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## **BOB KOESTER REMEMBERS JUNIOR WELLS**

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**PLUS: CLAPTON & CRAY ON THE ROAD AGAIN**

# Jazz & Blues Report

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Our original mascot from the early Buffalo Jazz Report days – mid '70s He is older now, but Still Cool!

Created by  
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## Can I Do it Like I Want To?

### Bob Koester remembers Junior Wells



Printed with permission of Bob Koester. In 1953 at the age of 21 Koester recorded the Windy City Six, a vintage jazz group based in St. Louis. That was the beginning of Delmark Records, the Chicago based jazz & blues label he continues to run today. This reelection on Junior Wells was run in Rhythm & News, Delmark's own magazine they publish in conjunction with their retail record store Jazz Record Mart in Chicago. Junior Wells Live at Theresa's 1975 was released by Delmark Records in October of 2006. Photo of Junior Wells by Marc PoKempner.

I first heard Junior Wells on the States 78's of "Hoodoo Man," etc. during my days in St. Louis. I later heard the Muddy Waters band on a trip to Chicago, at the Club Zanzibar c.1957 and was perturbed that Little Walter had left and a new guy had taken his place but when I requested Key To The Highway and Muddy said, "I think Junior Wells does that better than I do," Junior certainly cut Walter in the vocal department.

The University of Chicago's Folk Festival was always a few years ahead of the folk movement and had already presented Muddy and Memphis Slim before I moved to Chicago in 1958 so it was probably '59 when Junior performed at one of their excellent festivals. Junior did a great show that wasn't down-home enough for some of the crowd put off by the maroon band uniforms.

When Charlie Musselwhite came to work for Jazz Record Mart in 1962 we got better information about the blues clubs on the South and West sides. He deserves credit for finding J.B.Hutto at Turner's but it was Don Kent (JRM guy now with

Yazoo) who first urged me to go hear Junior at Theresa's. Sunnyland Slim was subbing the first night but, at Blue Monday a few nights later, not only was Junior there, but Little Walter was a regular sit-in and I fell in love with the club.

The bartender, Carl Jones, owned CJ Records, which produced the first recordings of Hound Dog Taylor and Betty Everett among others. He had sung with the Carolina Cotton Pickers and recorded six sides for Mercury in 1946 as Karl Jones, with Lonnie Johnson sharing the vocal chores and excellent New Orleans-style musicians filling out a band led by Richard M. Jones. With all this going on and, at the time, no door charge on Monday nights and sometimes a great free lunch, it was a heady atmosphere.

Delmark had had some very modest success with the Big Joe Williams and Sleepy John Estes albums (though most of the LP blues market seemed to require caucasian interpreters), I had really gotten my head into the Chicago sounds but was nervous about the folk-blues audiences tastes and the additional costs of extra sidemen and studio time needed to properly deal with

the newer idiom. (We were really scuffling in those days and any recording session screwed up the JRM budget for months.) I finally decided that the music was just too damn good not to record!

I told Junior he could pick his repertoire, sidemen and did not have to limit himself to two or three minutes per song. Junior used Buddy Guy for the session. During the session Buddy had a problem with his amplifier and, while engineer Stu Black repaired it in the control room, he wired Buddy through the Leslie system of the Hammond B-3 in the studio. I've always been amazed at how rarely reviewers commented on the guitar-organ tracks.

Buddy asked me to check with Leonard Chess to make sure there was no conflict with his situation there. Chess's reply was "OK, go ahead but he doesn't sing and you don't use his name!" Years later we realized that Chess didn't sign contracts with his artists and Phil Chess OK'd the use of Buddy's name.

The resulting album, Hoodoo Man Blues (#612) was released in November of 1965 and was our best-seller to date, shipping 1700 copies vs. c.700 for the Big Joe's and c.1300 for the Estes. (We lost a few sales due to a delay caused by a decision to reprint the jackets 2-up with a Louis Armstrong Blues reissue from 1920's Paramount recordings — the deal to buy Paramount fell through.)

Somewhere in the ether is about 15 minutes of releasable music (including a Guy-Wells duet) from that session. It disappeared from the JRM basement (along with a few hundred LP's) — my unwilling "contribution" to a white harp player's career. (No, not anyone you've heard of.) I learned years later that they probably thought it was blank tape and used it to record a rehearsal.

The pseudonym for Buddy Guy, Friendly Chap, was suggested by another JRM employee, Peter Brown, who later had the Down With The Game label in the UK. Pete was our Brit-del-año: each summer a different English blues fan became part of a cultural exchange program. (One of the later guys was pianist Pete Wingfield.) "A buddy is a friend, a guy is a chap."

Junior didn't want to sign an exclusive contract with little Delmark so he was free to do "Up In Here" which was his biggest R&B single and got him his three-year deal with Mercury.

Sam Charters says that Hoodoo Man Blues was a factor in his suggesting to Vanguard that they record the excellent 3-LP series, Chicago-The Blues-Today! which put the seal-of-approval on Chicago blues for the folkies. An option quickly picked up by that label kept Junior visible during a time when Delmark couldn't do a follow-up album and Mercury pitched Junior to the chitlin' circuit.

I met my wife, Sue, due in part to Junior. She'd come into the store with a copy of Hoodoo Man and wanted to know what to get next. A few months later we were married.

Shortly after the Mercury signing, Junior, following the success of Up In Here, was playing as many as four clubs a night (and sock-hops in area schools), touring the city in a limo. One night we did the deal for a second album (to be cut as soon as he was free to do so,) in a limo ride between Peppers and the Blue Flame.

Years later Junior summoned me to T's to plan the album. I figured he had probably forgotten all about the

price agreed-upon but when I opened the subject of money I got "No dummy — we agreed to \$XXXX back then!" Junior was always a man of his word. The session came off with no problems worth mentioning but I was pleasantly surprised (after leaving Junior the night before at 2 AM) to find that Otis Spann had been added to the personnel. Southside Blues Jam (#628) picked up where Hoodoo Man left off and I believe this was Spann's last recorded performance before he passed.

I think it was about this time that, one night at Pepper's, Junior handed me a wad of cash. "Hold this for me while I do my set." He didn't want an unsightly bulge in his clothes. I later found out I had been entrusted with much more money that I had paid Junior for BOTH albums!

I always referred to Junior's impressive apparel as "plumage". He later was more comfortable in denims, but in those days it was anything startling up to and including a zoot suit! He couldn't possibly have purchased it all! But he was always "sharp as a dog's dick" as Speckled Red would say. One night Chuck Nessa (yet another JRM employee at the time) and his wife were threatened by someone while Junior was on the stand at Pepper's. Junior jumped off the stand, landed with a pistol in his hand, and Chuck still wonders where the heck he had stashed the piece in his tight fitting suit.

We rarely got hassled in blues bars but on a rare night at T's I got "Hey whitey, what are you doing here. I can't come to your neighborhood!" I told the guy, "as a matter of fact I live on the North side and you can" and dismissed the matter. A few hours later we left the club, were followed by the two surly guys — followed by Junior, Theresa, CJ and about ten or fifteen T-regulars.

Toward the end of its existence, Peppers' musicians were hassled by a gang that extracted a ransom for each instrument and amp carried into the club. I guess Lefty Dizz didn't want to pay when he was Junior's guitarist. They attacked him right on the bandstand during one of Junior's sets. The gangster and Junior exited the club through a plate-glass window and the word was out that Junior better not come back to 43rd Street for his next gig. A few nights later Junior stepped out of his car with a shotgun, fired in the air, and 43rd Street was as safe as if the legendary Two-Gun Pete was on the job.

About this time Junior started using horns on the job and we followed suit with Junior Wells On Tap (#635) after his Atlantic contract expired. Asked about sidemen, he mentioned that he wanted "Sammy Lawhorn for flavor" and flavor we got! It is, in fact, my favorite Wells album though far from a best-seller. I'm sorry we couldn't get the wonderful vocal duets Junior did with Byther Smith, Junior's other guitarist of that period (sometimes Phil Guy would make up a third!) Junior and Delmark had a verbal agreement to record a fourth album but I had to beg off the deal so I could expand JRM from 600 square feet at 7 West Grand to 3000 sq. feet at 11 West Grand. By the time, years later, when I returned from a virtual bankruptcy caused by a thieving employee, Junior told mutual friends that the deal was still on, but by then he was really out of our financial league.

On and off the stand, Junior Wells was a prince .... irreplaceable as vocalist, harpist, band leader and great human being.

—Bob Koester  
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# Eric Clapton Announces Second Leg of U.S. Tour with Robert Cray Band opening Tour Kicks-off February 28 Starting With Major West Coast Cities

Fresh off sold out shows across the globe, Eric Clapton returns Stateside for the second leg of his U.S. Tour. Thus far, the shows have featured a varied set list including rarely played Derek And The Dominos classics "Got To Get Better In A Little While," "Layla" and "Tell The Truth," along with Clapton solo favorites such as "Pretending," "I Shot The Sheriff" and "Cocaine" mixed with the newer tunes from the latest Clapton albums.

