

BIG CITY Rhythm & BLUES

REVIEWS

SHEMOKIA COPELAND

Done Come Too Far
Alligator Records

The soulful and insightful Copeland always seems to have her finger on the pulse of what's happening on the scene. More specifically, she zeroes in on personal experiences and societal subject matter much of her audience is going through. And she delivers it with honesty and a sense of historical perspective. "Done Come Too Far" is the latest in a trilogy of socially conscious releases that began with the 2018 album "America's Child" and followed with the Grammy-nominated 2020 "Uncivil War."

Copeland, the daughter of famed Texas bluesman Johnny Copeland, shows all sides of her personality with this latest venture. She can be quite serious on many topics, but can also adopt a lighter and downright humorous tone when inspired as well. You get all that and more here. Producer, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter Will Kimbrough is back and brings his generous hand and creative spirit to the proceedings. "Too Far To Be Gone" addresses the state of civil rights in the USA today. It's framed by stories about crucial leaders in the movement such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. Guest Sonny Landreth plays some wicked slide guitar. "Pink Turns to Red" is another powerful statement ripped from today's headlines. Copeland sings with urgency about senseless school shootings and the toll it takes on us all. Guest Kenny Brown coun-



ters the song's paths with his stinging guitar work. "The Talk" is Copeland at her most vulnerable and frank. In her real-life role as a parent, she sings to her son about dealing with the police and being black in America. She states, "You might do nothing wrong, but in a moment you'll be gone...got to have The Talk!" CRT opposition is damned, "Gullah Geechee" touches on current descendants of West and Central African slaves that were brought years ago to North Carolina, South Carolina and the southern east coast of the United States. It's a part of history that many may not know, but these descendants of slaves still exist and thrive in these regions. "Why Why Why" puts the spotlight on staying truthful and earnest in a relationship. Copeland is at her most authentic and revelatory here. "Fried Catfish and Bibles" is just a fun and swampy slice of the South. Andre Michot's festive accordion, Cedric Watson's fiddle and Washboard Chaz's washboard technique combine to transport you back to New Orleans. "Done Come Too Far" is sort of an addendum to the album opener, with a Mississippi Hill Country feel via Cedric Burnside and guitarist Brown. The song percolates with passion and righteous anger regarding the need to keep making strides for people of color as well as all folks. The tag

line, "If you think we're stopping, you got it wrong" was never more on time! "Barefoot in Heaven" is a song written by Ray Wylie Hubbard and it features Kimbrough's smooth slide guitar. Gospel never sounded so good. "Fell in Love With a Honky" is just about what the song says. Loosely based on real world experience, it's a country song that is downright hilarious. It's a total about face from a number of the more textured and emotionally potent songs on the album. However, Copeland understands the importance of comic relief, and this is as good as it gets! Having said that, "The Dolls are Sleeping" was really difficult for this reviewer to listen to. Not that it's an inferior song. Quite the contrary! It's an extremely eloquent and solid statement on child molestation and abuse. It's just that it's a tough subject and one that is hard to comprehend. But Copeland calls attention to it in a well-crafted manner and it should focus a ton of eyes and ears on the problem. "Dumb it Down" falls somewhere between humor, sarcasm and a cautionary tale. It seems like a message Copeland is sending to those that might oppose the very thing in her music she is trying to accomplish. The singer and activist has always raised the bar with her socially observant lyrical concepts. That's just the thing the provocateurs in this song would oppose. Amidst a funky beat she sings the hook, "Dumb it down, dumb it down, dumb it down, baby don't get smart, dumb it down, dumb it down, dumb it down pretend that it's art.

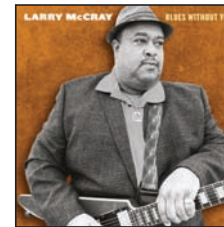
Dumb it down, dumb it down, dumb it down don't get all broke down....if you wanna move on up, you've got to dumb it down." The leader concludes the album with a cover of one of her father's best mid-tempo blues jams, "Nobody But You." It's just a feel-good kind of tune that spotlights the singer's ample blues chops and Kimbrough's guitar prowess. —Eric Harabadian

LARRY MCCRAY *Blues Without You* KTBA Records

Guitarist/singer/songwriter Larry McCray grew up on a farm in Magnolia, Arkansas before moving with his family to Saginaw, Michigan at the age of twelve. He spent about ten years working a General Motors assembly line before devoting full time to his career. *Blues Without You* is his tenth release, his last being 2015's *The Gibson Sessions*. As co-producer Joe Bonamassa eloquently states on the CD liner notes, "Larry McCray is the last of the great blues shouters from the Rust Belt. Larry is among the greats. It's now up to the world to rediscover him."

