with Rick Connick (Harry's other son). They're a new band specializing in Sixties music . . . The Beat Exchange is planning to show films starting in October. Some of the titles of the films: Marcel Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema*; Will Hindle's *Chinese Fire Drill*; Hans Richter's *Ghosts Before Midnight*; *Metropolis*; and Andy Warhol's *Chelsey Girls*.

WWNO's new jazz program on Wednesdays at 11:30 pm, "Jazz Tonight," is a collection of contemporary

American improvisational jazz music hosted by David Delegator . . . also on Wednesday nights, at midnight, WTUL is featuring "Basement Tapes" with scenes from movies such as *Brave New World*, narrated by Aldous Huxley, and excerpts from the *African Queen*.

Tony McGill, with IRS Records in Pearl, Miss., has recorded Gene Autry's classic "Back in the Saddle Again." Jackie Thompson, Pearl's president, has also signed Grammy award winner Glen Sutton as McGill's producer. Look for a single from the duo soon . . . Tijonne Reyes cut her new single, "I Haven't Found Him," at Ultrasonic last month. To be released on Blue Chip Records, the disc features Harold Moser doing the string arrangements on Chamberlain string synthesizer.

Ron Cuccia's second album, *Music from the Big Tomato*, has been released in England by Armageddon Records . . . The Look will be Texas bound October 18-31, doing 12 gigs in 14 days including visits to Austin, Houston, Nachidoches, Dallas, then on to the West Coast in November . . .

The Sound Doctor has signed a recording contract with Zoo York Records, owned by John Hammond. The first release will be a 45 entitled "Oh, Jane" with "I've Got A Disease" on the flip. An album, *The Sound Doctor/Alive and Well* containing 10 songs, will be released soon after. All of the tunes were recorded here in Louisiana at the Sound Doctor Studios, Sea-Saint and Royal Sheild.

030 Flash is in the studio working on a soon-to-be-released single, "On the Street" . . . From the guy who brought you Vinyl Solution's *No Questions, No Answers* (the same guy who brought you 030 Flash, for that matter), a new album to be released in the near future, entitled *Edge of Disaster* . . . Shell Shock has a new single on the proverbial shelves — "My Brain is Jelly"/"Moviemaker" . . . T.T. and the Toxic Shock will make its

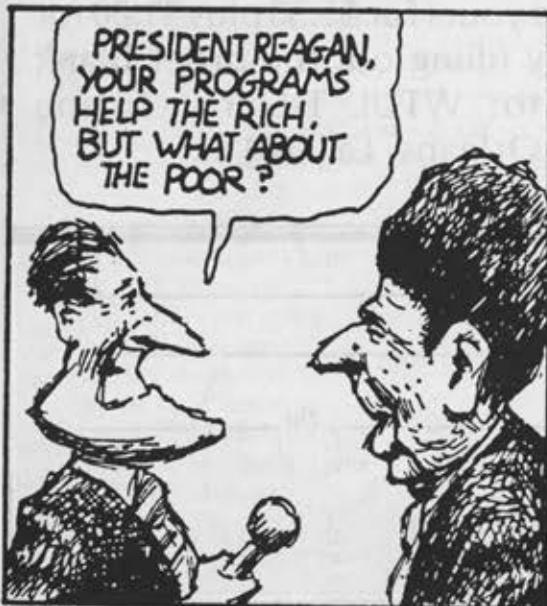
debut soon featuring Nancy, Suzie, Lydi and Tammy on vocals, with Stevie from that once-upon-a-time group, the Normals, haunting the guitar work.

Louisiana blues and zydeco accordionist Stanley "Buck Wheat" Dural has recently returned home from tours of Jamaica, Europe, and California. Buck is due for a new album release very soon on Blues Unlimited records . . .

Linda Ronstadt has been in the studio working on songs by some New Orleans artists, including Lee Dorsey and Aaron Neville. One of the titles in question is "The Price of Love." You should know, Linda . . . The Third Dimension, in Chateau Estates, has changed hands. Rumor is there'll be some surprises after reorganization time . . .

Erstwhile buggy driver and blues harmonica specialist J. Monque'd recently got one of those good deal phone calls with a buzz from a Madagascar guitarist offering eight weeks in Paris and Milano as a sideman, at a nightly fee comparable to what Monk's whole band would make in town. Monk was last seen with Eurail pass in hand and a new sleeked-back hairstyle, ready to conquer the continent . . . The Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble was the subject of filming at the Maple Leaf recently. The independent project, filmed by Becky Butler and produced by Berkeley (Cal.) inventor William Roverol, includes interviews in and about the Tulane jazz archives. The project is directed at cable television . . .

The Dream Palace is featuring Chuck Easterling's 16-piece jazz orchestra every Sunday night — a nice way to top off a Sunday afternoon at the flea market. The DP, complete with a new air conditioning system and new soundproofing, is ready for action this fall . . . Export, a band you'll find at the Dream Palace on occasion, is expermenting with digital recording, a method that gives a very authentic "live" sound. Look for a 45 from the band soon using this spaceage technique.



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