This leg focuses on the Southwest, Midwest and West coast, beginning on February 28 in Dallas and will travel to 11 U.S. states plus four Canadian shows.

To the best of our knowledge at the moment, Clapton's band will be of similar makeup to the band on the 2006 World Tour. It should consist of Eric Clapton (guitar / vocals), Doyle Bramhall II (guitar), Derek Trucks (guitar), Willie Weeks (bass), Steve Jordan (drums), Chris Stainton (keyboards), Tim Carmon (keyboards), Michelle John (backing vocals), Sharon White (backing vocals). Many of these musicians were featured on the J.J. Cale & Eric Clapton album **The Road To Escondido**, released in November, 2006, which offered some genre mixing touching on blues, rock, jazz, country, bluegrass and folk. It was reviewed in Jazz & Blues Report in our November issue.

As with recent East Coast dates, The Robert Cray Band will again be the show opener. Cray's band consists of Cray (guitar & vocals), Jim Pugh (keyboards), Kevin Hayes (drums) and Karl Aevareid (drums.) The four have been together since 1991, and Pugh and Hayes have been with Cray even longer. Cray's very accessible sound has been responsible for bringing thousands of new fans into the world of blues, as has Clapton through his longtime worldwide popularity spanning several decades. The Robert Cray Band has a recent very fine live 2-CD set titled **LIVE From Across The Pond** on Nozzle/Vanguard.

Tickets for all shows are on sale via [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)

## CURRENT U.S. TOUR DATES

February 28 - Dallas, TX - American Airlines Arena  
March 2 - Houston, TX - Toyota Center  
March 3 - San Antonio, TX - SBC Center  
March 5 - Oklahoma City, OK - Ford Center  
March 7 - Denver, CO - Pepsi Center  
March 8 - Salt Lake City, UT - Delta Center  
March 10 - Las Vegas, NV - MGM  
March 11 - Phoenix, AZ - US Airways Center  
March 14 - Los Angeles, CA - Staples Center  
March 15 - San Diego, CA - iPay One Center  
March 17 - Anaheim, CA - The Pond  
March 18 - San Jose, CA - HP Pavilion  
March 20 - Sacramento, CA - Arco Arena  
March 22 - Seattle, WA - Key Arena  
March 23 - Vancouver, BC - General Motors Place  
March 25 - Edmonton, AB - Rexall Place  
March 26 - Calgary, AB - Saddledome  
March 28 - Winnipeg, MB - MTS Centre  
March 30 - Fargo, ND - Fargodome  
March 31 - Omaha, NE - Qwest Center  
April 2 - Kansas City, MA - Kemper Arena  
April 3 - Moline, IL - Mark of the Quad Cities  
April 5 - Detroit, MI - The Palace  
April 6 - Columbus, OH - Schottenstein Center

# Blue Note Label Group Earns 12 Grammy Nominations

## Joe Lovano, Dr. John Among Those Nominated

The Blue Note Label Group earned 12 nominations in the 49th Annual GRAMMY Awards for releases by artists including Anita Baker, Joe Lovano, Dr. John, The Color Purple, Martha Argerich, Leif Ove Andnes, and Ian Bostridge.

The nominations were announced in December in Los Angeles, and the awards ceremony will take place Sunday, February 11 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, and will be broadcast on CBS TV.

Vocalist Anita Baker, an eight-time Grammy Award winner, was nominated in the Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance for the song "Christmas Time Is Here" from her holiday album Christmas Fantasy (Blue Note Records), while four-time Grammy-winning vocalist Dr. John received a Best Contemporary Blues Album nomination for his Hurricane Katrina benefit album Sippiana Hericane (Blue Note Records).

The original cast recording of the hit Broadway musical The Color Purple (Angel Records) was nominated for Best Musical Show Album, a nomination for album producer Jay David Sacks, and composers/lyricists Stephen Bray, Brenda Russell and Allee Willis.

In the Jazz categories, the Grammy Award winning saxophonist Joe Lovano was nominated once again for Best Large Jazz Ensemble for Streams of Expression (Blue Note Records), which features arranger Gunther Schuller's innovative "Birth of the Cool Suite." In the Best Latin Jazz Album category, first-time Grammy nominee Ignacio Berroa was nominated for Time Codes (Blue Note Records), the drummer's recording debut as a leader.

The legendary producer T Bone Burnett was nominated for Producer of the Year, Non-Classical, in part for his work with Blue Note vocalist Cassandra Wilson on her album thunderbird (Blue Note Records). In the Producer of the Year, Classical category, previous Grammy winner Stephen Johns was nominated for his work on several EMI Classics releases, including Sir Simon Rattle and Berlin Philharmoniker's recordings of Holst: The Planets and Schubert: Symphony No. 9 'The Great'.

Three-time Grammy-winning pianist Martha Argerich received two nominations this year, with her release Martha Argerich And Friends: Live From The Lugano Festival 2005 (EMI Classics) being nominated for both Best Classical Album and Best Chamber Music Performance. Pianist Leif Ove Andnes, a previous Grammy nominee, was nominated for Best Instrumental Soloist Performance (with Orchestra) for his recording of Rachmaninov: Piano Concertos 1 & 2 (EMI Classics) with Berliner Philharmoniker under the baton of conductor Antonio Pappano.

The 12 Cellists Of Berliner Philharmoniker, previous Grammy nominees, were nominated once again for Best Small Ensemble Performance for their release Angel Dances (EMI Classics). Grammy Award-winning vocalist Ian Bostridge was nominated for Best Classical Vocal Performance for Britten: Song Cycles (EMI Classics) with Sir Simon Rattle and Berliner Philharmoniker featuring French horn soloist Radek Baborák.

Also, Blue Note artist Terence Blanchard was nominated in the Best Long Form Music Video category for the documentary Flow: Living in the Stream of Music by director Jim Gabour, a film about the trumpeter's Blue Note release Flow, which was produced by Robin Burgess and Jim Gabour and released on DVD by Jazziz Music & Video.

# Concord Reactivates Stax Records

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — In honor of the 50th anniversary of the legendary label Stax — home to many of soul music's most enduring recordings — Concord Music Group is pleased to announce a year of activity that will include deluxe reissues, special events and the reactivation of the label with a slate of new signings.

Stax's contribution to popular music is enormous. Releasing hit after hit from Otis Redding, Booker T. & the MGs, the Bar-Kays, Isaac Hayes, Sam and Dave, the Staple Singers, Eddie Floyd, Johnnie Taylor, William Bell and Rufus and Carla Thomas, among many, many others, the Memphis soul label established itself as a one-of-a-kind brand. With a grittier sound than Motown's and arguably the greatest house band of all time (Booker T. & the MGs), Stax pushed soul music to new heights. But the strength and commitment of the artists was also socially significant, as was the undeniable symbolism of the MGs' black and white musicians playing together in the segregated South. Stax grew up during years of enormous socio-political turmoil. The label's legacy stands as a testament to their extraordinary commitment and dedication to civil rights, both politically and culturally. Songs like "Hold On I'm Comin'," "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay," "Respect Yourself" and "Knock on Wood" defined a generation.

It's a fitting tribute to Stax that not only will its past glories be suitably honored during 2007, but its future will be assured as well. The first new signings to Stax include soul luminary and Stax patriarch Isaac Hayes and superlative vocalist Angie Stone. Isaac Hayes remains an integral force in Stax and beyond, and Angie Stone is widely regarded as one of her generation's few heirs to the grand tradition of R&B.

"Stax always has been and always will be Soul Music, I was a part of that," said Hayes. "I am coming back to Stax because there is still so much to do. It's like coming home."

"The thrill of putting out music on the label that brought the world Otis, Booker T, the Staples and so many other artists who made me want to sing in the first place is simply indescribable," added Stone. "I simply can't believe that I will be a Stax artist — and I'll be label mates with Isaac Hayes. The staff at Stax share my belief that soul has to stay in touch with its origins. We're going to make beautiful music together."

"These two signings sum up our vision for Stax — they represent the roots and the future of the soul tradition," noted Concord executive VP of A&R John Burk. "As the co-writer, producer and arranger of Stax hits like 'Soul Man' and 'Hold On, I'm Coming,' as well as the genius behind 'Shaft,' 'Hot Buttered Soul' and other hugely influential records, Isaac has established himself as a visionary of modern music. And Angie Stone, with her extraordinary voice, artistic intelligence and soulful sensibilities, is ideally suited to carry on the tradition. We're thrilled that she's joined us as we enter a new era in which Stax will once again be the home for the great-

est artists in soul and R&B."