Blues Without You contains eleven original songs, mostly written by McCray and various co-writers, the lone cover being Albert King's "Roadhouse Blues", a highlight among highlights on this superb album. The autobiographical "Arkansas" starts things off, as Larry tells his story atop a Bo Diddley beat amid a tight horn chart and drenched in B3 organ provided by Stevie Ray

Vaughan vet Reese Wynans. The ballad "Down To The Bottom" features the slide guitar of Gov't Mule/Allman Brother Warren Haynes. Actually,



McCray's version of the popular Haynes composition "Soul Shine" came out a year before the Allmans recorded it, from Larry's 1993 album *Delta Hurricane*. Joanna Connor guests on "Breaking News" and Joe Bonamassa is featured on "Mr. Easy". In fact, Bonamassa plays guitar along with other co-producer Josh Smith throughout the session. But, guests or no guests, this is clearly Larry's show. His gut bucket vocals and on point guitar solos, clearly influenced by the three Kings (B.B., Albert and Freddie), confidently carries the entire album. Stylistically the album reflects McCray's broad taste in music but never strays from soul and blues. Lyrically the songs can seem personal and are always heartfelt. McCray states in the CD notes that due to the pandemic, it was the first time he had a chance to take a break and reflect on his life, and that is well apparent in the songs and his emotive singing. Just a great effort all around, a fully realized project by one of the finest and nicest musicians in the world. —Bob Montealeone

BARRY & FRIENDS AT GREASELAND STUDIOS

Self Produced

A very special music project recently took place at the award-winning recording studio in California known as Greaseland Studios. Barry & Friends consists of Dan Einar on bass, Joe Mockus on drums, Don Christian on guitar, Les Duman on bari sax and bandleader Barry Walker on vocals, guitar and harmonica. The original music and lyrics by Barry Walker are straight down the middle for today's society and they strike a nerve



with listeners of all ages and all walks of life.

Right out of the gate is Barry Walker's original "Nothing More to Share" with a cool driving bari sax line by Les Duman that complements a really fun and solid groove laid down by Dan-Einar and Joe Mockus.

Walker's vocals are just right for this message of relationship trials and tribulations. "You didn't make me any promises, Maybe I would have stayed, Nothing more you can really give her, Nothing more to share," accompanied by a nice crisp guitar solo in the middle by Don Christian.

Track two is a story that rings true to so many musicians out there doing what they love to do.

"Gypsy Life for Me" tells the story of a musician who is more comfortable being on the road going from gig to gig than he is at home. Walter sings a convincing message "it's an obsession, it's calling me and that's my confession, there's no doubt, it's the gypsy life for me." Great songwriting and message delivery by Walter. You get the feeling that he has lived such a life.

On the next track titled "Stories That You Tell" is something that no one wants to hear from their partner in the middle of the night. "Talkin' in your sleep but not about me, what did I do? you know that's not my name, I'm feeling used." The listener can only feel one thing: "Wow, now that's the blues!"

Track four is a cure for the previous, called "Sometimes It Works out." Walter makes you believe how sincere one can be to their partner when he sings "What can I do to make your dreams come true. Chase away your blues."

On track five the band plays a great tribute to Ray Charles with all the right ingredients on Ray's classic "Hallelujah, I Love Her So." This is the only cover song on the project and they really do it justice with great musicianship throughout.

Closing out this great musical journey is the heartfelt song "What About Me". Walter's vocals pull at your emotions with a message that is real in today's society, telling us about a homeless veteran and the challenges he faces day to day: "With no address, who can I be?" These haunting lyrics pretty much sums it up and makes you really think about what's going on out there on the streets today.

This project delivers the complete package. Great songwriting by Barry Walter with great vocal delivery, all around great musicianship throughout the band and project deliv-

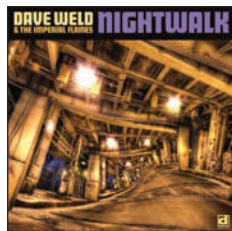
ered by seasoned veteran musicians who you can clearly tell, love what they are doing. Recorded and mixed by both Barry Walter and Greaseland studio owner, Christoffer "Kid" Andersen, this is a great musical gem to start out 2022 for all to enjoy.

