

January- February, No. 17, 1992

BLUES LETTER

David Dee
at
Blues
Showcase 91

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The Magazine of The St. Louis Blues Society

OFF BROADWAY NIGHT CLUB

BLACK TOP RECORDING ARTISTS
DARRELL NULISCH
AND TEXAS HEAT



SAT, FEBRUARY 15

BULLSEYE RECORDING ARTISTS
LITTLE JIMMY KING
AND THE MEMPHIS SOUL SURVIVORS



SAT, FEBRUARY 22

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15
Black Top Recording Artists
DARRELL NULISCH & TEXAS HEAT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20
**ST. LOUIS MUSIC NETWORK
SHOWCASE**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21
THE HEATERS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22
Bullseye Recording Artists
**LITTLE JIMMY KING & THE
MEMPHIS SOUL SURVIVORS**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28
Warner Bros. Recording Artists
P.M.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29
BLUE DIXIE

THURSDAY, MARCH 5
SUE FOLEY
(Formerly with Albert Collins)

FRIDAY, MARCH 6
Red Hot Rhythm & Blues
THE ROCKIN' LUCKYS

SATURDAY, MARCH 7
**BUGS HENDERSON &
THE SHUFFLEKINGS**

MONDAY, MARCH 9
CAPO PRESENTS
BILL MORRISSEY / PETER KEENE

THURSDAY, MARCH 12
**ST. LOUIS MUSIC NETWORK
SHOWCASE**

FRIDAY, MARCH 13
Red Hot Rhythm & Blues
THE ROCKIN' LUCKYS

SATURDAY, MARCH 14
SERAPIS

THURSDAY, MARCH 19
Hot Harmonica & Blues
PAUL ORTA & THE KINGPINS

FRIDAY, MARCH 20
World Beat Party Band
THE BONEDADDY'S

SATURDAY, MARCH 21
THE SOULARD BLUES BAND



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25
Hot Texas Style Guitar
CHRIS DUARTE

FRIDAY, MARCH 27
**DAVID LEE &
THE HOUSEROCKERS**

SATURDAY, MARCH 28
New Orleans Rhythm & Blues
MARSHA BALL

EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT
J. GRAVITYS MUSICIANS JAM
WITH ST. LOUIS' BEST MUSICIANS
MUSICIANS BRING YOUR AXE

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BLUESLETTER

The Magazine of The St. Louis Blues Society

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By Peter Yewell

As the new Executive Director of the St. Louis Blues Society, I am most honored to be professionally associated with an organization that is dedicated to carrying on our city's great Blues music heritage. It is a legacy we intend to pass on to future generations.

Since last October when I accepted this position, I have been working hard with the board to develop a plan for the Society, one that will call attention to the recent resurgence of Blues music here and all over the world.

Of course, there are those of us who never gave up hope, but now, Blues music is finally getting its due by being recognized by the press and other commercial media. We at the Society are very grateful for this acknowledgement.

We have recently scored big with a few events and my prediction is that 1992 will be a ground-breaking year for the Blues Society. We ended 1991 with a bang as St. Louis Blues Showcase '91, held at the end of November at Mississippi Nights, proved to a lot of people that St. Louis Blues is here to stay. The event also showed that we've got the talent to back it up. With 37 Blues acts in a two-day, 20-hour period, there should be no doubt in anyone's mind as to the power of St. Louis Blues music.

We've also launched two new programs that will help bring attention to the Blues in St. Louis. The Blues Society Welcome Program, which finds the Society welcoming and promoting the Blues concerts we do not produce ourselves, and the Blue Monday Series with KSHE. In addition, we've established the Blue Highway Series which brings Kansas City Blues bands to St. Louis for a weekend of KC Blues, and in turn we go there to show 'em our stuff. Check out the related stories in this issue.

But by far, the big new is this year's St. Louis Blues Festival. Plans have been in the works for months now and we are working very hard to make this not only a major St. Louis event, but a nationally recognized festival as well. Although the Society has produced festivals and other major events before, the 1992 festival will represent the first time we've ever produced a festival with national presence. I'll keep you posted on this as things develop. But for now, leave Labor Day Weekend open.

A lot of people don't realize St. Louis is the second largest Blues community in the world. Not just in this country, but in the world. Couple that fact with the attention Blues music has been receiving of late, and you gotta know the Blues is here to stay. And the St. Louis Blues Society is going to make it happen by working to keep alive this city's great Blues heritage.

It's very encouraging to see that the Society continues to grow day by day in terms of our membership and activities. But if it weren't for our dedicated volunteers, the Blues Society would not be a reality. I urge you to become a member is not already.

Things are really happening here and we want you to know about it and be proud of it. Thanks for supporting the St. Louis Blues Society. Hope to see you at the next Blues concert.

Out of the Blue

Terri F. Reilly

Hello Faithful Readers. In this issue of the BluesLetter, you'll find a few new things, and of course, the wealth of Blues music information you've come to expect from the St. Louis Blues Society.

You'll notice "Blue Notes," a new section which features bits and pieces of the goings on in Blues music. It will keep you up-to-date on what's going on in the Society, like the recent changes which have occurred, as well as what's happening around town, Mardi Gras, a partnership with KSHE and a Grammy nomination for one of our own — Johnnie Johnson.

We will continue to bring you in-depth feature stories and columns that explore the history of Blues music, new Society programs like Blue Monday and the Blue Highway Series, as well as upcoming

events like this year's Harp Attack.

We're working hard to bring you a BluesLetter every other month. However, since the entire issue is produced by volunteers, we're not exactly the RFT — YET! But we're workin' on it. We would certainly welcome your input.

I'm always looking for people to write record reviews or feature-length stories. Also, we have a column called "Desert Island Disks" in which the writer gets to pick 10 albums he or she would insist on if stuck on a desert island. We'd love to see your picks. Send them in. Letter to the editor are also encouraged. Let us know what you're thinking. And if you have a band and we're not listing you, send me your info. Or let's us know if you have a product to sell. The BluesLetter is a great vehicle. The address is St. Louis Blues Society Box 78894, St. Louis, MO, 63178. We're waiting to hear from you.

Until next time, know that we are working hard to bring you the best Blues coverage around. We very much appreciate your continued support. See you at the next Blues show.

