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VOLUME TWO ISSUE SIX

JULY 1996

the BLUES NEWS



This Month:

Alexander Band

Mem Shannon

Lucky Peterson

Enter to win an autographed

Lee Oskar Harmonica!

ROBERT ALEXANDER

CALIFORNIA'S BEST BLUES AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

the BLUES NEWS

JULY 1996

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 6

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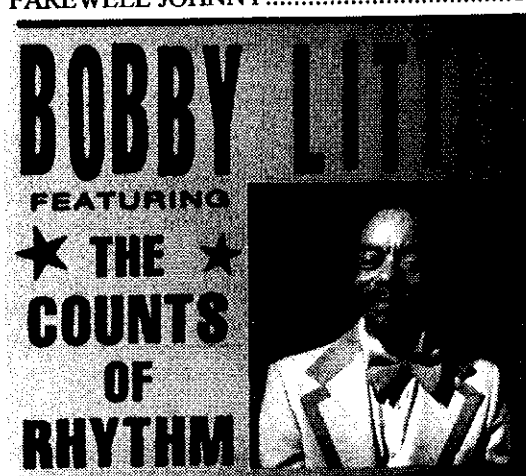
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FROM THE EDITOR

Well, it's sure been hot here in sunny Southern California. Along with the summer heat comes hot summer concerts. The Blue Falcons with 'Doc' Ryan are playing a summer fund raiser for the Ramona High PEP Squad Saturday, July 20th at 7 p.m. at the Ramona High School Auditorium. The cost is only \$10.00 and it's for a good cause. Call (909) 549-4137 for more info.

Don't forget *the BLUES NEWS*' photo contest is still under way. Provide us with a photo of your favorite way to read or enjoy or transport or pickup *the BLUES NEWS* magazine and you could win an autographed Lee Oskar Harmonica. Entries must be received by our office by September 2nd, 1996. *the BLUES NEWS* must be easily seen in photograph.

Riverside locals are well aware of the incredible blues talent that has been presented to us at our own Lake Alice Trading Co. The "Lake" features the longest bar in the county and the hottest blues acts as well. Every Sunday afternoon there is "Blues in the Afternoon" from 3 p.m., hosted by the Blue Falcons w/ 'Doc' Ryan. This is a blues jam where blues musicians from all over come to strut there stuff.

Sunday, the 28th of July, Black Top recording artist, W. C. Clark, is playing at the "Lake". I believe it is an afternoon/early evening show; call Lake Alice at (909) 686-7343 for exact show times.

the BLUES NEWS is now hiring for its upcoming expansion! Positions are available in sales, promotion and production. Interested parties should contact Eric at: the BLUES NEWS, P.O. Box 1263, Riverside, CA 92502-1263 or (909) 369-8635 x100 or thebluesnews@earthlink.net.

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THE BLUE FALCONS

The History of the Blues: **The Blues**

"Gone Country"

By Cindy Dumas

As I looked out the plane window and stared down on the massive Mississippi, I could see downtown Memphis in all of its stark wonder. Just then the Pilot announced our whereabouts, and for a brief moment I was compelled to run to the cockpit and beg him to turn the plane around and set it down alongside this gleaming water giant. In reality I knew my trip would be spent in Nashville exploring the roots of Country Music not the Blues, or would it?

I had all but prepared myself to pass over the Delta and be a regular Nashville Nellie this time around, not at all to say that I don't have a great appreciation for the roots of both Country as well as the Blues, because I do. However, being born and raised in Southern California with all of its transient splendor, there was a seed planted in my mind that "Country" and "Blues" were light years apart from each other, or at least what I had been spoon fed. As a child, my earliest impressions lie solely in hearing my Father play Hank Williams (his idol) records and that was it until later when I began to have a real appreciation for the roots of country. Then again, maybe the blame falls on the media, because the public seems to be bombarded with the commercial aspect that dominates most of today's music - who really knows. In attempting not to stray from the point and in retrospect, wherever I went throughout my trip there were constant reminders paralleling the two forms and how they have affected and crossed over one another, with origins dating back before the time of our parents and grandparents. And then there is the third aspect to consider - Gospel music, a foremost catalyst for both blues and country which found its origin in the streetlined churches stretching across the South. If you were to ask any given artist when they first began to sing and perform chances are