Thank you Barry & Friends for sharing your passion with us. Great work!—**Randy and Michele, Oxford Entertainment**

DAVE WELD & THE IMPERIAL FLAMES *Nightwalk*

Delmark Records

Guitarist/singer/songwriter Dave Weld was born and raised in Chicago and has been deeply involved in the city's historic blues scene since he was a young lad. Cutting his



teeth in the house band on the west side of the city at Sweet Pea's with members of Hound Dog Taylor's band before moving to the 1815 Club, after a year, sharing the stage with Otis Rush, Hubert Sumlin, Detroit Junior, Eddie Shaw, and especially slide master J.B. Hutto, who mentored the young Weld. He learned from the best, and has carried on the tradition ever since. He was a member of the renowned group Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials from the late 70s until 1988, eventually touring the world as one of Alligator Records' signature acts. He formed his own band, the Imperial Flames, shortly after, releasing albums on Earwig Records as well as on the Blue Sting label. 2022's *Nightwalk* is his third release for the respected Delmark Records and is chock full of house rockin',

no holds barred, Chicago blues with a capital "B." Ten of the twelve songs are co-written by Weld and co-lead vocalist Monica Myhre. The other two numbers are from Dave's former mentor J.B. Hutto, "Now She's Gone" and "Loving You" which rolls (pun intended) into Bukka White's classic "Jelly Roll Blues." Weld and Myhre alternate lead vocals throughout the session, lending a nice contrast to the listening experience. Both are passionate

singers. (Drummer Jeff Taylor sings "Hit By the 103" by the way.) The opener, "Mary Who," is built on a repetitious riff, where Weld tells a harrowing tale in vivid detail about a murderous pimp and his victims. This track, however stunning, is an outlier compared to the rest of the album, as most of the songs adhere to traditional blues structure. The sounds are all organic: great guitar, B3 and drum tones, Nashville-based producer Tom Hambridge has done a great job alongside recording engineer Brian Leech. Horns pop up throughout the album, Billy Branch plays some nice harp on "Now She's Gone" and the rhythm section of Taylor and bassist Kenny Pickens are constantly locked in. But the focus of the project is most definitely the wild and untamed slide guitar excursions of Dave Weld.—**Bob Monteleone**

THE PHANTOM BLUES BAND *Blues for Breakfast*

Little Village

Back in the early '90s our national treasure, Taj Mahal, was in desperate need of a legitimate blues band. It must have been one of those moments where all the stars aligned, as the assemblage of all the right ingredients fell comfortably into place. Mike Finnigan (keyboards), Johnny Lee Schell (guitar), Tony Braunagel (drums), Larry Fulcher (bass), Joe

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Sublett (saxophone), Les Lovitt (trumpet) and Jim Pugh (piano and organ) heeded the call and The Phantom Blues Band was born.

Several albums with Taj Mahal and some Grammy and W.C. Handy Blues awards in their own right later, this ensemble has created a legacy on the L.A. sideman and studio circuit that is akin to a modern-day Wrecking Crew. Unfortunately, the ubiquitous keyboardist Finnegan recently passed away and this current album was recorded and dedicated to him. And it is an unabashedly upbeat and fitting tribute that the celebrated keyboardist would undoubtedly approve of and appreciate.

The primary intent of the dozen tunes here is to showcase the band in their natural habitat and musical



milieu. Blues, soul and swing are the order of the day and they cover the classics and deeper cuts like no other. Sam & Dave's "I Take What I Want" gets a streamlined treatment by way of Schell and Fulcher's smooth vocal harmonies. It's a joyous vibe set to a gospel-infused boogie beat. "Get Involved" couldn't be timelier, with its message of a need for change and the urgency to vote. It's got a Staple Singers feel to it as well. Politics never sounded so good! Muddy Waters' "She's Into Something" keeps that upbeat vibe engaged by way of a New Orleans-flavored rumba. The tune has a hook the size of a deuce-and-a-quarter, with a mid-section swing part that will really grab you. The classic Curtis Mayfield track "Move On Up" retains all the spirit of the original, but is processed through

the filter of Bob Marley. Guest Ruthie Foster's stellar backing vocals and a superb horn arrangement make this one a highlight. Perhaps one of Finnigan's last recordings, he shines on the jazzy "Ok, I Admit It." His vocals are relaxed and his legendary organ work is on full display. Keeping that soul ballad feel intact, "Still Be Friends" harbors a really nice sentiment by Schell that'll truly put you in a good mood. It's a simple message of love and caring uplifted by some killer sax work by Sublett. "Country Boy" is another Schell vocal spotlight where he is joined by frequent collaborator and album guest Bonnie Raitt. It's a smooth, easygoing feel, with effortless call and response by the two. Sam Cooke's "Laughin' and Clownin'" never sounded so good delivered by another legendary guest vocalist Curtis Salgado. Pugh's subtle and percolating organ fills deftly set the lyrics and Salgado's harmonica work aflame. Jimmy McCracklin's "Stepping Up in Class" addresses a relationship in need of an upgrade. A great groove, solid horns and a catchy hook are a nice combo here. Salgado returns for another guest star turn on "I Know You Don't Love Me." He's really in his element with those testifying type songs and this one really swings as well. The core of The Phantom Blues Band really come to the fore on the very funky "That's What Love Will Make You Do" and "Stuff You Gotta Watch." The latter finds Pugh doing his best Professor Longhair-type piano work on the vintage sounding rocker. All proceeds from the sales of this particular album are donated to the scholarship program at the Mike Finnigan School of Music in Salina, Kansas. Check out www.stiefeltheatre.org/school-of-music for more information. It would be money well spent!—**Eric Harabadian**

STRATCAT WILLIE & THE STRAYS

On a Hot Tin Roof

Self-produced 2022

Guitarist and songwriter Willie Hayes has been purveying the blues for over five decades. As influences he cites a litany of six string legends: B.B. King, Ronnie Earl, Johnny Winter, Mike Bloomfield, and T-Bone Walker. Building on their foundation, he has developed a jaunty, "let's party" musical format that has earned him a dependable following around the region of his New York State base.