The first new release on Stax will be Interpretations, a star-studded tribute to the songs of Earth Wind & Fire mastermind Maurice White. The disc will boast performances by such EWF acolytes as Chaka Khan on "Shining Star", Musiq Soulchild "Reasons", Meshell N'degeocello "Fantasy", Kirk Franklin "September", The Randy Watson Experience (aka ?uestlove of The Roots) featuring Bilal "Can't Hide Love", Dwele "That's The Way of the World", and the aforementioned Stax family member Angie Stone on "Be Ever Wonderful" among other stellar artists. "Concord came to me with the Interpretations concept," says Memphis native White, who helped match the artists with his songs for the project. "Right away I felt very positive about it. I could tell it was a labor of love."

Concord, which acquired the legendary Memphis label as part of its purchase of Fantasy Records in 2004, will also honor Stax's 50th year by releasing definitive collections, rare performances, unreleased tracks and more from the Memphis R&B imprint in deluxe new packages. The first of these will be Stax 50: A 50th Anniversary Celebration, a two-CD, 50-track anthology brimming with hits from Sam & Dave ("Soul Man," "Hold On, I'm Comin'"), Otis Redding ("(Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay," "Respect"), Booker T. & the MGs ("Green Onions"), Isaac Hayes ("Theme from Shaft," "Never Can Say Goodbye"), The Staples Singers ("Respect Yourself," "I'll Take You There"), Eddie Floyd ("Knock on Wood"), Rufus Thomas ("Walkin' the Dog"), Carla Thomas ("B-A-B-Y"), Jean Knight ("Mr. Big Stuff") and many more. Featuring a unique lenticular cover and extensive notes from Stax historian Rob Bowman's acclaimed book *Soulsville U.S.A.: The Story of Stax*, this extraordinary compilation is an authoritative display of Stax's creative vitality and unbridled chart power.

Plans for digital releases, remixes and other projects are also in the works; the anniversary year's releases are slated to include more than 20 CDs and DVDs. "This is about honoring an extraordinary legacy," said CMG General Manager Gene Rumsey. "We look forward not only to providing indispensable collections of the most famous Stax recordings, but also to shining a spotlight on many lesser-known and undiscovered gems."

In tandem with *Soulsville USA*, the City of Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Stax Museum of American Soul, Concord will also participate in numerous live, broadcast and other events as part of an extensive year of activity heralding "Memphis Celebrates 50 Years of Soul" including a feature length documentary illustrating the staggering Stax story.

"Our partnership with the Concord Music Group has been extremely gratifying," said Deanie Parker, President/CEO of *Soulsville USA* and former Director of Publicity, Artists and Community Relations at Stax. "The people at Concord get it. I appreciate the respect that they have for Stax's music and the legacy, their ability to embrace the spirit and philosophy of Stax, and their marketing savvy."

Concord looks forward to a joyous celebration of Stax's 50th anniversary, a productive relationship with *Soulsville USA* and the City of Memphis, and an exciting new chapter in the story of one of music's all-time greatest labels.

## Eric Bibb Concert part of the Cuyahoga Valley Heritage Series in Boston Hts.

Bluesy troubadour Eric Bibb celebrates his latest Telarc offering, *Diamond Days* – a musical appreciation of the ups, a respectful acknowledgment of the downs, and a thoughtful perspective on how the two co-exist – set to be released January 24. Bibb will perform selections from his newest disc as part of the Cuyahoga Valley Heritage Series live at Happy Days Visitor Center – Friday, February 16. Bibb takes the stage at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for general admission, \$10 for members, and \$5 for children. The Center is located at 500W, Streetsboro Road/Rte 303 in Boston Heights.

Time and again over the past three decades and beyond, Bibb has demonstrated his ability to not only capture those singular moments when the spiritual and the everyday come together, but also extract the priceless nuggets of truth and wisdom that emerge from those moments. *Diamond Days* is filled with just such gems. Steeped in various shades of blues, folk, gospel and reggae Bibb released *A Ship Called Love* September 27, 2005 on Telarc - a reflective 14-song set that reaches out across boundaries with simple yet straightforward messages of love, unity and peace.

The 12-song set on *Diamond Days* leads off with "Tall Cotton," a track whose title was inspired by a guitar maker friend in Canada, says Bibb. The track features Congolese guitarist Kahanga "Master Vumbi" Dekula, who plays in a distinctly African style. "For me," says Bibb, "to talk about tall cotton, which is a very southern American expression, and to connect it to African culture is musically, historically and personally very resonant."

Further in, "Story Book Hero" is a tongue-in-cheek tune reminiscent of the romantic ballads of the 1930s, when male singers would brag to the ladies about their masculine charms. "Heading Home" is a song that Bibb considers very autobiographical.

"If one recording out of my entire catalog were to be selected as a self-portrait, *Diamond Days* would be the most accurate," says Bibb. "I'm hitting my stride, and I realize how fortunate I am to be able to say that. This album is homage to the idea that hard work does pay off in some way or another, and that it's worth it to keep on keeping on."

For more information, or tickets, call 330-657-2909.

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# BLUES WATCH

By Mark Smith

**Ahhh, the New Year!!...**

Here's a few new releases to burn up all that Christmas cash.... **Arthur Alexander-** *The Greatest*; **Bert Jansch-** *Black Swan*; **Little Axe-** *Stone Cold Ohio*; **Howlin' Wilf-** *Cry Wilf!*; **Frankie Lee-** *Standing at the Crossroads*; **The Ford Blues Band-** *Butterfield/Bloomfield Concert*; **Earl Bostic-** *The Earl Bostic Story*; **Dirty Blues-** *Eat to the Beat-The Dirtiest of them Dirty Blues*; **Coco Montoya-** *Dirty Deal*; **John Mayall-** *Essentially John Mayall*; **Michael Bloomfield-** *Count Tallent & The Originals*; **Rory Block-** *Best Blues and Originals*; **Kenny Wayne Shepherd-** *10 Days Out (Blues from the Backroads)*; **H-Bomb Ferguson-** *Big City Blues*; **Phantom Blues Band-** *Out of the Shadows*; **Otis Rush-** *Live and in Concert in San Francisco*; **Odell Harris-** *Searching for Odell Harris*; **Bob DeVos-** *Shifting Sands*; **Jay McShann-** *Last of the Blue Devils*; **John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers-** *Live at Klooks Kreek*; **John Mayall-** *A Big Man*; **Francine Reed-** *Blues Collection*; **Shorty-Shorty** *Featuring Georgie Fame*; **Alexis Korner-** *Party Album*; **Georgie Fame-** *Seventh Sun*; **Marva Wright-** *Do Right Woman*; **Bob Margolin-** *In North Carolina.....*  
**It's nomination time!!!** The annual Blues Award nominations are now on the books. The Blues Foundation notes in its press release: "The 2007 Blues Music Awards ballot features timeless nominees like harpist **Charlie Musselwhite**, who garnered five nominations on the strength of his *Delta Hardware* release; drum legends and perennial fan favorites, **Sam Carr**, **Sam Lay** and **Willie "Big Eyes" Smith**; and "old school" names **Big George Brock** and **Guitar Shorty**, who have experienced a rejuvenation in recent years. The ballot features triple nominees **Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials**, **Janiva Magness** and **Michael Powers**, as well as **Nick Moss** and his band **the Flip Tops**, with four nominations. Other artists with three nods represent a range of Blues stylings: from the Piedmont style of **Cephas & Wiggins'** *Shoulder to Shoulder* to the Delta shadings of **Guy Davis'** *Skunkmello* to the soul of **Irma Thomas'** post-Katrina *After the Rain*. But the most amazing story of 2007 is the six nominations racked up by **Watermelon Slim** as an individual and with his band **the Workers**. It is almost impossible to amass more than six nominations in a single year, but their **NorthernBlues Records'** self-titled release struck a chord with the nominators as this former truck driver with a Masters degree in history, and his band, picked up song, album, band and entertainer nods, among the 25 album, artist and instrumentalist categories. Online voting is underway for members and will continue through February. And if you are not already a member, that is easily remedied online.



# THE RUDY VAN GELDER EDITIONS

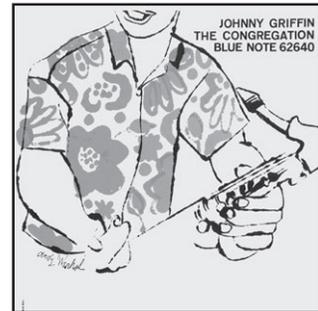
From 1953 to 1967, Alfred Lion produced a body of work that ranks as the most innovative series of recordings in modern jazz. Almost all of these masterpieces were documented by the extraordinary Rudy Van Gelder; a self-taught engineer who more than set a new standard. Devoid of caution or timidity, he captured the full power and rich sound of jazz ensembles with dazzling clarity. His contribution to the focused approach that Blue Note took at every stage of any album was immeasurable. Decades later, Rudy agreed to take a second look at the original recordings, bringing them into the digital domain with the same skill and focus. More RVG Editions have just been released. If you think you've heard these gems before, listen again.



