

# Blues~Link 3



January/February 1974

25p



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# Blues-Link

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## editorial

This issue sees the departure of John Stiff and Frank Sidebottom from the editorial staff due to personal commitments and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all the work that they have put in. We aren't losing them altogether as both Frank and John will continue to contribute to *Blues-Link*.

Our Address Listing for 1974 is being compiled and if you wish to be included please send your name, address, 'phone, age, and special interests to us as soon as possible.

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# Chicago Blues Festival

## Interview

**John Stretton and Bob Fisher**

The blues artists to be seen in this country today are almost all in the capable hands of Jim Simpson's *Big Bear* organisation. More than any other promoter in the field, Simpson concentrates on bringing the same acts in fairly regularly, but each one of his twice yearly concert packages has with it some newcomers. The tour which was around during October featured Snooky Pryor and Homesick James plus regular U.K. performer Johnny Mars and The Sunflower Boogie Band. In addition there was Eddie Taylor, Big John Wrencher and white pianist Erwin Helfer. All will hopefully return.

Backstage at the Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham, most of the artists were able to talk freely in a relaxed atmosphere.

For Eddie Taylor it was a return to England after an absence of some 5 years when he toured with Hooker, T-Bone and his once constant sidekick Jimmy Reed, for an *AJBF* tour. He now works mainly on the west coast, with a band featuring Sam Lay and two white musicians, sporadically recording for Frank Scott's *Advent* label.

*"I'd been going all over the country you know, I've no special place in Chicago, I quit. Advent just called me up and kept on bothering me. I was working on the West Coast, Santa Barbera, Los Angeles with my own band"*

Before the *Advent* album he hadn't recorded acoustically, but even then it didn't really work out as he had wished.

*"I'll tell you the guitar I was given to play on that album. It was a bad guitar, the strings were set in something like H and it was hard to play, but that's how I started in Mississippi, by myself. I had a chance to record in Mississippi with the guy who cut Joe Hill Louis and Walter Horton . . . er . . . Sam Phillips, yeah that's him, but I didn't cos I had a good job driving trucks."*

Eddie was born in Benard, Mississippi, on Jan 29th 1923, to a noticeably non-musical family.

*"It was people like Charlie Patton, Son House, Roosevelt Sykes and Robert Johnson I heard. But I didn't have to buy their records because I'd be under the house listening. See, in the country in those days they'd give parties after 12, leave town and go out to the parties. I was too little to go inside, so I'd go under the house and sit all night listening, it'd sound so good. I was 8 or 9 when I started playing. I started around '33 and went pro in '38. My mother didn't bother me, she even ordered me a guitar from Sears Roebuck. I didn't get whupped when I'd leave home, cos, when I come back I always brought some money over."*

*"I got to Chicago in '49. I had my own band with Snooky Pryor in those early days, also with Floyd Jones we worked back and forth with one another, till I got together with Jimmy Reed. Snooky's here but Floyd Jones he isn't playing much anymore. He goes out of town every once in a while. We could still play together cos he knows what I'm doing and I know what he's doing. I'd like to work regularly with him, he's a good guy."*

*"I wasn't with Vee Jay from the start, Jimmy was and so were The Spaniels (VJ 100 Jimmy Reed "Roll and Rhumble", VJ 101 The Spaniels "Baby It's*



Eddie Taylor Photo Alan Johnson

*You'/'Bounce'')but was on most of his recordings except 'Found My Baby' (Leadbitter/ Slaven list him as present on that and on VJ 100, which makes his comment open to doubt). As well as my own and Jimmy's, I was on records by Morris Pejoe, Elmore James and Snooky and Floyd Jones. "*

Eddie claims to have no style of his own and forced the point quite strongly:

*"I play the same way Robert Nighthawk did, but I do what he did with a slide, with my fingers. You take me, I don't have no style of my own. I take this guys and that guys mix it up a little and put a little me in there. Anyone who says they got their own style is a liar, I don't care who they are. "*

*"One thing that'll bother me is if the music ain't right, this music over here is bothering the hell out of me (Homesick and Snooky). It ain't right, I can't play good here. I think it's all very nice (referring to the UK tour) it's just the amps. Now Lippman, you know in Germany, they rent amplifiers, they got a good sound. These here are good but I can't get the tone I want, you just have to go ahead and do the best you can. I don't like to get angry about nothing, but I can't play the music I want, these guys over here don't understand what I want. "*

At this point a row of some proportions broke out, as John Wrencher chastised Eddie for being 'unprofessional' in his outspokenness about other musicians. Wrencher being a good time singer out for the fun of it and Eddie being a 'pro' and a perfectionist told him in no uncertain terms by retorting that if John had worked as long and as hard

as he had in clubs and on package tours, he might understand more.

*"What do you know about the road, you've never toured like me. Day in day out with people fucking in the same room waking up finding someone pissing in your face. Everbody knows about musicians on the road and playing live (meaning us) they do, or they wouldn't ask these questions. I seen it all and I know that this ain't right . . ."*

You may gather from all this that Eddie was difficult to talk with and many questions just received 'Yes/No' answers in quick fire fashion. The subject of Jimmy Reed brought little response. Did he still work with Jimmy?

*"Lordy, No."*

But he did follow through with a little more.

*"He don't drink anymore, you know. Nothin' but Pepsi Cola now. It's an insult to offer him a drink of alcohol, he's back like he was in the 50's. I don't work with him, no, because I worked with him 27 years you know (?) and it worried me — gave me ulcers."*

Despite his perfectionist qualities and criticisms, he is a fine performer and to the untoured ear he sounds excellent, blending in with his UK support extremely well. Don't let anything he's said put you off seeing him, he's really just too critical of himself and others. In fact, he said a lot more, but in fairness to him the tape was switched off during the heated words. Apart from the *Advent* material, and whatever he may record for *Big Bear*, there is nothing of his work available despite the fact that all his *Vee Jay* solo work could fit neatly on an album. So, start writing to *President Records* who hold the rights to *Vee Jay* and get them to issue a *Joy Special*. If you're interested in The Spaniels who Eddie mentioned, try the three volumed "Good Ole Rock And Roll" at 94p each, which features much of their work. If *President* had their ear to the ground, they could have had it out to coincide with the tour and sold it at the shows. The ways of the record biz don't come easy to understand . . .!

Big John Wrencher, or One Arm John Wrencher, is altogether a different artist. Not a superstar, in the comparative sense of Eddie Taylor, but a simple Juke and street performer who only has one track available (that is, if we don't count the bootleg album in the States on the *Barrelhouse* label) on a *Testament* album of 1964 called "I'm Going To Detroit".

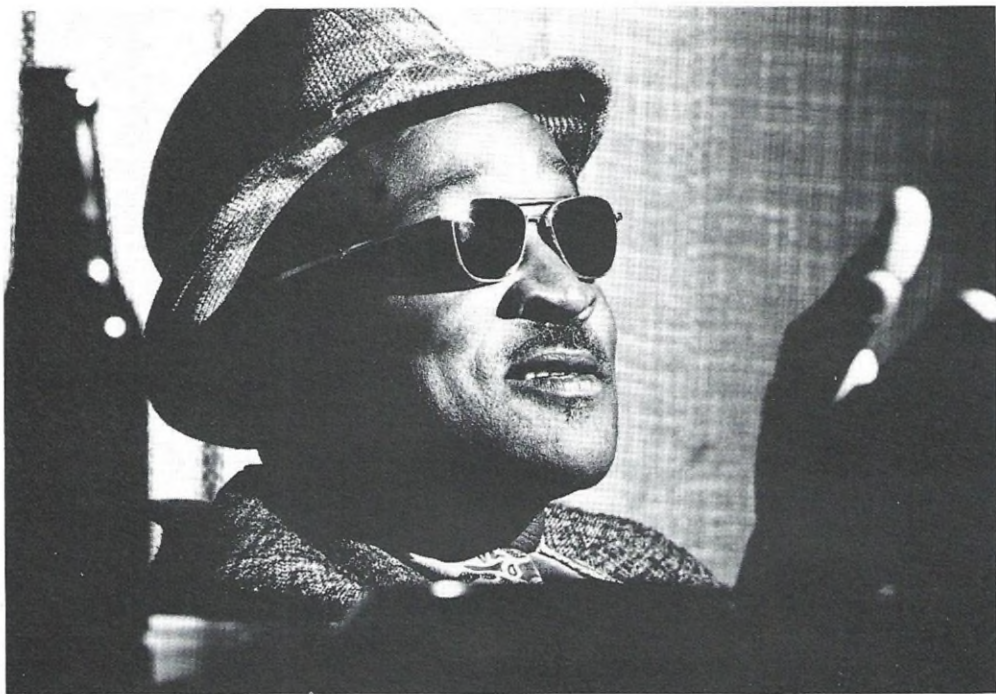
He was born in 1924 and had a fairly standard start in music.

*"A friend of mine, Sidney, he used to play harp at house parties and I'd follow him around. Finally, I said I'll buy myself one too. I couldn't play, but finally I hit a tune and learned to push and pull it. I was 12 then and when I got to be grown I'd go where the bands were and let them see what I could do. I always thought I had a wonderful voice, I had sung in church and I'd make the sisters jump and shout and the deacons had to hold 'em. The first star I ever played with was Robert Nighthawk, after that Sonny Boy (Rice Miller, you know). I never had to pay to get in clubs, they all knew me and let me in free. I used to be a little shy, never lift my head up when I played, bashful like, and they got a little home brew, like they make in the south, give me a couple of shots to build me up and I'd be okay. Soon I found I didn't need it after awhile."*

*"My Auntie had a couple of buildings in Chicago and asked me if I wanted to go to live there, so I went. I got a job at General Screw, a factory that makes parts nuts and bolts and stuff, then started playing on Maxwell Street. I still play every Sunday, I don't have to, but a lot of my friends are there still. It's changed. They pull all the buildings down, and colleges and apartment blocks*

One Arm John Wrencher Photo Alan Johnson





*have come up, but people haven't forgot Jew town, it ain't original, but you can still buy all the same cheap second-hand stuff like it's the same thing."*

*"John Lee Granderson, he was with me three weeks ago, and Johnny Young, also Shakey Horton, everybody still playing."*

It seemed indelicate to bring up the obvious question of his lost arm, but he answered with delight.

*"In a car wreck in a little town called Mount Bayou (phonetic) Miss. I was visiting my mother. I drove 700 miles from Chicago. I was okay but on the return I fell asleep at the wheel. I was playing again the next day though. I never gave up. It cut my arm clean off and left it in the highway. Then I walked 2½ miles to a girlfriend and picked up my arm and brought it on to Clarksdale. When the ambulance men come with stretchers, I was in bed smoking, so I drove back in front with the guys. I was in hospital for three days only. For a while I still had pain at night. As you know, fever rises at night and that's how it was."*

Although Leadbitter/Slaven only lists the *Testament* track, he has recorded more.

*"I also recorded for Mr. Shelton, 4 or 5 things, but he ain't put them out. (Shelton owns the Ja Wees/Daran label and distribution set up. He was first to record the Chilites and Magic Slim. Wrencher's material, obvious unbeknown to him, is packaged and ready but not yet released, Daran/Ja Wes material is, or was, available through the Beacon company in the UK but it is not clear whether the label still exists. "Chicago Blues" from Shelton's label is still available in Tesco's on the Windmill label, which includes Magic Slim and others. These too could have tied in with the tour) In recording you have to*



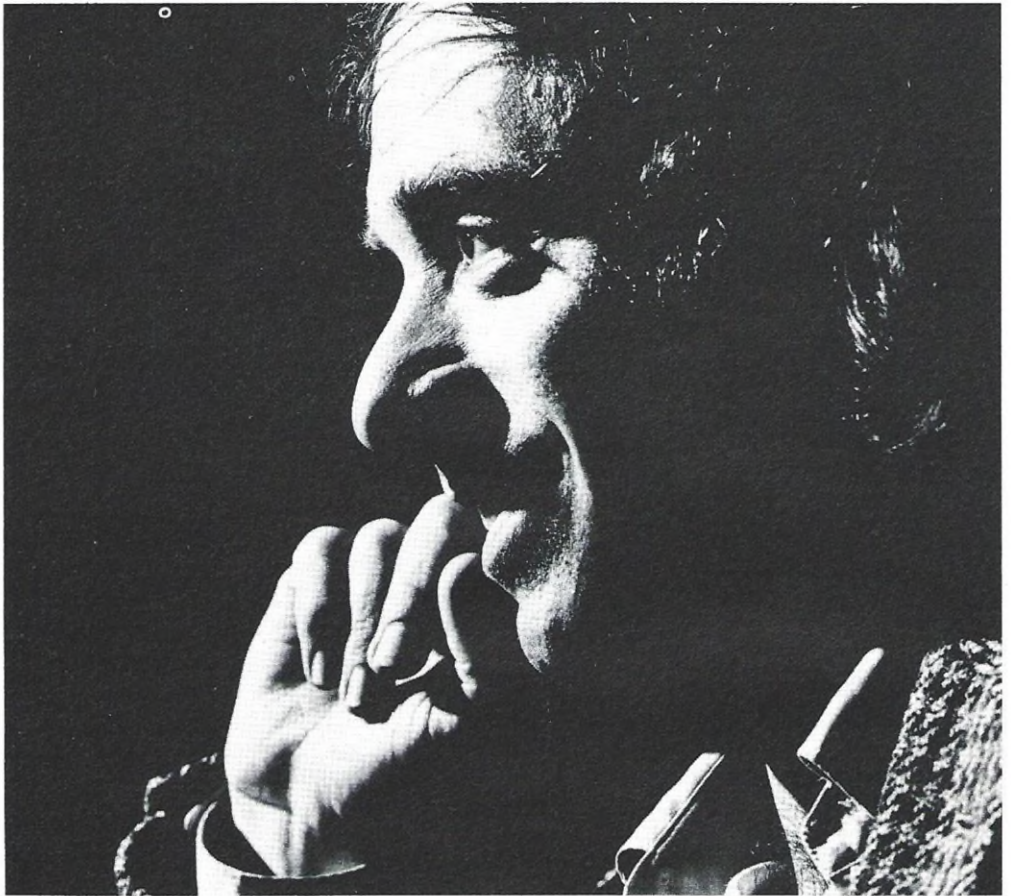
*watch them, they're all for themselves. I will not cut for anyone unless they for real. He cut me and sits on it and I went and signed for a year too, but I can sit it out, I'll go to sleep for a year. Eddie and I are talking about recording for Jim over here."*

John's description of his live work was a little confusing. It seems he still lives in Chicago but bases in Detroit and from there travels all over Michigan and into Canada. It was all something of a geographical nightmare, as we jumped from Port Huron to Tennessee and back to Chicago, but he is working a lot. On stage he puts over an exuberant performance laced with what is obviously a derivative from the old minstrel buck dancing. He has a powerful voice, and considering his arm, plays a powerful harmonica. Let's hope that James Shelton gets the material out on Wrencher, because one track for as good an artist as he, is a sin. Judging by the audience response, Big John has a good chance of emulating Lightnin' Slim's popularity with British audiences. He could well become a semi-permanent fixture on the club and college scene.

A surprising addition to the tour was Erwin Helfer; surprising as he is white, contrary to Jim Simpson's usual policy. Assiduous readers of *Living Blues* will have seen the name before; but for the uninitiated, he is a youthful looking 37-year old, who teaches blues and classical piano in Chicago. He has cut several records, and has produced blues LP's for his own label, *Tone Records*. In a slow drawl he sketched his life.

*"The first deep musical experience I had was when I went up to Maxwell Street as a child, and saw some skiffle bands. I still didn't pay much attention, though: blues and gospel were on the periphery of my life, because they were not on the radio a great deal. When I was in High School, I made a habit of going to South Side, and meeting people like Clarence Lofton. I was too young to visit the clubs really, but I went to a few funky places with Mama Yancey, when no white people ever went there. I got a good education in these places (!). One time a guy came up to me, I never drank, and he said, "What the hell are you doing in here?", you know, real rough. So I said, "I like the music", and he really dug that, and started buying me cokes."*

*"What always bothered me though, was the racism in blues on the side of white people. Like Eddie Taylor has two guys in his band, and he and Sam Lay have trained them, and now they're as good as any blacks. One's a guitar player. Al Hite — not of Canned Heat fame — and the other is a bass player John Salter. Eddie is a perfectionist, and I dig that, and John (Wrencher) just wants to enjoy himself, and I dig that too. A lot of young white blues fans, if they hear about some black dude who's a real drunk and who pisses in his pants, they think that real neat. But they wouldn't put up with that with a white person. If that isn't racism, I'd like to know what is. They expect blacks to act this way, and it's just fucking nasty as far as I'm concerned; and I say, I think the more sources you draw from, the better you play. Where would alot of black jazz players like Cecil Taylor be if they couldn't draw from a white influence? Scott Joplin couldn't have written his rags if he hadn't have known European classical music. The whole thing is, we're in the world together and the divisions have got to stop somewhere. Living Blues have written a lot of very complimentary things about me, but they wrote this racist editorial; which disturbed me, and I sent a letter, that they wouldn't publish. Thing is, it didn't protect white people trying to play the blues; what it is, is just asking people to listen. That's the only way to understand anything." (Our sentiments too — eds).*



Erwin Helfer Photo Alan Johnson

Snooky Pryor was tired and he had declined an interview (probably thinking that his well documented life was going to be plumbed again). Later he began talking in conversation, and the tape was switched on.