"On a Hot Tin Roof," the band's sophomore effort, follows 2020's well received "On the Prowl." All twelve tracks were written by Willie. The band is composed of Willie's long time bass compadre John Wisor, sharing bass chores with Vinnie Burvee, and they are joined by the skilled Neal Massa on keyboards; percussion duty is split between Dave Salce and Dave Fiorini. Backing vocalists appear to good effect on several tracks, as do saxophonist Josh Cohen and trumpeter Rich Graiko.

The StratCat's liner notes proclaim his intent to celebrate at the waning of the Covid-19 pandemic (we hope!), and unsurprisingly the set commences with "Let's Have a Blues Party," all the participants contributing to a vibe remi-



niscent of a 1950s sock hop. (If you're not old enough to have been there, check out an old Frankie Avalon or Fabian movie or a video clip of American Bandstand.) The retro ambience continues with "Hot Tin Roof," introduced by a drum flurry

and sporting some twangy guitar a la Duane Eddy. "Let's Dance" shifts into shuffle mode, led by Willie's laid-back tenor vocal, and then "Way Too Fast" melds blues rock with jump blues.

Continuing to reflect Willie's apparent influences, the band next launches into "Redneck Woman" with guitar riffs mirroring John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival, although the song leans more toward the languid than the biting CCR style. The following three tracks forego horns and supporting vocals for some straight-ahead blues; especially appealing is the slow blues "Cryin'." Horns and vocalists reappear briefly on "My One True Love," and the set's only instrumental, "Mezcal," an instrumental with a Latin flavor, provides for Willie's guitar and Massa's organ to mesh nicely. A rockin' Chuck Berry-like tune, "Runnin' with the Strays," concludes the album on a zesty and danceable note.—**Steve Daniels**

HOROJO TRIO

Set the Record

Stony Plain 2022

Based in Ottawa, Canada, this blues power trio won the 2020 International Blues Challenge in the Band category, and its guitarist, JW Jones, won as Best Guitarist. Their first release does nothing to diminish their burgeoning acclaim. The two excellent musicians accompanying Jones are Jamie Holmes, who mans the drum kit, and keyboard artist Jeff Rogers. Rogers handles the vocal duties, with backing contributions by Jones and Holmes and, on two cuts, fellow Canadian bluesman Steve Strongman.

The sassy and zesty rocker "Man of Steel" opens the set with unalloyed bombast: "I'm your superhero, baby/Your man of steel/ Your midnight lander [rambler?]/Your high-light reel/Your back door

lover/Here to close the deal." Trust me, you will be snapping your fingers and stomping your feet just a few bars in. The upbeat groove continues with the shuffle "A Little Goes a Long Way," followed by the title track, which adds an element of syncopated funk. A slower shuffle, "Stay Crazy," mines the soul blues area and sports nice vocal harmonies.

Proving that a slow blues is well within their range, the trio excels on "The Night." Jones pro-



vides an emotive guitar introduction in tandem with Rogers on piano, and organ later appears to fill out the sound; it's a highlight of the set. The tempo revs up on "Hard As I Can," and "Running" affords Jones the spotlight to showcase his guitar prowess. Then comes "Ragman's Blues," my favorite number, with an irresistible beat and some very clever lyrics: "Sometimes I pet stray dogs/Sometimes I don't play to win/Sometimes I walk around the house stark naked/Answering the door with a grin." It had me grinning, too.