New & Renewal Members

David Arthur
Mark Autry
Bob Barker
Edward J. Bippen
Bob Blasi
Dr. Sam Blumberg
Stephan H. Braun
Jean Brenon
Jr. Briggace
Richard Buffer
John Carnasiotis
Bob Case
Myrna C. Charlton
Jim & Sheryl Cheves
Kelly Cluck
Ron Coleman
Thomas E. Cummings
David Cunningham
Dan Curran
Paul Dobberstein
William Douglas
John Ellis
David E. Emery
Bob Emery
Lowynta Etier
David Evans-Lombe
David W. Fritz

Chris Galarnik
Kenneth Gray
Ronnie Guyton
Jonathan Guze
Steve Handley
Darvel E. Hemann
Joseph Jones, Jr.
Bruce Jordan
Carol Keller
Rod "Dr. Jockenstein" King
Betty Larkin
Donald Levin
Newton & Sherre Love
Ken J. Macswan
Charles G. Maguire
Richard A. Markland
Paul May
Mike McCombs
Shela McCoy
Tom McDonald
Tim McGrath
Norman Merritt, Jr.
Susan Mize
Steve Morgan
Kim Nash
David G. Nasser
Jeffrey Nemens

Dannis Newman
Orlando Peraza
Leroy Pierson
Tim Pimmel
Victoria R. Poindexter
John P. & Barbara J. Reed
Terri F. Reilly
Tom Robbins
Katie Rodriguez
Robert E. Sharp
William R. Shields
J. Scott Simpson
Linda Skellinger
David R. Swimmer
Tampa Blue
Kenneth Taylor
Mark Tisch
Hattie Vaughn
Ed Vigil
Dave Waggoner
Eleanor Wahby
John Wegrzyn
Jason Weinberg
Kathleen Wentzel
John A. White
Greg Wilkinson
Felix Wohrstein

Join the St. Louis Blues Society

Upcoming Events

February 15 ←
Darrell Nulisch & Texas Heat
Off Broadway Nightclub

February 20 ←
Little Jimmy King &
The Memphis Soul Survivors
Off Broadway Nightclub

March 2 ←
Tommy Bankhead Benefit
Ninth Street Abbey

March 5 ←
Sue Foley Band (Formerly
with Albert Collins)
Off Broadway Nightclub

March 7 ←
Bugs Henderson &
The Shuffle Kings
Off Broadway Nightclub

March 19 ←
Paul Orta & The Kingpins
Off Broadway Nightclub

March 25 ←
Chris Duarte Band
Off Broadway Nightclub

March 28 ←
Marsha Ball
Off Broadway Nightclub

April 4 ←
Harp Attack '92
Mississippi Nights

BLUESLETTER



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AVAILABLE ADS	PRICE	MECHANICAL DIMENSIONS
FULL PAGE	\$325	57 X 10 inches (42-1/2 X 60-1/2 picas)
TWO THIRDS PAGE	\$255	4-5/8 X 10 inches (28 X 60-1/2 picas)
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THIRD PAGE	\$125	3-1/2 X 2-3/8 inches (21-1/4 X 14-1/4 picas)
QUARTER PAGE	\$85	2-1/4 X 10 inches (13-1/2 X 60-1/2 picas)
SIXTH PAGE	\$50	2-1/4 X 4-3/4 inches (13-1/2 X 28-1/2 picas)
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PRODUCTION RATES Include layout, typesetting, one PMT, and one half-tone (B&W photos only). NOT included is logo design, illustrations or custom camera work, though price-per-hour quotes for such work are available. Advertisers own any artwork done by THE BLUESLETTER production.



The St. Louis Blues Society, a nonprofit Missouri corporation in its seventh year, is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating Blues music in St. Louis, to foster its growth and appreciation and to provide Blues artists the opportunity for public performance and individual improvement in their field, all for the educational and artistic benefit of the general public.

With a membership of 500 strong and a board of directors consisting of 16 devoted Blues lovers, the Blues Society actively participates in a number of ongoing projects, including the acclaimed "Blues in the Schools" program, the publishing six times a year of a respected newsletter titled "BluesLetter," the acquisition of Blues archives materials, and the producing of live Blues concert series throughout the year, which culminates in the annual St. Louis Blues Festival.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

JOHN MAY, Chairman

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PETER YEWELL, Executive Director

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ART DWYER

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TERRI F. REILLY

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PAUL STEWART

LOU THIMES

PATTI THOMAS

HENRY TOWNSEND

BLUE NOTES

BLUES SOCIETY APPOINTS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome Peter Yewell

The Blues Society began a new era with the appointment in November of Peter R. Yewell as our executive director. Formerly with Andersen Consulting, Peter brings to the Society a keen business sense and a deep understanding of what it takes to run a successful non-profit organization.

In a few short months, he has been instrumental in establishing a number of new programs, including the Blues Society Welcome program, the Blue Highway Series, which brings Kansas City Blues bands to St. Louis and vice versa and the KSHE "Blue Monday Series" which airs every Monday from 7:30-9 a.m.

As chairman of the Society's Development Committee, Peter has been very successful in opening a number of corporate and civic sponsorship doors previously closed. Specifically, he has played a key role in attracting sponsors involvement in the upcoming 1992 St. Louis Blues Festival. Peter, a born and bred St. Louis Blues lover, is responsible for all day-to-day Society activities, as well as long-range planning.

The Society is most fortunate to have a man of Peter's caliber as its executive director. His love of the art form combined with his immense enthusiasm and tireless dedication will help ensure the Society's future.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED

Welcome Art Dwyer and Patti Thomas

The Board of Directors of the Blues Society are happy to welcome to our ranks two people who have devoted their professional lives to Blues music.

As the bassist for this city's most enduring (not to mention one of the best) Blues bands, Art Dwyer and the Soular Blues Band have defined present-day St. Louis Blues music.

Moreover, Art and the boys, as ambassadors of St. Louis Blues, represent our city's heritage well while on the road. And more often than not, they can be heard around town most any night of the week. And Art's weekly KDHX show, "Blues in the Night," is one of the station's most popular programs.

His areas of expertise includes booking, promotion, management and artist coordination. The Blues Society is indeed lucky to have a man with such thoughtful insight, keen intelligence and deep wisdom as Art.

A veteran St. Louis vocalist, Patti Thomas' Blues-filled voice is a familiar sound around town. As the long-time lead singer for veteran Blues harp blower Doc Terry, Patti gained a reputation for being able to belt out a song. Recently, she formed her own band — the Travelin' Band — with her brother Michael.

An experienced booking agent and promoter, Patti has been involved in a number of Blues projects over the years. And her dedication to the Blues Society as a long-time volunteer reflects her deep commitment to preserving our great heritage.

The Society is honored to have Patti as a director. Her extensive knowledge and deeply rooted experience will be a major asset.



Besides, she's one helluva nice person. (Welcome, Sister!)

BOARD OFFICERS ELECTED

In accordance with the by-laws of the St. Louis Blues Society, the Board of Directors elects its officers following the annual members meeting, which last year was held in December at Off Broadway.

During a board meeting in January, the Board voted unanimously to elect John May as chairman for this year. John, a founding member of the Society, has been a tireless champion of the Blues. Most of his work has been behind the scenes, but it is because of his deep commitment to the Society that it is a great organization.



John's "backstage" work is evident, however, in the BluesLetter. His fine design eye as the BluesLetter's art director makes this publication a beautiful piece of work. In addition, John's band the Rockin' Luckys is among this city's finest Blues bands.