*"I wrote "Telephone Blues" (cut with one other on his first ever session, with Moody Jones and sometimes issued as "Calling Up My Baby Blues") in service in Japan, thinking about my little wife I left behind; that's when I wrote the number. When I came back to the United States in 1947, I recorded it and I made the first post-war blues in Chicago. Not too much of a blues scene then, only house parties. There were none too many clubs for bluesmen to work, but the house parties were going pretty strong."*

*"I was not doing anything but playing music, as I had not long come out of Service in 1945. It was my own idea to record; I had this in mind. As a kid I wanted to do recording. I started playing when I was 8/9 years old. I had a real lot of trouble with my parents. My father, he was a minister, and he didn't want me to play music; to get my rehearsals, I had to go to my eldest brother's house. He (father) figured it was a sin to play blues. He didn't know what the blues were, but he had them himself."*

Why the two-year gap to the next recording?

*“Well the record company didn't want to give you the break; they didn't want to pay the price. But I wasn't going to do it for nothing. After this was recorded, I had plenty of working jobs until 1954. I had Chicago sewn up for blues with my band. Floyd Jones was in that, and Moody Jones. We had a drummer, but he was not too much on drums; we called him Porkchop. So I had this record out, and it was going big, and so I was going out on the gigs. I even recorded before Muddy Waters did (must have been close!) there was not too much competition from Little Walter that time. He was recording, but I was more famous you understand, before I retired the first time. I wasn't afraid of him. He was good, but Sonny Boy Williamson II was my favourite. He was the second man I ever heard play harp when I was young. But I guess my playing was inside me; and I wanted to do this anyway. I never had no teacher. I like the sound of the harp; and in those days it was kinda difficult to buy a guitar. Money was scarce in those days.”*



This is his second time over here in a short time. What are his thoughts about this?

*“(I feel) about the same as before. I don't care for music like I used to. It used to be my heart. I guess I got older, and I retired, and I didn't want to be away from home too long. I've got quite a big family. They're pretty sad when I come over here, and the first time I thought they'd die (laughs). My wife and they not want me in the music world. I'd been with them 12 years before I came back into the music business. My sons play guitar, but I don't encourage them. I didn't even have my own LP's in the house, until about three years ago. I know what a*

*life it was. They just play for themselves."*

*"(Homesick) he had to persuade me from 1970 to when I came over here. We've been playing together for some 30 years (!?!), and I guess she felt kind lonesome without me. I decided I'd come back for a while to see what it's like. Everything's been working out fine. I likes to travel these countries. The people are very warm. I like to meet 'human' people"*

On the subject of living elsewhere . . .

*"Well, that's where I was put. I would prefer to stay where I am until times change. There's still a lot of prejudice; a person of my ability meets it anywhere. But I have Biblical insight, so it would profit me nothing to leave America before the time. I would prefer to live in the land of Canaan, Palestine, Jerusalem; my God-given land. But not with the present troubles, that's why I say wait for the time. There will be a time when there won't be troubles. These things I understand, and you can't rock the boat before time. I wish all my people could wake up and find their way and learn something about themselves, and their ancestors. We don't know anything about our God-given land. Now, everybody has his land except the Negro. I searched Biblical history; I searched the Bible; I searched Encyclopaedias; and I never heard of a Negro land yet. There's something wrong with that. I must try and find my land; and I have come to the conclusion it is Canaan. I am one of the lost tribe. That I know, and I can prove it. Most people don't understand."*

Does he play in Chicago much?

*"No, not much. College dates and tours like this. I don't do too much of anything. I'm a union carpenter by trade. I contracts my own jobs. I work as I please. If I want to contract about \$400/500 a week, I can do that. Then I have my own farm and home. I have two homes, all of which is paid for. I can afford to kinda take it easy!"*

The conversation then flowed through several minor matters, including Floyd Jones being sick, with high blood pressure, and age, but he might be fit enough to come over (!); he (Snooky) finds people warmer in England than in Europe; and Jim Simpson works him pretty hard, only one day off on the last tour!

We would like to thank Jim Simpson for the courtesy and opportunity of making this interview; the artists for their politeness and time; and Alan Johnson for taking the photographs.

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# Talkabout with Bob Groom

Anyone who has read "*The Blues Revival*" (Studio Vista 1971) will be aware of my interest in the use of Blues themes by rock artists and the reverse process, Blues use of Rock themes. An apparent example of the latter is the fact that several verses from the Big Bopper's "It's The Truth , Ruth" (recorded 1958) also crop up in Lightnin' Slim's "Rooster Blues" (recorded 1960). It may be, however, that both derive from an earlier Blues or folk song. Can anyone comment on this? A more definite example of a Blues artist using a Rock number is Ethel McCoy's "Childhood Dream Blues" (Adelphi 1004), which is derived from Chuck Berry's Chess recording of "Childhood Sweetheart". Rock use of Blues themes occurs more frequently than the reverse process and an example of this, noted by Tony Travers, is Warren Storm's "Jailhouse Blues" (3 Year 1021), a rockabilly number which employs virtually the same lyrics as Blind Blake's "He's in the Jailhouse Now".

A chapter on reptiles in folklore by J. K. Strecker in "Rainbow In The Morning" (Texas Folklore Society 1926);(reprinted in a new edition by *Folklore Associates* 1965), explains the meaning of two rather obscure terms which crop up now and then in country Blues. Many readers will know J. D. Short's tremendous "Snake Doctor Blues" (Vocalion 1704) which evokes the eerie atmosphere of a Southern cypress swamp. A 'snake doctor' is, surprisingly enough, a dragonfly! An old myth credits it with being able to heal a snake's wounds and return it to life. The Tiger Salamander, which can grow to almost a foot long and is plentiful on the West Texas Plains, is, in its axolotl (i.e. larval) stage, known as a 'water dog'. The adult salamander often uses prairie dog (marmot) holes. No doubt the change in form part-way through its life cycle accounts for the salamander's having become an object of superstition.

Forthcoming *Arhoolie* releases include: 1068 Fred McDowell, "Keep Your Lamp Trimmed And Burning", 1071 Dave Alexander "The Dirt On The Ground", and 2020 Rice Miller "King Biscuit Time". 2020 is a remastered and repackaged version of *Blues Classics 9*, which reissues 16 of Miller's *Trumpets*. Its appearance in the main *Arhoolie* reissue series follows the purchase of the original masters from the Globe Music Company.

The *N.B.B.O.* (Holland) plans to publish two books, the first on Big Joe Williams by Leon Bruin and the second on Piano Blues and Boogie Woogie by *N.B.B.O.* secretary Martin Van Olderen.

Latest L.P. from *Delmark* is "Sidewinder" by J. B. Hutto and His Hawks (DS 636). Its issue coincided with Hutto's appearance at the Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival 1973 on September 7.

The autumn *Bookseller* carries an advert for the first two volumes in the *Eddison Books Blues* series, edited by Tony Russell. Mike Rowe's "Chicago Blues" and "Right On" by Michael Haralambos were originally scheduled for the *Studio Vista/November Books Blues Paperbacks* series, discontinued in 1972.

Word has it that Memphis Slim is coming to live in England, reinforcing our small complement of resident Bluesmen.

John Hogg has been located again in California (odd that he was allowed to drop out of sight following the April, 1960 interview/recording session by Chris Strachwitz and Grayson Mills — reported in *Eureka* 3). John, who was raised in Greenville, Texas, (north-east of Dallas) and greatly influenced by the late Black Ace, is now 60. Hopefully this time a John Hogg L.P. will be issued. Perhaps we will then be able to hear his reputedly brilliant (but never issued) "Denver Blues".

# Young Gifted And Underrated

Shirley Caesar, ex-singer of "The Caravans", has not had the success outside the USA she deserves. In Europe Mahalia Jackson is still the archetype of Gospel, the same as Big Bill Broonzy was to Europeans in the fifties as far as the blues were concerned. In the fifties few could imagine that hundreds of other bluesmen were around, playing in different styles. Remember how dear old Muddy Waters was hissed at and spurned because he played an electric guitar in front of 'purists'? Let's hope that doesn't mean it will be another ten years before Gospel artists in general are performing in Europe regularly!

Born thirty-three years ago, Shirley Caesar has already walked a long way on the Gospel road. She is one of the few soloists illustrating the transition era between the old singers ("the sons of the Depression" as Tony Heilbut calls them in his book) who suffered a hard life, working since their childhood in fields or as servants until music became a way to earn their living, and the new generation of singers — educated, proud to be black, on their way to complete freedom, with much more sympathy for soul singers than for James Cleveland, Marion Williams, Dorothy Love Coates or Alex Bradford. Black people's life is still difficult today, of course, but it can't be compared with pre-war days.

Shirley takes her inspiration from the old masters, but introduces 'soul' and up-to-date harmonies in her singing, enough to please both old and young audiences.

Her father was a local Gospel singer of fame in his home-town of Durham, North Carolina, but he died when Shirley was only twelve years old — leaving a wife and twelve children to feed. To support her family, Shirley began to professionally sing what she had learned from her father, performing only on week-ends as she was still in school. A very hard, bittering life for such a young girl. Known as "Baby Shirley". she was very popular in the area and in mid-fifties she formed a duo with a Gospel preacher — they travelled and performed in the Carolinas and Virginia.

In 1955 she was involved in a racial incident where she came near to death, which contributes to the bitter aggressiveness still found in her way of singing and behaviour.

She then studied for two years to be a secretary, but, in 1958, she had an opportunity to join Albertina Walker's famous group "The Caravans", where Albertina shared the lead with the great Inez Andrews. For Shirley it was the realisation of a dream — to join a professional group. As a permanent member of "The Caravans", she learned a lot from the group's leads, much older and trained top artists. She discovered she could preach too and, in 1961, she recorded a sermonette and became an Evangelist, earning money by herself during "Caravans'" vacations.

She became, more and more, an occasional member of "The Caravans" and, in 1966, she finally went her own way (. . . and it was the end of "The Caravans", the whole group splitting up!).

Shirley then devoted herself to evangelical work and it's worth noting that she earned more money in a few months of preaching than from all of her previous singing!

However, when Choirs became popular she decided to try her luck in the recording studios again and she recorded, in 1967, for *Hob* company. Her first LP, backed by the Young People's Choir Of The Institutional Church of God In Christ from Brooklyn, was a big seller on the Negro market. It was followed, the same year, by two more albums on the same label (see discography), the third being an All-Gospel Stars session recorded 'live' in Cornerstone Baptist Church of Philadelphia with Reverend Douglas Fulton and The Original Gospel Singers Ensemble, Evangelist Naomi Smith and The Heavenly Dewdrops Of Philadelphia, all backing Shirley Caesar.



Shirley Caesar And The Caesar Singers Courtesy Bob Sacre

Her singing is very special and her style is her own, filled with blue notes and rhythmic effects (repetition of consonants, heavy breathing . . . ) and full of religious conviction. She often alternates songs and sermonettes where she has close contacts with the public and members of congregations, going into the middle of them chatting and singing, and borrowing handkerchieves, bags or rings to illustrate her words . . . . Thereon she sings old-timey hymns with a modern approach, using hip choirs or accompanists to back her, which seems a very fruitful procedure because it gains her acclaim from both old and young.

Since 1970, Shirley Caesar has travelled with her own group, "The Shirley Caesar Singers". She still works hard, is a star among black communities, and her name in the programme brings a lot of people to any Gospel concert.

Let's hope that European promoters won't wait too long before booking Shirley and her group. It's very frustrating to hear such an artist only on records and not live!

### Shirley Caesar Discography

Below is a discography of Miss Caesar's recordings under her own name which is published by courtesy of Cedric J. Hayes. Miss Caesar recorded extensively with "The Caravans", but space would not allow the printing of this part of her recording career.

S. Caesar & The Institutional Choir. voc. acc. by The Young People's Choir of the Institutional Church of God In Christ, Brooklyn, New York; Dores White, lead voc. (-); Gloria White, lead voc. (-2); Hampton Carlton, pno; Alfred White, org. New York, 1967.

I'll Go	Hob LP 266
He Holdeth The Reins (choir only + (-1))	—
I'm Glad I Found Jesus	—
Rapture	—
When Trouble Comes (choir only + (-2))	—
You May Not Believe It	—

Choose Ye This Day	—
Jesus Is All	—
Don't Be Afraid	—
Waiting On The Promise Of Jesus	—
Battle Field	—

Voc. acc. as above, except Anne Bell Caesar, voc. added on (-1) only. New York, 1967.

Tear Your Kingdom Down	Hob LP 278
My Testimony	—
Long Way To Go To Be Like The Lord	—
Power Lord	—
You Must Live Right	—
Take Up Your Cross	—
Everyday Brings About A Change (-1)	—
He Touched Me	—
I've Been Saved	—
God Is Not Dead Part 1	—
God Is Not Dead Part 2	—
Give Me Strength, Oh Lord	—
Looking For A Home	—

Voc. acc Rev. Douglas Fulton & The Original Gospel Singers Ensemble (-1); Evangelist Naomi Smith & The Heavenly Dewdrops Of Philadelphia (-2); Church Choir only (-3); Gwen Carter, lead voc. (-4); Herman Stevens, org. (-5). Cornerstone Baptist Church, Philadelphit, October 14, 1967.

Introduction	Hob LP 281
Till I Die (-1)	—
I Can Tell It To The Lord (-1)	—
One More Day's Work For Jesus (-3, -4)	—
It Is Well (-1)	—
Jordan River (-1, -5)	—
Hold Out (-2, -3)	—
Sermonette (-1)	—
Comfort Me (-1)	—
Praising Him (-1)	—

Voc. acc. Anne Belle Caesar, voc. (-1). 1967.

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear	Hob LP 281
Oh, What A Wonderful Child	—

Note: other titles on Hob LP 281 not by this artist.

Voc. with A. B. Caesar, voc. (-1); The Progressive Baptist Church Choir Of St. Louis. 1968.

Loose That Man (-2)	Hob 196
Stranger On The Road (-1)	—

Voc. 1968.

You Must Live Right	Hob LP 291
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Note: other titles on this LP not by this artist.

Shirley Caesar and The Caesar Singers.

"Stranger On The Road"	Hob LP 299
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Evangelist Shirley Caesar and The Caesar Singers with Thompson Community Choir. 1971.

The Three Old Men	Hob HBX 2132
Amazing Grace	—
Help Me Jesus	—
Put Your Hand In The Hand	—

No details on other titles.



# Mariposa Folk Festival 73

by Dean Tudor

The Toronto Mariposa Folk Festival held its thirteenth annual gathering on Centre Island in the harbour of Toronto on July 6th, 7th and 8th, 1973. Attendance was strictly limited to eight thousand each day, and with six simultaneous concert areas there was plenty to choose from during the 168 concerts and swaps. The crowds spread out nicely, with roughly equal attendance everywhere (although, at one time there was a crowd of four thousand at one spot), cresting at the 'big name' areas, usually Murray McLaughlin, John Prine or Steve Goodman.

For the first time in many years there was not as much emphasis on the blues, and what there was here was derivative and distilled. First, the whites: John Hammond and Leon Redbone drew big crowds wherever they went. The blacks — Salome Bey, now residing in Toronto, is a jazz singer; Larry Johnson, well known to British audiences, is interpretative country blues; John Jackson will (and does) sing anything) Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup is still bitter, but was nicely offset by the freshness of the Cajun Ardoin family.

The performances were in two formats: one, a regular concert either for an hour or thirty minutes; or two, ninety minute long song swaps along a particular theme (and where six or seven singers rotate through about three tunes each).

**Concerts:** Here is the freedom for the performer to sing what he wants. The few blues concerts were very eclectic, and not too well attended. Rural blues are not in the same category as hokum, and the big names in past Mariposas have included Bukka White and Roosevelt Sykes who always drew enormous crowds because of their hilarity and double-entendres. String bands were also successful in the past (e.g. — Martin, Bogan and Armstrong) but the only such group here was the Ardoin Family. John Jackson sung much of the material available on his *Arhoolie* albums. The crowd really dug his coveralls and wide toothy grin. He had three concerts to himself. Crudup was the only performer to use an electric guitar. In many instances he looked completely blank and his repertoire was extremely limited and repetitious during his two concerts. The Ardoin Family consists of Morris, Alphonse and Gustav Ardoin, with white fiddler Doc Guidary. Alphonse (also known as Bois Sec) now leads the group with his concertina. Readers may remember senior brother Armand Ardoin from the 1920s who subsequently died in an insane asylum in 1940 (some material from this early period is on *Arhoolie's Old Timey* series, "Louisiana Cajun Music"). They were very successful at Mariposa, with the audience inclined to dance a little, and played four concerts during the three day weekend. For some strange reason there was only one concert apiece by Salome Bey and Larry Johnson, and neither was in the blues bag. Johnson was good-time music (a carryover in enthusiasm from an earlier swap), while Miss Bey was jazz-gospel. True, Miss Bey only arrived for the Sunday shows, but she had a large back-up group of drums, guitars and piano, and as soon as they belted out the first item an immediate crowd gathered for the amplified sound. She delivered some sensitive lyrics about GOD and a nine year old kid, plus other songs, but the crowd was plainly out for some good ol' sock-'em music.

**Song Swaps:** These are the most important sections of Mariposa. They grew out of

the quiet workshops that used to be held first thing in the morning, and since Mariposa eliminated the 'star system' (all performers draw scale for the period) and the evening big name concerts, they have become larger and more diversified. The idea of theme and people work as the songs are swapped and personal reminiscences recalled. Most of the blues was in these workshops, although it should be noted that yet again Mariposa has ignored the sexual aspects and the social concerns or topicalities that crop up from time to time in the blues. Crudup was at a swap hosted by well-known folkie Malvina Reynolds ("Little Boxes") on *Songmaking*: components of what goes into a song, plus musical examples. He was very nervous, but Mariposa made the mistake of not including him in the 'part two' of the swap — the other shoe — a discussion held the next day, entitled "*So You Want To Publish Your Song*". Here his knowledge of Melrose and beating his head against a brick wall would have been invaluable. As it is, check into a recent *Stereo Review* for the latest details. "*Guitar Styles*", hosted by John Cohen of N.L.C.R., included John Hammond and Larry Johnson, the latter showing off his considerable ragtime skills. The session "*Stories*" concerned narrative songs in the ballad tradition, and John Jackson was very appropriate for this as he is a great assimilator. The "*Blues*" (at last!) session, hosted by local blues guru Dick Flohil, was a catchall session run on two days. For ninety minutes Crudup, Hammond, Johnson and the Ardoin Family did their thing as the mood struck — but the blues are so rich a field that little thought is needed for selection. The Saturday, 'part two', concert ran a half-hour longer and was augmented by John Jackson and Leon Redbone. Redbone sang Rodgers' "Blue Yodel No. 9" and Jackson, still in coveralls, worked on a number of soft ballads. Johnson pretty well fell off his chair every time Redbone opened his mouth.