The entire set features outstanding singing by Rogers; perhaps the finest example is on "Give and Take," the vocal recalling the power and purity of the late Michael Ledbetter. That track is succeeded by the churning "Something You Should Know," on which Holmes distinguishes himself with dynamic drum propulsion. The closing number, "Real Deal," is a no-holds-barred, pedal-to-the-floor cut - until an unexpected but moving mid-song slow blues bridge, during which the singer declares "I want a happy ending"...and we

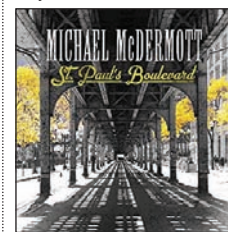
get it, as the song and this entire set accelerates to a zippy conclusion.—**Steve Daniels**

MICHAEL McDERMOTT

St. Paul's Boulevard

Rounder/Concord Records

Windy City-based singer/songwriter Michael McDermott has spent years, mostly in relative obscurity, expertly striking that difficult to achieve artistic balance between the personal and the universal and, lo & behold, does it once more on his latest album, recently issued on the Pauper Sky label. "Everyone has their own St. Paul's Boulevard, the place where we left pieces of our hearts, our innocence, where we suffered heartbreak, came to learn about shame, where we struggled to find our place in this world," says McDermott. "It's a place where we strived to nurture love and light in a darkened world. It's where some of us were permanently arrested in our development and our social and emotional intelligence." In addition to McDermott's invigorating guitar and piano work he is joined by co-producer Steven Gillis on drums, acoustic and electric bassist Matt Thompson, guitarist Grant Tye, violinist and occasional vocalist Heather Lynne Horton and keyboardist Vijay Tellis-Nayack. Additional musi-



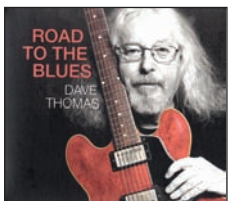
cians include Will Kimbrough on guitars, banjo and mandolin, John Deaderick and Danny Mitchell on piano and organ and David Grissom on guitars. Choice cuts include "Our Little Secret," a driving folk-rock that sounds like the soundtrack for somehow-restless days

and lust-filled nights with "Sick of This Town" with its CHUGGING folk-country bottom beat framing a purgative lyric to busting out of scenes that cage us in and the ruggedly optimistic "Where The Light Gets In." Other insightful gems include "Meet Me Halfway," that deals with a romantic reckoning set to the dance steps of Mr. Bojangles; an anthemic heartland rocker that pays tribute to Raymond Chandler's private-eye "Marlowe; the utterly artfully wistful "Paris" and the introspective title song where "none of the heroes around here have capes/ they're just talking in taverns or on fire escapes/or dance with their dreams behind the drapes." Five stars.—**Gary von Tersch**

DAVE THOMAS *Road to the Blues*

Blonde on Blonde Direct 2022

A self-taught harmonica and guitar player, Dave Thomas has been purveying the blues since the 1960s. With his own group or multiple other bands, he has traveled extensively, and has even been presented with a citation by the city of Cleveland, Ohio, for his blues efforts. His last album, 2020's "One



More Mile," was a reprise of some of his earlier efforts. "Road to the Blues" represents new work; it was co-produced with his long-time collaborator, Steve Jinks. Thomas handles all the lead vocals; Jinks plays bass and percussion. Completing the ensemble are saxophonist Phil Marshall, harmonicist Gareth Tucker, and pianist James Goodwin. Together they ramble through a set of thirteen tunes, all co-written by Thomas save for the closer, a cover of

Chuck Berry's "Memphis Tennessee."

To begin with the ending: the rendition of "Memphis Tennessee" is more introspective than Berry's rollicking, country-ish version. Thomas deploys to good effect his tenor vocal, which on all the tracks of this set is pleasant to the ear: slightly reedy, lacking in power, but soothing to the ear. One of the benefits of the number is the display of Thomas's guitar skills, because on most of the album he is content to forgo guitar solos and work cohesively with his bandmates.

There are a few ballads, a few slow blues, and no frenetic rockers. Of the shuffles, "Winnebago Dreaming" and the opening title track are particularly appealing. On the latter, Goodwin shows that he can really tickle and tinkle the ivories with aplomb and taste. "The Lady's Not for Turning" adds some funk, with Thomas's singing introducing it over just percolating bass and drums. The longest number of the set, "Another Girl," mines one of the two overriding themes of the album: love, requited or not, and travel, in music of either love or music. For example, on "Winnebago Dreaming: "They cruised into the sunset/Straight down Highway One/The Pacific Ocean glistened/Beneath the setting sun/Their future, it was fated/Time to have a little fun."

Much of the album is sedate, but not all...especially when John Thirkell and Michael Smith add trumpet and saxophone to three tunes. The core of the album is expressed in "Eye on the Money," which declares, apparently tongue-in-cheek, "Keep your eye on the money/Hands on the wheel/Put the band back together/Get that big, fat record deal." Based in Wales, and at this late stage of his career, that deal is unlikely to happen for Thomas. However, he

soon continues with "Memphis to Chicago/Got to play the blues/We may be getting old/But we got nothing left to lose/Listen to the soul of man/Listen to the blues." That's where this album is coming from, and it's a message to which all blues lovers can relate.—**Steve Daniels**

BOB MARGOLIN AND BOB CORRITORE *So Far*

Vizztone 2022

Here are two blues luminaries of impeccable credentials, cementing their long-time friendship with a new collaborative approach.