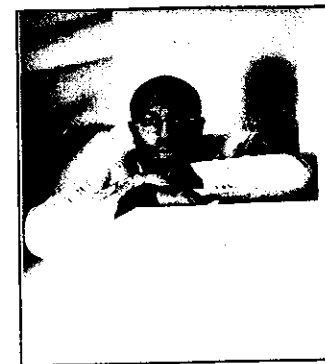
great they will tell you it was in "church". The more I thought about the connection between all three, the more I began to recall moments such as, the first time I ever heard a collection of Muddy Waters tunes. Several songs in particular reminded me of the music I had grown up with, particularly rockabilly's great ambassador, Elvis Presley. In listening to Muddy it was apparent that he had been a major influence on young Elvis. I once read somewhere that Elvis was quite taken with Lonnie Johnson in his youth, but in hearing his so-called mentors music I knew it was true. And after all, Presley was a poor white boy from none other than Tupelo, Mississippi, who roots and first musical impressions emerged from the heart of Blues Territory. Proof of Elvis's mastery of the blues idioms can be found on *Reconsider Baby*, an RCA compilation of his cover versions of songs written by and, or originally sung by Arthur Crudup, Lonnie Johnson, Lowell Fulson, and Percy Mayfield. He could sing the blues with natural feeling because he was born and raised in the South, regardless of the color of his skin.

With Elvis in mind, just look at the all too brief career of Buddy Holly who coming from Lubbock, Texas was greatly influenced by blues artists such as, Lightin' Hopkins (another fellow Texan), Muddy Waters and Little Walter. The late Patsy Cline born in Virginia had a hauntingly soulful voice. Patsy could belt out a song better than most blues singers of yesterday or today. Hers was a style which allowed a crossover into any musical form. She simply had a one of a kind persona that absorbed her listening audience.

Now folks don't get worried, the girl hasn't "Gone Country" like the song says, but I did see most of the sights in Nashville, which ranged from The Grand Ole Opry Radio Show to The Ryman Auditorium and Country Music Hall of Fame, including an all too near pass with Billy Ray Cyrus, and my most prized possession, a picture in front of the famed Bluebird Cafe. My last night in Nashville was spent amidst the electrical storms and tornado

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KASHIF -- FIVE-TIME GRAMMY NOMINATED & MULTI-PLATINUM, AWARD-WINNING SONGWRITER/PRODUCER FOR WHITNEY HOUSTON, KENNY G., GEORGE BENSON, DIONNE WARWICK AND EVELYN "CHAMPAGNE" KING & OTHERS -- SHOWS SAN DIEGANS THE SECRETS OF "MAKING MILLIONS. MAKING MUSIC" AT WEEKEND EDUCATIONALSEMINAR/TALENT SEARCH/BOOK SIGNING, JULY 20TH & 21ST

Kashif, five-time Grammy-nominated and multi-platinum, award-winning songwriter/producer for Whitney Houston, Kenny G., George Benson, Dionne Warwick, Evelyn "Champagnes King and others (such as Al Jarreau, Debbie Allen, Howard Johnson, Jermaine Jackson, etc.), recording artist/national seminar leader/author of the highly-acclaimed book, "Everything You'd Better Know About the Record Industry," has added San Diego to his national "Making Millions, Making Music" tour schedule. He will be here to conduct his exciting, weekend-long educational seminar/talent search/book-signing on Saturday, July 20, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, July 21, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The all-ages, all music styles event will be held at the Scottish Rite Center (1895 Camino del Rio South, San Diego). Tickets are \$20 for the entire weekend (no individual day tickets will be sold) Seating for "Making Millions, Making Music" is limited to a first-come, first-serve basis. To pre-order tickets, send a check or money order made payable to: Brooklyn Boy Books, P.O. Box 3029, Venice, CA 90294-3029. You may get more information about the event, including talent contest, and/or charge your tickets by calling (619) 582-3468 or (800) 974-7447. Exhibitor table space and conference sponsorship opportunities are available, as well.