Without running through everything, several sessions were obviously highlights: Friday evening saw a "*Tribute To The Rev. Gary Davis*" with Larry Johnson and John Hammond (who was out in the left field: Johnson should have been there as a solo), and another "*Ballad*" session on Saturday with Jackson, along with Irish, Scottish, Southern U.S. and North African (!) vocalists. Sunday was the busiest blues day — concerts all around and swaps in one area or another. "*Religious Music*" could have had more black participation than just Saolme Bey, and it tended to be 'sacred' rather than 'gospel'. Miss Bey reappeared in a very interesting "*Men — Women*" session, dealing with the myriad ways of relating. Of course, she sang the blues while playing an electric piano.

"*Squeeze Boxes*" was, surprisingly, the only point of contact between Cajun Music and one of it's direct antecedents, Acadian Music — you would have thought that Mariposa would go out of it's way to link the two since the festival was in Canada, and it had a Cajun group in attendance. Alphonse Ardoin outplayed the rest, naturally, but then in it's traditional use the concertina is mainly rhythm anyway, and the Cajuns have gone beyond this, making it a principal instrument.

Crudup was misplaced in "*Singers And Their Sources*", for everything came from himself alone anyway, while the others stressed the folk tradition and "I learned from so-and-so". The best, and most well attended session was the "*Good Time Music*" swap. Steven Goodman, Leon Redbone, John Jackson and Larry Johnson entertained at a very high level, and Johnson could not contain himself again at the self-assured, cool delivery of Redbone, who was not fazed by anything that passed his way — not even runaway mikes. Deliberate understatement has done wonders. A stringband here may have been better, for Good Time Music is infectious. Johnson produced Blind Blake stuff, and Redbone material from the twenties and thirties (called nostalgia today).

The weather was superb (in the low nineties with breezes rolling off the lake), and Mariposa will be back next year — with more blues then, I hope. Or am I just spoiled? Ask me for a performer's list, Mr. Flohill.

# Travellin' Man

.. a brief appreciation of Roy Bookbinder.

This year, 1973, has certainly been good for Roy Bookbinder. It started with a short but very successful tour of Great Britain and throughout the year Roy's first solo album, "Travellin' Man", on the *Adelphi* label (AD 1017), has already received fifteen good mentions and in particular the album was given a 'five star' rating by *Downbeat Magazine*. In the September 2nd edition of *The New York Times*, a small headline read, "Terry and McGhee Complement Bookbinder and Kaplin at Max's", and the article went on to say, "Oddly enough the opening singer, Roy Bookbinder, shares with Terry a past association with the late Rev. Gary Davis, the gospel-blues singer and guitarist. Ordinarily, one might think it foolish for an urban white country and blues specialist to appear on the same bill with such as Terry and McGhee. But Bookbinder, accompanied by the deadpan Karl Kaplin on fiddle and banjo, has enough skill and unassertive self-confidence to make it work."

Although this has been an exceptional year for Roy, with good bookings throughout the year, he has been working steadily on the American club and college circuit for the past four years. He has appeared at most of the major clubs, including, The Gaslight Cafe, N.Y.C.; Yale University; Cafe Lena, Syracuse; Rutgers University; The Gaslight Cabaret, Fayetteville, North Carolina, and The Mouthpiece Coffee House, Providence. He has appeared with many of America's leading folk and blues artists, Reverend Gary Davis, Homesick James, Johnny Shines, Arthur Crudup, Doc Watson, John Prine, Bukka White, Paul Geremia and Dave Van Ronk. It was perhaps that latter artist, Dave Van Ronk, that first introduced Roy to the sounds of folk music in the early '60's: Roy said, "I used to listen to Dave's records from sunup to sunset, not going to classes. He was the first one that really turned me on to it. He was my first major influence but I didn't actually start to play any of his music until the Rev. Gary Davis And Roy Bookbinder Summer 72

Robert Tilling





summer of 1966 because it was quite difficult!" It was through Van Ronk's music that Roy was introduced to Blind Willie McTell, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Lemon Jefferson etc., and of course the late great Reverend Gary Davis.

It was the late Reverend Davis who had the most profound influence on both Roy's attitude to music and to life. (For anyone who has met and talked to Reverend Gary it is difficult not to be!) Roy first met Reverend Gary in 1968 after his friend Mike Katz suggested he went to Reverend Gary for lessons. Roy phoned him, met him, and within a month he left school and was on the road with him! . . . . "Reverend Davis wouldn't be there for ever and school would be." Roy, on the sleeve notes of his album relates to this time, "Shortly after I met this most influential of the East Coast blues guitarists, as he was trying to teach me one of his incredible guitar solos, he mentioned that he was leaving for Detroit the next day to begin a tour of concerts and coffee house gigs. As old Gary sat smoking a *Tiparillo*, sitting in his favourite armchair in front of his electric heater, I mentioned that I had fifty dollars and that I wouldn't mind goin' to Detroit with him. Rev. Davis chuckled a little, saying that fifty dollars couldn't get me much further than Pittsburg, Pennsylvania . . . . Detroit was great! We froze in a Chicago hotel for a week, almost crashed in a plane ride from Buffalo to Baltimore, and we had more weird things happened to us in more weird places than either of us could remember. Gary and I were both pleased that some of his music is on my record."

Reverend Davis regarded Roy as one of his best 'students', along with Larry Johnson and Woody Mann, and Sister Annie Davis still refers to him as, "... good ol'e Roy. . .". One of my fondest memories of Reverend Gary is when I was at his house in April 1972 and Roy was sat close to Gary playing Bo Carter's "Biscuits" with Gary laughing and smiling. . . . . Gary always liked a 'humorous' song!

The second half of Roy's concert tour here started in January but in fact this was his second visit to Great Britain, the first being during the winter of 1970/71. During this stay he played nearly all of the most important clubs, including, The 100 Club, London; Dundee University; Royal Folk Club, Jersey; Bedford College; The Blues Loft, High Wycombe; Emanuel College, Cambridge and The London School of Economics. He also received some good press and Ron Brown commented in *Jazz Journal*, "On this showing he's the best white bluesman I've ever heard, and if he hasn't been recorded yet, somebody ought to do it, bloody quickly!"

Soon after Roy's return back to the States after his tour in 1971 he was to record for his first solo album for Gene Rosenthal's label *Adelphi*. The title of the album "Travelin' Man" was taken from the song of that name by the Carolina blues and ex-medicine show man Pink Anderson. Roy had admired his smooth playing for a long while and in 1968 Roy set out to see if he could find Pink down in Spartanburg South Carolina. After asking around Roy finally found Pink's house (I think it was in the phone book!) and when he came to the house he found that Pink was out and would be back soon. In the mean time Roy was asked to wait on the porch. While waiting for Pink, Roy played his guitar and played a couple of Pink's songs. . . . . can you imagine the look on Pink's face while walking towards his home hearing his songs being played for all to hear! From that time on Roy and Pink have been good friends and Roy, (along with Paul Geremia), have tried to get Pink some gigs and recording dates. Last August at a coffee house named, 'Salt' in Newport, Rhode Island, Pink Anderson made his first public appearance after twenty years! and in a recent letter from Roy he briefly told me about his first gig, "He was incredible! Walked on stage for the first time in over 20 years. He did a trick with his hat!, went into a twenty minute monologue and had everyone laughing. He played for about 35 minutes, injecting funny 'one lines' between each song. He played, "In the Jailhouse Now", "Travellin' Man" and many others. Every night (4) was different with a new routine with jokes and songs we had never heard. Pink flew home and told the stewardess, 'he's paid up for Spartanburg so he didn't want to go to Cuba!'. It was his first flight."

Although Roy used one of Pink's songs on his album when he made his recording debut on the *Blue Goose* album, "These Blues Is Meant To Be Barrelhoused", (BG 2003), Roy

recorded the song, "He's In The Jailhouse Now", which is also one of Pink's favourite songs and has also been recorded by him.

Roy must be well pleased with his first solo album on *Adelphi* and as I mentioned earlier it has received at least fourteen or fifteen very fine reviews, among them;

"Bookbinder has reached tastefully back to the masters for his repertoire here, and there's not a weak tune in it. He has re-arranged all the tunes to fit his narrative style, and given them a distinctive identity all of his own." *Downbeat* July 1973

"The secret of Roy Bookbinder's appeal is a combination of his superb guitar playing, which commands instant respect, and his unaffected and un-negroid singing." *Jazz Journal*

"Roy Bookbinder is a very fine guitarist and it is a pity that many others do not take after him in the way he relates to the bluesmen that he follows. Not only does he dedicate this album to Pink Anderson, whose title cut he plays, but he has kept in constant touch with Pink and is warmly remembered by him. Bookbinder plays good, clean guitar and has well synthesized his influences." *Jazz Digest*.

I think the most obvious quality of the album is its honesty for Roy has not in anyway tried to emulate or copy note for note the songs that he has selected. It would appear that he has given the songs his own style and arrangement without losing any of the original quality or atmosphere. This is shown most effectively in his arrangement of Blind Willie McTell's, 1928 recording of, "Statesboro' Blues", where Roy has lost none of the original 'feel' but played some beautiful 'Bookbinder' instrumental breaks. For me the two highlights of the album are his selections of Little Hat Jone's, 1930 recording of, "Bye Bye Baby Blues", and Willie Harris's, 1930 recording of, "Never Drive A Stranger From Your Door". The latter is the only 'bottle neck' piece on the album and it really 'swings' and shows that Roy is equally at home using the bottleneck. Roy's version of "Poor Boy Long Ways From Home" where he plays bottleneck with the guitar flat on his lap is the finest I have heard and sadly it is not on this album. The album ends with Willie Brown's 1942 recording of "Mississippi Blues", and this song I believe to be one of the 'classics' of black american music and Roy gives the song his superlative touch!

The "Travellin' Man" album only shows a part of the Roy Bookbinder appeal. His record does not show his incredible stage presentation when he tells jokes, stories and tales. His presentation is somewhat similar to Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Reverend Davis, when he projects his warm and sincere qualities. It is Roy's sincerity that is most obvious. He respects the source of his music, he respects the musicians as men, and perhaps most of all his whole approach is most unaffected. He is totally involved in his music and this has certainly gained him much respect from other musicians.

During the past couple of months Roy has been working with a very fine young fiddle and banjo player named Karl 'Fats' Kaplin and already they are receiving a good press and quite a reputation on the college and coffee house folk circuit. Roy is hoping to bring Karl

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with him on his next British tour which should be really something! (For those who may be interested Roy at present uses two guitars, but like all guitarists he is on the look out for something even better!, one is a *Gibson* LO-1935 model and a *Martin* OM 18 1935 model, both of which are mahogany guitars and on both he uses light gauge strings. He also has a *Gibson* J-185 (1950) and a 0.18 *Martin* 1932.)

Roy has all sorts of plans for the near future with a possible new recording offer and concert tours both here and in the United States. I hope very much that Roy will be able to get a tour together for Great Britain when we will all be able to hear his fine work in person.

#### Related Listening:

- 1) "These Blues Is Meant To Be Barrelhoused" *Blue Goose* 2003 (U.S.)
- 2) Pink Anderson *Bluesville* BVLP 1308 (Deleted)
- 3) " " " BVLP 1051 "
- 4) " " " BVLP 1071 "
- 5) "The Blues" (including Pink Anderson) *Asch* 101
- 6) "Ragtime Guitar" Rev. Davis, *Trans.* TRA 244
- 7) "Children Of Zion" Rev. Davis, *Trans.* TRA 249
- 8) "Tex-Arkana-Louisiana Country" *Yazoo* L-1004
- 9) "Jackson Blues" *Yazoo* 1007
- 10) "Travellin' Man" Roy Bookbinder *Adelphi* 1017.

Robert Tilling

# OBSCURE



# Lp's

## BLUES IN THE MISSISSIPPI NIGHT Pye-Nixa NJL8

Alan Balfour

Back in 1962 this record was responsible for my discovering the blues. Issued in 1957, it is a documentary dialogue between three, then anonymous, bluesmen recorded 'in-the-field' by Alan Lomax in 1942.

Natchez, Leroy and Sib — according to a somewhat patronising liner — remain nameless at their own requests; the inuendo strongly hinting at the 'outspoken' nature of the recording. Without wishing to sound cynical, I would venture that the anonymity is to prevent their respective record companies from finding out. Be that as it may, the bluesmen concerned are, Big Bill Broonzy, Memphis Slim and John Lee 'Sonny Boy' Williamson.

With the aid of careful editing, together with some prompting from Lomax (not heard, but very obviously there), these three men talk about their lives. The jumping off point is — wait for it — "What gives you the blues". To Sib (Williamson) it's being rejected by parents

as a suitor to their daughter: "...and so they turned me down, and I just got sitting down thinking, you understand, and I thought of a song....". For Natchez (Broonzy): "...a man has a companion and she turns him down....that's where I get the blues from...." Whilst for Leroy (Slim): "Blues is a kind of revenge. You know you wanna say some things... you wanna signify, that's the blues....". And so the foundations are laid by Lomax for a 'conversation with the blues'; the swapping of reminiscences and anecdotes about the 'hard times', mainly between Natchez and Leroy, with Sib occasionally joining in.

Considering the nature of the subjects touched upon and the subjectiveness of those concerned, the attitudes expressed are understandable. From the humorous: "...you know the food we had to eat was really scrap food, from what other people had refused..." (reply) "Yeah, they had a name for it — la, la, lu, if you don't like it he do....". To the embittered "...we had a few Negroes down there that wasn't afraid of white peoples or talk back



to them. They called those people crazy, crazy people.

I wonder why they called them crazy, because they speak up for his rights?" But although the conversation is almost entirely centred around the ill-treatment of the black man and his own hatred of the whites, Natchez puts it down to the system. "...that's what makes 'em (Negroes) so techious till today, because they have been denied in so many places until if a gang is in a place and they say 'You fellas get back' or 'Don't stand there' or something like that, they figger right straight that's you — they're pointing out to the Negro see, and a lot of times they don't mean that, they really mean they don't want *nobody* standing in that place. But the Negro thinks they're preferring him cos he's black."

To be fully appreciated this record has to be *really* listened to — no background music this. It is an invaluable piece of documentation, even if at times it does have elements of seeming to give the white man with the recorder what he wants to hear. It is also an indispensable record for its on-the-spot recordings of Broonzy, Williamson and Slim, the likes of which I can assure you they never laid down on 'commercial' wax, together with the unidentified field-holler "Another Man", which always manages to leave me with that empty feeling.

Nothing would ever make me part with this record — not even money — so if you want it, don't come to me. A better bet would be to pressurise *Pye*, that is, if they still hold the rights. Or write to *Blues-Link* and we'll try to find someone who has both sense and money!

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# Letters

Dear Gentlemen,

Congratulations on the first, interesting edition of *Blues Link*. I was particularly interested in Frank Sidebottom's 'Sidetrackin' ' article examining the use of anti-climax in blues lyrics. Another suitable candidate for inclusion would have been Jazz Gillum's "Uncertain Blues" (BB. B 7821), surely a master piece in procrastination and indecision!

1. *Well, I started to write a letter; no I believe I'll go back home (x2),  
After she reads my letter, I believe she'll travel on.*
2. *I started to cook me a chicken; no I believe I'll take my rest (x2),  
Maybe I'll go back and sleep, maybe I'll dream the thing that's best.*
3. *I started to sell my jewellery; no I believe I'll pawn my clothes (x2),  
My watch ticks so lonesome up and down this lonesome road.*
4. *I started to break a twenty; no I believe I'll spend my change (x2),  
I started to buy me a woodstore, no I believe I'll fix my rent.*
5. *I started to say that I'm worried; no I believe I'm satisfied (x2),  
I started to walk round the corner, but I believe I'll take a ride.*

Every success with the magazine.

STEVE RYE,  
London, U.K.

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## BILL WILLIAMS DIES IN GREENUP

Bill Williams, who was generally acknowledged by blues experts as the greatest living master of the East Coast blues tradition, died of a heart attack October 6th in his native Greenup, Kentucky. He was 76. An associate of the legendary Blind Blake, Williams came to prominence during the recent folk revival and drew acclaim for his appearances at the *Smithsonian Institution* and the Mariposa Folk Festival. Producer Nick Perls, who featured Williams on his *Blue Goose* label, plans to issue two posthumous albums of his remaining works, which were recorded in New York last year. "The death of Bill Williams," he remarks, "isn't just the death of one musician. It's the passing of a whole musical era."