Margolin, guitarist in



Muddy Waters' band from 1973 to 1980, over the years has garnered thirteen Blues Music Award nominations and has won five BMAs: two as Guitarist of the Year, two for Acoustic Album, and another as Traditional Blues Male Artist. He is also an author and blues educator. Among his own nine BMA nominations, Corritore was winner in 2011 for Best Historical Blues Album, and he is renowned for his collaborations and recordings of, and with, multiple blues artists and for his own albums.

Both principals are most noted for their efforts in an electric quartet or quintet band format; this is their first acoustic outing together. Margolin composed seven of the songs, Corritore penned the one instrumental, and there are covers of several relatively obscure songs. Bob M. handles the vocals and sounds best when he adopts a "talking blues" approach.

Among the tracks to be savored is Margolin's "Outrage and Inrage," which showcases his skill on slide guitar and constitutes a particularly pleasant melding of guitar and harmonica. In his liner notes Bob M. reveals that he based his take on the song on "Terraplane Blues" by the legendary "King of the Delta Blues," Robert Johnson.

Corritore's instrumental number, "Salt River Stomp," finds him dishing out some delicious mouth harp licks, while Bob M. delivers a restrained but solid six string foundation; only problem here: the song is too brief! We want more! And we do receive a lot more deft harmonica playing throughout the set; for example, check out "One Hundred Hearts Later."

On two tracks, we are treated to the guest appearance of noted guitarist Jimmy Vivino. He and Bob M. play dual guitars, trade vocals, and then harmonize on a country-flavored cover of The Band's "It Makes No Difference," and the two guitars again blend well on the Bob M. original "Running Through High Water." Two of the cover tracks, "Broken Heart" and "Red Hot Kisses," represent the laid-back, soulful back porch country blues tradition. More up-tempo is the cover of "My Little Machine" by John Lee Williamson (Sonny Boy Williamson I)...and yes, of course, there is a Muddy Waters tune, "I Wanna Go Home," reminding us pleurably that Muddy began as a solo acoustic musician in his Mississippi home in the late 1930s and early 1940s.—**Steve Daniels**

ROLLING STONES *17" Singles 1963-1966*

ABCKO Records Box Set

As Nigel Williamson puts it at the outset of his well-researched, but too brief, liner notes: "The Rolling Stones have made

some of the greatest albums in the history of rock 'n' roll—yet for most of the first decade of the group's existence, it was the 45 rpm single that was all-important." The Stones became total masters of that art, releasing a string of memorable 45's during the 1960s that defined their era as well as serving to track the groups' shift from covers to original band compositions. Their initial single, from June, 1963, readily acknowledged their rhythm 'n' blues roots with nitty-gritty covers of both Chuck Berry's "Come On" and Muddy Waters' "I Want To Be Loved" with the following seventeen 45's (including three EP's) continuing the search for that elusive hit record—their follow-up single, "I Wanna Be Your Man," was a Lennon/McCartney gift while the mostly instrumental B-side, "Stoned," owes a lot to Booker T and the MG's "Green Onions." Up next was a 1964 EP that featured four covers of some of their favorite American songs, highlighted by the "beautiful slow belter" "You Better Move On" from Arthur Alexander's songbook.



Followed by a cover of Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away" that's dressed up with a Bo Diddley beat. Two singles down there is yet another 1964 EP that has five songs recorded at Chicago's fabled Chess Records—picks include the instrumental "2120 South Michigan Avenue" (the Chess studio's address) along with a pair of Chuck Berry covers—"Confessin' the Blues" and "Around And Around." (The third EP features six tracks recorded in London, Liverpool and Manchester and while the sound is

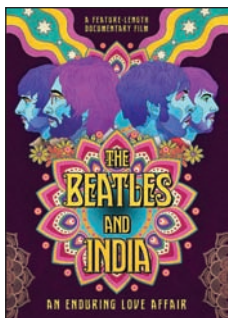
primitive it compensates in energy and excitement with particularly raw versions of Solomon Burke's "Everybody Needs Someone To Love," Otis Redding's "Pain In My Heart" and Nat King Cole's "Route 66.") I began this review with the first four singles and will conclude with the band's late-1965 final four 45's, all band originals—the 15th and 16th both lead off with two versions of "Get Off My Cloud" (the band's fifth consecutive number one in Britain) with the seventeenth, with "As Tears Go By" as the A-side, released as a US single in December 18, 1965. The 18th 45 is also a US release with "19th Nervous Breakdown"—the first Stones single to clock in at more than four minutes. In between, of course, are other early hits on the order of "Satisfaction," "The Last Time," "Heart of Stone," "Time Is On My Side" and "It's All Over Now." B-side obscurities abound—from "I'm All Right" and "The Under Assistant West Coast Promotion Man" (where are you George Sherlock?) to "Sad Day" (with Brian Jones on organ) and "Gotta Get Away." All in all, a chronologically comprehensive overview of the Stones' early career as pop chart hit-makers. All singles and EP's are in original sleeves (often picture) and the box also reveals a 32 page, image-laden booklet with fore-mentioned liners plus a set of five photo cards and an outsize poster. Well worth every penny or pound!—**Gary von Tersch**