The record industry is a 12.3 billion dollar industry and each year thousands make their attempts at stardom in this lucrative business. Most find that is very difficult, at best. The few that are successful will more than likely be taken advantage of by unscrupulous managers, lawyers and record executives. The "Making Millions, Making Music" weekend, which will also include guest A&R and other invited music business representatives, is designed to bring top industry knowledge to those who are interested in pursuing their dreams in the music industry. "How do I find the right manager? How much money can I make? Who should I send my demo to? How do I get in touch with record companies, producers, entertainment attorneys, and publishing companies? What should I know about contracts? How do I build a recording budget? What does it take to get reviewed in a magazine or interviewed on the radio?" These are but some of the questions that seminar participants will get answers to at "Making Millions, Making Music." Kashif presents powerful and easy lessons for success in the music business. The "shoot-from-the-hip" educational event offers practical solutions to the problems that aspiring and professional songwriters, artists, producers and music entrepreneurs face on a day-to-day basis.

As well, a local talent search contest will take place during the weekend's activities. The first-place contest winner will have a single produced and released by Brooklyn Boy Records (Kashif's label). There will also be top prizes for second, third and fourth places.

Along with Kashif is featured publicity workshop leader, PJ Grimes, who will share her industry insider expertise as a member of the media and noted marketing and promotions expert. She'll show "Making Millions, Making Music" participants how to create, implement, and maintain a high-impact, low-cost, Earth-friendlier publicity campaign, what to look for in hiring a publicist or publicity firm and give tips and resources for cruising and using the Internet for exposure success.

A recent Airplay International "Trailblazer Award" winner and the former host of "Take Note!" radio show on AM 1000 KCEO, Grimes is the arts & entertainment editor for Encinitas-based weekly newspaper, "The Beach News," a commercial radio show producer/head writer for 95.7 KUPR-FM's "Gelder's Global Gig...Music for the Planet," publisher/editor of "ArtSmarts," an international newsletter (print & on-line versions) and a nationally and locally-published freelance writer.

Infopreneur Grimes is also the owner of the Vista-based Communications agency, Imagination Station, which provides publishing, consulting, training, and educational workshops for the performing, literary and visual arts. Over the years, she has worked directly with or consulted with numerous projects and individuals, from entertainment to social services to education to high-tech, including the Jackson Browne/La Penca Tour, Grammy winner and John Tesh bandmate, Charlie Bisharet, Earth Day, San Diego Women in the Arts, Bark Buddies and others.

As well, Grimes is the co-author/editor/publisher of the soon-to-be-released "Backstage Gourmet Cookbooks (and co-founder/host of the on-line "Backstage Gourmet Cafe" interactive Web site) as well as author of other sourcebooks, including: "Music Media ConneXtion: How to Plug Into the Press for Exposure Success", "The Eco-Networker Directory" and "The San Diego Eco-Networker Directory".

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10TH ANNUAL CAJUN AND ZYDECO FESTIVAL

By Cindy Dumas

For those who enjoy the real roots of music, that is, New Orleans Cajun and Zydeco, the weather was just right to usher in the 10th Annual Southern California Cajun & Zydeco Festival at Rainbow Lagoon in Long Beach this past June 1st and 2nd.

After three years of trying to make this weekend venture, I was thrilled to finally stake my territory and bake in the warm sunshine. With drink in hand, fresh boiled and spicy crawfish (those Louisiana caterers had everyone coming back for more) I was ready to sit back and enjoy the Cajun and Zydeco bands that were slated for the day. New Orleans is a one of kind place and this festival was the next best thing to being there and experiencing the culture and music of the people.

What do the diatonic accordion, fiddle and triangle have in common? Cajun music, that's what. Cajun music has been influenced by Country & Western, Afro-American and Swing and Bluegrass, while Zydeco is Cajun's counterpart, blending R & B, Blues and Jazz.

Among this years line up were C.J. Chenier & the Red Hot Louisiana Band, The Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band, Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie, Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys.

C.J. Chenier (a personal favorite) is the son of the late Clifton Chenier who was known as "King of Zydeco". C.J. has perfected his style of Zydeco and incorporated his talent on the saxophone. The band is tight and together they produce just the right sound. Geno Delafosse prefers the R & B side of Zydeco bridging the gap between Cajun and Zydeco. Delafosse, a native of Eunice, Louisiana, at a mere 25 years old is already making his mark in Zydeco. He has boundless energy and his band, French Rockin' Boogie is very dynamic. Steve Riley, who attended high school with Geno Delafosse (yes, it is a small world) sustains his roots in traditional Cajun sounds incorporating his accordion and fiddle playing. With boyish good looks he has what I call charming stage personality. The Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band features Michael Doucet (noted band leader for Beausoleil),

Marc Savoy who has maintained the traditional roots of this music though styles are continually changing, and Ann Savoy who is the author of a book on Cajun and Creole music.