The Blues Society is most honored to call as its chairman a man who embodies the essence of the Blues Society's mission and all it stands for. And we wish to sincerely thank his wife, Judi, for sharing him with us.

The Board elected as its vice chairman Ron Edwards, who for a number of years served as the Society's chairman. Pages could be filled and never fully pay tribute to Ron's immense contribution to the Society. Suffice it to say, without Ron, the Blues Society would not be where it is today. The Society thanks Ron from the bottom of our hearts for his countless hours of work, his deep commitment to the Blues and most of all, his visionary leadership.

We'd also like to thank Ron's wife Janice for putting up with us. Barrett Braun was re-elected to the position of secretary and the Blues Society welcomes his continued involvement. In addition to Barrett's dedication to the Blues, he has logged hundreds of hours in the effort to prevent the city's musicians tax from becoming a reality (see related Blue Notes story).

VOLUNTEERS - BACKBONE OF THE SOCIETY

It would not be possible for the St. Louis Blues Society to stage Blues shows, produce a BluesLetter or plan for a festival, without the dedicated group of volunteers who make this organization so great.

The Board of Directors, along with our Executive Director Peter Yewell, extend their heartfelt thanks for countless hours of hard work, and for sharing our deep love of Blues music to:

Charmaine Thorpe, Andy Millner, Mark Knoppe, Don Westerholt, Paul May, Jason Skags, Kathy Wentzel, Lindsay Pickens, Dennis McGrath, Joannie Thomas, Joan Pynes, Larry Cuba, Tom Larkin, Benet Schaefer, Mike McNaughton, Nancy Theodoro, Orlando Perez and anyone else who has helped make the Blues Society strong.

And a very special thanks to the Camaratos—Joe, Marilyn, Bill and Beth for their generosity and warm hospitality.

REAL ROCK AND DOWN-HOME BLUES

KSHE and The Blues Society Blues Showcase '91

The Blues Society is most fortunate to have established a great working relationship with KSHE, St. Louis' premier rock station now in its 25th year.

KSHE, specifically Jim Owens, Smash, Carl the Intern and the U-Man, have been extremely generous in giving the Blues Society a tremendous amount of promotional air time to publicize our events.

Three KSHE appearances are of particular note. Our first venture came the Thursday before Blues Showcase '91 and saw two top Blues bands and two well-respected Blues artists in the KSHE studio for what turned out to be a four-hour jam session—save commercials and

other station biz.

Tom Hall and Keith Doder opened up the morning with Smash and Carl at the un-Godly hour of 6 a.m. The Rockin' Luckys held down the 7 a.m. slot and tore it up until the Soular Blues Band came on at 8 a.m. The morning was climaxed by a jam with The Luckys and Soular Blues and our own Oliver Sain waitin' away on the sax.

The response from KSHE listeners (and the phones did light up) was overwhelmingly positive. Most said that KSHE was "so cool for airing that kind of music."

Although there was a lot of moaning heard from the boys in the band for having to get up so early, by the time we signed off at 10 a.m., everyone had had such a blast that it didn't seem to matter.

The bottom line was very evident come Showcase weekend when it was obvious by those in attendance, that we had tapped into a new audience thanks to KSHE.

Smash's Birthday Party

On the heels of that incredibly fun morning, KSHE invited the Blues Society back to help celebrate Smash's birthday on Dec. 6. A surprise to him, The Luckys and Soular Blues again showed up early to serenade Sir Smashington on his 43rd year.

Smash was also showered with cool Blues gifts which included the latest release from Soular Blues, a signed poster from all the musicians who played at Showcase '91 and a beret complete with a Blues Society button from the Board of Directors, and an "adult" gift from The Luckys. Once again, it was worth bravin' the early-morning light for.

USO Show

We were at it again during the Christmas season as the Blues Society was invited by KSHE to entertain the troops during the annual Christmas exodus from boot camp. We're talkin' 5000 troops coming through the USO facility at Lambert International in one day—all those shaved heads were truly a sight to behold.



These fine young men and women were treated to the Blues at its best as Twilight Jump, Rondo, Oliver Sain, Barbara Carr and the Travelin' Band featuring Patti Thomas performed for hundreds of soldiers.

The show, which went out live over the KSHE airwaves, was highlighted by an hysterical rendition of the Blues classic "Dust My Broom" as performed by Rondo and Smash. Robert Johnson had to be turnin' over in his grave.

A special thanks goes out to all musicians who gave so generously of themselves during these gigs and for getting up so early after many had performed the night before. Specifically, Tom Hall, Keith Doder, the Rockin' Luckys, Soular Blues Band, Oliver Sain, Barbara Carr, Rondo, The Travelin' Band, with Patti and brother Michael and Twilight Jump.

DOC TERRY CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

With A Little Help From His Friends

The 1860 Saloon was the place



to be Dec. 15 when Doc Terry, with the help of family, friends, fans and fellow musicians, celebrated his 70th birthday in style.

Hosted, by Patti Thomas, Doc's long-time formerly vocalist, the

jam session began with

Patti, whose now with the Travelin' Band, vocals, Maggie "Blue" Laycock on harp, Don Westerholt on guitar, Bob Spitzfaden (also with the Travelin' Band) on drums and Michael Jackson on bass. And did they cook things up early.

Doc, who was born in Sunflower, Mississippi, has dedicated himself to the Blues since he was 12. He's been a constant in the St. Louis who's who of Blues music ever since settling here after World War II.

So if anyone deserves a party, it's Doc.

And what a good time it was. Numerous musicians dropped by to help celebrate and one after another got up to strut their stuff. Of course, Doc took a few turns himself.

Special thanks goes out to all those who came by to pay their respects, including Nate Thomas, Jesse Gill, Tommy Johnson, Marshall Dunn, Doc's Pirates, Tucker Bodman, J.R. Reed, Steve Martin, Michael Thomas, Wally Treppier, Ben Wells, Tommy Bankhead, Eric McSpadden, Papa Ray, Sharon Foerner, Gayle Foerner, Dwight Bosman, Gus Wurtz, Rich Cotton and one of Doc's dearest friends, Honey Bee (we hope we didn't leave anyone out).

A real special thanks goes out to Mark Knoppe and his company Knoppe Media Services for providing sound and lighting equipment. Happy Birthday, Doc. And many, many more!

WE WELCOME THE BLUES New Blues Society Program

Next time you go to a Blues show, chances are it will be welcomed by the St. Louis Blues Society. In addition to the concerts the Society produces, we will also lend our name and support to the clubs who are promoting the Blues by booking Blues bands.

Welcomed shows will also receive mention on our "Blue Monday" show on KSHE and will be MCed by a member of the Society. We welcome you to show your support of the Blues by turning out for these events.