THE BEATLES & INDIA MVD

Entertainment Group DVD

Filmed across India at all the sites of the mid-60's Beatles visits (Mumbai, New Delhi, Rishikesh and Dehradun), this 96-minute DVD is a certifiably uncommon, historical chronicle of the abiding, culture-bridging

love affair that resulted between the Beatles and India that began more than fifty years ago, changing the Fab Four from the world's most famous pop stars into multi-faceted pioneering musical artists. The *Magical Mystery Tour* as well as the death of their manager, Brian Epstein, was yet to come. An abundance of rare archival footage, recordings and photographs, onlooker accounts and perceptive comments keeps one's eyes wide open. Highlights are many—from a frank, never before aired, interview with ace test pilot Rustom Captain who flew the helicopter on the legendary flight over the Ganges seated between Maharishi and John Lennon when the latter was convinced that the holy man would “slip me the answer” and the international situation that developed when the KGB and CIA unexpectedly infiltrated the Maharishi's ashram to a riveting eye-witness account of an historic dinner party that brought George Harrison and Ravi Shankar together—forming a musical and personal relationship that would last for decades. And that's only



to cite a few. There is also a WIDESPREAD range of interviews with people who met the group on their Indian trips, most with their stories unheard until now. From journalists to musicians to teenage girls, each has a one-of-a-kind tale to tell. In the end, the Beatles left us with not just a collection of great

songs but also the reminder of a spoiled dream that concluded way too soon.—Gary von Tersch

LET'S THROW A ROCKIN' SOUL PARTY

Various Artists

Koko Mojo Records

SWEET DREAMS FOREVER

Patsy Cline/
Cowboy Copas/
Randy Hughes/
Hawkshaw
Hawkins

Atomical Records

The metamorphosis of sounds featured in volume four of *Dance Party* is derived from rhythm and blues music with a “New Breed” self-determinative proto-soul influence from the up-and-coming stars of the genre, circa 1957 through 1963, on a wide variety of labels. These recordings were the infancy of Tamla Motown and soul music with its direct messaging, generous outpouring of spirited warmth, unpredictability and prizing of the naked truth. Standout tracks include “Shop Around” by the Miracles (with “Smokey” Robinson), a live version of “The Nitty Gritty” by Shirley Ellis, Marvin Gaye's 1962 hit “Stubborn Kind of Fellow” and Little Jimmy Ray with “You Need To Fall In Love.” Lloyd Nolan leads affairs off here with his finger-popping song “I Don't know About You” and, honestly, things never let up with Ike and Tina Turner's “A Fool In Love,” the Drifters' “Rat Race,” the Five Keys “Girl You Better Stop,” Hank Ballard & The Midnighters' “The House On The Hill,” Sam Cooke's “Win Your Love For Me” and Eugene Church's “Without Soul.” Other favorites include Bobby Bennett's rocking dance number “The Boss Turn,” The Four Bars' impassioned commentary “What's on Your Mind,” an up-tempo recall of the classic doo-wopper “White Cliffs Of Dover” by The



Robins and the put-down epic “I Spend My Life Loving You.” Things come to a close with the easygoing dance number “The Cootie Snap” from the Vocaleers and the dream-



like “Sitting by The River” By Bernard Byers. All killer, no filler! One of the saddest days in the history of country music was March 5th, 1963 when Cowboy Copas, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Patsy Cline and Randy Hughes all perished in a plane crash returning to Nashville from Kansas City after playing a benefit concert. To make matters even worse, Jack Anglin, half of Johnny and Jack, had a haircut and set off for the funeral on March 8th but never made it—he was killed in a single-car accident en route, aged 46. *Sweet Dreams* features 29 mostly upbeat titles which are pre-rock 'n' roll boogie with a country beat along with a smidgen of rockabilly as 1950s music began changing, heralded by a generous sampling of some rarely-reissued salacious hillbilly boogie courtesy of Randy Hughes. One of the first country music artists to cross over into pop music, Patsy Cline has six tracks here—highlighted by her 1957 million seller “Walkin' After Midnight,” a great reading of tunesmith Harlan Howard's “When I Get Thru With You,” the heartbreak ballad “Crazy Dreams” and the rock 'n' rollin' “Gotta Lot Of Rhythm In My Soul.” Hawkshaw Hawkins, who was married to country