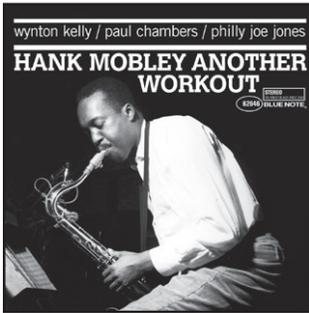
*Royal Flush, Donald Byrd*



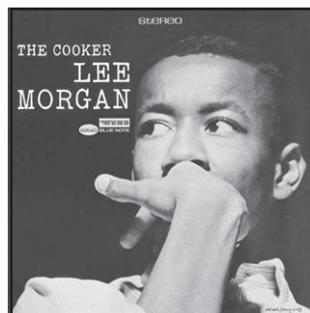
*Trompeta Toccata, Kenny Dorham*



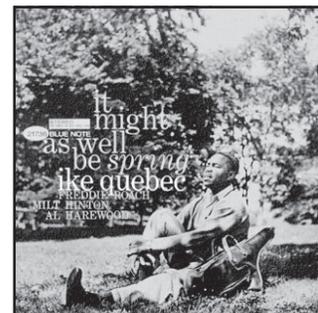
*The Congregation, Johnny Griffin*



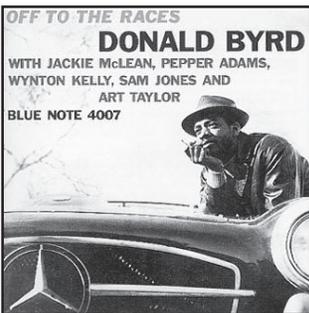
*Another Workout, Hank Mobley*



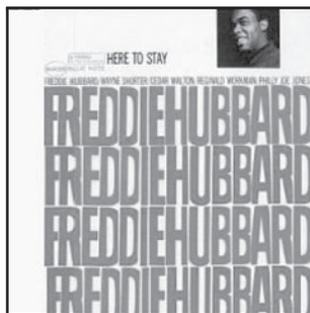
*The Cooker, Lee Morgan*



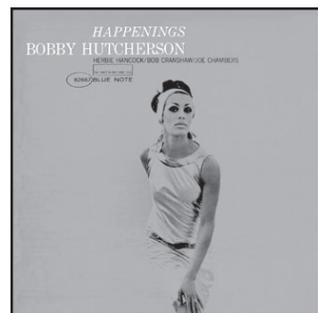
*It Might as Well be Spring, Ike Quebec*



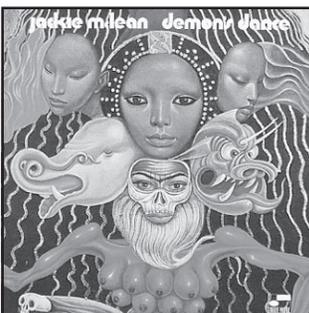
*Off to the Races, Donald Byrd*



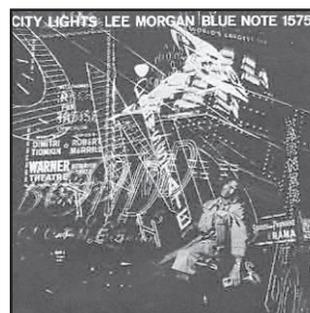
*Here to Stay, Freddie Hubbard*



*Happenings, Bobby Hutcherson*



*Demon's Dance, Jackie McLean*



*City Lights, Lee Morgan*



*Doin' the Thing at the Village Gate, Horace Silver*

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(go to [www.blues.org](http://www.blues.org)) The winners will be announced at The Blues Music Awards on May 10, 2007, at the Cook Convention Center in downtown Memphis." Meanwhile, the Grammy's were also announced on December 7<sup>th</sup>. As usual, the Recording Academy managed to pick a couple of discs that will likely produce a "huh?" amongst most blues fans given all the great blues discs left out of the nominations. There were some informed nominations as well with some of the nominees finally getting a nod after a lifetime in the blues. Those in line for a shot at the little gold statute in the Best Traditional Blues album category include **Tab Benoit** for *Brother to the Blues*, **Dion** for *Bronx In Blue*, **James Hunter** for *People Gonna Talk*, **Duke Robillard** for *Guitar Groove-A-Rama* and **Ike Turner** for *Risin' With the Blues*. The Best Contemporary Blues Album nominees include **Robert Cray** for *Live From Across the Pond*, **Dr. John & the Lower 911** for *Sippiana Hericane*, **Keb' Mo'** for *Suitcase*, **Susan Tedeschi** for *Hope and Desire* and **Irma Thomas** for *After the Rain*.

#### As February Rolls In...

**New Release blues....** The new release schedule is finally kicking into high gear as bands trot out the fruits of their labor since the end of the festival season. Here's a few of interest: **Kenny Wayne Shepherd-** *10 days Out (Blues from the Backroads)*; **Bernard Allison-** *Funkifino*; **Michael Landau-** *Live*; **Coco Montoya-** *Dirty Deal*; **The Holmes Brothers-** *State of Grace*; **Eric Bibb-** *Diamond Days*; **Tommy Castro-** *Painkiller*; **John Hammond-** *Push Comes to Shove*; **Odell Harris-** *Searching for Odell Harris*; **Earl Bostic-** *Earl Bostic Story*; **Daddy Mack Blues Band-** *Bluestones*; **Stevie Ray Vaughan-** *The Ultimate Stevie Ray Vaughan: The Real Deal, Vol.1*; **Sonny Boy Williamson-** *Bye Bye Sonny*; **Texacali Horns-** *Texacali Horns*; **Charlie Wood-** *Lucky*; **Barbara Wood-** *You'll Lose a Good Thing*; **Various Artists-** *Desperate Many Blues: Discovering the Roots of American Music*; **Scrapomatic-** *Alligator Love Cry*; **Arthur Alexander-** *The Greatest*; **The Billy Gibson Band-** *Southern Livin*; **Deitra Farr-** *Search is Over(Dig)*; **Tony Joe White-** *Swamp Music- The Complete Monument Recordings*; **Dana Gillespie-** *Live With the London Blues Band*; **Jenny Hoysten-** *Hallways of Always*; **Freddie King-** *Texas Guitar Blues*; **Eddie Taylor, Jr.-** *Mind Game*; **The Malford Millian Band-** *Rides Again*; **Ruthie Foster-** *Phenomenal Ruthie Foster*; **Howard & the White Boys-** *Made in Chicago*; **Volker Strifler-** *The Dance Goes On*; **Johnny Drummer-** *Rockin' In the Juke Joint*; **Joe Doucet-** *Houston's Third Ward Blues*; **Jame Harman-** *Strictly Live in '85! Plus*; **Francine Reed-** *Blues Collection*; **Corey Stevens-** *Albertville*; **Mississippi Mud Sharks-** *Train Rolls On*; **Frank "Paris Slim" Golwasser-** *Bluju*; **Philip Walker-** *Self Titled*; **Bob Margolin-** *In North Carolina*; **Big Pete Pearson-** *I'm Here Baby*; **Jimi Bott-** *Bott & Paid For*; **Phil Guy-** *Born To Get Down*; **Katherine Davis-** *Rock This House-Live!*; **Jeff Turmes-** *The Distance You Can Travel*; **The Mystics-** *Satisfy You*; **Eddie Kirkland-** *Booty Blues*; **The Rounders-** *Wish I Had You*; **John Nemeth-** *Magic Touch*; **Jimmy Cavallo-** *You Better Believe It!*; **William Clarke-** *The Early Years, Vol. 1 and Vol.2....*

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## JAY MCSHANN

**Hootie Blues**  
**STONY PLAIN**

The passing of the legendary Jay McShann this past year was one of many substantial losses the music world suffered.

McShann led one of the last great Kansas City Big Bands which was noted for its blues playing and the fact that Charlie Parker was a member until he emerged as one of the forces behind the Bebop revolution of the forties.

In the forties and the fifties McShann recorded behind any number of blues singers including Crown Prince Waterford and Jimmy Witherspoon (Mosaic is reissuing their classic RCA album) and then in the late sixties and early seventies he recorded in the US and abroad for a variety of labels which showed him to be one of the great piano masters of blues and swinging jazz.

He continued to perform and tour worldwide over the past 35 years and in the past several years the Canadian Stony Plain label put out several very fine releases in the company of Duke Robillard.