MARDI GRAS - ST. LOUIS STYLE The Place To Be Is Soulard

You'll want to mark your calendars for this year's Mardi Gras St. Louis-style celebration. Festivities kick off a week earlier this year with the annual Mardi Gras Ball, Saturday, Feb. 22 at the 9th Street Abby. The traditional Mardi Gras parade will begin at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 29. Of course, the party will be in full swing by Fat Tuesday (March 3). Additionally, you'll want to miss A Taste Of Soulard, plus a whole lot more Mardi Gras activity, not to mention all the great music you'll hear that week in the Soulard bars. For more information, call 768-2345.

JOHNNIE JOHNSON RECEIVES GRAMMY NOMINATION

Johnnie Johnson, who has been written about in the last two issues of the BluesLetter, is yet again in the news. In the last issue, Johnnie's recording "Johnnie B. Bad" was compared to the 1986 Grammy Award winner for Blues Album of the Year, "Showdown." Well, the Grammy Committee must have noticed because the album has been nominated for the 1991 Grammy Award in that category. Go Johnnie go!

BENEFIT FOR TOMMY BANKHEAD

Monday, March 2, 1992 there will be a benefit for bluesman Tommy Bankhead at the 9th St. Abbey from 8 PM til 1 AM.

Tommy has recently been hospitalized for a collapsed lung. He is out of the hospital, recovering, but is now suffering from financial strain. Under the direction of Tommy's longtime drummer, Ben Wells, The St. Louis Blues Society will be sponsoring a benefit concert.

Some special guests will be Henry Townsend, Doc Terry, Rondo, Mae Wheeler, Keith Dodier and many more. All musicians are welcome!!!

Ticket donations will be \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door. For more information call: Ben Wells at 725-7529 or Patti Thomas at 772-2464. Advance Tickets are available at Vintage Vinyl, Mike & Mins, 1860 Saloon

THE BLUES HAD A BABY. . .

We all know that the Blues had a baby and they named it rock 'n' roll. Blues music's influence on rock 'n' roll is undeniable, and the Blues is finally getting the recognition it deserves both from the public and the music industry.

To witness, in January two Blues greats were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Honored was the late, great guitarist Elmore James, whose brief life ended with a heart attack in 1963, died well before receiving the widespread recognition he so deserved. Another late great, Stevie Ray Vaughn, has done much (with a little help from brother Jimmie) to bring James' music into the mainstream with the recent release of the James' classic "The Sky Is Crying."

Bobby "Blue" Bland, whose still kickin' out the Blues up in Chicago, was also given a Hall of Fame nod for being a leader in the "modern-day" Blues movement. At least some of the great Blues musicians are being recognized before they die.

Three veteran rock guitarists who have been heavily influenced by Blues guitarist such as Robert Johnson, Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters, were inducted—Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck—collectively as the Yardbirds. Thanks for keeping the music alive, guys.

BLUE MEMORIES

Willie Dixon - His Legacy Will Live On

By Keith Doder

Willie Dixon, a literal giant of Blues music whose music was covered by the Rolling Stones, the Doors, Jimi Hendrix and Elvis Presley, died Jan. 29, 1992, in Burbank, Cal., after a prolonged illness. He was considered a vital link between the Blues and rock 'n' roll.

Born in Vicksburg, Miss., in 1915, Dixon's journey into music carried him from the South to Chicago in 1935. While there, Dixon became a champion Golden Gloves boxer but soon discovered his love of the Blues was stronger and he quickly shifted to playing the bass. He first recorded in the late 1940s with the Big Three Trio, Memphis Slim and Robert Nighthawk.

Dixon emerged as a prolific songwriter, arranger, accompanist and mediator for most of Chess Records' Blues artists during the 1950s to the mid-sixties. He also fronted his own group, the Chicago Blues All Stars, which toured for several years. Dixon's songs were emulated and recorded by many well-known artists who parlayed his material into commercial successes in jazz, country, rock and pop.



His song "Little Red Rooster," was recorded by the Rolling Stones and the Doors; "I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man," by Hendrix and the late great Muddy Waters; "My Babe," by Elvis and the Everly Brothers; and "I Can't Quit You Baby," by Led Zeppelin and Otis Rush.

Dixon made a rare St. Louis appearance in February of 1991, for a St. Louis Blues Society "Blues in the Schools" program. At that time, he was also promoting his autobiography which was appropriately titled, "I Am The Blues."

Willie Dixon, a true champion of Blues music will be missed, but his work will live on through his recordings and the work of those who have paid homage to him over the years. ♪

"Champion" Jack Dupree Another Great Voice Gone

By Leroy Pierson

On January 21, 1992, internationally known Blues pianist and vocalist, Champion Jack Dupree passed away at his home in Hamburg, Germany. Born William Thomas Dupree on July 4, 1910 in New



Orleans, he was raised in an orphanage where he learned the rudiments of his two future occupations — music and boxing.

As a club fighter, he earned the nickname of "Champion Jack" which he used on his first recording session in the early 1940s. These first sessions produced 24 titles, including the first

recording of "Junker Blues," a song which became a standard featured in the repertoires of Professor Longhair, Doctor John and James Booker.

In 1942, Dupree joined the navy and served in the Pacific until his ship was sunk and he was taken prisoner by the Japanese. After the war, Dupree was repatriated and settled in New York where he continued his recording career, working for more than a dozen different labels under a variety of pseudonyms.

In 1985, shortly after recording his classic "Blues From the Gutter" album for Atlantic, he moved permanently to Europe where he toured and recorded prolifically for more than three decades.

In 1990, Dupree made his triumphant return to America where he headlined the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and recorded an album for Rounder. He returned in 1991, and in addition to another appearance at the New Orleans Festival, embarked on a short tour throughout the country with an extended stay in St. Louis where he visited with his son who lives there. In addition, Dupree performed to a sold-out house at Off Broadway during his St. Louis visit.

He spent most of his time in St. Louis lying in his hotel-room bed, smoking cigars, drinking beer and visiting with his son. His show at Off Broadway was one of the best the city has seen in recent years and he made many new friends here. Ironically, the Off Broadway show turned out to be one of his last. After returning to Germany, Dupree went through a series of hospitalizations before finally succumbing to cancer. He will be missed by many. ♪

RONDO AND SMITTY

St. Louis Ambassadors of the Blues

By Mark O'Shaughnessy

What does Rondo's Blues Deluxe and Big Bad Smitty's have in common? A lot of things, lately! Besides the fact that both bands performing an urban Blues repertoire, they both possess some of the best Blues side men in town, are both based in St. Louis, and both charismatic band leaders are arguably the best at what they do...growl, groove, moan and belt out vocal blues like nobody's business all for adoring local audiences.

Having both returned from a high-profile European gig recently, both bands have even more in common. Furthermore, Rondo and Company and Smitty both have new recordings which are being released by prestigious European record labels.