*Country Blues News Service.*



*Ann Arbor Blues and Ja*



The '73' Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festival held September 7th., 8th., and 9th. was both a great artistic and financial success. The organizers significantly surpassed last year's effort especially in the music presented. Whereas '72' understandably had a line-up of mainly established stars and concert regulars, this year's show, with a success behind their belts, could bring us some of the more legendary or obscure bluesmen like Big Walter and Jimmy Reed and shows like the Detroit and Chicago bills. Not only was the music of higher quality but it was much more varied (from Joe Willie Wilkins to Johnny Otis to Ornette Coleman) with blues now dominating and fewer white/rock acts on stage. With the foundations laid, '73' did what it set out to do, bring black music to a mass audience both at the grounds and across the country on radio. I do question the "rainbow of sound" idea, sometimes the vast difference between blues and jazz can be hard on the listener. Generally though, the high quality of both musics made it possible for me to enjoy most of the jazz acts. And of course there were the usual festival 'blues'; parking facilities were poor, people kept screaming for others to sit down while I'm trying to listen, the usual amateur musicians (I'm one too) tooting on their harps and being hassled by people who have no interest in the music. My

of Jimmy Ricks, an R & B star of the 40's and 50's who has one of those deep, mellow voices and also a brilliant drum solo by Sonny Payne. Blues guitarist Freddie King was the star of Friday night and maybe the whole Festival. Freddie has become very popular in America, and while there are things I don't like about King's 'high energy' music, there is something very exciting and gripping about the man. His music, loud, with rock and soul influences, is where the blues are at today. Basically he played his normal set, "Goin' Down", "Look On Yonders Wall", "Ain't No Sunshine" and his new hit "Woman Across The River". The crowd was on its feet until the end.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON: John Lee Hooker, scheduled to start the Music Of Detroit programme was late. His back-up band, another white boogie outfit, filled in. Why couldn't we have had a surprise guest like Robert Jr. Lockwood's appearance last year? The Detroit Blues Show was almost a whole festival by itself. 15 acts were shuffled on and off, each doing two or three of their best songs. Little Mack Collins, musician/manager, M.C.'d the affair and his band, The Rhythm Masters, backed many of the acts in their modern soul-blues style. A terribly bad white harp player 'sittin' in', nearly ruined many of the sets. The whole show had a real scruffling black

# Jazz Festival 73

Photos by Norbert Hess

Text by John McCarty

arse also suffered from the 12 hours on the cold, hard ground but I suppose it's all to be expected. The organisers went out of their way to help make things bearable by providing a child care centre, drug tent, natural foods tent, and their own police force, but really it is the rare opportunity to see some of the best bluesmen around, all in one weekend, that makes Ann Arbor such a good time.

(The following report is only on the blues bands mainly due to lack of space - Ed)

FRIDAY NIGHT: Roosevelt Sykes, complete with panama hat and the ever present cigar, was his usual great self. His set was kept short though, even after the crowd pleasing risqué blues "Mother Fuyer". J.B. Hutto and His Hawks did not show - a real disappointment. While the next scheduled act (Count Basie) was set up I was introduced to a pleasant surprise.

Between sets, records by people like Jimmy Dawkins, Slim Harpo and Cleanhead Vinson were played over the speaker system. A nice touch. The Basie set was of course the big band jazz he is known for, highlighted by the singing

blues feeling as Collins would plug records and gigs amid the introductions. Little Junior, one of Detroit's few working bluesmen, led off. Like so many younger singers, Junior strives for the suave image and sound of B.B. King. The result is competent but predictable. Singer Joe L. did his fine single "Please Mr. Foreman". A very nervous Arthur Gunter started out with a hoarse voice and an out of tune guitar. He did get it together on the rockin' "Baby Let's Play House". I hope he can do better. Eddie Burns turned in one of the best sets of the show. He is one of Detroit's real originals, with a nice warm voice and good guitar and harp. Boogie Woogie Red's solo piano was also well received. He did his usual "Viper Song", "Blues After Hours" and boogie numbers in fine style. Mr. Bo is one of Detroit's most popular bluesmen but is another B.B. man. Again nice but not special. Little Mack himself proved to be a poor guitarist and mediocre singer on Little Milton's "Back Streets". Two street singers appearing back to back each had a completely different impact. Jake 'The Shaker' Woods from Saginaw Mich. sang some inaudible ditties, banging on an old beat up guitar. Needles to say he was so ridiculous the crowd loved him. The legendary One-String Sam however is no joke. Playing his home made instruments with a jar while stamping his feet, he sang in a rough blues filled voice

top left: Bobo Jenkins

top right : Hound Dog Taylor

bottom left : Homesick James

bottom right : Johnny Otis

doing of course "I Need A Hundred Dollars". A powerful, moving experience. The mood again changed with Johnnie Mae Mathews (the only female singer on the Detroit bill) and her Memphis sound band. Johnnie does not fit the typical big mama type blueswoman as she is slender and rather young looking. I was not overly impressed with her hoarse voiced soul-blues. Three veterans from the 50's, Baby Boy Warren, Washboard Willie (both have been in Europe recently) and Bobo Jenkins, the Mr. Blues of the local recording scene, all turned in rockin' sets. Washboard Willie really floored me. He and his nice little band produced some relaxed, hypnotic blues accented by Willie's washboard and warm voice. Eddie Kirkland is a real experience. He brought the audience to its feet with his dynamite rock-soul-blues and stage acrobatic flash. Not for purists though. Dr. Ross brought the show to a close (Lightnin' Slim did not show) spreading his one man boogie disease complete with slide number. Good news! Johnny Lee had arrived but his short set was nothing but bad news. He played almost no guitar and let his son carry much of the load. One of the festivals biggest disappointments, I expected so much more.

**SATURDAY NIGHT:** One of the real highlights of Ann Arbor '73 for me was the appearance of Big Walter. I have no doubts now that Walter is the best blues harp player alive. Nervously moving, gesturing, he played many instrumentals showing the full breadth of command and control he has over the instrument. Walter can drive or lay back, always with that beautiful fat tone. His back-up band, made up of local white musicians John Nicholas, Fran Christina and Sister Sarah Brown, gave him the most sympathetic backing I have ever heard from a white band. Their obvious respect for Walter shows on stage and in the beautiful music they play *together*.

Jimmy Reed was not the first artist to be late but he was one I just could not wait to see. A white turbaned Eddie Taylor led the rest of Reed's band until finally a well recovered Boss Man shuffled on and did those songs. I can't say Jimmy is as good as ever but the few songs he was able to do show that the Bossman is on the comeback trail. After over nine hours on the hard ground I had to leave. I'll make a point to see Ray Charles in the future.

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON:** Joe Willie Wilkins, Houston Stackhouse and the King Biscuit Boys gave us a rare chance to hear pure, amplified southern blues of years gone by. They deserve a European visit. I missed Victoria Spivey and after running over a mile from a distant parking space I arrived just in time to hear Johnny Otis introducing his famous show. While a little smaller than usual (Mighty Mouth Evans, Marie Adams, "Cleanhead" Vinson, The Three Tons Of Joy, Pee Wee Crayton, The Otisettes; Joe Turner was absent), the talent, variety and sheer joy they emit from their music was easily felt by the enthusiastic audience. Pee Wee Crayton is not much of a singer but he really shines on guitar. Johnny of course did "Hand

Jive" and a duet with Delmar, SBW II's "Don't Start Me Talkin'". Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson's awesome presence was enough to bring the audience to its feet even before he sang a note!; and I'm sure most of the crowd had never heard him before. "Cleanhead Blues", "Kidney Stew", and "Person To Person" justified our devotion. The R & B extravaganza lived up to its reputation (over 3 encores).

**SUNDAY NIGHT:** This was Chicago night. The King of Chicago Boogie, Hound Dog Taylor and The Houserockers, now a favourite with college audiences, gave us nothing but one hour of rockers. Dog's non-stop boogies are just raw, distorted power. Dog is also quite a blues personality and deserves the attention he's been getting. Tunes like "Give Me Back My Wig" had Dr. Ross dancing wildly around the stage. A real endorsement. Next one of Chicago's premier groups, The Mighty Joe Young Blues Band, started out well with an original instrumental but it soon became obvious that this was not one of Joe's tightest bands. The inclusion of Eddie Taylor and Carey Bell did not go too well either. Eddie sang well on "Big Town Playboy" but could not get it together on guitar and Bell's fine harp was undermined.

Joe's group stayed on stage to back the next three artists and veteran blues producer (now with *Bluesway*) Al Smith came on to do the M.C. chores. Otis Rush, a late addition to the bill, had a gig in Chicago so he played only three songs, "I Feel So Bad", "Gambler's Blues" and an instrumental. Otis takes other peoples songs and makes them his own. He seemed out of place with Young but his 'fluid guitar and soaring voice' moved the crowd, not any jive, which he weakly tried to do but can't and I'm glad. Homesick James is one of the best slide players around and proved it on of course "Dust My Broom" among others. Lucille Spann with the festival grounds named in honour of her late husband Otis, sang her emotional "Dedication To Otis". Although in good form this night I sometimes think Lucille's popularity rests more on her dead husband than her singing, which at times gets out of control. Luther Allison, on the strength of his performances in all the previous festivals closed the '73' event but I'm afraid the previous act, the indescribably bizarre Sun Ra stole the show. Luther is a great guitarist and still a good bluesman but the road to success has meant the loss of much of his Chicago west side roots. I left before his set was over.

I hope that with the financial success they enjoyed in '73', the Ann Arbor people will continue to improve the U.S.'s biggest blues festival. There are a lot of things I could complain about but really it was as the posters said "... A Real Good Time".

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top left : Eddie Kirkland  
 top right : Jimmy Reed  
 bottom left : One String Sam  
 bottom right : Freddie King



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# is walkin' some more

an interview with the indefatigable Pete  
Lowry by Valerie Wilmer

To some blues fanciers, the idea of devoting all one's time to running around the South with a tape-recorder and an ear for the righteous sounds, might well seem like a dream existence. It's hardly a way of making a living, though. To make a viable proposition of such activity, needs determination and stamina, qualities that Pete Lowry has in abundance.

Shortly, the first batch of Lowry's *Trix* LPs will be on the market. Eddie Kirkland, Peg Leg Sam, Frank Edwards and Henry 'Rufe' Johnson will be featured and, says Lowry, "The advertising accompanying these issues will be aimed to capitalise on the popularity of such as Fahey, Kottke and Taj Mahal. Essentially it'll say, 'If you happen to be listening to these people why don't you buy my records because these are the people they're stealing from'. I reckon that anything's fair in love, war and advertising!"

Lowry's activities in the Carolinas and Georgia have been well publicised in *BU* and *Living Blues*, but his special interest in the Piedmont area and style is relatively recent. It started when he was driving Bruce Bastin around the area in 1970 while the latter was collecting material for his *Crying For The Carolines*. Lowry felt that he ought to do a little more than act as a mere chauffeur and general sightseer.

"I think without realising it, too, I'd been into that region. I'd always liked Willie McTell's stuff, Curley Weaver and Blind Boy Fuller, so I bought a tape-recorder and a couple of microphones and was fortunate in getting a good match."

The first *Trix* singles appeared just over a year ago and Lowry anticipates his second batch of four albums in six month's time. They will feature Robert Junior Lockwood, Willy Trice, either Guitar Shorty or Tarheel Slim, and the first volume from some extensive taping he did at an after-hours piano joint in Detroit last year.

Lowry, who gave up a secure teaching job in order to pursue his first love, claims he was never surprised at the amount and quality of blues that the South continues to yield with a little exploration. "I never really believed all that stuff about the blues being dead," he said, "As with other celebrities who said 'my death has been greatly exaggerated', so the blues. I think it's been submerged beneath the overlay of modern black pop music, but hell — you go down through Georgia and the Carolinas and there's still country-supper. Peg Leg Sam still goes around busking in the streets, blowing his harp and collecting quarters and dollars."

One of the *Trix* singles artists was the little known Roy Dunn, who lives in Atlanta.





“Just to show you how the music has been submerged, I’ve given Roy Dunn 200 copies of his 45 and he’s sold damn near all of them, just around Atlanta. And people have said ‘gee, that’s kind of nice — I always wondered why I couldn’t buy records like I used to.’”

Lowry will be back from his third field trip in 12 months at the end of the year. He does all his travelling by *Volkswagen* bus, accompanied by a faithful hound and no less than eight guitars. One such trip lasted five months and netted enough material for 20 albums, all of which he will be processing himself. “I said, ‘Christ, I’ve got an awful lot of stuff here — there’s no sense in farting around with other people, I’ll do it myself.’”

The guitars are needed because often the people he encounters have not played for a while or else their existing instrument may be in bad shape, rattling or buzzing. “I’ve always tried to keep a clean sound on my recordings unlike most of the so-called field work,” said Pete. “I’m sort of in-between. I’m not just an out-and-out field recorder, nor do I use a studio as such. I usually say that the best sound-quality stuff I do is sort of in a *Holiday Inn* recording studio in whatever town I happen to be staying. You know, if it’s not too cool where they’re living or something, we go back to the hotel room. There’s a beautiful Baby Tate tape I’ve got that’s got a bloody dog barking in the middle for about a minute. It’s an exquisite piece, too.”

Of all the artists he has recorded, Eddie Kirkland impressed him as the most dynamic on stage. From Frank Edwards, who recorded for *Savoy* in 1950, he derived enormous satisfaction, because of the rapport they were able to build up. “He believes that I am what I am. The LP I’m going to put out is 70-80% new stuff he’s written for me. Chris Strachwitz sent him some royalties from the two cuts that were on *Blues Classics*, he bought a guitar with it and spent three months writing songs for me.”

Lowry has the talent for inspiring that kind of respect in Black singers and musicians. He is obviously in their corner and not trying to steal from them. He pays everyone, very fairly for whatever he records and whatever the records sell, and from talking to ‘his’ artists I have discovered any number of great personal kindnesses.

Baby Tate was one of his closest musician friends and his untimely death last year grieved Lowry considerably. “My plan last Summer was to really record him in depth,” he explained. “He was just an incredible person and a wonderful person to deal with. I can’t say I’m satisfied with what I’ve got on tape because I know he could do three times more and a lot better. But just having been around him and dealt with him and lived with him, there’s a degree of satisfaction.”

Of the other artists he came across in the South-East, Henry ‘Rufe’ Johnson he describes as providing the biggest surprise. “I feel he’s the best finger-picking blues artist I’ve heard in five or ten years. He’s from Union City, S. Carolina. Peg Leg Sam had mentioned him and I figured that if so, he can’t be bad because normally he’s pretty choosy about who he works with.”

And Peg Leg Sam he taped at a medicine-show in Pittsboro, North Carolina, which was also video-taped by the folklore department of the University of North Carolina, courtesy of Bruce Bastin. “Most of the artists we have been recording have been put on video-tape, too, which I think is helpful. And *Flyright’s* going to be putting out my tapes of the medicine show as well as tapes of the concert that Bruce put on in March.” (This concert, incidentally, featured Guitar Shorty, Willy Trice, Henry Johnson, Elester Anderson and Eddie Kirkland amongst others and can be heard on *Flyright’s* “Blues Came to Chapel Hill”).

Lowry explained that all his *Trix* albums will be solo efforts by the artists concerned because anthologies are the worst selling type of LP to put out. “I don’t know why this is but it is a reason why I’m not bothered about putting out an album by a relatively Baby Tate, Spartanburg S.C. ’72 Photo Valerie Wilmer

unknown artist. It just doesn't make any difference in terms of sales."

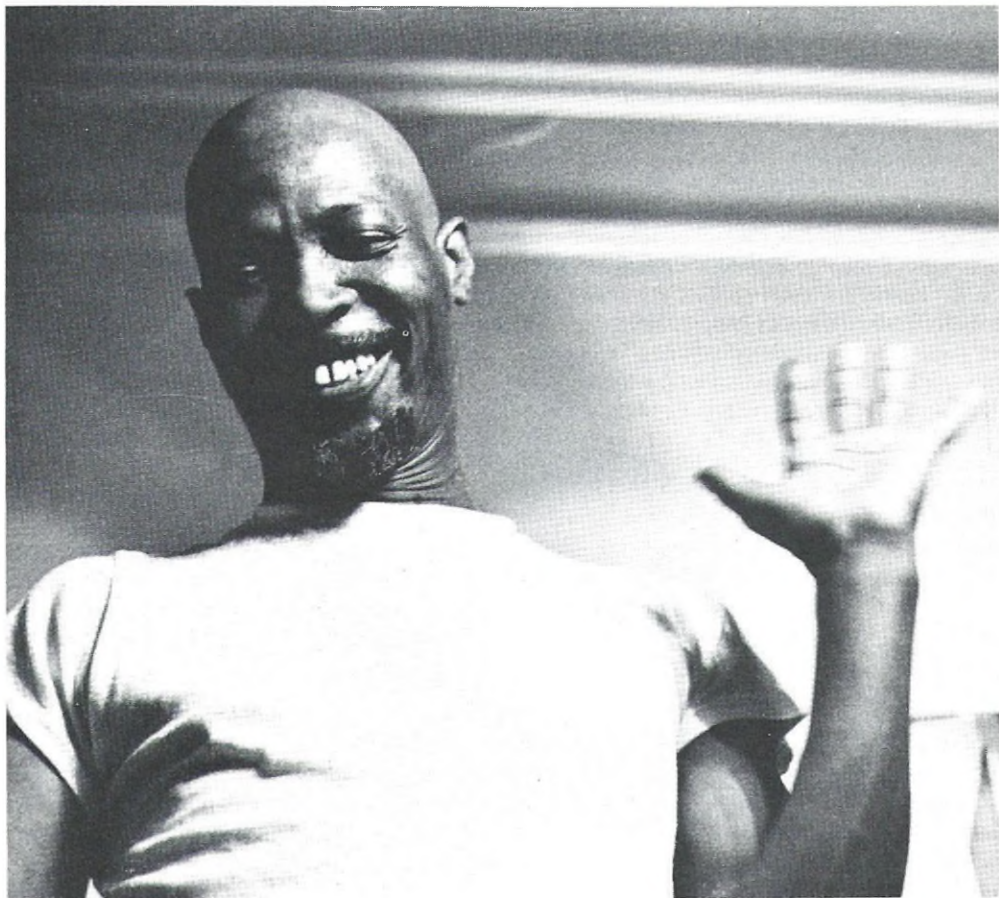
Even given the positive flood of blues albums available, he feels that *Trix* has a better than average chance of succeeding by virtue of the area in which his interest is currently concentrated. "This slightly ragtime-based kind of guitar is what a lot of white people are playing and listening to," he explained. "I'm trying to hook on to that because it is the essence of the Piedmont style."