Perhaps the last McShann CD to be issued in his lifetime, the 2006 Stony Plain disc, **Hootie Blues**, was recorded in 2001 at Toronto's *Montreal Bistro*, with the pianist-vocalist accompanied by saxophonist Jim Galloway (whom McShann had played with over the past few decades), Galloway's wife Rosemary on bass and Don Vickery on drums.

This disc is a delightful set of chestnuts from McShann's pen like *Confessin The Blues*, *My Chile* and the title track, along with a strong blues that I believe Witherspoon recorded, *When The Lights Go Out*, as well as standards as *'Deed I Do* and *All of Me*.

McShann still sounded fine at 85 when this performance occurred, especially in his piano playing, and the backing band is right with him. Galloway is a very attractive player working within the swing tradition. McShann was modest about his singing, but his slightly nasal delivery, reminiscent of his one-time vocalist Walter Brown, had a definite appeal. Although his delivery perhaps shows a tinge of the years, he still sang and played the blues at a level most could only aspire to.

In addition to some marvelous performances, there is an extended interview between Stony Plain's Holger Peterson and McShann recorded in 2003 where he remembers his formative days and more. It is placed at the disc end so one can listen to at their leisure.

A very enjoyable release which may not be among his finest recordings, but certainly has little to fault.

**Ron Weinstock**

## WILLIE KING

### One Love FREEDOM CREEK

Alabama bluesman Willie King has developed a following with his strong juke joint blues that mixes his own take on classic delta and Chicago blues with a topical-protest slant to some of his own material. His music might be loosely described as Howlin' Wolf mixed with Mississippi Fred McDowell with some RL Burnside seasoning for a driving, almost hypnotic mix.

His most recent release certainly will satisfy his fans as he launches into *Sweet Potato Man* ("I'm your sweet potato man, I want to work for you.") with its relentless groove, followed by *I Like It Like That*, opening with stinging King guitar and a funk groove while guitarist Debbie Bond and Willie Lee Halbert second his vocal lines in a manner similar to that heard by some zydeco acts. *Ride Sally Side* is another North Hills rocker as he sings about having getting together in the old days and just pitching down a wonderful time, while *Holing (sic) the Line*, with some emphatic harp and sax, sports a lyric about other people trying to wreck one's life, but don't worry as long as you hold the line.

*Writing in the Sky (Katrina)*, a slow blues with a John Lee Hooker feel, has King reflecting on the horrible hurricane that wreaked havoc through the Gulf Coast ("Did you see the handwriting in the sky all the way from Africa."), while the one cover, Howlin' Wolf's *Spoonful*, benefits from the slowed tempo with King being one of the few vocalists able to successfully to evoke Wolf when singing. *Mamaluchi* mixes the *Hideaway* melody with a tinge of Jimmy Reed for an easy going rocker as King sings about going to get his baby. The title track is an upbeat lyric about how we are all interconnected despite what seems to make us seem different and that brings us hope for better.

There is nothing fancy about the music here, and it's similar to a lot of other 'primitive-sounding' juke blues,

but Willie King places his own stamp on this simple, driving music and has a focus that provide the performances with more personality than similar efforts by others. It's music for listening, but more importantly it's music to dance and get a groove on with. **Ron Weinstock**

## THE BRIAN LYNCH/ EDDIE PALMIERI PROJECT

### Simpatico ARTISTSHARE

Trumpeter Brian Lynch, a stalwart in Eddie Palmieri's band for 19 years, leads a satisfying Latin jazz collaboration with pianist Palmieri and a slew of all-stars.

On nine outstanding original tunes composed mostly by Lynch alone or with Palmieri, the band plays an array of authentic Latin-jazz pieces ranging from sizzling hot to sultry. Lynch's "Guajira Dubois," one of the lengthiest and catchiest, features alto saxophonist Phil Woods among the soloists.

Woods also participates in the septet performing the exuberant waltz, "Slippery." Highlights and spectacular solos by Lynch, Palmieri and others are too numerous to mention.

Listener-friendly from start to finish, this CD ranks as one of the recent best Latin Jazz recordings, perhaps a prospective Grammy winner. Twenty-two musicians in all appear on this recording, many of them from Palmieri's regular band.

With ultra-talented reed musicians such as Donald Harrison (alto sax), Greg Tardy (tenor sax), and Mario Rivera (baritone sax) and trombonist Conrad Herwig providing solos and section work at times, this album is an dazzling listen.

A comprehensive 16-page liner booklet includes the collective personnel list, soloists on each tune, translations for the vocal numbers by Lila Downs, and notes by Ted Panken, the co-leaders and others.

**Nancy Ann Lee**

## JANUARY

FRI 19 ..... THE CHOSEN FEW  
SAT 20 ..... THE TONY KOUSSA JR. BAND  
FRI 26 ..... HIPNOTIC DOG  
SAT 27 ..... COLIN DUSSAULT & THE BLUES PROJECT  
SUNDAYS SUN. JAN. 21 - CRUISIN' (R&B/MOTOWN)

## FEBRUARY

FRI 2 ..... REAL LIFE, FEATURING BECKY BOYD  
SAT 3 ..... COLIN DUSSAULT'S BLUES PROJECT  
FRI 9 ..... STACY MITCHHART & BLUES-U-CAN-USE  
SAT 10 ..... 77 SOUTH (COUNTRY/ROCK)  
FRI 16 ..... ARMSTRONG BEARCAT  
SAT 17 ..... THE DEACONS (EVANGELISTS OF SOUL)  
FRI 23 ..... DAVE C. & THE SHARPTONES  
SAT 24 ..... COLIN DUSSAULT & THE BLUES PROJECT  
SUNDAYS SUN. FEB. 4 - SUPERBOWL PARTY  
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	23 STONE RIVER BAND	13 ACOUSTICALLY BLUE
	30 ERNIE KRIVDA BIG BAND	20 FAT TUESDAY - CATS ON HOLIDAY
		27 ERNIE KRIVDA BIG BAND
WEDNESDAYS	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
	17 LAWLESS	7 ACOUSTIC JOYRIDE
	24 MY THREE SONS	14 KENTUCKY THUNDER
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## OTIS RUSH

Live... And in Concert from San Francisco  
BLUES EXPRESS

Backed by the four piece Tower of Power horn section and a rock solid rhythm section, guitarist Otis Rush demonstrates on this live disc why he is revered by blues and rock guitarists alike.

With everyone from Buddy Guy to Stevie Ray Vaughan to Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck singing his praises and copping his licks Rush could have approached this 1999 performance as little more than a victory lap to celebrate his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday and the Grammy he'd taken home the previous year for his "Any Place I'm Going" disc.

Instead, he rips into his guitar parts like a hungry lion with lots to prove. While there are only seven cuts here, most of them top six minutes giving Rush plenty of time to take his guitar on journeys into territory that mere mortals would be afraid to explore.

While in lesser hands guitar jams can be repetitive bores, Rush keeps things fresh and interesting as he weaves his riffs around the horn section, keyboardist and rhythm section.

If it wasn't for the appreciative audience response to the performance the stellar sound of this recording would lead you to believe it was done in the studio. Play often and loud.

Mark Smith

## CANNONBALL LEGACY BAND

Maximum Firepower  
SAVANT

It's been sometime since Julian 'Cannonball' Adderly passed away and a few since his brother Nat passed. Louis Hayes, drummer for Adderly forty years ago, has been leading a tribute band to the legendary saxophonist and the terrific band Hayes was such a part of. This writer had the pleasure to catch Louis Hayes and the Cannonball Legacy Band at the 2005 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and enjoyed their set that brought to life some of the classics the Adderly Brothers were remembered for.

Savant has just issued **Maximum Firepower** from Hayes and the Cannonball Legacy Band that showcases their fine music. In addition to Hayes, the Legacy Band includes Vincent Herring on alto sax, Jeremy Pelt on trumpet, cornet and flugelhorn, and Richard Goods on bass. Anthony Wonsey and Rick Germanson share the piano chair.

This is a nice overview of the Adderly Brothers' repertoire although it omits a couple of the best-known songs, *Mercy, Mercy* and *Work Song*. There is a pretty varied group of writers represented here including Quincy Jones (*Jessica's Birthday*), Bobby Timmons (*This Here*), Nat Adderly (*Little Boy With the Sad Eyes*), Charles Lloyd (*Sweet Georgia Bright*), Victor Feldman (*New Delhi*), Cannonball (*Sack 'o Woe*), and Sam Jones (*Unit 7*), with one original from Jeremy Pelt (*The Two of Them*). The performances are consistently focused and strong. Herring and Pelt play strong heads as well as solos (check out the beginning of *This Here*), and the band plays this strong hard bop set with plenty of heat and swing. Hayes himself remains a wonderful drummer nearly five decades later and the Rudy Van Gelder recording wonderfully captures his playing as well as the entire group.