Rondo's Blues Deluxe made its international performance debut this past October and November under the auspices of Wim Wigt Productions/Timeless Records of Wageningen, Holland.

With less than 72 hours to mobilize a replacement band for the then hospitalized Oliver Sain, it was remarkable to witness the level of organizational skills and the amount of cooperation each of the band members displayed as they made last minute arrangements with family members, rescheduled gigs in the metro area, got five out of six passports (in Chicago) required for travelling. They also got ticketing, promotional and logistical information to

the overseas promoter, and then packed their luggage and made their flight.

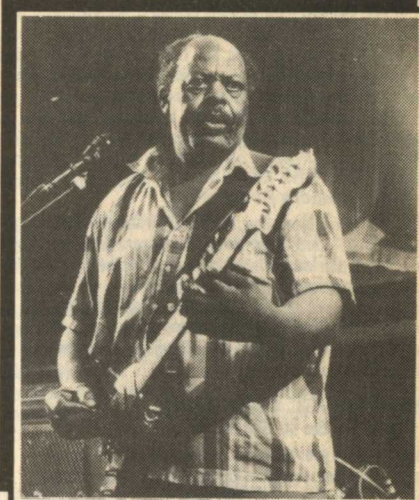
Rondo and band, having had no sleep for the previous three days, got a chance to show off their professionalism as well as their undeniably rich musical skills once they arrived in Germany for the start of a three-country tour, which took them to Germany, Holland & Norway. From all the reports I've heard from the production company, the band was extremely well received everywhere, and received standing ovations, with multiple encores being rule rather than the exception.

Rondo's Blues Deluxe's new CD release, which was recorded while the band was in Europe, is titled "Cross Eyed Cat" and will be released on Timeless Records out of Holland. It features; Rondo Leewright on vocals and harp, Rich McDonough on guitar, Craig Thornton on bass, James Connor on drums, Jack Inglis on keyboards, and DJ Lansing (Chicago Slim) on sax, is slated for release in early '92. (See Record Reviews p.?)

Big Bad Smitty and band members Arthur "Willie" Williams on harp, Bennie Smith on second guitar, Darius Montgomery on bass, and Rayburn Hayes on drums did St. Louis proud when in November, under the guidance of manager Joel Slotnikoff, played the prestigious Blues Estafette Festival in Utrecht Holland, sharing the stages with the

likes of Joe Hughes, Snooks Eaglin, Eddie Bo and the George Porter All Stars.

Big Bad Smitty's new CD release, titled "Mean Disposition" (CD 9018) on Black Magic Records (Holland), was released



Copyright 1991 By Bert Luk

Big Bad Smitty, in Utrecht Holland

internationally in November during the band's performances at the Festival. The US version of this recording, which was produced last August at St. Louis' own Premier Recording Studios, and then mixed down in New Orleans, will soon be released here on GENES (GCD 4128) sometime in early '92.

Judging by the number of offers Smitty and Company have received for the remainder of 1992 — the "Red Car" Festival in Great Britain in May, Festival work in Switzerland and Germany in June and July, and the Handzame Blues Festival in Belgium in September — it seems that the international audiences really liked what they heard.

These two bands have also joined the ranks of other illustrious St. Louis Blues musicians such as Henry Townsend, James Crutchfield, Oliver Sain and Johnnie Johnson who have been taking their brand of St. Louis Blues music overseas to entertain literally millions of Blues fans.

Because of the international interest and goodwill both bands created for St. Louis while overseas, they deserve our thanks and continued support. The next time you see a listing for either of our two new musical ambassadors, I suggest you take advantage of seeing them while you still have a chance. The way the international music community is responding to their talent, we might be seeing a lot less of them here in St. Louis in the near future, because they will probably be working their musical magic a lot more around the world. ♪



Rondo mixing down tracks at Arnold Mühren's Recording Studios in Bolemdam, Holland

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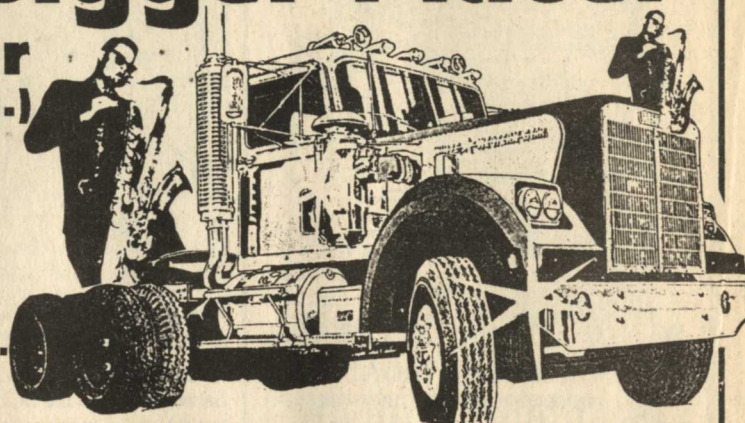
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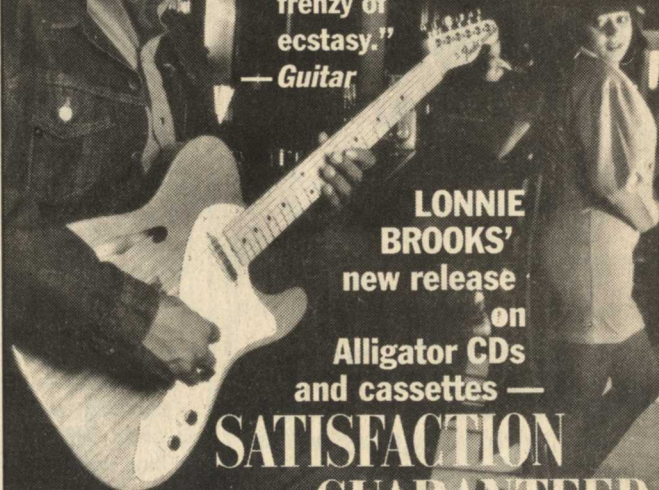


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THE BLUE HIGHWAY East Meets West for Band Swap

By Peter Yewell

The Kansas City Blues Society welcomed us with open arms the last weekend in January as we met to discuss the start of the upcoming Blue Highway Series.



Kenny Taylor and Peter Yewell at Nightmoves

The Blue Highway Series, a collaboration between the KC and St. Louis Blues Societys, will be an on-going series which will bring the best of the KC Blues musicians to St. Louis for a weekend event. In turn, we'll bring our finest to our sister city for a weekend to show them how it's really done!

Seriously, we were very impressed with not only the caliber of the KC Blues musicians, but also with the KC Blues lovers who showed up in droves to hear the Blues.