star Jean Shepard, was known for his rich, effortless vocals and music drawn from the blues, boogie and honky-tonk canon. He has six sides here with picks beginning with the spirited “Dog House Boogie,” a foot-stomping recall of Hank Williams' “Kaw Liga” and the hard-hitting “Shotgun Boogie.” Honky-Tonk singer Cowboy Copas got his big break in 1946 when his debut single for King, “Filipino Baby,” hit No. 3 on the country charts and he never looked back. He has seven tracks here that range from the novelty number “Hangman's Boogie” and the tale of a “Tennessee Flat-Top Guitar” to the exuberant “Settin' Flat on Ready” and the tropical-located “Blue Kimono.” And further licentious tunes from session guitarist Randy Hughes include “Tattooed Lady,” “Birthday Cake,” Tapping That Thing” and “It'll Feel So Good.” Enjoy!—Gary von Tersch

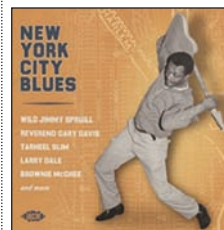
NEW YORK CITY BLUES

Various Artists

Ace Records

This 16 track project, that astoundingly closes with both parts of Bill Dogget's monster 45 single “Honky Tonk,” is an aural tie-in with the book *New York City Blues* by Larry Simon and edited by John Broven. It also serves a dual purpose—not only as an adjunct to the book but also to delineate an overview of the New York blues scene in all its vaunted variety from the post World War II years through its golden age into the 1960s. For the more contemporary crowd there is also a look at the city's 1980s-90s revival with author Simon's Killing Floor NYC Band backing many of the pioneering bluesmen. On our blues highway we move from the Piedmont country blues of Blind Boy “Step It Up And Go” Fuller to the street-tough sounds of Harlem-cured blues and

rhythm 'n' blues—typified by the likes of the opening title track by Larry Dale and his celebrated House Rockers, “Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee” by Stick McGhee and his Buddies, “Hard Times (The Slop)” by Noble “Thin Man” Watts and his Rhythm Sparks and Bob Gaddy channeling T-Bone Walker on “Stormy Monday Blues.” A real treat is the top-notch studio musicians employed, notably ace guitarists “Wild” Jimmy Spruill and Mickey “Guitar” Baker. Other favorites



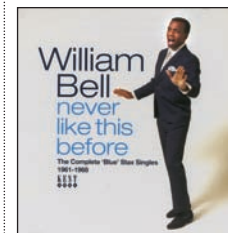
encompass John Hammond's version of “I Wish You Would,” with The Band's Robbie Robertson playing in the same ball-busting dynamic guitar style that fueled so much of Bob Dylan's early “electric” music, Dr. Horse's “Jack That Cat Was Clean,” Big Joe Turner's “Boogie Woogie Country Girl,” Reverend Gary Davis' “Say No To The Devil” and Ruth Brown with her Rhythmakers' “Mambo Baby” as well as the late Paul Oscher's adventuresome “Mudcat” with Muddy Waters—a reminder of the Brooklyn-born harmonica players' five years with Muddy. All in all, the book and CD offer a welcome focus on the neglected New York blues scene.—Gary von Tersch

WILLIAM BELL Never Like This Before

Kent CD

Legendary Southern soul man William Bell has been making records for nearly seventy years and was with Memphis' fabled Stax record label for its entire fifteen-year existence (1960-1975). During

that time, he composed and waxed many songs that are now regarded as classics—from his Stax debut “You Don't Miss Your Water” and the time-honored and oft-covered blues testimonial “Born Under A Bad Sign” to his riveting 1968 duet with Judy Clay, “Private Number” (a Top Ten hit in the UK). This month sees the release of the first of two CD sets that will, between them, anthologize the A and B sides of all Bell's solo singles for Stax in chronological order with all fourteen singles issued on Stax's original blue label with the catchy *Stack Of Tracks* logo. Bell, of course, at his most inviting is backed throughout by members of the storied Stax “house band” Booker T & The MGS and the Memphis Horns. No better! Among the CLASSICS featured here are the fore-mentioned “You Don't Miss Your Water,” the holiday perennial “Every Day Will Be Like A Holiday” and his ardent salute to his recently deceased Stax labelmate Otis Redding “A Tribute To A King” (i.e. Otis). Other notable numbers include the soulful ballads “Everybody Loves A Winner” and “Soldier's Goodbye,” dance tunes like “Eloise (Hang On In There)” and “Never Like This Before” and the local charters “Any Other Way” and “I'll Show You.” As



compiler Tony Rounce puts it: “Southern soul in a package worthy of the man who, at age 82, is still singing many of these songs in live shows and singing them as well as he ever did.” Long live William Bell!—Gary von Tersch

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