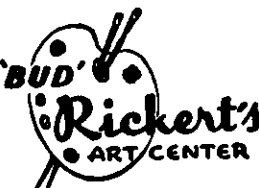
There were plenty of family activities for those who wanted to be more actively involved, and from what I observed there were plenty of participants. Dance lessons and workshops in Cajun Two-Step and Waltz, contemporary Cajun Jig, the Creole Zydeco and Jitterbug, Harlem Shuffle and the Pony Step were offered. And, if you always wanted to play the rubboard but didn't know how, this was your big chance to get firsthand instruction. Lessons were also given on the fiddle and accordion. Comprehensive Child Development, a Long Beach non-profit child care organization conducted a number of festivities for the little ones, including face painting, costume making, and a children's Mardi Gras parade.

A big thank you to Franklin Zawacki and Cajun Music Ltd. for producing yet another year of the Southern California Cajun & Zydeco Festival, and also to Comprehensive Child Development for their assistance.

If you didn't have an opportunity to attend the Cajun & Zydeco Festival don't fret, just plan ahead now for next year!

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Mem Shannon: New Orleans Cab Driver and Boogie Man

By Jay Egenes

Robert Alexander -- Playing to Win

An interview by
Willard Manus

The road to the top of the blues heap is full of obstacles, blind alleys and dangerous twists. Robert Alexander -- he prefers to be called by his last name alone -- has been climbing that hill for 25 years. His path has taken him from California to Chicago to Holland and back, with lots of zigzags along the way, and while he's still a great distance from the peaks, he is at least within sight of them.

Plenty of blues men have traveled that route and seen the heights, only to fall by the wayside before achieving their dream. Fame comes only to a few. Alexander lives with that knowledge but the realization hasn't blunted his drive to succeed; if anything it has made him more determined to keep fighting to break through and be recognized for the gifted artist he is.

What's helping his cause is the release in Europe of his first CD, "Alexander -- Play to Win." Recorded in Holland and issued on the CRS label, "Play to Win" has been a bestseller on the continent and has been attracting the interest of booking agents and music companies here. Alexander's band has been signed to appear at the JVC Jazz Festival and at the NAMM convention in Nashville this summer and can be seen locally at Pepper's in Rancho Cucamonga.

This isn't the first time Alexander has worked the local club circuit. After graduating from Alta Loma High School, he joined Rod Piazza's blues band; that association lasted seven years, well into the Mighty Flyers era. Alexander and Piazza still remain friends to this day. Alexander was even married to another member of the band, Honey, the keyboardist.

When Alexander finally split from the Mighty Flyers, he and Honey formed their own trio and achieved a measure of success. When the marriage dissolved, Alexander hit the road and headed to the blues mecca, Chicago, where he scuffled for some time before meeting the man who became his mentor and inspiration.

Louis Myers is a name some blues aficionados will know. Certainly every blues musician in Chicago knew who he was -- and held

him in awe. "He was, quite simply, the best," is how Alexander described him in a recent interview. "He never got the public recognition he should have -- and was never recorded properly -- but he was the king, an artist and an innovator who played the blues with a purity, integrity and power that can only be called religious. When he walked into a club, even players like Buddy Guy and Little Walter would start shaking, because they knew what an incredible talent he had."

Myers, who was black and older, took a liking to Alexander's work on the guitar. He also appreciated his songwriting gifts and his skill as an arranger. "At the time I was living in a cheap boardinghouse on Chicago's south side," Alexander recalled. "One day Louis came round and said it was too dangerous a place for a young white guy. He took me home and moved me into his house with his family and adopted me as a son."

At that time Myers was fronting a band called the Aces (Dave Myers and Dave Below were the other members). In Alexander's opinion, the Aces was the best blues band ever. "I've got the private tapes to prove it too," he said. "Some day I'll do something with them and the world will see just how good Aces was, far better than anything the band ever put down on vinyl."

Alexander not only player in the Aces but joined Myers on gigs with the likes of Willie Dixon, Odie Payne Jr., Big Moose Walker, Joe Carter, Johnny Drummer and many others. Through Myers Alexander also came into contact with such Hall of Famers as Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

"The thing about Louis was that though he was all fire on stage, in person he was courteous, quiet and gentlemanly. If you were for real, he loved you. If you were a phony, or someone who was selling the blues out, he had no use for you. He also believed in helping people. 'If you don't give something to others, you'll end up with nothing,' he always said. 'And if you want to be successful in what you play, you must tell a story. It's not about the notes, it's how you feel right now. The blues is how you tell the story.'"