Of particular note, Harlings, just down the

street from the Grand Emporium, was the place to be on Saturday afternoon for the regular Blues jam. Unlike here at home, KC has a tradition of holding Saturday afternoon Blues jams. We were amazed to find so many people (about 200) packed into Harlings at four in the afternoon drinking beer and listening to the Blues.

Besides Harlings, there were at least five other clubs where Blues ruled on a Saturday afternoon, including Kenny Taylor's Nightmoves up in Northtown and Roger Nabor's (he's the president of the KC Blues Society) Grand Emporium where we caught the Milleage Gilbert Band after leaving Harlings.

There was more great Blues to be heard that day as we headed to Lindsay Shannon's BBs where the well-known Blues dj has a reputation for serving up some of the best BBQ, cold beer and Blues you'll find anywhere in KC.

In between indulging in the three Bs — BBQ, beer and Blues — we did manage to get a little business done with Kenny Taylor whose warm hospitality and willingness to share all he knows about the Blues made for a very successful weekend in KC.

You'll be hearing more about the Blue Highways Series as we finalize arrangements. At press time, we're looking at a possible KC Blues night to be held mid April at Off-Broadway. We'll keep you posted. ♪

BLUE MONDAY A Tradition Begins on KSHE

By Terri F. Reilly

A major breakthrough collaborative effort between the St. Louis Blues Society and KSHE-95 has resulted in a weekly Monday morning Blues show titled "Blue Monday," which had its first airing on Jan. 20.

This program, which will air from 7:30-9 p.m. every Monday, represent the first time this type of joint effort has been undertaken by a major St. Louis commercial radio station.

"Blue Monday" will focus on a number of Blues topics, such as historical St. Louis Blues vignettes by noted historians and musicologists, as well as a calendar of upcoming Blues events around town.

The bulk of the show will be devoted to live, in-studio performances by St. Louis Blues bands and artist representing a variety of Blues music.

For example, one show will feature Blues sax, another guitar, then piano, then female vocalists, harp players and so on. An acoustic show is planned, as is a Texas Blues show and an urban Blues morning. We will devote at least one morning to a comparison of old Blues classics with their modern-day rock 'n' roll counterparts.

The Blues Society express their deepest gratitude to KSHE--Smash, Carl the Intern and Jim Owens--for bringing the Blues to the KSHE airwaves. ♪

HARP ATTACK '92

Wailin' Away

By Terri F. Reilly

What began as an idea the St. Louis harp players had a number of years ago has turned into an annual spring tradition. The Harp Attack show, which features this city's finest harp players for a day-long event, is now in its fourth year.

Harp Attack IV, held this year on Saturday, April 4 at Mississippi Nights, will offer harp-loving Blues fans a dozen or so of the city's meanest harp blowers beginning in the afternoon and lasting until 1 a.m.

You can expect to hear your favorites, such as Jim "Ribtip" McClaren from Soulard Blues, Thomas 'Papa' Ray, Johnny Diamond from the Rockin' Luckys, Keith Doder from Blue City

Band, Eric McSpadden from Mojo Syndrome, Glenn Changer from Twilight Jump and Doc Terry to name but a few.

Just as was the case with last year's Attack, harp workshops will be offered in the early afternoon for both professionals and amateurs.

We're in the process of working with Hohner who will hopefully be sponsoring a headline harpist.

Details will be finalized soon, so stay tuned to the next BluesLetter which will be out before the show. Blues Society members will receive a discount to this show. But be sure to keep April 4 open. ♪

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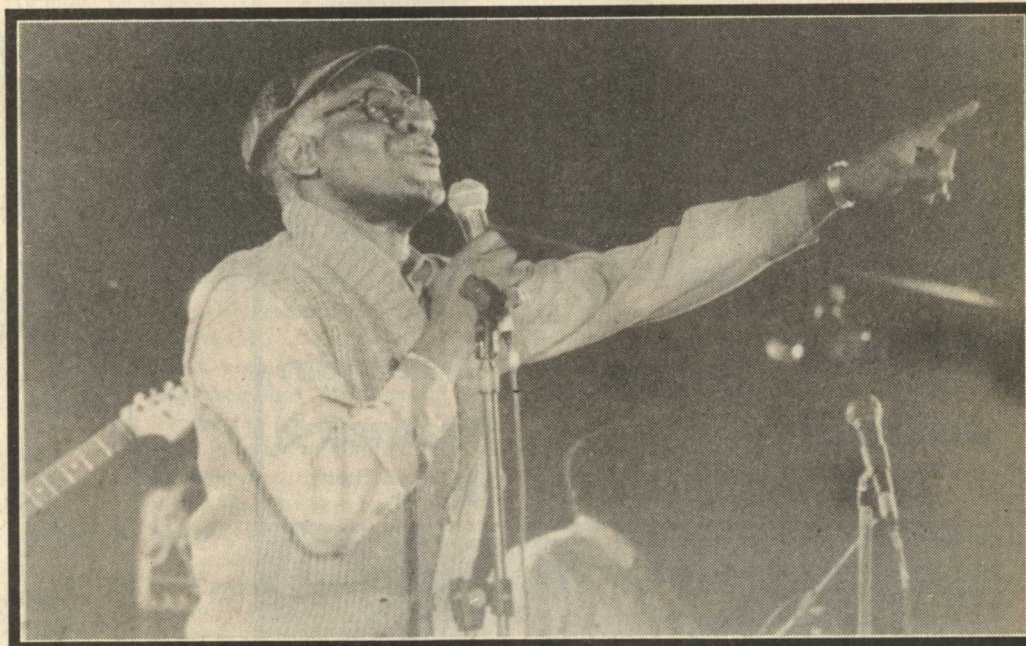
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BLUES SHOWCASE WHAT A WEEKEND!

By Terri F. Reilly



Arty

When the final note was sounded at the St. Louis Blues Showcase '91 event held last November at Mississippi Nights, everyone knew they had just witnessed the finest display of St. Louis Blues music ever heard.

After 20 hours of performance, which featured 37 Blues acts, there was no doubt about how deep our St. Louis Blues roots run. Not only was the audience impressed with the local talent



Tom Hall

pool, but the Showcase proved to many of us in the Society, as well as to many of the



David Dee

musicians who participated, that we are truly blessed to have a wealth of Blues talent right here at home.

Ironically, most of the musicians who performed that weekend rarely get a chance to see other Blues bands because they're all playing at different clubs around town at the same time. It was like old homeword. And by all indications, the musicians had even more fun than the audience.

Although the Showcase went on for 20 hours over a two-day period, the amount of man (and woman) hours it took just to stage it were countless. There were so many people who rose to the occasion to put this thing on. True, it was the music that made the event great, but it was because of all the dedicated people who volunteered that Showcase was a successful reality. The following people (and there are many more who deserve our thanks and recognition) were instrumental in making it all happen.