Lowry described himself as a strange mixture of realism and altruism: "Realism in that I know I'm not going to get rich. I'll be lucky if I break even, but I've met an awful lot of good people, a lot of good musicians, and dammit — they should be heard. It's that simple."

"I'm in a position now where I've got the money to put out material and push it a bit, and hopefully I'll realise enough sales to keep the whole thing going. But it's just criminal that say, Eddie Kirkland is wasting away in Macon, Georgia, and that Baby Tate had to work as a bricklayer — you know?"

So — *Trix* is walking some more and if you want to support the effort or find out more about what's going on, write to Pete Lowry at P.O. Box 750, New Paltz, N.Y. 12561, USA. Albums are expected to be around \$6 (post paid), plus another 50 cents or so for overseas, and you can grab hold of the six introductory singles for a mere 5 bucks.

Tarheel Slim Photo Valerie Wilmer



# Reviews

**JAY McSHANN "The Band That Jumps The Blues!"**

**Black Lion 2460201**

"Hot Biscuits"/"Slow Drag Blues"/"M.R. Blues" (c)/"Buttermilk"/"Skidrow Blues" (a)/"Soft Winds"/"No Name

Boogie"/"Thinking About My Baby" (b)/"Geronimo"/"Twelve O'Clock Whistle" (c)/"Mellodrag"/"Eatin' Watermelon" (d).

Vocals: (a) Jimmy Witherspoon; (b) Lois Booker; (c) Maxine Reed; (d) Crown Prince Waterford.

**JIMMY WITHERSPOON "Ain't Nobody's Business!"**

**Black Lion 2460206**

"Ain't Nobody's Business" / "In The Evening"/"Frog-I-More"/"McShann Bounce"/"How Long Blues"/"Money's Getting Cheaper"/"Skidrow Blues"/"Spoon Calls Hootie"/"Backwater Blues"/"Jumpin' With Louis"/"Destruction Blues"/"Ain't Nobody's Business".

If ever two albums released within a month deserved a joint review these are they. All the tracks were recorded between 1947 and 1949 in Los Angeles for the *Swingtime* label and many of the sessions and band members overlap the albums. For the straight blues fan the Witherspoon has the obvious appeal, and doubly so when one considers the rarity of these his earliest recordings, preceding his *King* material. The McShann band is well into the blues tradition of these recordings. Jay McShann plays a fine boogie piano in the then popular Kansas City style, a style which has been wrongly neglected by historians when plotting the path of Rhythm and Blues in the late forties and early fifties. All the instrumentals feature fine playing and although the saxes may not honk quite as forcefully as on some of the material released through *King* and the other fifties labels, the appeal should still be there. On "Geronimo" some stirring tenor sax is provided by Maxwell Davis who went on to become one of the top West Coast blues arranger/producers, working extensively with B. B. King at *Modern/Kent*.

Of the other vocalists on the band album Charles 'Crown Prince' Waterford stands out with his exciting "Eatin' Watermelon". Although this track is known to feature McShann's piano, the other sidemen are unknown and it was recorded after Waterford's departure from his residency with the band. The recording may in fact be a solo vocal totally unconnected with McShann's band. Maxine Reed is very much in the femme R&B vocalist mould of the year with a close affinity to the singers with other bands of the day — Lucky Millinder, Joe Morris, etc. who featured the likes of Annisteen Allen, LaVern

Baker, Ruth Brown.

As there are vocals on the band set, so there are two instrumentals on the Witherspoon collection, "Bounce" and "Jumpin'", both of which are exciting boogies featuring McShann's piano with just bass, drums and guitar (an amazing solo by one Louis Speiginer — info anyone?).

Jimmy is an incredible 24 years old on these recordings and his voice still echoes these tracks with little weakening. The album is released at just the right time after he garnered some pretty staggering reviews from the national and pop press for his stint at Ronnie Scott's club. If *Polydor* have the patience to keep it in catalogue for six months they'll grab a few sales from his proposed return. It's a very fine set of big band blues featuring the then youthful Witherspoon interpreting some of the previous generation's blues with great reverence. His versions of Bessie Smith's "Backwater Blues" and Leroy Carr's "How Long" show off his impeccable timing to great effect.

Two highly recommended sets for the discerning blues fan and a good jumping on point for those limited to country or Chicago styles. For the benefit of those who noticed the "Skidrow Blues", they are two different takes.

Bob Fisher.



Jay McShann Courtesy Black Lion

**“THE RURAL BLUES  
SACRED TRADITION 1927 - 1930”**

**Herwin 206**

“Oh Lord, I’m Your Child” (a) / “Glory !  
Glory ! Hallelujah !” (a) / “You Can’t Hide”  
(a) / “Jesus Is My Air-O-Plane” (a) / “When I  
Take My Vacation In Heaven” (a) / “I Want To  
See Him” (a) / “Down On Me” (b) / “Lord I’m  
The True Vine” (b) / “Jesus Is Sweeter Than  
Honey In The Comb” (c) / “There’ll Be Glory”  
(c) / “In Times Of Trouble Jesus Will Never Say  
Goodbye” (c) / “Death Is Only A Dream”  
(c) / “God’s Riding Through The Land” (c) / “I  
Shall Not Be Moved” (c) / “Within My Mind”  
(b) / “Tryin’ To Get Home” (b). (a) Mother  
McCollum; (b) Eddie Head & Family; (c) Rev. E.  
W. Clayborn.

The star of this record is without a doubt  
Mother McCollum, whose entire output is here  
presented. Almost certainly a Mississippian, she  
gives out with the passion and strength typically  
associated with the blues singers of that state. Her  
fine voice and phrasing are backed up by a good,  
and tantalisingly familiar sounding, male vocalist  
on three tracks; the instrumental accompaniment  
is supplied by banjo and guitar on some tracks,  
and two guitars on others. All the in-  
strumentalists are outstanding, the banjo being  
up to Gus Cannon standards, and the guitarist  
being a fine bottle-neck stylist and a heavy picker  
who reminds me of ‘Rabbit’ Brown. This is gospel  
to rank with the best.

---

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Rev. E. W. Clayborn’s sides are presented as  
‘the best of . . .’; listening to them, one has to  
agree that Clayborn lacked musical inventiveness,  
and is best taken in small doses. His trademark is  
a statement of the melody knife-style, followed by  
a rhythmic accompaniment to the vocal. I feel  
bound to point out that the best Clayborn I have  
heard is on *Roots* RL 328 (“Your Enemy Cannot  
Harm You” and “Gospel Train Is Coming”),  
neither of which is here; nevertheless, Clayborn’s  
strong lyrical talent and expressive voice are both  
well displayed here.

The Head Family, from Georgia, produced  
only the four songs reissued here. They are all  
well-known themes, backed by guitar and  
tambourine, with an overall treatment  
reminiscent of unamplified Staples Singers. Their  
performance cannot be described as exceptional,  
but is extremely pleasant and relaxing for all that.

Everything on this record is well worth hearing;  
and if Clayborn tends to go on a bit, listen to  
Mother McCollum, who can be guaranteed to  
knock you sideways. It’s a sad thing she made so  
few sides.

Chris Smith.

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**“ANN ARBOR JAZZ & BLUES  
FESTIVAL 1972”**

**Atlantic K 60048**

“Kitchen Sink Boogie” (Hound Dog  
Taylor) / “Wang Dang Doodle” (Koko  
Taylor) / “Ain’t That Loving You” (Bobby  
Bland) / “I Walk On Gilded Splinters” (Dr.  
John) / “I’m A Roadrunner” (Junior  
Walker) / “These Things Will Keep Me Loving  
You” (Junior Walker) / “Tribute To Fred  
McDowell” (Bonnie Raitt) / “Highway 49”  
(Howlin’ Wolf) / “Honey Bee” (Muddy Waters)  
/ “Form Kinetic” (CJQ) / “Dedicated to Otis”  
(Lucille Spann) / “Going’ Down” (Freddie  
King) / “Please Send Me Someone To Love”  
(Luther Allison) / “My Last Meal” (Boogie  
Bros.) / “Dust My Broom” (Johnny  
Shines) / “Gambler’s Blues” (Otis Rush) / “-  
Women Be Wise” (Sippie Wallace) / “Life Is  
Splendid” (Sun Ra).

John Sinclair is a great champion of causes.  
His convictions have sent him for a term behind  
iron bars. Since his release, he has made a nest at  
Ann Arbor, Michigan, powerhousing politics in  
alliance with the Human Rights’ Party, and  
promoting what he hopes will be snowballing  
interests in the ‘pure’ music (to him Jazz and  
Blues — with large capitals). This particular  
spectacular took place the three days September  
8-10, 1972, in front of an audience of some 10-  
15,000. By the recorded responses, they so ob-  
viously enjoyed themselves. As a mere listener,  
you too should have equal joy, and some measure  
of the strength of this double is the list of per-  
formers present in body, but absent from these  
grooves. Names like Lightnin’ Slim, Siegel-  
Schwall Blues Band, Miles Davis, Robert Jr.  
Lockwood, Pharoah Sanders, Archie Shepp, etc.

The bias of this album is blues, with jazz relegated to a lowly second, and the result is the better for it.

A collection such as this, because of the multitude of different names, is bound to promote controversy as to the highs and lows. Thus the following is only my own opinion. You may disagree on minutiae, but as an overall collection you could not possibly fail to find a great deal for your own palate.

My high spots are Hound Dog Taylor, Junior Walker, Lucille Spann, Luther Allison, Sippie Wallace, Otis Rush and Johnny Shines. Of these, the undoubted highlight is the highly emotional and expressive performance by Lucille, singing (I suspect not entirely extemporaneously) a eulogy and confirmation of her undying love for her late husband Otis. This follows hot on the presentation to her by Sinclair and Muddy Waters that tears disturbingly at your heart-strings. She has such a strong voice, and confidence in delivery, ably supported by Mighty Joe Young, that surely she must record in her own right after this.

For sheer saturation of blues, the performances by Otis Rush and Luther Allison would take a lot of beating. Coincidentally, they are the two longest tracks (7.38 mins. and 7.23 mins. respectively) and in the handling of their axes they show just what emotion can be wrung from the strings of a guitar. Messrs. Guy and the three Kings should take just a little look in this direction (especially Freddie King in view of his latest release!). It is, perhaps, unfortunate that Allison should immediately follow Freddie's abortive "Goin' Down", where he is just not at home within the song.

Hound Dog Taylor has the job of opening the collection, and he does it superbly, with his 'Houserockers' really living up to their name. The title gives you some idea, and it's difficult to realise there are only three of them making all that noise! Junior Walker is instantly recognisable with his distinctive tenor sax, and his effort too sets a ripping pace — in his case for 4.25 mins. The pre-war blues are not forgotten either, with Sippie Wallace (ably supported on guitar by whitey Bonnie Raitt) re-airing her "Women Be Wise", a tune she first performed in 1929; and Johnny Shines, as always reworking the Robert Johnson licks, this time also nods towards the later re-incarnation, with Elmore's "Dust My Broom".

For me, the lows are Bobby Bland, who doesn't seem totally together, Howlin' Wolf, who is crucified by those around him, CJQ and Sun Ra. These last two are purer jazz profferings, and to my mind, they detract from the rest by their presence. A total of 12.20 dubious minutes.

So there you have it. A fine release, in honour and memory of the late, great Otis Spann; and one to rank alongside others like Johnny Otis at Monterey and Taj Mahal at Filmore East. A real goodie.

Michael J.

## THE MIGHTY FLEA "Let The Good Times Roll"

Polydor 2460 185

"Let The Good Times Roll"/"Honky Tonk"/"Tain't Nobody's Bizness If I Do"/"Charley Stone"/"Bloodshot Eyes"/"Hi-Heel Sneakers"/"Goin' To L.A."/"Let's Go Get Stoned"/"The Chocolate Cowboy Rides Again"/"GM Blues".

Strange as it may seem, this is Gene Connor's first album under his own name. I say strange because, although he is not well-known, he has been around since the second World War and has always been highly rated as a sideman. I guess a trombonist is not 'big-name' material — in other words, trombone players should be heard and not seen.

Anyway, the man's finally made it, so it's a pity there's not more of the famed 'triple-tonguing'. Whilst not an adventurous album from the point of view of material or arrangements, I have heard few albums so far this year that are as delightfully listenable and competent. The band, with Mickey Baker coming through nicely, is well together and sympathetic, and Mike Burney on tenor sax gets plenty of space to show off his capabilities.

Particular favourites of mine are, the title track (by Louis Jordan, not the Shirley and Lee version), "Charley Stone" (nice 'hi-de-ho' feel here), "L.A." and "GM", however, as I say the album is good throughout. If you're looking for a good listening album in the blues genre, it could be sometime before you found one as good as this. As far as I'm concerned, as many 'stars' as you like and praise be to Polydor and Jim Simpson.

John Stiff.



The Mighty Flea Courtesy Polydor

**"PACKIN' UP MY BLUES (BLUES OF THE DEEP SOUTH 1950-61)"**

Muskadine 102

*"In The Country"*

Stick Horse Hammond: "Alberta"/"Gamblin' Man"/"Truck 'Em Down"/"Too Late Baby".

Tommy Lee: "Highway 80 Blues"/"Packin' Up My Blues".

David 'Pete' McKinley: "Shreveport Blues"/"Ardelle".

*"In The Jook Joints"*

Levi Seabury: "Boogie Beat"/"Motherless Child".

Sunny Blair: "Five Foot Three Blues"/"Glad To Be Back Home".

The Confiners: "Toss Bounce"/"Harmonica Boogie".

Drifting Slim: "Down South"/"My Sweet Woman".

Piling superlatives on Frank Scott's releases is becoming embarrassing; but believe it or not, this is the best to date. (Who said Payola?!). Split into two distinct styles, there are sixteen tracks by seven artists, (one with four, the others two each), and out of all, I'd only previously heard of one of them. Like all the tracks are extremely rare!

Stick Horse Hammond (to name but three!) opens the Country side. He has a growling, gravel voice, not at all unlike Lightnin' Hopkins, and his tracks, out of only six recorded in 1950, are in themselves empirical of the real essence of deep south blues. Lacking possibly in technical ability, they are in fact full to overflowing of real blues atmosphere, and sheer emotion overwraps everything. His approach to songs resembles that of Tommy McClennan, and all are pure joy to listen to. "Too Late" has a strange feel of very early Dylan, overlaid with a doom aura similar to many of Josh White's early recordings; this is a track which shows what the blues really are, oozing unhappiness.

Tommy Lee (Thompson) has a much lighter voice, that at many points approaches Skip James, a rich clear guitar style, and a relaxed approach to his music that is common of other Jackson, Mississippi performers. His two cuts are among the rarest; the only two he cut (in 1953) that were issued; and his second, the title track, is in itself a gem, absolutely saturated in atmosphere. David 'Pete' McKinley is the side closer, with two out of four numbers cut in two sessions. Not unlike a slow, early John Lee Hooker in attack, he is an artist so rare that neither the 'Blues Bible', nor Frank Scott himself, know virtually anything about him. Be that as it may, he too pervades the true blues essence; flat-stomping his insistent beat, behind an almost call vocal, and a ringing guitar interweave that is reminiscent of Fred McDowell at his best.

Side 2 is much livelier, as might be expected, with fuller line-ups and a different audience to

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cater for.

Levi Seabury's two numbers were produced (in 1957) by B. B. King (no less) and the guitar work is very suspiciously like the master's. Seabury died shortly after cutting these, and judging by the way he's playing harp, he must have blown his lungs out! "Boogie Beat" is a breathless instrumental that really sizzles, and I marvel that he didn't swallow his small instrument! "Motherless Child" is slower, with vocals, but still his harp wails with the greatest confidence, extracting a beautiful sound. As these are his only two cuts, it shows just what talents went almost unnoticed.

Sunny Blair appears four times, twice as support (see below) and twice as lead. On his own tracks he again shows what a beautiful instrument the blues harp can be, "Five Foot" especially being a real jook joint bopper. "Back Home" is a low point on the album, but only as it is a standard blues format heard so often before. Compared to most releases this would still be a high. Part of the King Biscuit team of the forties (on Radio Station KFFA), he has so plainly been listening to Sonny Boy. Drifting Slim was his mentor though, and he gives thanks by appearing on that artist's two tracks. This is the only name I know (otherwise known as Elmon Mickle — his real name —, Drifting Smith and Model-T Slim), and his two tracks lay down real solid urban blues (featuring Ike Turner on piano on "My Sweet Woman").

But the undoubted hits of this side (and the whole album) are the two tracks by The Confiners (recorded in Mississippi State Prison in 1961!). "Toss Bounce" is something else again as a reelin' and rockin' blues instrumental that would stand comparison to any pro job; and "Harmonica Boogie", although gentling the pace slightly, still manages intense harp work, and a searing guitar break. All unknown artists, these are ten out of ten tracks that are amazing by their sheer brilliance and excitement. Five star tracks on a five star album. BUY IT.

Michael J.