Because the Aces never made it to the big time, Alexander started spending time in Europe to supplement his income. He found his way to

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the BLUES NEWS

Tell the truth. Have a sense of humor. When in doubt, funk. These three phrases capture the feeling of Mem Shannon's Friday, June 14, show at La Vida Roadhouse, a/k/a Cantina La Vida.

Shannon opened with the funky "I'm the Boogie Man", and kept the funk coming all night. Although clearly in the blues tradition, much of Shannon's material has funk and jazz underpinnings, which shouldn't be surprising in an artist from New Orleans. Some of the songs even contained hints of Second Line, the New Orleans style popularized by artists such as the Neville Brothers and Little Feat.

On "You Ain't Nothin' Nice" Shannon played big fat jazz chords over a funk beat. Shannon even turned Albert Collins and Stevie Ray Vaughan covers into funk pieces.

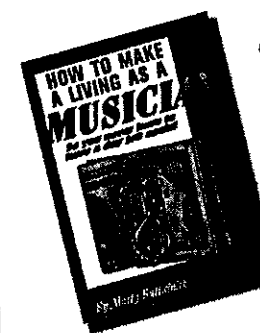
Mem Shannon is a tremendous songwriter who writes about his life with a great deal of both honesty and humor. "Me and My Bed", a tale of insomnia told to a swinging shuffle beat, was the first tune of the night to get some couples on the dance floor. "Taxicab Driver" is about Shannon's experiences, and bad luck, as a cab driver in the Crescent City.

"My Baby's Been Watching TV", ostensibly about the strange ideas Shannon's wife gets while watching Oprah Winfrey, is a humorous put-down of trash television. After he tells her not to be influenced by all of the junk she sees on TV, he goes on "She told me I needed therapy, she thinks somethin' wrong with me."

Although Shannon's greatest strength is his songwriting, he is also a gifted guitar player and talented singer. His band included a crowd-pleasing sax player who could really blow.

Touring in support of his first CD, "A Cab Driver's Blues" (Rykodisc), Shannon showed some real potential, overcoming some early technical problems to put on a solid, but low-energy, show.

Opening for Shannon was King Earnest, the crowd-pleaser with Chicago roots. King put on his usual high energy show, and unfortunately Shannon's show paled in comparison. When Shannon gets some more touring experience under his belt and learns to tear into his strong material with the energy and intensity of a performer like King Earnest, he could become a major force on the blues scene.



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PRINCE OF THE BLUES

by D. "Blues Dude" Bardos

Listen up! You ever hear blues guitar so sweet and so pure from the heart that you don't even dare go to the restroom for fear of missing just even a few minutes of that right-on pure bliss experience which tickles the blues G-spot of your soul?

Listen up! Did you ever think it were possible for the opening act to actually steal the show from -- The Godfather of Soul himself -- Mr. James Brown?

Listen up! Did you ever think it possible that O.J. and Heidi Fleice would shoot a golf video for hackers called "How to slice and hook your way to fame and fortune"? (Forget I said that.)

Guess who once performed at The Palace in Hollywood for a benefit for The Willie Dixon Blues Heaven Foundation and played with every emotion as well as DAMN NEAR EVERY INSTRUMENT? Guess who brought the audience to their only standing ovation that night and had every other musician backstage paying homage to this "Prince of The Blues" as he so calls himself? (Actually I prefer "New Allah of the Bluesmeisters").

Give up?

Want his name?

Tune in next month for the continuing... (just kidding). Allah's name is LUCKY PETERSON.

Ever seen or heard him?

Well, this Blues Dude was "lucky" enough to do just that (I promise I Won't take that grammatical liberty again).

Want to hear about him? Listen here....

Lucky, age 29, was born and raised above his father's New York blues club, the Governor's Inn. Shortly after learning how to walk, and after his parents would put him to bed early, little Lucky would

meander his way to the middle of the kitchen floor, right above the stage down below, and soak up his diapers as well as the sounds of the great blues artists who played the club -- Koko Taylor, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Junior Wells et al (the chances are pretty good that pre-Lucky during his fetus phase was doing some womb boogying then too).