Emergency Networks and David Evans-Lombe for sponsorship support; the RFT for media sponsorship (thanks Nanci and Ray); KDHX and all those there who keep the Blues alive;



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JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1992 / BLUESLETTER

McMurray Music for donating sound equipment; to Hard Shell Cafe and Dennis and Joni for feeding everyone; to all the volunteers, specifically Charmaine Thorpe, Andy Milner, Glenn Changer, Patti Thomas, Don Westerholt,

Kathy Wentzel, Bob Case (and anyone else I'm forgetting). To Kathy Corley and her Legacy Productions for capturing it all on video; Mississippi Nights and Cindy, Lacey, Pat and Jeff for their consideration and professionalism; all those who were guest MCs, specifically Smash, Harper Barnes, Ray Hartmann, Beatle Bob, Joe Camarata, Gary Bennett, Dr. Jockenstein, Robin Windfield and Joe Edwards; the City of St. Louis and Chester Hines; Embassy Suites and Milenko Vochavich.

To everyone at KSHE, specifically Jim Owens, John Beck, the U-Man, that cute Carl

the Intern and above all Smash for giving so much of himself to us; and finally to all those on the Board of Directors of the Blues Society who gave until it hurt—specifically Ron, Paul, John and Mark (who once again proved there ain't nobody better at doing what he does) and to Peter who joined our team just weeks before the event and went well beyond the call of duty to make it happen.♪

Henry

Arty



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HENRY TOWNSEND

PART 2

By Leroy Pierson

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(Ed. Note - Henry Townsend Part II is the second in a series of five. Parts III, IV and V, plus CD information, will appear in subsequent issues. We promise!)

THE DEPRESSION

The biggest selling blues recordings of the late twenties were piano/guitar duets by teams like Leroy Carr with Scrapper Blackwell and Georgia Tom with Tampa Red. Henry Townsend particularly liked Scrapper's string-popping guitar style which was quite similar to his own, although he used keys and positions unfamiliar to Henry at that time.

Henry began accompanying local pianists like Roosevelt Sykes, Henry Brown, Aaron "Pinetop" Sparks, and most importantly, Walter Davis, with whom he associated throughout the singer/pianist's long career. Sykes, Gibson and Spaulding all recorded early in 1929 and later that year, shortly after Henry's twentieth birthday, the Columbia record company sent scouts to St. Louis and auditions were held which resulted in contracts for Henry and an obscure pianist named Sylvester Palmer.

They went to Chicago in mid-November and Henry recorded four solo numbers in the open E minor or "cross natural" tuning that he relied on exclusively in his early days. Generally, Henry conceived these early songs in only one chord and relied on rhythmic tension rather than melodic correctness to achieve the intensity apparent in all four songs. This was an approach he shared with Henry Spaulding and Walter Davis. On his return from Chicago, he and Sykes began to team up regularly playing clubs throughout the city, exploiting the considerable local fame that followed their early recording successes.

Sykes was so successful in fact, that he recorded for four different labels between 1929 and 1930. When Sykes decided to record for Victor he asked Walter Davis to go along, and although the Depression was already having a

severe impact on record sales, their discs were best sellers. Early in 1931, Henry and Walter Davis went to Grafton, Wisconsin and recorded for Paramount, but neither of their records have ever been found, and there is every possibility that they weren't issued.

Another Victor session was scheduled for June 1931 in Louisville, Kentucky. Sykes and Davis were given a free hand by the company executives to arrange the Louisville sessions, and they used the opportunity to take their best friends (Henry, his brother Lazarus "Minnow" Townsend, Clifford Gibson and Jaydee Short) into the studio. Sykes dominated the two-day, sixteen-master session with his piano appearing on all titles, but all of the artists waxed vocals and Henry played guitar on at least 10 masters. Some of Henry's accompaniments with Sykes and Davis have survived, though his own coupling issued as Jesse Townsend has never

Henry came through the door cussing and shooting high...

been found, and his brother's two vocal masters, which may include guitar by Henry, were never released.

The Victor records didn't sell very well, but then very little did in 1931. The Depression was crushing the record business and very few Blacks had 75 cents to invest in a breakable record and even fewer could afford a phonograph. The legendary Paramount label was only one of many to succumb to financial pressure in the late part of '31 or early '32. Victor timidly released only 40 Blues records during 1931 and even fewer the next year, recording less and less new material and relying on masters from the late twenties for new releases.

During these hard times Henry decided he could broaden his appeal and income by learning piano, and the first thing he learned was Sykes' "All My Money Is Gone," a number Henry recorded for Bluesville in the early Sixties. Sykes was travelling all the time so Henry

formed other partnerships with Walter Davis, Teddy Darby, Tommy Webb, Charley Jordan or Jaydee Short. Short came to St. Louis in 1923 and began playing guitar a few years after Henry, who remembers Short following him around as he himself had followed Spaulding and Ryan. By 1932, Henry and Jaydee were alternating sets at a Biddle Street tavern.

Henry was performing when he was attacked by a drunken and knife-wielding Short, who stabbed him deeply between the shoulder blade and collar bone just at the base of the neck. Henry is still mystified by the incident, which he attributes to professional jealousy. It took him a few weeks to recover, but on his release from the hospital, he immediately bought a gun and went looking for Short, who he found drinking in another bar. Henry came through the door cussing and shooting high. Jaydee panicked, fell down and half ran, half crawled out the back door. Henry remembered what happened to "Dudlow Joe," and so never intended to kill Short, but wanted to let him know to keep his distance. They never played together again, and when Davis and Sykes arranged a Chicago date for early 1933 including Short, Henry remained in St. Louis.

In December of 1933, Henry returned to Chicago with a group which included Sykes, Davis, Teddy Darby and Tommy Webb. Henry recorded four vocal/guitar performances, but of the three issued titles only one has been recovered, "Sick With The Blues," a fine "cross-natural" effort and Henry's own personal favorite of his early sides. Although not present on the few titles I've heard, Henry may also have accompanied Sykes or Davis on some of their numbers, but these sides are extremely rare so independent checking is impossible, and the Victor files are not reliable since they list no guitar on Townsend's sides. These recordings were issued on Victor's new 35-cent subsidiary, Bluebird, but even at the new lower price few were sold, and Henry was further disappointed when his sides came out under the name Henry Thomas.

To Be Continued Next Issue

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RECORD REVIEWS

By Tony Cabanellas

Rondo's Blues Deluxe Cross Eyed Cat

Timeless, CD

Rondo's recent trip to Europe was productive on a number of levels. In addition to winning new converts to his preaching style of the blues, he recorded a new album's worth of material for CD on Timeless Records. This album mixes blues classics like "Dust My Broom" with new gems like "One Hour In Your Garden". Stylistically it's similar to his live performance, lots of "in your face" uptempo rockin' blues and some blues ballads in the southern soul tradition such as found in the Malaco and Ichiban labels market. Technically its recorded and mixed quite well with Rich McDonough's aggressive guitar and Dennis Lansing's sax punching the songs in the right places to Rondo's soulful wails. St. Louis fans of Rondo's Blues Deluxe should eagerly grab this new CD, "Cross Eyed Cat", while new converts will appreciate the disk's solid appeal too.