**"THE VICTORIA SPIVEY RECORDED LEGACY OF THE BLUES"**

Spivey LP2001

"Detroit Moan"/"Arkansas Road Blues"/"How Do You Get It That Way?"/"Don't Trust Nobody Blues"/"Dreaming Of You"/"The Alligator Pond Went Dry"/"TB's Got Me"/"Telephoning The Blues"/"New Black Snake Blues"/"Organ Grinder Blues"/"Murder In The First Degree"/"Give It To Him"/"I Can't Last Long"/"I'll Never Fall In Love Again".

The danger in liking Victoria Spivey is that one may come to accept her own estimate of her importance, as Len Kunstadt seems to have done in his notes. Miss Spivey evidently has a remarkable talent for self-projection, but she ain't that great, Lenny! Having got the lady's

image out of the way, it is fair to say, I think, that she is a good vocalist of the second rank of 'Classic' blues singers, and a lyricist of original talent, with the benefit of some first class accompanists.

These facts are all well demonstrated on this record; Lonnie Johnson makes genius look simple on four tracks, and Tampa Red is his usual fluent self on one. Eddie Lang, the blackest white man of them all, joins Joe Oliver, Omer Simeon, Clarence Williams and (maybe) Eddie Durham to give a sparkling backing to an unissued take of "Organ Grinder". Satchmo is on "How Do You Do It", like Johnson making it all sound so easy. The inimitable Spivey voice is everywhere displayed to good advantage, with some incredible diction on "Give It To Him" (previously unissued). Incidentally, whatever Godrich and Dixon say, the Jane Lucas titles sound to me *exactly* like Spivey; if it's not her, I don't know who else it could be.

I don't suppose many people would see this as an essential record, but do give it a listen if you get the chance. You may even end up buying it. Miss Spivey is an individual talent — not as individual as she herself believes, perhaps, but this is a good record for all the hype.

Chris Smith.

**LITTLE JOHNNY TAYLOR "Open House At My House"**

Ronn LPS 7532

"Open House At My House Pt.1"/"You're Not The Only One Baby"/"My Special Rose"/"A Thousand Miles Away"/"I Can't Stop Loving You"/"What Would I Do"/"Open House At My House Pt.2"/"You're Savin' Your Best Loving For Me"/"As Long As I Don't See You"/"Strange Bed With A Bad Head"/"I'll Make It Worth Your While".

This could have been a brilliant album of modern blues, unfortunately it is made up of two sessions — one of which produced some rather mediocre cuts. This lesser session consists of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth tracks and, in all honesty, I can only describe these tracks as being 'straight soul'. Taylor handles these items well enough, but the 'ideas' in production and arranging seem to be somewhat lacking.

The rest of the album is marvellous. Taylor really gets into things, the lyrics are good and, in general, the production has been handled very well. The material is best described as modern, city blues with a slight dash of the 'soul' technique.

Stand-outs, as far as I'm concerned, are "Strange Bed" with lyrics about a guy who gets drunk, picks up with a hangover and wakes up in the morning with a hangover and no money; "Open House" and "I'll Make It", but this section of the album will, I'm sure, be thoroughly enjoyed by any lover of modern blues.

On balance, the quality of the bulk of this album far outweighs the shortcomings of the four



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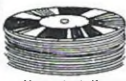
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John Stiff.

### EARL HOOKER "His First And Last Recordings"

#### Arhoolie 1066.

"The Hook"/"New Sweet Black Angel"/"Going On Down The Line"/"Original Sweet Black Angel"/"Guitar Rag"/"Earl's Boogie Woogie"/"Improvisations On Dust My Broom"/"Improvisations On Frosty".

The album opens with a great track — "The Hook" — but it's not Earl Hooker! Or, at least, he's so far submerged that he disappears. Louis Myers holds the limelight with a superb harp showcase that hardly takes time for a breath, and Steve Miller plays well as support on piano. Fortunately, the other tracks all have Earl up front, but they are of greatly varying shades of success.

As the album title would have you believe, these are from the embryonic and culminative years of his recorded career. It's a pity that although his proficiency maintained itself over the years, the true blues feel did not. Whilst the tracks cut in '52 and '53 are great, solid 'rockers', the later cuts lose all the essence, and virtuosity seems to take the place of sensitivity. A good example of this loss is easily had on the album, by comparing the old and new versions of "Sweet Black Angel". The former, the first thing he ever cut, sounds as if he means it. The lyrics are sung with conviction, and the rich guitar sound is played for all it's worth; while the version from 1968 has his guitar sounding like a fine steel wire, stretched thin and taut, and the musicians just marking time.

The early years had a vitality, and an interest in the music he was playing; nothing pretentious, but simply getting into the number and playing his fingers raw. It's sad, but I suppose inevitable, that the vast majority of bluesmen who have re-awakened for the young white audience have nothing new to say. It's all very well witnessing animated Tutankhamun, but is it really satisfying? There *are* worthwhile blues performances being laid down here and there, but this album must be excluded from the category. If you're an Earl Hooker fan, then you may want it to get everything he's ever recorded, but otherwise stick with his albums on *Red Lighnin'* ("There's A Fungus Among Us"), and his earlier one on *Arhoolie* ("Two Bugs And A Roach"). And I don't like the *Arhoolie* trait of lack of sleeve notes. (Chris Strachwitz please note!)

Michael J.

### "MISSISSIPPI BOTTOM BLUES"

#### Mamlish S — 3802

"Muddy Water Blues" (a)/"Low Down Mississippi Bottom Man" (a)/"Don't Cry Baby" (a)/"Mr. Freddie's Kokomo Blues" (a)/"Original Stack O'Lee Blues" (b)/"Mama You Don't Know How" (b)/"Please Don't Act

That Way" (c)/"Bad Notion Blues" (d)/"Little Girl In Rome" (d)/"Jersey Bull Blues" (e)/"Love My Stuff" (e)/"Your Good Man Is Gone" (a)/"Way Back Down Home" (a)/"4A Highway" (a).

(a) — Freddie Spruell. (b) — Papa Harvey Hull & Long Cleve Reed. (c) — Tommy Bradley. (d) — Otto Virgial. (e) — Charlie Patton.

This is an excellent compilation from *Mamlish*, and gives the enigmatic Freddie Spruell his first extensive LP outing. He turns out to be a fine singer and an imaginative lyricist, though not an exceptional guitarist; the palm here goes to 'second' guitarist Carl Martin, who lays down some stunning stuff on four tracks. Incidentally, the 1926 'Papa Freddie' tracks ("Muddy Water" and "Down Home") are surely not Spruell, but an unknown (to me) Texan who sounds rather like Willie Reed — suggestions anybody?

Of the other artists, Hull & Reed were put out earlier by *Herwin*, but these enchanting performances can stand duplication in my collection, particularly as the remastering here is much better. The Pattons are also available elsewhere, but are, as usual, dazzlingly performed. Tommy Bradley's track is rather a filler, but fine stuff — with fine mandolin from Eddie Dimmitt and a perfect imitation of Scrapper Blackwell's guitar from Bradley.

The real star, though, is the previously unreissued Otto Virgial, and this LP is worth its price for his tracks alone. If you can imagine a combination of elements of Charlie Patton, Joe Williams and J. D. Short, nonetheless stamped with Virgial's own personality, you have some idea of the impact of these performances.

Lots of good things and an asset to anybody's collection. There is also an excellent cover photo of the young Robert Nighthawk.

Chris Smith

### REVEREND GARY DAVIS "Lo' I Be With You Always" Kicking Mule/Sonet SNKD 1

"She's Funny That Way"/"Baby Let Me Lay It On You"/"Please Judy"/"The Boy Was Kissing The Girl"/"Hesitation Blues"/"Candyman"/"I Got Religion"/"I'm So Glad"/"I'm A Soldier In The Army Of The Lord"/"Children Of Zion"/"Whoopin' Blues"/"What Could I Do"/"Lo' I Be With You Always".

This is certainly a terrific debut for the new *Kicking Mule* company and luckily it is easily available in this country. I am convinced that it will be a 'best seller' for sometime for not only is it a real *must* for all Davis admirers but it is a beautiful introduction to any who may not have any of his albums.

For those Rev. Davis admirers they should be really thrilled to hear the incredible titles, "I Got Religion", "I'm So Glad" and "I'm A Soldier In The Army Of The Lord". They were recorded in 1959 at the Mariposa Folk Festival, Canada, and where he is the lead singer with the Georgia Sea Island Singers. As Stefan Grossman



says in his sleeve notes, "...the performance is far above anything words can describe." Here we have Rev. Davis as near as he must have sounded at his many chapel meetings at the 'Little Mount Moriah Baptist Church' near 137th. Street where he was much loved. It is these songs that perhaps show even more clearly that apart from being a genius musician Rev. Davis was a compassionate man who dedicated his life to his work with the church.

Another highlight is the title "What Could I Do" where he is accompanying Suzzy, a family friend, and it is good to hear Gary's rich guitar work behind such an interesting singer. I was particularly interested to hear this track as I had just received a tape of Rev. Davis singing and playing with a similar sounding lady singer in 1952.

All of the sides One, Two and Three were recorded with an audience and I feel that under these conditions he really flourishes and always creates a unique rapport with his audience. This was very noticeable on his last tour here in 1971.

There is so much that can be said about this album and there is so much to be said about Reverend Davis's genius. ....this is an excellent album in every way. It is well designed with good notes and photographs. (and among the pictures are two of Sister Annie Davis who is a beautiful lady).

All in all this for me is the album of the year and I cannot recommend it enough!

Bob Tilling

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## NEW WORLD ISSUES

**JOHN LEE HOOKER — New World NW 6003**  
"May Lee" / "Losing You" / "Little Girl" / "Lay Down Little Dreamer" / "Girl You Don't Want Me Baby" / "Don't Be Messin'" / "Lost Everything" / "I Cover The Waterfront" / "I Don't Want Nobody Else" / "Storming On The Deep Blue Sea" / "Crazy Mixed Up World" / "Seven Days".

**B. B. KING — "Volume 1" — New World NW 6004.**

"My Own Fault Baby" / "You Upset Me Baby" / "Bad Luck" / "3 O'Clock Blues" / "Woke Up This Morning" / "Ten Long Years" / "You're Breaking My Heart" / "Did You Ever Love A Woman" / "Going Down Slow" / "Sneaking Around" / "Sweet 16" / "Parting Time".

**B. B. KING — "Volume 2" — New World NW 6005.**

"Got A Right To Love My Baby" / "What A Way To Go" / "Long Nights" / "Feel Like A Million" / "I'll Survive" / "Good Man Gone Bad" / "If I Lost You" / "You're On Top" / "Parting Time" / "I'm King".

**IKE & TINA TURNER — "Revue" — New World NW 6006**

"Please, Please, Please" / "Feel So Good" / "Love Of My Man" / "Think" / "Drown In My Own Tears" / "Love The Way You Love" /

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"Your Precious Love" / "All In My Mind" / "Can't Believe What You Say".

*New World* is a new budget-price label, selling at 71 pence each. As with most budget labels they are not widely advertised, but these four are of definite interest to *BL* readers. These issues have varying 'parentages'; the Hooker is the old *Verve-Folkways*, the Kings are *RPM/Modern* and the Turners' issue are from unidentified live recordings.

The Hooker, as I have stated, is the *Verve* LP 3003, which was recorded in London in 1965 with The Groundhogs with what appears to be track retitling. Incidentally, "Girl Don't You Want Me Baby" and "Don't Be Messin'" are in fact both the same piece, but alternate takes.

I've never been a great fan of Hooker so when I say that this album is rather boring and monotonous, I could well be being harsh. The whole thing sounds competent enough, and the Groundhogs are fairly sympathetic and unobtrusive.

There is more interesting Hooker material around, but at this price it is well worth looking into if you don't have the *Verve* album.

I am a King fan, which maybe means my judgement is impaired again when I say I find his two albums very good. However, I've always considered that the late 50s and early 60s material on *RPM/Kent* was B.B.'s most consistent.

"Volume 1" could be retitled "His Best Known Hits" — for, most of the material has

been on several other labels. This, however, does not detract from their quality — this is good solid B.B. without the choirs, strings, etc. If there is anyone who does not already have this material — take the opportunity now.

“Volume 2” is an exact copy of *Crown LP 5167*, which a number of King fans could well be looking for — I know I was. These tracks were, apparently, recorded in Los Angeles in 1960 with King’s own band behind him (what a pity that his present company has forgotten that he has a regular band). It’s fine hard-hitting blues, typical of King at this time. King is forever being put down by blues fans, which may be warranted when one takes into consideration some of his latter-day material, however, an album such as this one clearly shows that he was an extremely fine blues musician — see him in person and you have definite proof that he still is. This “Volume 2” is highly recommended to everyone.

The Ike & Tina is, as the title says, the *Revue*. In fact, Ike and Tina appear on only three of the tracks here — “Please, Please, Please”, “All In My Mind” and “Can’t Believe What You Say”. These are the best tracks on the whole album. Like most ‘Revue’s’ the material and the artists’ performances are of mixed quality. The meat of the album is Tina, who gives her live audience a vicious roasting on “Please” and then gives them a couple of real treats with her other two songs.

Goodness knows where the material originates from, presumably recorded in a club or small theatre, the only clue seems to be Tina’s reference to St. Louis in “Please”. All in all, this album is for Turner fanatics or someone looking for a cheap rave-up.

*New World* also has a new full-price label called *Sticky* (!) The first issue (STYL 10001) is a ‘soul’ album by Soul Generation entitled “Beyond Body & Soul”, which I found very good. It is extremely well recorded, performed, produced and arranged (in this respect the ‘soul’ fraternity seems to have taken a lot of tips from the Fifth Dimension). However, it is easy to see why this music is popular and why it could be difficult for blues artists to get in on the scene. A worthwhile purchase if you’re looking for an example of current black music. Keep ‘em coming *New World*.

John Stiff

#### LIGHTNIN’ HOPKINS IN BERKELEY Arhoolie 1063

“Please Settle In Vietnam”/“Up On Telegraph Avenue”/“Wipe Your Feet On The Floor”/“Send My Baby Home To Me”/“Selling Wine”/“Brand New Look”/“Have You Ever Loved A Woman”/“Little And Low”/“Hold Up Your Head”/“Good Times Here”/“Annie’s Boogie”/“Black And Evil”.

Hopkin’s recording career stretches over 27 years, and over that period his output has been prolific. His style crystalized early in his career and has changed little over at least 25 years. At

best he can be a remarkably creative guitarist supporting brilliantly contrived lyrics. At worst he is inclined to fall back onto old hackneyed phrases both vocally and instrumentally. Fortunately his output as a whole has been remarkable for its consistently high quality and originality.

On this record Hopkins performs the first side solo and on the second is supported by Francis Clay on drums. The first side starts well with the, then, topical “Please Settle In Vietnam” which concerns the uncertainty as to whether a girl’s boy friend will come home from the war. The remainder of this side is uneventful, although an exception is “Selling Wine” which contains a grim warning against selling wine to Indians in Arizona because “they picked me up right there and then and put me on the rock pile”. I had the feeling while listening to the other four tracks that I had heard it all before.

I found the second side more varied, and interesting. Francis Clay lays down the rhythm while Hopkins, singing less, lets his guitar do the work. The feeling is relaxed, somewhat reminiscent of the tracks that Hopkins recorded in the mid sixties with Earl Palmer and Jimmy Bond. The standout track is undoubtedly “Black And Evil”, slow and atmospheric. Lightnin’ protests about racial inequality saying that God created all men both black and white. This side makes for an interesting contrast with the first because one can see two of the facets that make up Hopkins’ musical character.

I do not, however, feel that on this album Hopkins can be heard at his most creative. Occasionally I was of the opinion that he was merely going through the motions and, although there are no bad tracks, this album rarely reaches the peaks of which I know Hopkins is capable. For Hopkins fiends only.

Hugh Fleming

#### DR. ISIAH ROSS “His First Recordings” Arhoolie 1065

“Shake ‘Em On Down”/“Down South Blues”/“Shake A My Hand”/“Little Soldier Boy”/“Mississippi Blues”/“Going Back South”/“Dr. Ross Breakdown”/“Going To The River”/“Good Thing Blues”/“Turkey Leg Woman”/“Country Clown”/“My Bebob Gal”/“Memphis Boogie”.

*Arhoolie* deserve some sort of award for releasing these thirteen tracks, recorded between 1951 and 1954. Personally, I feel that Ross hasn’t bettered them — and they have the added attraction of that raucous, slightly echoing quality of early 50’s mono recordings, as though they were done in somebody’s bathroom, with people running up and down a rattling staircase outside.

I’ve always thought of Ross as being mainly a harp player, but I’d never realised just how good he is. On this record he treats us to some excellent blowing, despite the limitations of not being able to cup the instrument to give tonal effects. Tracks such as “Down South Blues” and “Shake A My Hand” are outstanding

examples, with the harp carrying the melody line and providing inventive chorded breaks between lines. Naturally, the harp is the main instrument throughout the record but of course, Ross also handles the vocals and guitar, while others provide assistance on washboard or piano. On "Memphis Blues" (the only instrumental) the harp, guitar and drums (on this track alone) build up an excellent rapport, with each instrument equally displayed. Percussion is by washboard on other tracks, and the overall effect is a fine, foot-tapping exercise in rhythm.

Ross's principal influence, as far as harp style is concerned, was Sonny Boy Williamson (John Lee). This is illustrated particularly well on "Down South Blues", "Shake A My Hand" and "Good Thing Blues". The first has a very Williamsonish vocal, sung to a marked washboard beat - with Ross cramming the words into each line, in the best Sonny Boy manner. The second has a high, wailing vocal, complementing the harp in high key. Ross goes in for some long, sustained blowing on the third example.

The guitar takes a leading position on only a single track, "Going To The River". There's no harp, and the guitar lays down a heavy, strumming, boogiesh rhythm, reminiscent of Bukka White. The voice is also deeper, in response. There is indeed one White song on the record, although the only resemblance to the original is the first line of each verse. The reedy harp plays a recurrent phrase and again we get that fine, descending wail in the singing.