This is a marvelous set, which will appeal to the same sort of gritty hard bop that the Adderly's provided decades ago.

Ron Weinstock

## SMOKEY WILSON

Round Like an Apple,  
The Big Town Recordings 1977-1978  
ACE RECORDS (UK)

Until the early 1990s when he was signed by Bullseye Blues, Smokey Wilson was one of the best blues secrets out on the West Coast. The albums recorded for the Bihari Brothers for Big Town that have been culled for the this new Ace (UK) CD, along with recordings made with Rod Piazza and William Clarke, indicated what a talent this gentleman who operated the Pioneer Club in Watts was.

A Mississippi native, he moved to Los Angeles and established himself on the West Coast. The Big Town recordings display his powerful straight no-holds barred style that would have been as at home at a Little Rock juke as it would a West Side Chicago bar as Wilson sang with a gritty, gravelly voice that suggested Wolf, as well as played strong guitar whether driving modern single style or slide. Few can handle Howlin' Wolf's material like *How Many More Years*, or remake *Night Time is The Right Time* into a scorching rocker.

The way he tears into a vocal like Johnny Copeland's

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SAVANT

*I Wish I Was Single* or *Low Rider* (*Deuce & A Quarter*), a reworking of Lowell Fulson's *Tramp*, is marvelous, as is the title track with its relentless boogie groove and the driving *Blues For Big Town*.

These recordings have been unavailable for so long and their re-release is so very welcome. One might hope that this sells well enough so that Wilson's other Big Town sides are also made available. **Ron Weinstock**

## MATT SAVAGE TRIO

**Quantum Leap**  
SAVAGE RECORDS

Pianist Matt Savage, a 14-year-old jazz prodigy, performs a 15-tune set of standards and originals with two adult musicians — bassist John Funkhouser and drummer Steve Silverstein.

At the keyboard, Savage shows incredible imagination and skillful execution that belie his age. He shows an innate sense for melodious swing and creatively improvises, refreshing warhorse gems such as "A Child Is Born," "All The Things You Are," "Monk's Dream," and "Lullaby of Birdland." His original compositions such as "Couch Potato Blues," "Serenity," "Free and Easy," and others, demonstrate that even at his young age, he's able to write tunes that could become standards.

Diagnosed at age three with autism, Savage was enrolled in a long-term, comprehensive special program that ultimately allowed his musical skills to flourish. By age seven, he taught himself to read music and shortly after began classical piano studies. He switched to jazz after

discovering the music of Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane and Miles Davis. After three years of studies at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, Savage recorded the first of two solo piano albums.

This is Savage's fifth album, but his first with world-wide distribution. Previous albums include "Cutting Loose," "Chasing Your Tail," "Groovin' on Mount Everest," and "All Jazzed Up." His immeasurable talents have gained praise from key jazz musicians and critics. He's won ASCAP's young jazz composer award for the past two years and is the youngest pianist in Bosendorfer's 178-year history to be signed as an artist.

One listen to this satisfying disc and you'll agree that this gifted young artist appears to be destined for a brilliant career. **Nancy Ann Lee**

## MAC ARNOLD

**Nothing To Prove**

PLANTATION 1 RECORDS

Mac Arnold had a stint with Muddy Waters about four decades ago and followed that up with work with Otis Spann, John Lee Hooker and Tyrone Davis among others. The bassist has emerged with this new album and it's a record rooted in the sounds of four decades ago, although with a hard hitting groove that will appeal to today's listeners.

The rocking shuffle, *Blues For You*, is a driving party song as Arnold exhorts the audience to enjoy themselves as he plays the blues for them. As a vocalist Arnold really excels on the slow tempo songs like the title track, as he

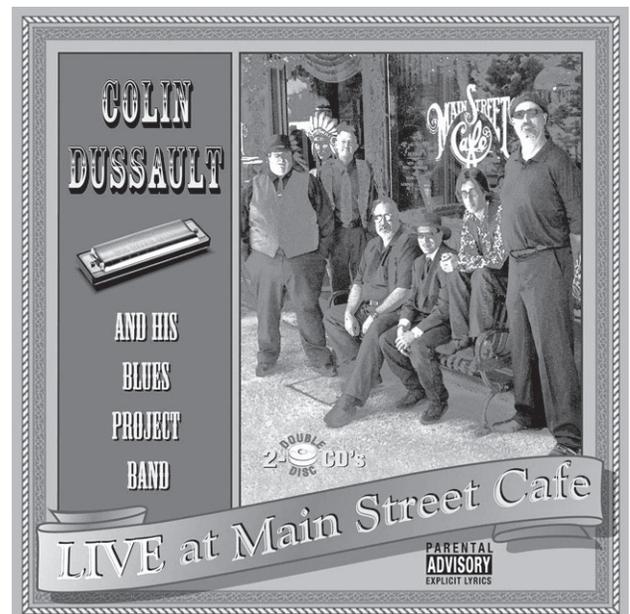
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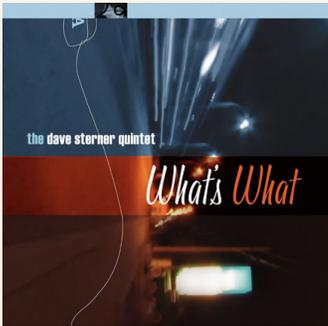
tells someone he's walked in their shoes and had his share of blues, with Max Hightower wailing on harp here. Rudy 'Blues Shoes' Wyatt plays the piano on *Call Mac Arnold*, where Arnold tells the ladies to call him when they want to have fun while their man is on the run. Austin Brashier's guitar playing is strong here on working against the mambo groove. Wyatt's piano and Hightower's harp provide the

backing for the down home version of *(Get on) Back to the Country*.

*The Truth* sports a funky groove as Arnold notes some rather tell a lie because the truth ain't good enough, and some are telling rumors 'trying to break us up.' *So Mean to Me* is a late night slow blues that Arnold ably delivers. The album closes with a fine live version of *(Get on) Back to the Country*, with Hightower playing some solid slide guitar in the vein of Muddy Waters. **Ron Weinstock**

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## MITCHEL FORMAN

**Perspectives**  
**MARSIS JAZZ**

The fare is varied but what doesn't change a bit on Mitchell Forman's new disc is his graceful touch and elegant lyricism. Woven in these is the jazz/fusion keyboardist's constant sense of invention as he moves through a set of works penned by some very influential colleagues.

A one-time member of the Mahavishnu Orchestra and former Wayne Shorter sideman, Forman draws from their "books" as well as those of Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea and Keith Jarrett. Hancock's "Dolphin Dance" gets a new-century electronic update and on Corea's "You're Everything" - from Return To Forever's early, Brazilian-flavored days - Forman retains all the flair of the original while infusing his own creative solo touches. And creative as well are his moody, acoustic readings of Lennon & McCartney's "Here, There And Everywhere" and "Michelle".

*Perspectives* successfully transcends the "tribute" tag by way of the creator's own skill and the result is a most enjoyable set. **Duane Verh**

## BOOBOO DAVIS

**Drew, Mississippi**  
**BLACK & TAN (NETHERLANDS)**

Tired of the same old blues shuffles and rhythms? Look no further my friends. In addition to using a violin to add an occasional eerie orchestral backdrop, this 10 cut slab of hypnotic blues and soul grooves combines club style scratching on many of the tracks with guitar licks as down

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and dirty as anything RL Burnside waxed during his reign as king of the Hill Country blues world. Check out "Made Me Cry" for a wondrous example of this marriage of old school blues and modern day sensibilities. Vocalist and harmonica player, Boo Boo Davis uses this unique musical backdrop to launch into tales about poverty and racial brutality, "Drew Mississippi," the lack of sexual action, "Who Stole the Booty" and life on the edge, "Trying to Survive."

With a vocal style that resembles John Lee Hooker on the boogie driven numbers, Mem Shannon on the more soulful tracks and even Omar Dykes (Omar & the Howlers) on the funky, "Got the Blues in My Heart," Davis is a commanding presence who provides just the right emotional connection to the groove laden tracks to keep you returning to this disc.

**Mark Smith**

## CHICO HAMILTON

Juniflip  
Believe

Sixth Avenue Romp  
Heritage

JOYOUS SHOUT RECORDS

It's been quite a career for the masterful drummer Chico Hamilton who, on the occasion of his 85th Birthday, had four CDs issued on the Joyous Shout label. A Los Angeles native he started on clarinet and played in a high school band with Ernie Royal, Jack Kelso, Charles Mingus and Dexter Gordon and played in such bands as T-Bone Walker, Floyd Ray, Lorenzo Flennoy, Lester Young, and Lionel Hampton. During Army Service in World War II studied under Jo Jones and joined Lena Horne in 1948.