Anyway, not long thereafter, Lucky began experimenting with the instruments downstairs. By age 3, he was playing the drums, the next year the organ and by age 5 he was actually on the Tonight Show playing keyboards.

Yes, really! And then at age 9 the Rolling Stones wanted him to replace Mick Taylor (No wait... that was Shuggie Otis... Forget the Rolling Stones thing). Anyhow, by the time he was a teenager, the bass, guitar, trumpet and French horn got to know Lucky as well. You could say Lucky rarely met an instrument he didn't like. And so by the age of 17, Lucky became the band leader for Little Milton and put in three more years as featured soloist with Bobby "Blue" Bland.

So where, you ask does this portrait of a young man go from here? No, not Disneyland! Try the studio and the road for a succession of 7 CDs in the realm of blues, jazz, funk and Gospel. Or as Lucky calls it. Blues with an edge.

ATTENTION! This is NOT less filling Blues Lite... with half the integrity and no caffeine. Nor, should I mention, is it the New Passion-Free Blues with extra long hair... all so readily available on the market today.

WARNING! The Music General warns, that Lucky Peterson may be hazardous to your Kenny Wayne Shepherd collection.

The essence of Lucky Peterson's genius is his ability through his vocals, keyboard and guitar playing to so effortlessly and beautifully convey the pure emotion of the song straight to the very heart of your soul. Lucky possesses the same sense of articulation, timing and phrasing that the great guitar masters had... Freddie King, Albert Collins and you know the others. Lucky's guitar playing contains textbook examples of how to effectively construct solos which express both extreme LOGIC and PASSION. Whereas many of today's modern blues players can play the notes, very few have the God given ability to create music and solos which incorporate the same qualities that those of a great novel, or movie have: tension, dynamics, logic and passion.

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Blind Melon's, 710 Garnet Ave., Pacific Beach
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The Cannibal Bar 3999 Mission Blvd.,
Mission Beach (619) 488-1081
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The Tiki House, 1152 Garnet Ave., Pacific Beach
(619) 273-9734
Guitar Center
Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., Ocean Beach
(619) 222-6822 also at the North
County location

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CD REVIEW:

BOBBY LITTLE & THE COUNTS OF RHYTHM

BY WILLIAM SILGUERO

RONALD BLUSTER, BETTER KNOWN AS BOBBY LITTLE, HAS MADE HIS OWN PATH ALONG THE SORRY ROUTE OF BLUES MUSICIANS. INSTEAD OF LEAVING HIS RURAL ROOTS BEHIND FOR THE BIG CITY, LIKE SO MANY ARTISTS, LITTLE DID JUST THE OPPOSITE. HE BEGAN HIS MUSICAL CAREER IN THE BAY AREA OF CALIFORNIA, SINGING DOO WOP, THEN MIGRATED TO CHICAGO'S WEST SIDE WHERE HIS MUSICAL DIRECTION TOOK SHAPE, THEN SETTLING IN THE DELTA OF CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI, WHERE HE IS NOW PERFORMING.

LITTLE'S SELF TITLED CD, "BOBBY LITTLE" FEATURES NINE SONGS THAT WILL SIMPLY MAKE YOU WANNA SHAKE. "TEARS I CRIED" IS A CLASSIC SLOW BLUES TUNE WITH THE FEELING OF HOWLIN' WOLF. "YOU'VE BEEN CHEATIN'" HAS A BASS LINE THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO TAKE THE TOP DOWN OFF YOUR CAR AND DRIVE TO VEGAS. "THE COUNTS OF RHYTHM" HAS A LOT OF TALENTED LICKS, BUT IS THE ONLY SONG ON THE CD THAT NEEDS A DIFFERENT ENGINEER. THE SONG "I-55" FEATURES AL ROLLUG, RHYTHM GUITAR PLAYER WHO HOLDS THE SONG WITH BEBOP STROKES AND BILL GIBSON, WHO PLAYS A HARMONICA LIKE SOME OF THE GREAT PLAYERS IN OUR LOCAL AREA. ON "LAST LAUGH" BOBBY LITTLE PLAYS WITH A SOUND THAT TELLS YOU THE CARNIVAL IS COMIN' TO TOWN. THE GROOVE AND VOCALS/LYRICS ARE A FUNKY BLUES RHYTHM THAT WILL BE FAVORED BY ALL. IT MAKES YOU SMILE WHEN YOU HEAR IT.