"Little Soldier Boy" (which may be autobiographical) is a slower number, befitting the theme of the song (soldier in Korea asking his lady back home to pray for him) with harp fill-ins. The liner notes mention a John Lee Hooker influence here, but the guitar chords are not so driving and percussive. "Mississippi Blues" later becomes "Cat Squirrel" (by way of "Catfish" and "I Been A Fool"). The familiar riffs are there, and it would be interesting to know if Little Walter Jacobs ever heard Ross's harp playing on this track: it's superb. The wailing voice cuts right through the backing, and the washboard is subdued. "Going Back South" allows Ross to show his skill as an accompanist, backing an unknown vocalist (who is not outstanding). I wish Ross had put his guitar aside here and coaxed all he could out of his harp, but the playing is still tremendous. On "Dr. Ross Breakdown" the harp is more spare - the washboard takes prominence.

Ross's lyrics are worth listening to; "Country Clown" (apparently based on Lil' Son Jackson material) is an ironic piece of self depreciation: the singer explains that his country upbringing forces him to be drunk most of the time. On "Turkey Leg Woman", Ross brags about his woman to a washboard backing; as the title suggests we get some interesting kitchen/cooking imagery. (Ross's approach to blues is still a basically country one: no cited phrases here).

The special quality of these early recordings can be best seen on "My Bebop Gal" where

Ross's guitar sounds as if it was being played in another room, through a hole in the wall. Ross seems to have had a lot of lively girlfriends in his time and he doesn't appear to have suffered too many of the standard problems inherent in the emotional life of the blues singer.

So buy this record while it's around. You'll get some fine tracks, informative sleeve notes and a photo of Ross in his army greatcoat and cap looking very professional. I'm sure that this disc will become a mainstay of the *Arhoolie* catalogue.

Graham Whiteman

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### JIMMY DAWKINS "All For Business" Delmark DS-634 (USA)

*Delmark's* latest batch of releases is one of their best ever with the long awaited Robert Jr. Lockwood lp and this one which is really 'all for business'. Dawkins has gained the recognition of blues fans the world over as one of Chicago's best electric guitarists; the great taste, control, style and sheer technical ability of this mature artist can all be heard here. This record succeeds because Jimmy Dawkins is in control. He both wrote all the songs and handpicked the excellent back up musicians. The creativity and originality here is indescribable. As the liner notes say, Jimmy is constantly changing. "Business" is very different from his earlier *Delmark* release. Instead of letting his recent success commercialize his work, Jimmy's guitar style has become even more gutsy and true, pared down instead of the aimless flashiness of so many others. Listen to the title tune, a masterful slow blues. His guitar cries with bursts of harsh repeated notes and almost voice like wails. Even in spite of his great guitar throughout, this does not seem like just a Jimmy Dawkins lp because he has surrounded himself with equals who are given a chance to do their thing. The other musicians include Otis Rush and members of his band at that time, sax-Jim Conley and Ernest Gatewood-bass and Charlie Hicks on drums. Otis takes a number of extended solos that equal Dawkins and show the vast differences in their styles. Why doesn't Rush do a solo effort on *Delmark*? Andrew 'Voice' Odom (formerly B.B. Junior, he is more original than that) handles all but one vocal, a rather average effort by Jimmy. 'Voice' fits perfectly on the title cut and others but I feel Dawkins should have sung more. Personally Odom's vocal style is hard to take for a full album. I should not forget the contribution of veteran keyboard man, Sonny Thompson, who adds some gospel influence to the instrumental "Cotton Pickin' Blues".

Both instrumentals on the album are highly tastefully extended pieces. In fact, all the songs are long enough for everybody's licks. This record reaffirms my belief that the blues are still alive. Dawkins is a 'living' artist because he is able to communicate through his guitar and songs (deep, powerful blues; "Born In Poverty" and "Welfare Blues"), life in the ghetto, a life he lives *now*, not twenty years ago. He doesn't depend just on past traditions but adds to the

blues language. This is one of *Delmark's* best releases. The cover picture of Jimmy tells it all.

John McCarty

#### CHUCK BERRY "Bio" Chess 6499 650

"Bio"/"Hello Little Girl Goodbye"/"Woodpecker"/"Rain Eyes"/"Aimlessly Driftin'"/"Got It And Gone"/"Talkin' About My Buddy".

The album title is lifted from the opening track, which is a very interesting package tour through his life, giving us such glimpses as "I hitch-hiked to Chicago to watch Muddy Waters play/. . . . It was him showed me the way". But the album isn't one you should approach as historian, or critical examiner; it's pure and simply one to enjoy. It's worth it for the cover photo alone, apart from the ones inside the gate-fold sleeve, showing the artist as a young man (a very young man), with the same sly smile that's still evident today. But the music inside is no throwaway.

O.K., so Chuck is showing signs of age, but he sure is growing old gracefully. Gone is the breathless, breakneck sense of urgency that saturated his early work, and in its place is a far more relaxed saunter through workouts of his ideas. There are seven numbers on the album, all noticeably longer than his usual, and as all are newies, there is ample evidence that his creative powers are far from finished. His support this time is Elephants' Memory; obviously New York's get back at the London Sessions! Far from perpetuating the mediocrity of the latter, as you may have feared, the musicians have a sufficient empathy with the master to infuse their own joy at playing with him, and to show a prodigious bouncing of ideas around each other. Of course, when black meets white, the latter tends to create musical straightjackets, but here the restrictions attendant on the meeting of the two colours are at a minimum.

There is the same comfortable feeling as with "San Francisco Dues"; and if you liked that you'll like this. But comfortable is not to say that there aren't still new moments of particular beauty to behold; as witnessed by the guitar in "Aimlessly Driftin'", which plays around the basically staid rhythm like a happy child skipping round a playground. You might complain that some of the old drive has gone, but be fair, you'd also complain if he merely rehashed, reviewed and redid his old hits. These new numbers might not be earthquakes, but they provide a hell of a swell, inviting you to ride contentedly on its back! I for one am

happy to do so.

Michael J.

#### THE SON SEALS BLUES BAND Alligator 4703

"Mother-in-Law Blues"/"Sitting At My Window"/"Look Now, Baby"/"Your Love Is Like A Cancer"/"All Your Love"/"Cotton Picking Blues"/"Hot Sauce"/"How Could She Leave Me"/"Going Home Tomorrow"/"Now That I'm Down".

Thirty year old Son Seals is backed on this, his first, album by John 'Big Moose' Walker (organ), John Riley (bass), and Charles Caldwell (drums). Son's major influence is undoubtedly Albert King, although one can also hear B.B. King and Buddy Guy influences. Son sings dirty and plays dirty, and the result is that of a tight, aggressive sound very similar to that which one would find in a Chicago club on a good night. The album contains much excellent material, seven of the ten tracks being Son's own compositions.

It is unfortunate that the two opening tracks are probably the poorest on the album. Junior Parker's "Mother-in-Law Blues" is rather uninspired, and "Sitting At My Window", although containing an excellent vocal in which Son employs the melissa singing style of B.B. King, has an over long guitar solo which builds to its climax too early and then tails off over the last twelve bars.

Having disposed of the first two tracks the album then improves greatly. Son is heard at his best on his own compositions which lyrically are often superb. Nowhere is more evident than on the opening verse of the stunning "Your Love Is Like A Cancer":

*Your love is just like a cancer woman, Lord,  
eating away my life (x2)*

*But if you are loving to kill me woman, Lord  
knows but I don't mind dying.*

these very powerful lyrics lead into a searing guitar solo. Other good lyrics occur on the long slow "Cotton Picking Blues":

*Little bee sucks the blossom,*

*Big bee makes the honey,*

*I do all the hard work,*

*But my baby takes all of my money.*

These long, slow tracks are undoubtedly Son's best medium, the atmospheric "Now That I'm Down" runs almost for six minutes, and he also renders a beautiful version of Magic Sam's "All Your Love".

Son's guitar is very much upfront throughout and the long tracks allow plenty of scope for his lengthy, exciting guitar breaks, most of

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#### BLACK WAX MAGAZINE R.I.P.

We were saddened to hear of the demise of Roy Stanton's *Black Wax Magazine* which seemed to be going from strength to strength and promised really great things. Roy decided to wind things up as *Black Music* an IPC publication, was projected which would have covered the same ground as *BWM* but as a glossy with national distribution. Roy will continue to freelance and run *Black Wax* record sales as well as compiling a *Black Wax* bibliography/library.

which are constructed very well. John Riley, with some heavy bass playing, and Charles Caldwell, with his powerful drumming give excellent support. I wish that Big Moose Walker had played piano instead of organ, but that, and the choice of opening numbers were my only gripes. Taken as a whole this is a really promising first album for Son Seals and a must for lovers of modern Chicago blues. The cover and sleeve notes are up to *Alligator's* usual high standard.

Hugh Fleming



**BLIND JOHN DAVIS "Live Malersaal 16/4/'73 Happy Bird HB5004**

"My Own Boogie"/"Everyday I Have The Blues"/"Texas Tony"/"Trouble In Mind"/"If I Had A Listen"/"St. Louis Blues"/"After Hours"/"How Long Blues"/"Everybody's Boogie"/"Memphis Blues"/"Rockin' Chair Boogie"/"The House Of Blue Lights"/"C.C. Rider"/"Runaway Boogie"/"Pinetop Boogie".

Blind John Davis will be well known for his role as session pianist on innumerable sides from the 30's and 40's, when he produced splendid accompaniments to Big Bill Broonzy, John Lee Sonny Boy Williamson, Merline Johnson and many others.

Now he steps out of the sidelines with this album, recorded in concert last year in Germany. John Davis turns out to be a completely professional artist, well able to produce an excellent varied set of blues and boogies; he also has a fine voice. While one can only regret that he was never recorded solo in his prime this album does much to redress the balance. Davis is still an extremely talented musician,

full of ideas and possessing a technique capable of expressing them.

The range of this album is enormous – from a highly sophisticated "Everyday" to a rocking "House Of Blue Lights"; from "Runaway" (a version of "Yancey Special") and "Pinetop" to two W.C. Handy numbers. "St. Louis Blues" possibly exemplifies John Davis's talent; he takes a trite jazz standard and transforms it into an imaginative, bluesy, personal statement. He is on record as saying that he "...never really cared for the blues.". Be that as it may, he evidently cares for his reputation as a musician; this album is blues-orientated but Davis is too conscientious an entertainer merely to go through the motions. There is a lot of hard work and personal pride in these tracks.

John Davis's session work has been criticised as over-decorative – a debatable description. On this record he proves himself to be a brilliantly talented pianist, thoughtful as well as technically excellent. This should be an essential record for any lover of piano blues or blues in general. The halcyon days of rediscovery often seem over; then along comes Blind John Davis to demonstrate that he not only was, but remains, one of the great bluesmen.

Chris Smith

**TOM SHAW "Blind Lemon's Buddy" Blue Goose 2008**

"Baby Be A Boy Child Named After Me"/"Stop In The Valley"/"Some Men Like Doggin'"/"Just Can't Keep From Crying"/"Match Box Blues"/"Rock"/"Samson And Delilah"/"Howling Wolf Blues"/"Martin Luther King"/"Ella Speed"/"Broke And Ain't Got A Dime"/"Prowling Ground Hog".

Tom Shaw is a new name to me – although I understand that he's made at least one record before this. I'd like to hear it, because Shaw sounds like a competent, if minor singer and guitarist. I say 'minor', as Shaw is now in his mid 60's and is passed his best, on his own admission. Also, about half of the tracks on this record are derived from the work of other performers.

Forget the title of this record. Jefferson must have met and inspired hundreds of would-be guitarists in his time. Shaw learned some of Jefferson's repertoire, both at first hand and from discs, adapting it to his own, more measured picking style. It's no disgrace for a guitarist to admit that he can't reproduce Jefferson's unique riffs and Shaw's version of "Match Box Blues" is a fair approximation of the Jefferson, setting (using the words of "Booting Me About") without the colourful guitar runs. Inevitably, the vocal is less successful: Shaw lacks a 'fast' enough singing style to cope with Jefferson's crowded lines.

Shaw also had some contact with Funny Paper Smith, Ramblin' Thomas and Blind Willie Johnson. His recording of "Just Can't Keep From Crying" is a more direct copy of the latter's style of vocal delivery – even down to the exclamations and line-fillers. Again, the

guitar style is simplified – there's no bottleneck and Shaw uses hammered-on bass notes at the end of each line, in place of Johnson's slide phrase. Apart from the familiar chorus, the lyrics are different to Blind Willie's recording. This track works very well, sung in Shaw's gravelly, terse voice. For the other Johnson inspired song, "Samson And Delilah" (or "If I Had My Way") Shaw uses an enunciation almost as indistinct as the original.

Other 'copies' on this record are Lemon's "Broke And Ain't Got A Dime", Funny Paper Smith's "Howling Wolf Blues" (where the guitar playing is lacking in force) and "Some Men Like Dogging" (attributed to Texas Alexander), which indulges in Alexanderish hummed line or two. All of these are fair tributes to the original singers.

Shaw's own material is rather more of a mixture. "Martin Luther King" – while no doubt a sincerely felt statement has trite lyrics, and these don't seem to hang together with the accompaniment. The strangely named "Baby Be A Boy Child Named After Me" is a compilation of standard blues lines, but it works as a song for all that. The fastish picking style is carefully worked and ragged enough to be fresh. "Stop In The Valley" is perhaps his best track for some reason, it reminds me of a Charley Patton number. Shaw does some accomplished playing on the treble strings and turns in a good vocal – even his straining after high notes is somehow fitting.

"Rock" is something that an early white rocker might have done. The overall effect is one of carelessness. "Prowling Ground Hog", a distant relative of Big Joe Williams' "Roosting Ground Hog", contains some interesting bass runs. "Ella Speed" includes elements of "Salty Dog". There's a walking effect in the accompaniment – played too slowly, I think. Shaw's voice sounds particularly cracked and strained here.

Shaw is interesting, but not outstanding – competent, but not original. The record is certainly worth having, but I wouldn't queue up in the rain to buy it.

Graham Whiteman

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**JIMMY ROGERS "Gold Tailed Bird" Shelter 8921 (USA)**

**THE BOB REIDY CHICAGO BLUES BAND "Lake Michigan Ain't No River" Rounder 2005 (USA) featuring Jimmy Rogers, Johnny Young, John Littlejohn, Richard Robinson and Carey Bell.**

These two albums mark the return of Jimmy Rogers to record, possibly the blues event of 1973! His performances on both lp's are fine though none of the *Chess* remakes match the originals. Would that be possible? "Gold Tailed Bird" brings Jimmy and his pianist Bob Reidy together with Freddie King and The Aces. They produce some super tight instrumentals, "Live At Ma Bee's", "House Rocker", the slow and beautiful new tune, "Gold Tailed Bird" and updated *Chess* items like "You're The One". Jimmy's voice is not as strong as it once was

and sounds strained on a few numbers but his creativity and that smooth, understated delivery still satisfy. My only qualms are with the production, not only are the musicians names spelled wrong on the jacket (the harp player goes uncredited) but the song sequence is all screwed up. However the back cover does have some excellent photos of Jimmy and his family. The four Rogers cuts on the Reidy lp are almost all *Chess* material. Jimmy sings poorly on "Walking By Myself" and Carey Bell's harp does not compare with Big Walter's work on the original but the other three "House Rock", "Slick Chick", and "Sloppy Drunk" are all great rockers. Jimmy Rogers is still a fine performer and his fans will want both of these albums (there is no duplication).

The *Rounder* lp is a lot more than just a Jimmy Rogers appearance. The Bob Reidy Band ranks as one of Chicago's best groups today. Reidy himself is a strong musical influence and leader. He reminds me of Otis Spann in the 50's with Muddy, he is that important to their sound. The other young white musicians in the group are good, especially Chris Mason's tough sax work but Reidy and Co. depend on the black blues masters who appear here to carry the load. Carey Bell's harp work is not his best but I like his vocal on Muddy's "My Eyes". Richard Robinson, an unknown name to me, is an impressive drummer (listen to his cymbal work). His two vocals are more enthusiastic than good. The best cuts are on side two by John Littlejohn, a man who has never received the popularity due him. He breathes life into two well known numbers "Dust My Broom" and "Reconsider Baby" and also does a great job with Willie Dixon's "I Don't Know Why". Littlejohn is versatile, he can play both straight and slide guitar and is a good singer. Johnny Young does his predictable mandolin thing and I do like his vocal on "Break My Heart". Bob Reidy contributes two instrumentals of the super-tight kind I know him for. This is a fine programme of Chicago blues with some fine new material and up-dated standards done by a real all-star roster. Chicago fans should get this and blues freaks in the States should try to catch the Reidy Show around the Midwest, honest they (Jimmy Rogers, Johnny Young, Sam Lay etc.) are one of the best around. The *Rounder* people should be rewarded for the job they have done on this record and I hope more blues are coming from them.

John McCarty

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**ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS/ROOSEVELT SYKES "Blues From The Bottoms" 77 Records LEU 12/50.**

"Gonna Stand No Quittin'" / "Broken-Hearted Man" / "Salty Woman" / "Whiskey Head Man" / "I'm The Sweet Root Man" / "Spontaneous Conversation" / "Lord, Help Poor Me" / "Goody Fay And John".

This is for those 'purist' freaks (like myself) who salivate at the thought of pre-1942 recordings, and who must have been bemoaning lately

the dearth of fresh releases of 'old' material. This isn't recorded as long ago as that, in fact it's only two years old, but it's saturated in essence of that era; and because of it, it's one that lovers of more modern sounds should bypass. This is going to be too difficult for them to understand or take. But the rest of you, read on.