Big Bad Smitty Mean Disposition

Genes / Adelphi, CD

The arrival of a new release by a St. Louis blues artist would be cause enough for celebration. Big Bad Smitty's new CD and tape called Mean Disposition meets and exceeds one's expectations. What we have here folks is nothing short of a blues masterpiece. A perfect mixture of new original tunes by Smitty, mixed with his interpretations of other blues songs in that rare post-war delta style. Not since the heyday of 1950's Chicago blues has this kind of emotional intensity been blended with virtuoso performances. The backing by Benny Smith on guitar and Arthur Willie Williams on harmonica borders on genius. Durlous Montgomery and Ray Hayes contribute tastefully on bass and drums. Finally, kudos to Joel Slotnikoff for keeping the arrangements and productions simple and unobtrusive. Don't walk, run, to your nearest store to purchase the St. Louis blue release of the decade.

Hopkins Brothers Lightning, Joel and John Henry

Arhoolie, CD 340

Texas folk blues of the style associated with Lightning Hopkins could be fast upbeat boogies or slow doomy sad classic blues songs. On this CD recorded for Arhoolie by label founder Chris Strachwitz in Texas at a family reunion of Lightning's in 1964, examples of the Texas repertoire from pre-World War II through folk songs of a bluesy style are performed by Lightning with brothers Joel and John Henry. While the enthusiasm seems evident in the music, a certain sameness of tempo and song styles along with Joel and John Henry not being Lightning's equals as vocalists cause this CD to be adequate but not an essential purchase. For Lightning or Texas blues completists only.

Jesse Fuller Frisco Bound

Arhoolie, CD 360

Jesse Fuller was a performer of Georgia-style blues and songs similar to what Blind Willie McTell did in the 1920's and 1930's. Jesse moved to the bay area of San Francisco in California and sang in the Piedmont style with accompaniment on 12-string guitar, harmonica, kazoo and footdella. The most interesting pieces on this long CD of over 1 hour of music involve Jesse singing with backing on slide guitar. This stuff is from rare 1950's and 1960's sessions from long out-of-print albums. If you enjoy folk-oriented blues that ultimately influenced Dave Van Ronk and Bob Dylan, this source is a godsend.

Snooks Eaglin Country Boy in New Orleans

Timeless Records, CD 348

Snooks Eaglin is probably familiar to most folks as the contemporary exponent of R & B going back to the early 1960's sides cut for Imperial with Dave Bartholomew's band backing. These sides cut for Dr. Harry Oster as field recordings go back to the 1950's and are fine funky folk blues with tinges of the R & B that surfaced later. Not only was Snooks a fine vocalist and guitarist even then but Lucas Bridges' washboard and Percy Randolph's harmonica add to the background folk feel of this over-1 hour CD. This CD comes with high recommendations for fans of Louisiana folk blues.

Clifton Chenier Out West

Arhoolie, CD 350

Zydeco music has enjoyed a spate of recent attention and releases by a number of artists of varying skills. This Clifton Chenier CD recorded in 1972 with blues rock legend Elvin Bishop joining Clifton's smokin' band is a party from the minute it starts until the end at 60 minutes plus. French spoken blues, waltzes, R & B, all add up to an accordion-based masterpiece. The "King of Zydeco" moniker Clifton enjoyed at this time can fully be appreciated on this CD. One of best zydeco CDs ever released.

Charles Ford Band

Arhoolie, CD 353

Post-war Chicago-style blues shuffles, besides being represented by the original masters on Chess, Checker, VJ, and other small labels, enjoyed a second wind in the mid-1960's. Artists like Paul Butterfield, Charlie Musslewhite and Rod Piazza embraced the harmonica-guitar ensemble sound. After Charlie Musslewhite and Paul Butterfield relocated from Chicago to California in the late 1960's, all kinds of shuffle-style blues bands started cropping up. The Charles Ford Blues Band is one such band that Arhoolie recorded in 1972. While there is some good aggressive guitar by Robben Ford who has gone on to some legendary status in rock and jazz fusion genres, overall the sound on this CD is a bit too derivative and not original enough to surpass the first generation masters or the second generation guys like Paul Butterfield and Charlie Musslewhite. If you can't get enough of that uptempo harp/guitar groove, go for it. Otherwise buy superior shuffles by Wolf, Waters, or Walter on Chess.

Mercy Dee Mercy's Troubles

Arhoolie, CD 369

Texas piano blues as performed by Mercy Dee on this CD go back to the start of the 20th century. Performed in labor camps and small towns, this kind of piano-based blues with backing by drums occasional guitar and some harmonica lays the foundation from which all blues sprung forth. Chris Strachwitz recorded this album back in the early 1960's on the west coast that ultimately filled 2 LPs. Through digital technology both LPs fit on this CD. This has Texas blues of a boogie and 12 bar slow style. Only criticism that springs to mind is a lack of enough tempo changes. Texas blues piano-ensemble music is hard to find these days so this CD is a welcome representation of that form.

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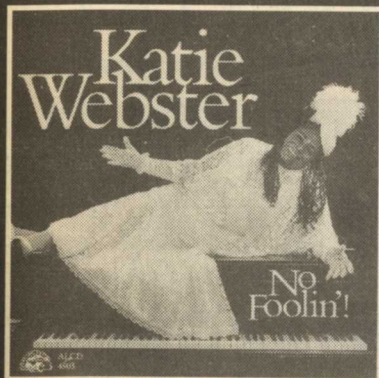
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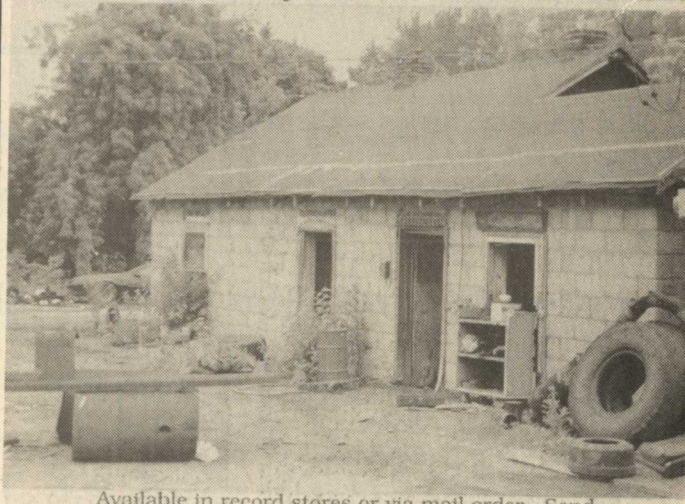
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