BOBBY LITTLE IS BACKED BY THE COUNTS OF RHYTHM, CONSISTING OF BASS PLAYER, CARL SHANKLE, WHO EXECUTES HIS PERFORMANCE WITH LITTLE, AND SEAN COSTELLO ON RHYTHM LEAD GUITAR AND BILL GIBSON ON HARMONICA.

OVERALL THE CD IS ONE TO PUT AN YOUR LIST AND LET'S HOPE ONE DAY BOBBY LITTLE AND HIS BAND PLAY THIS AREA.

Lucky Peterson (Cont. from page 10)

Of his 7 CDs, all of which are recommended two stand out as essentials for anyone's blues collection 1992's "I'm Ready" and 1993's "Beyond Cool", with the Memphis Horns. "Beyond Cool" has some textbook guitar solos but nearly every tune has one or more just perfect keyboard tracks from Lucky as well. And when you listen to the delicious recipe of Lucky's beautiful guitar playing sprinkled so delicately over his soulful vocals and blended so smoothly with his sweet keyboard playing, I'm telling y'all it's the perfect commercial for Michelob beer, "It doesn't get any better than this." Listen to the songs "Count on Me" and "Beyond Cool" and tell me if Allah hasn't taken you to the Blues Mecca.

Says John Snyder, the Producer of his record, "Never have I seen more music flow from one human so consistently over such a long period of time as I was lucky enough to witness those weeks in June and July, 1993. [This record] is political, pointed, serious, funny, exhilarating and jammed. It might even give you a heart attack."

Lucky these days is touring around with a 12-piece ensemble, including a brass section he calls "The Sugar Free Horns": Sylvester Polk and Dan "Boney" Fields on trumpet, Bill Eden on tenor and baritone sax, Johnny Cotton on trombone and a couple of female background vocalists for some added spice. When you see Lucky play live, as he moves in and out of traditional blues, r&b and funk one immediately realizes that Lucky is not afraid to mix it up in

the ring. Lucky might just get plain bored with playing only straight ahead blues, probably because he's so damn good at it. If he were a fighter, they'd say he was mostly Ali with a bit of Tyson. His live shows are part circus, part sweet science of blues and sometimes just plain brute force hitting you all upside your head.

Says Lucky, "I'm never going to stop playing the blues, but I'm not afraid to take some chances with it. It's a great music but it just doesn't get a lot of exposure. If blues was being played on the radio, people would be exposed to it and they would love it," he says. "But there's not much I can do about that. All I can do is keep playing blues, adding this and adding that so people will pick it up and hear what blues sounds like today."

A couple of months ago Lucky came down to San Diego and ripped the roof off of Blind Melon's in Solana Beach. If you're ever in this neck of the woods, the blues is to Blind Melon's as what baseball is to Dodger Stadium (except the beers cheaper at Blind Melon's). The pictures on the wall of the Blues artists who have played there tell it all.

So I ran into Lucky and (after knocking him over) I asked him, "What advice would you give to the Blues musicians out there today?"

He left me and San Diego with these words: "Keep practicing, keep listening to the blues, keep listening to Albert Collins, Albert King and Johnny Clyde Copeland, be sincere and... buy my records!"



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History of the Blues

(Cont. from page 4)

warnings (I'll take Southern Cal's earthquakes any day), in a quaint little blues club called Bourbon Street Blues and Boogie Bar. A musician by the name of Roger "Hurricane" Wilson was playing a few sets that night and it was nice to hear a roomful of blues cranking in Nashville.

Last but not least, my most humbling experience took place in Hermitage, Tennessee where I stayed with a friend. The area in Hermitage while being the birthplace of Andrew Jackson, is also surrounded by fairly new housing tracts. I noticed a grove of trees from my bedroom window one day and asked why it was left there. As it turned out the contractors had purposely built around the area and I was amazed to find out that this particular grove of trees was the resting place of five slave graves, some with worn and weathered headstones dating back to the 1800s. At first it seemed like Poltergeist revisited, but as I walked around the area I could feel myself catapulted back in time to the Old South and I wondered then who these individuals were and what their lives must have been like. I walked alone out there while my friends lingered amidst the grove boundaries gawking through the trees. They had heard stories that many of the slave graves in the South were haunted due to the suffrage and oppression. However, for me this was an extremely spiritual experience, one in which I could pay my respects to several human beings who paved the way for the rest of us, in essence literally living out the blues...and the rest is history.