He played with Charlie Barnett, Billy Eckstine, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis Jr., and Billie Holiday including the Carnegie Hall Concert and later formed his first quartet with Gerry Mulligan and recorded first album as a leader with Pacific Jazz in 1955. A pioneer in chamber jazz he formed an unusual quintet in 1955 with cello, flute, guitar, bass and drums which acquired national following. The quintet's original personnel included Buddy Collette and Jim Hall. His bands served as an incubator for other talent like Eric Dolphy, Charles Lloyd, Gabor Szabo, Larry Coryell and others. He has been honored as a JazzMaster and remains a vital musician and leader with these four different celebrations of his musical career.

All four discs feature his "Euphoria" group with Cary DeNigris on guitar, Paul Ramsey on bass, Evan Schwam on flute, tenor & soprano saxes, Karolina Strassmayer on flute, alto & soprano saxes, Andrew Hadro on flute, alto & baritone saxes, and Jeremy Carlstedt on percussion.

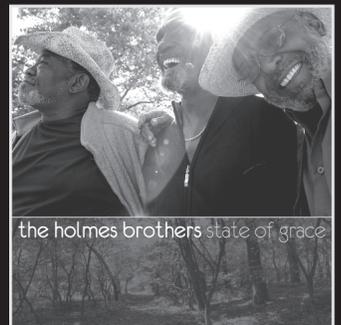
The first release is *Juniflip* with guest appearances by the late Arthur Lee of the rock group Love (who shared bills with Hamilton in the sixties), actor-vocalist Bill Henderson and Hamilton alumni, trombonist Georgo Bohanon and bass trombonist Jimmy Cheatham, who augment the Euphoria group and add to the chamber group flavor of the band on the five tracks they appear. On the opening *Mr. Hamilton*, with its swinging blues groove, they riff behind Eric Schwam's tenor solo and the horns all add color behind Paul Ramsey's bass guitar solo.

Karolina Strassmayer opens on flute for *A Little Bit of This, A Little Bit of That*, a Hamilton composition that opens with a moody feel before Hamilton picks up the tempo and the trombones trade fours with the saxophones riffing in support. Its marvelous hearing Hamilton driving the band without getting obtrusive and Bohanon sounds very strong here. Vocalist Henderson, evoking Joe Williams, is initially backed by Hamilton for the first few lines of *Ain't She Sweet*, then joined by the band on a fresh arrangement of the song that features Henderson scatting with Schwam providing a responsive foil, while his other feature is the standard best known from the big band era, *Don't Be That Way*. Again a nice arrangement from Hamilton with the song opening as a duet between Henderson and DeNigris which then shifts into a bossa groove. The old Georgie Fame hit 'Yeah is redone and dedicated to Carlos Santana with a bit more swing (not that the original did not swing) with Cheatham's bass trombone singing the melody to kick this number off. Lee is heard on *What's Your Story Morning Glory*, which was recorded by Saunders King and likely heard growing up by the veteran Hamilton. It opens up with nice guitar from DeNigris which is punctuated by some effectively placed Horn riffs. More storming tenor from Schwam before the tempo slows down for DeNigris' guitar on *Cary's Footsteps*.

*Believe*, the second release, features guest vocals from the great Fontella Bass as well as trombonist Bohanon, who appears to supplement the playing of Euphoria on several numbers. The opening *Evans-ville* sports nice bossa groove underlying a flighty flute opening with

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Bohanon's trombone adding sum funk before a funky middle section which provides Schwam space for some gritty sax before the closing light bossa groove with more interplay between flute and sax. Bass handles the vocal on *Love Me A Long, Long Time*, a nice walking blues groove with bebop touches in the vocal and the arrangement of a staple of Gerald Wilson's Orchestra. 'My Brother Don and My Brother Bernie are Hamilton's tributes to his brothers and feature more solid ensemble work and soloing. The latter number opens as a languid ballad before hitting a samba groove with Bohanon sweetly taking it home. Bass also sings on *Baby Won't You Please Go Home*, which was part of the influential Jimmy Lunceford Band's repertoire. The opening chorus has just Bass backed by bassist Ramsey with Hamilton and guitarist DeNigris jumping in for the second verse and Schwam adds tenor starting with the third verse. The other Bass vocal is a fine gospel selection, *Believe in Him*. Ramsey's bass line for *Alive* evokes one of Jimi Hendrix's recording before Schwam lays down some tenor funk. Hamilton and Eurphoria salute the Who on *The Kids Are Alright*, another delightful indication of Hamilton's marvelous eclecticism.

**Sixth Avenue Romp** (referring to Hamilton's home until he moved to New York in the sixties) is a bit more slanted towards classic rhythm and blues with Shuggie Otis guesting on T-Bone Walker's *Strollin' With Bone*; vocalist Brenna Bavis and Allman Brothers drummer Jaimoe are on a very soulful rendition of Smokey Robinson's *You Really Gotta Hold on Me*; and trumpeter Jon Faddis is on muted trumpet and sings on Billy Strayhorn's immortal *Take the A Train*. Junior Walker's *Cleo's Mood* and *Cleo's Back* provide some gutbucket sax and show Hamilton's ability to play funky yet still swing, while Hamilton's high hat and cymbal work help kick off the Basie chestnut *Topsy*. Hamilton and Euphoria provide a fittingly somber cast to Bill Withers's *Ain't No Sunshine* with the horn voicings adding to the feel, while they get the groove going on the Booker T & the MG's *Chicken Pox*. The variety here is illustrated by *I'm Still Thirsty (Chico's Accordion Dub)*, which has a Central American flavor to it and its repeated riff would certainly get the dance floor full.

**Heritage** is the final CD in this excellent series of recordings. Bohanon adds his signature playing to this disc as does vocalist Marya Lawrence, daughter of former Hamilton band member Arnie Lawrence. This disc finds Chico looking back to his formative influences, Chicano Heritage, as well as several tributes by Hamilton to some of his musical alumni and associates, including Arnie Lawrence (on *One for Arnie*), Gerry Mulligan (on *Mulligan Stew*) and Gabor Szabo (on *One for Gabor*). Marya Lawrence brings a slinky innocence to *I Got a Right to Sing the Blues*, whose arrangement is based on that of the Gerald Wilson Band and Bohanon channels the blues once more. Her rendition of *Love Me or Leave Me*, is inspired by Lena Horne's recording, whose group at the time

included Hamilton. There are three Gerald Wilson originals performed including the hot latin-groove of *Viva Tirado* whose opening sounds like it might have been on a Santana recording from three decades back with DeNigris superb early on this one before Bohanon takes off, and *Blues for Yna Yna* is another impressive feature for saxophonist Schwam. Hamilton himself takes the vocal with quite a bit of charm on Billy Strayhorn's marvelous ballad, *Something to Live For*, with marvelous guitar by DeNigris in support, that conclude this series of recordings on the high level of the earlier releases.

The consistency of these recordings and the continued high level of Hamilton's playing, show that his music continues to offer us so much.

Ron Weinstock

## FREDDIE ROULETTE

### MAN OF STEEL

#### TRADITION & MODERNE (GERMANY)

Long before Chris Strachwitz issued his first collection of **Sacred Steel** recordings on Arhoolie, guitarist Freddie Roulette had recorded on lap steel on a variety of recordings including Earl Hooker's classic Arhoolie album, **Two Bugs and a Roach**, Big Moose Walker's great 45 *Ramblin' Woman b/w Puppy Howl Blues*, and the Chicago Blues Stars. What stood out was the vocalized quality of his playing and how his playing evoked trains, howling dogs and other sounds in a fashion that the sacred steel players and few other guitarists do today (Derek Trucks being a notable one).

Roulette has lived in the San Francisco area over three



**THE WAY THINGS GO** is a fresh take on traditional Blues from the veteran Bluesman. **CLEVELAND FATS** once again shows that he is a master singer, guitarist, and songwriter highlighting his talents on nine originals and three covers. This recording includes the re-teaming with his former boss and mentor **ROBERT LOCKWOOD, JR.** and special guest **BILLY BRANCH** on harmonica.



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and a half decades. Back in 1997, he had a terrific album on Hi Horse, **Back in Chicago**, where he was backed by the late Willie Kent and his excellent band. Now guitarist Henry Kaiser has produced this new release by Roulette, **Man of Steel**, on the German Tradition & Moderne label. Certainly it provides enough space for Roulette to display his considerable talents, but the presence of several other guitarists, some of whom also play, slides provide for what may be overall a less satisfying recording. It opens with Roulette reviving the Johnny Taylor/Albert King classic *Breaking Up Somebody's Home*, with some startling playing but a lesser vocal, followed by Washington Phillips' *Tattler* on which David Lindley takes the vocal lead and adds slide.