The title is just a little misleading. Roosevelt Sykes appears performing on only one track, plus a short burst of inactivity, enigmatically entitled "Spontaneous Conversation"! It's a bloody good job he is only allowed this one entrance, as his performance on guitar is little short of diabolical, certainly embarrassing. At one point he pauses for a guitar break, and falls all over the strings! He should stick to piano.

Fortunately, the other six tracks, all extended workings, are all from Robert Pete, and the quality of these is a far different world. Apart from the strange knocking noises accompanying "Gonna Stand No Quittin'", the opening track, which sounds as though someone is half-heartedly attempting to get in (!), the tracks are all beautiful cameos; a fine companion to the *Ahura Mazda* album released a year or so ago.

His vocals are raw, earthy, and primitive; and they are virtually unintelligible. I defy you to catch more than a handful of words from each song. But none of this matters, as the power and feeling behind them is impressive and all-important, and they are superbly counterpointed by a sweet yet incisive guitar accompaniment. It at one carries delicate intricacies and solid beat emphasis, and it is a great shame that his talent is largely overlooked in the blues guitar stakes. Perpetual romancers of John Lee Hooker should listen to this; and especially the sweet, understated bottleneck on "Lord, Help Poor Me".

It was a waste putting Sykes in such company; fortunately his 'contribution' can be happily forgotten without serious loss in the remaining wealth. A very worthwhile album that should earn Doug Dobell's 77 label a few pennies; but the final mark to John Bentley, for writing a whole sleeve of notes without anything of consequence!

Michael J.

#### THE LIFE OF BOBO JENKINS Big Star BB 008-19(USA)

This is an interesting little record. Not really good in the sense of good production/musicians but good because it's a personal, no bullshit effort by a man who loves the blues, Bobo Jenkins. This is Bobo's first album on his own label, *Big Star*, and it's a real homemade creation, from the poor sound quality to the nice sleeve with a vintage Bobo picture inside a star. The music is nothing but that amateur Detroit blues sound. A few of the tunes are pretty ragged but songs like "Realing And Rocking", "I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always", "Trying To Get You Off My Mind", all written by Bobo, are truthful comments on the life of a bluesman, using elements of the blues tradition. Bobo's simple guitar and warm

buzzing voice, come across and horns are used effectively on a few cuts. A rough, tough, Detroit jam; few albums today have such blues feeling. To order send \$5.00 to *Big Star Records*, 4228 Joy Road, Detroit, Michigan, 48204, U.S.A. I'm sure Bobo would be glad to hear from you.

#### WILLIE WILLIAMS "Raw Unpolluted Soul" Supreme SR-1001

Willie Williams is one of Chicago's best blues drummers and has played with the likes of Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters and Luther Allison. Recently he has recorded quite a few singles under his own name for small labels. His success with "Wine Headed Women" on black radio stations has circulated this Willie Dixon produced lp around and it deserves it for it is a fine programme of tight Chicago blues, the kind of pure blues that is getting scarce today. Backing up Willie are the likes of Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin, Eddie Taylor, Carey Bell, Little Mack and Joe Harper, all Chicago stalwarts. Willie wrote all the songs and came up with a few gems. "Back To Mississippi" is a tight instrumental featuring Little Mack's SBW II influenced harp and stinging Hubert Sumlin guitar. "Ruth Baby" and "38 Women" are from Cadillac Baby and they are tough, with superlative harp by Carey Bell. As the liner notes say, Willie is no Caruso, his rough, harsh voice fits his low-down blues. "Wine Headed Women", the hit, stands out with its chugging rhythm and squeaky harp. "Blues At Half Past Twelve" is a slow, original blues with Carey Bell giving his all on chromatic. Side Two is just more of the same.

One for all Chicago fans. Willie growls the blues.

John McCarty

# Ragtime

#### RAGTIME READING by Roger Millington

It's now twenty-three years since "They All Played Ragtime" came off the presses and in all that time this has remained the only major book of ragtime interest. Now with the ragtime renaissance well under way, a number of valuable books are appearing. Two of them "The Red Back Book" - reprint of Jolm Stark's band arrangements of classic rags dated about 1912 - and David Jasen's "Ragtime Discography", I haven't seen yet. So I'll concentrate on three that have recently become available.

"Scott Joplin, Collected Piano Works. Volume 1: Works for Piano."

Paperback edition published by *New York Public Library*. 305 pp. \$8.95.

This large format book was first published in a hard back edition a couple of years ago. A third edition came out recently in paperback to meet the demand for a cheaper copy. Anyway, it sits better on the music stand of a piano. Volume 2 is still only available in hard back and

is subtitled 'Works for Voice'.

For the main part, the book is a collection of sheet music for almost all of Joplin's rags, waltzes and marches. In all, 41 Joplin compositions; 7 collaborations with other composers; and one Joplin arrangement of a Joseph Lamb rag. In addition there is a transcription from a recently discovered piano roll attributed to Joplin. Three important rags have, however, been omitted as the present copyright owner refused his permission.

Volume 2 includes excerpts from the opera "Treemonisha" and several songs.

Vera Brodsky Lawrence, editor of both volumes, has carefully corrected many errors that appeared in the original sheet music – incorrect or missing notes, key signatures, time signatures and so on. Apart from that, the full size sheet copies retain all the typographical eccentricities and charm of the originals. All the music covers including duplicate versions are reproduced – sadly, only in black and white.

But the book is of value to other than pianists wishing to learn many of the less familiar and less readily available Joplin pieces. There are several important editorial sections. A six page introduction by Miss Lawrence reveals a number of interesting points about the sheet music. This is followed by a 28-page study of Joplin's achievements by Rudi Blesh.

An Appendix includes an extensive rolography of Joplin's works, listing over a hundred rolls – which indicates the massive task for anyone hoping to build a complete library of tape copies. Only a fraction of this huge output has found its way onto microgroove. Unfortunately, the rolography fails to indicate which rolls are known to be duplicates of each other. Thirty-two catalogue numbers of "Maple Leaf Rag" are listed, including three believed to have been cut by the composer. One roll added to the list is of interest as being the only known recording by Joplin of music by another composer: W.C. Handy's "Ole Miss Rag".

A list of 78's of Joplin compositions is also included. Again, "Maple Leaf" gets a formidable listing. Literally dozens of versions including which I can't wait to hear, by the Hotcha-Mundharmonika Trio! There is also a fairly comprehensive lp listing.

There's no halfway position about this book. If you're only slightly interested in ragtime, it won't give you that much insight into the music. But if you are a confirmed Joplin devotee, it is utterly essential. Even if you don't read music, just having it about makes you feel good. Very attractively printed, by the way.

To get hold of it, write to The Bloomsbury Bookshop.

"The Art of Ragtime", W.J. Shafer & Johannes Riedel. Published by *Louisiana State University Press*, Baton Rouge. 249 pp. \$10.

With the exception of single chapters in other books and a number of magazine articles, this is the first extensive musicological analysis of ragtime. So for much of the book, you need a pretty good knowledge of musical theory. But

there's also plenty of good reading in it: the lives and musical styles of the major composers; a good discussion of the impact of ragtime; complete scores of some pieces; a full analysis of "Treemonisha"; and even a fascinating study of the artwork of ragtime sheet music covers.

Looking back at what I've typed, I see that I give this book a fraction of the space given to the Joplin collection. Hardly fair, seeing as "The Art of Ragtime" gives you a much better read and contains ten times as much information. It also contains a remarkably good bibliography which alone is worth the price of the book.

As far as I know, it is not on sale anywhere in Britain. If you don't want to blow ten dollars, persuade your local music library to order it from America. They bloody well ought to, as there has long been a need for a work of this scholastic importance.

**"Memory Lane: Ragtime, Jazz, Foxtrot and other popular music covers"** Selected by Max Wilk. Published by *Studio Art*, London. 88 pp plus a selection of sheet music. £3.75.

An absolutely gorgeous book! A large format paperback in which Max Wilk has collected about a hundred sheet music covers, very well reproduced in full colour. There is also a selection of sheet music facsimiles, including several Joplin rags. The covers chosen date from 1899 to 1925 and have been selected for their pictorial interest rather than their historic value. Which is as it should be – essentially, this is a coffee table book for just looking at and enjoying.

Blues enthusiasts will be interested in seeing "Undertaker's Blues", "Dallas Blues", "The Saint Louis Blues", "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" and "Those Draftin' Blues", as they were presented to the music-buying public between 1912 to 1918. Ragtime fans are better catered for with a fair number of genuine rags and an even larger offering of the tin-pan alley pastiches.

Flicking through "Memory Lane" gives a great sense of historical period. There is a joyful innocence in the hand lettering – albeit often very skilfully executed – and a superb exuberance about the styles of illustration. Walking down Charing Cross Road and Denmark Street the other day, I couldn't help but be depressed by the contrast with the abysmal graphics perpetrated by today's music publishers.

BBC TV gave a long review of "Memory Lane" accompanied by appropriate vintage recordings and this push given to the book means you should readily find it at most big bookshops.

A good way to use up your Christmas book tokens. If you are one of those Phillistines who claim that £3.75 is a lot to pay for a paperback just think about all those lps you shelled out a couple of quid for and hardly ever play these days.

Next issue: reviews of some important ragtime lp's recently issued.



# Contact SECTION

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THIS IS YOUR SECTION OF THE MAGAZINE!; AND IT IS UP TO YOU TO HELP MAKE IT WORK. Contact ads are FREE to Subscribers as long as they are 'non-commercial', if the ads are commercial or if you are not a subscriber please send along 10p in stamps (UK) or 2 IRC's (overseas). Those of you who wish to place Auction Lists in this part of the magazine please write for further details.

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3-73:1) I am working on a paper on the Blues Harp with emphasis on biography, especially on Little Walter and both Sonny Boys etc. I would appreciate any information on any and all blues harp men, photos, newspaper-clippings, interviews, tapes, advice, remembrances of European visits by Little Walter or Sonny Boy Williamson etc., anything! I also need some help with the transcriptions and musical aspects etc. Write for more information. Thank-you.

John McCarty, 601 W. Wis. Ave., Kaukauna, Wis. 54130, U.S.A.

3-73:2) I would like to trade tapes of post-war blues. Any blues fans travelling through my area are welcome to call in. Write to:

Hartmut M. Munnich, 51 Aachen, Frankenbergerstrasse 27, West Germany.

3-73:3) *Australian Blues Society* — for more details please contact Graeme Flanagan who edits the newsletter. Graeme would also like to hear from people interested in post-war Chicago Blues and *Excello* artists. Write to:

Graeme Flanagan, P.O. Box 1029, Canberra City, ACT 2601, Australia.

3-73:4) Interests: All kinds of blues and gospel, some bluegrass, but mainly blues and 50's R&B. Interested in documentation of blues and bluesmen in Cincinnati. Send SAE or IRC for "LP's for sale/Auction List" to:

Steve Tracy, 4404 Brazee St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45209, U.S.A.

3-73:5) Wanted *Saydisc* SDR 146 Blues Piano *Roots* RL302, 303, 304, 305, 314, 316, 317.

Please state price and condition. Write to:

Steve Millington, 5 Lyn Avenue, Lichfield, Staffs WS13 7DA, U.K.

3-73:6) Pre-War Blues Reissues urgently wanted. *White Label* IRC 1-02 Big Bill (10''), *Kokomo* K1001 Blues Potpourri, *Phillips* BBL 7512 Blind Boy Fuller *RCA* 130.256 Washboard Sam, Down With The Game D201 Vol.2, *Fontana* 682.099 Low Down Blues, *Rarities* RA-3 Buddy Burton (EP), *Fontana* 467.182 TE Amos Easton, *Fontana* 467.214 TE Lillian Glinn, *Jazz Collector* JEL 10 H.H. Henry & Tampa Red, *Swaggie* JCS 33751 Sara Martin, *HMV* 7EG-8178 Lizzie Miles & Billie Young, *Polydras* 101 Trixie Smith, *Jazz Society* LP 19 Georgia White. Write to:

Roger Misiewicz, 714 Adelaide Ave. E., Oshawa, Ontario, L1G 2A9, Canada.

3-73:7) Have hundreds of unreissued blues on tape, pre-war and post-war (some unissued). Would like to trade tapes of unreissued blues with other collectors. Write to: Dave Moore, 19 Worthing Road, Patchway, Bristol, BS12 5HY, England.

3-73:8) I am a keen folk and blues fan with a good allround collection of records (ragtime aficionado with numerous records of this kind) who is looking for exchange partners in Western Germany. Be free to contact George Paul, Bahnhofstr. 28, 741 Reutlingen, West Germany. Lists upon request.

3-73:9) Have a large collection of unissued blues tapes and will send my list to anyone interested in trading unissued blues tapes from Club dates, air-shots, etc., Wolfgang Behr, 28 Bremen 44, Scholenerstr. 15, Germany.



3-73:10) We import *BLUES* records from the U.S. *Advent, Alligator, Big Star, Crazy Cajun, Fortune, King, Origin, US Specialty, Blues Connoisseur, Trix* etc. Send for our *NEW* free catalogue.

Smokestack Record Sales, Box 3048, S-183 03 Taby, Sweden.



3-73:11) "*The Jazz and Blues Film Society*" — aim to provide an archive of all film and videotape of Blues and Jazz and to show them. Enquiries and offers of help should be sent to John Stedman, 4 Oaks Cottages, Sandhurst, Hawkhurst, Kent, TN18 5JN, U.K.

3-73:12) Photographs of Bluesmen: Plain 5¼" x 5¼", 25p each; Mounted 5¼" x 5¼", 35p each.

Johnny Mars, Lightnin' Slim, Snooky Pryor, John Wrencher, Boogie Woogie Red, Homesick James, Whispering Smith, Eddie Taylor, Erwin Helfer, + a Jazz one-Art Blakey Jazz Messengers. Two poses of each available. Write to: Eddie Cousins, Apt. H, 4 Princes Gate West, Liverpool 8, Lancs., England.

3-73:13) *Leicester Blues Appreciation Society*: for more details please contact; Bob Fisher, 16 Yorkshire Road, Leicester, LE4 6PJ, U.K.

3-73:14) *Ragtime Collectors Club*: Enquires and offers of help should be sent to: Roger Millington, 25 Alexandra Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey, U.K.

3-73:15) Wanted: Tapes of any unissued Blues material from TV, concerts, parties, broadcasts, acetates etc. and tapes of records. State what you can offer and technical details. I have more than 50hrs. for trade. Anything from/about Big Joe Williams; pictures, posters, programmes, articles, records (*Bluebird / Chicago / Columbia / Bullet / Vee Jay / Collector and Xtra*), tapes of interviews, unissued sessions, concerts etc. (even where he was only used as an accompanist), and anything else that is available. Also wanted information about his unissued *Baul* recordings. Please send me your lists or write for my lists. Contact: Axel Kustner, 3353 Bad Gandersheim, Hoher Weg 15, West Germany. (Tel. 05382-2512).

3-73:16) Wanted: John Estes — *Swaggie* LP's 1219 + 1220 and any *Ebony* 45's; "Kings of The Blues" — *Victor 'X' LVA 3032*; Memphis Jug Band V: 'X' LX-3009; *HMV 7EG-8073*; Joe Williams — *Bluebird 07719*; Elijah Jones Bb B7526, 7565, 7616; almost anything by Yank Rachell, Memphis Minnie, Charley Jordan, Sonny Boy Williamson, Buddy Boyle, Furry Lewis & Co. Contact: J. T. Newman, 19 Elmswood Gardens, Sherwood, Nottingham, U.K.

3-73:17) *BLUES LP'S FOR SALE*: "I Feel So Bad", Eddie Taylor, *Advent 2802* — £2.00; "Fillin' In Blues" rare Gus Cannon etc., *Herwin 205*—£1.80; "The Compleat", Albert Collins, *Imperial 12449* — £1.35; "Travellin' To California", Albert King, *Polydor 2343 026* — £0.66; "Lucy Mae Blues", Frankie Lee Sims, *Specialty SNTF 5004* — £1.00; "Natchez Trace", Papa George Lightfoot, *Liberty LBS 83353* — £0.90; "Lightnin' Sam Hopkins Vol. 2", *Poppy 11002* — £0.70; "The Roots Of Lightnin' Hopkins", *Xtra 1127* — £0.90; "Ball And Chain", L. Hopkins/Mama Thornton etc., *Arhoolie 1039* — £1.50. Post free from:

Nick Holt, 92a London Road, Aston Clinton, Bucks, U.K.

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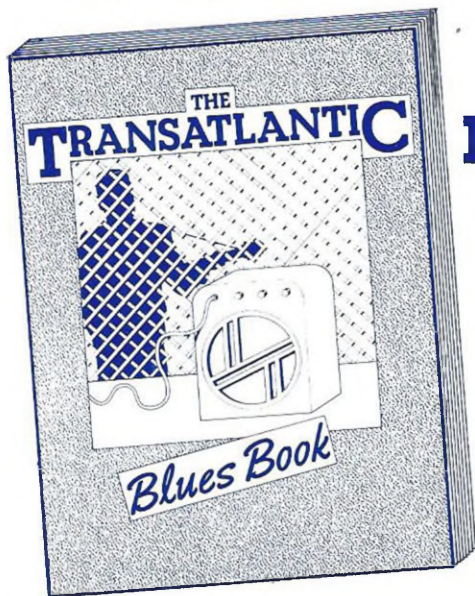


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This handy booklet compiled by Mike Leadbitter, was created with the collector and enthusiast in mind. In order to simplify things, and help everyone find what they're looking for quickly, the various blues catalogues distributed by Transatlantic Records have been divided up and reassembled under specific headings (e.g. "Chicago Blues" or "Texas Blues") with brief notes on the type of material under those headings.

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