Next month History of the Blues returns to its regular format.

Robert Alexander

(Cont. from page 8)

Amsterdam and made a psychic connection with that city, finding it "free and open and energetic, a good place for a blues man. I also liked it that another of my heroes and influences, John Lennon, did stuff there early on." The kid from Rancho Cucamonga ended up spending 7 - 10 months in Amsterdam every year for half a decade. "I didn't play only blues in Europe, but bluegrass, rock, jazz, whatever came my way. And I kept writing all the while, because like Louis said, the blues is in the story."

Six of the ten songs on "Play to Win" are Alexander originals but the musicians backing him aren't the ones you'll see in his present band when you catch it at such local clubs as Pepper's. Michael Dohony (drummer), Don Preston (guitar) and Gerald Johnson (bass) make up the current personnel. "All of them sing too, in world-class fashion," Alexander stated proudly.

Alexander feels he is walking in Louis Myers' footsteps. "Before he died he passed his beloved blond Gibson 335 that he played and recorded with for 25 years on to me and asked me to carry on and not let him or the blues down. That's exactly what I'm trying to do."

If a magnificent artist like Louis Myers didn't make it to the top, there's no saying Alexander will get there either. Nothing's for sure, but my gut feeling is that if Alexander gets a break or two, he will make the blues world sit up and take notice.

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the BLUES NEWS

FAREWELL JOHNNY.....

The music world was saddened in the month of May by the surprising death of Johnny "Guitar" Watson, who was part of the second generation of Texas-born blues guitarists. Influenced by T-Bone Walker and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Watson was performing in Yokohama, Japan when he suffered an apparent heart attack.

Raised in Houston, Watson grew up with the likes of Albert Collins and Johnny Copeland. He left Houston at age 15 and headed to the West Coast settling in Los Angeles. There he worked with Chuck Higgins and the Mellowtones playing piano for the band.

In 1951, Watson formed his own band and a few years later signed a record deal with the Federal Label. He billed himself as Young John Watson, adopting the nickname "Guitar" when he switched labels and moved over to Modern in 1955. At this time he worked with the Maxwell Davis Orchestra and released one of his great songs, "Those Lonely, Lonely Nights". The release went to number 10 on the R & B charts in 1955.

The guitar acrobatics of Guitar Slim were an important influence on Watson. The two occasionally toured together, developing an act full of energy and power. Watson displayed flashy moves like playing the guitar behind his back and sometimes wandered into the audience while performing a solo. Jimmy Hendrix once noted that Johnny "Guitar" Watson and Guitar Slim were two of his main influences.

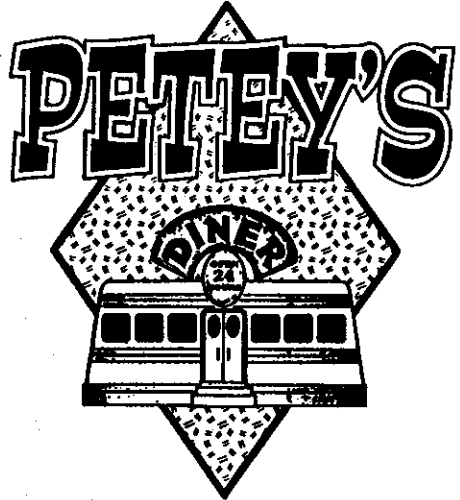
Changing his record label yet a third time in 1961, Watson went over to King where his single, "Cuttin In" reached number 6 on the R & B charts in 1962. In the 60's he also had two other records on the charts, "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and "Nobody". He recorded both songs with Larry Williams.

In the 1970's Watson took a step away from the blues, incidentally, enjoying his greatest chart success. "A Real Mother for Ya" made it to number 5 in 1977. He experimented with disco and funk landing 14 singles on the charts.

Retired from performing for many years he had in recent years begun touring again. He will be missed, but not forgotten.

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Fri. July 5th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. July 6th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. July 10th	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. July 11th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. July 12th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. July 13th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. July 17th	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. July 18th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. July 19th	"JAB Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. July 20th	"JAB Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. July 24th	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. July 25th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. July 26th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. July 27th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. July 31st	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00



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