Once one gets past the limited vocal by Roulette on the simple lyrics of *You Got To Funkifize*, one hears nice playing from Roulette but there is perhaps too much from Kaiser for these ears. With Ken Emerson providing a foundation on his lap steel, Roulette imaginatively takes lead on a refreshing reworking of Lee Morgan's *Sidewinder* before either Kaiser or Phil Emerson takes a nice solo. Roulette's vocal comes off better on Willie Nelson's *Nightlife* with his lap steel embellishments behind his vocal being a nice touch. A Hawaiian instrumental *How Do Ya Do?* provides nice lap steel playing from Roulette and Ken Emerson, and is followed by a slowed down, stop-time rendition of Arthur Crudup's *That's Alright Mama*, with a nice vocal by Ken Emerson and more nice mood-enhancing playing from Roulette. *Surfin'* is a nice instrumental set to a reggae groove, followed by a decent vocal on *In the Heat of the Night*.

It is a wide-ranging set with some typically fine work by Roulette covering a variety of musical styles with some fine ensemble playing. Still this does not quite place Roulette's electrifying guitar to the fore as the Hi Horse disc did.

**Ron Weinstock**

## MIKE DILLON'S GO-GO JUNGLE

**Battery Milk**

HYENA

Alongside their diverse and interesting archival releases, the Hyena imprint is also emerging as a haven for new-school improvisers; ensembles formatted as jazz with players drawing from all varieties of rock and funk as well and patently unafraid to let them all collide and mingle as the moment sees fit. And, typically playing up the "fun" aspect of the process in the bargain.

The label's latest lineup brandishing these attributes is led by vibraphonist/percussionist Dillon, an alumnus of Garage A Trois. A spirit of wholesome, inventive irreverence permeates this set where funk grooves underpin quirky, catchy heads and ear-catching lyricism can be followed by "street" attitude. Both Dillon and drummer GoGo Ray are prone to engaging extended breaks. Saxophonist Mark Southerland is a solid second solo voice and alternating bassists Ron Johnson and J.J. Richards provide the necessary cohesion to make the whole thing work.

*Battery Milk* tempts one to christen "punk jazz" as an up-and-coming genre. However one chooses to tag this stuff, it makes for better-than-average listening.

**Duane Verh**

## D.C. BELLAMY

**Give Some Body to Somebody**

STACKHOUSE RECORDING CO.

Singer D.C. Bellamy has a rich soulful voice that he uses to great effect on this release.

With several self-penned tunes about the foibles of love and relationships, including the title track which extols the virtues of involving someone else in your sexual acts, the disc focuses mostly on carnal pleasure. "One's the Woman, One's The Wife" is another take on the classic tale of having it both ways while "Bury the Bone" is a lascivious double entendre tale of an old dog who doesn't get around so much anymore but can still "bury the bone" with the best of them.

While Bellamy clearly relishes the lustin', lovin' and leavin' side of the blues, he has other tools in his kit as well. His cover of "Lowell Fulson's "Room with a View" reveals him to be a nuanced vocalist who gives the late, great Charles Brown a run for his money. Backing him on this effort is a hand-picked crew of Kansas City musicians who provide a funky backdrop that serves the tunes well.

Harmonica player John Paul Drum is all over these tracks and is so critical to the overall sound that he could easily be accorded co-headliner status.

**Mark Smith**

**jazz  
& blues** report

From the Editor:

We are currently undergoing a rather complete upgrade of our computer equipment. In the midst of it all, we did manage to get this issue out, which covers the second half of January, and all of February.

Our next issue will be up March 1 and will have our annual Tri-C JazzFest feature. Not too many new CDs are released during the winter months, but we'll cover the good ones that do come out, as well as several we still need to cover from late 2006

As soon as we get some preliminary information on JazzFest, we will post it on the website. You can download it then from the left window.

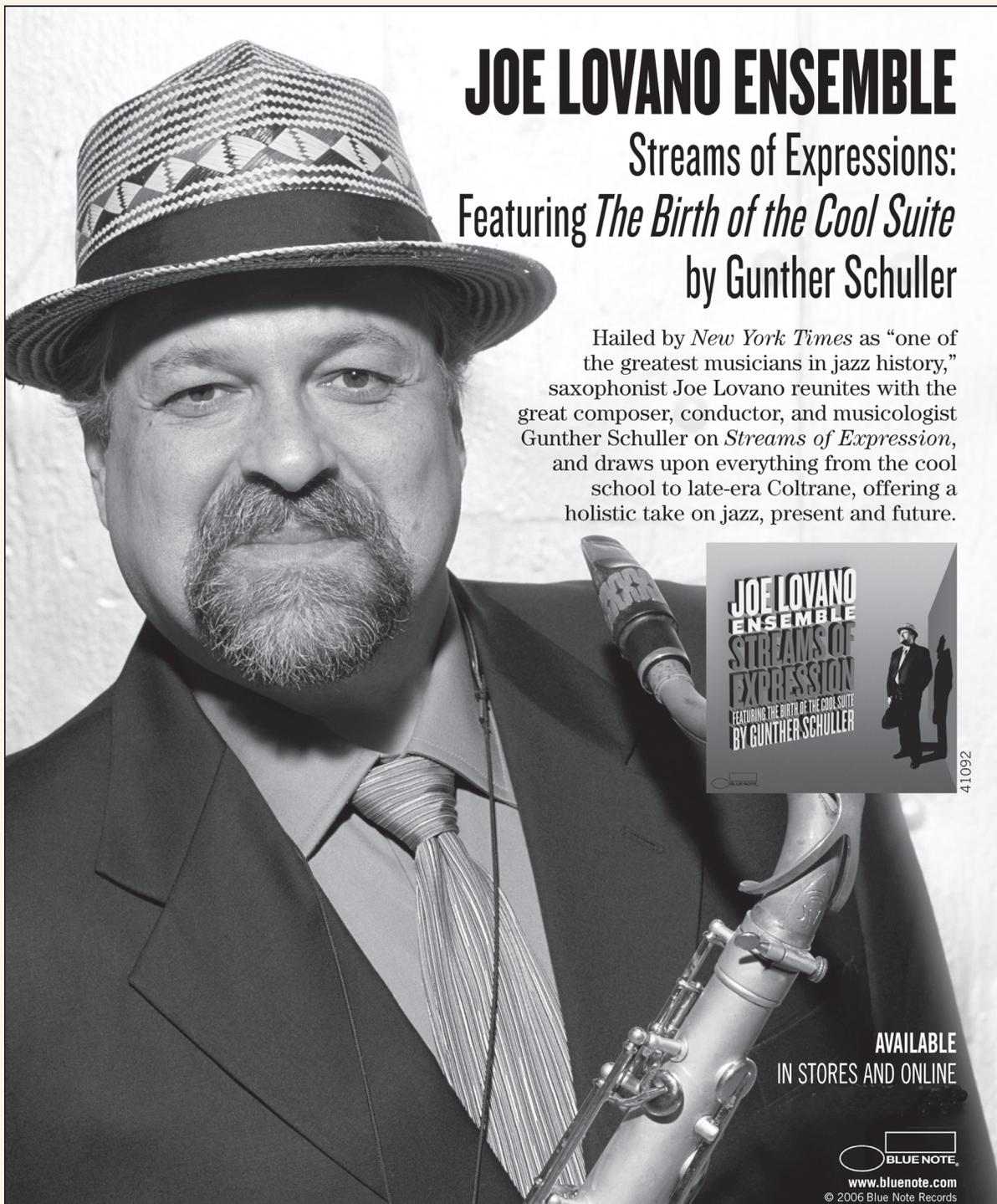
Some of you may have noticed that many of the reviews from the past year are not yet in our searchable database. We are undergoing some problems with the database that need to be corrected, so please bear with us. Also, we will be completely redoing the website in the near future.

On a sad note, we have just learned of the passing of two musicians already in 2007. Jazz pianist Alice Coltrane, widow of John Coltrane, died on January 12 near Los Angeles at age 69. Her passing was related to respiratory failure. Tenor saxophonist and composer Michael Brecker – an 11-time Grammy Award winner – died of leukemia on January 13 at age 57.

We wish you all the best of luck for 2007. See you in March.

–Bill Wahl

# Jazz & Blues Report Congratulates Joe Lovano and Blue Note Records for Yet Another Grammy Nomination!



## JOE LOVANO ENSEMBLE

Streams of Expressions:  
Featuring *The Birth of the Cool Suite*  
by Gunther Schuller

Hailed by *New York Times* as “one of the greatest musicians in jazz history,” saxophonist Joe Lovano reunites with the great composer, conductor, and musicologist Gunther Schuller on *Streams of Expression*, and draws upon everything from the cool school to late-era Coltrane, offering a holistic take on jazz, present and future.



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