

BRIT BOOGIE

ISSUE No. 18 MARCH 1992

BRITISH BLUES REVIEW



A letter from the Editor.

Where have we been? You might well ask...and some of you did!

I think the current phrase is: **Bumping along the bottom!** It has been one of those years I would rather forget, what with illness, coupled with the normal joys of recession (or is it depression now? I'm beginning to lose track). Anyway, we are back! True, we are back in a slightly different form. All the Gig Reviews and Record Reviews and Listings, that we had set up are now so out of date that I decided not to include any in this issue.

We should be able to rectify that by the April issue, however.

I had to go into hospital after a bungled operation for a detached retina, but I'm adjusting to a changed visual outlook on the world (and I'm probably more cynical than before - if that is possible), so with luck, it should be possible for me to get my act together again. Yes, I wrote *again*.

Believe it or not, I have got it together previously, though I can understand anyone thinking otherwise.

For those of you who wrote wishing me well, I thank you. For those of you who wrote wondering what the hell was going on, I can only say that I wasn't sure just what was going on myself.

For all of you who are still awaiting replies, please accept this open letter as my answer, with my apologies. To all our contributors, we are back in business and look forward to more contributions, reviews, etc. For musicians, bands and promoters, we will include your listings if you send them in.

Letters and suggestions are also welcome - sometimes - and always considered,

however rude. So get writing! Next month, the festival season starts with a vengeance, and we hope to catch some of the action. Burnley and Gloucaester head the procession as usual and are offering a foretaste of what is in store for us this year. What we need now is the money to pay for it all. To make life easier for you hard pressed subscribers, we are giving you the option of subscribing for six issues or twelve, whichever suits you best(see page 31). Finally, I hope you enjoy the magazine and have a great blues year.



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BOOK REVIEW

THE VOICE OF THE DELTA: CHARLEY PATTON AND THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRADITIONS, INFLUENCES AND COMPARISONS - AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Edited by Robert Sacre

Presses Universitaires Liege, Belgium, 1987

ISBN 2-87014-163-7 347pp, illustrated, index

The rather lengthy title and 'University press' imprint might lead you to expect that this is an academic tome; well, you'd be right, but I must state that it is also an enjoyable and informative read. Two chapters and the introduction are in French, though there are English summaries for Robert Sacre's contributions, so that the sole French-only piece is Daniel Droixhe's rather technical chapter on blues scales. The remainder of the book is in English, with chapters by such well-known blues researchers as Jim O'Neal, Dick Shurman and the late Arnold Shaw from the USA and Mike Rowe, Cilla Huggins and John Broven from the UK. These chapters were originally papers presented at the Symposium which took place in Liege in 1984 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Charley Patton's death and although the focus is on Patton, the antecedents of his music and his influence on his successors form an important part of the discussion. For the uninitiated, Patton was born around 1887 and was probably the most influential Mississippi blues singer of his generation - if you have not heard his music, I urge you to go and remedy that now! The early chapters of this book trace the roots of the blues from West Africa, through slavery and on to the spirituals (Robert Sacre), and then Arnold Shaw looks at the origins of the blues, and aspects of the Mississippi in particular. Further on, valuable chapters include John Broven's examination of the Louisiana downhome blues and Mike Rowe's talk on the early post-war blues of Chicago (though both have treated their subjects in much greater depth in the books 'South To Louisiana' and 'Chicago Breakdown' respectively); Dick Shurman's personal reminiscences of Howling Wolf (who learned from Patton) and his guitarist Willie Johnson add a touch of warmth, and Jim O'Neal looks at Mississippi survivals in contemporary Chicago blues, whilst David Evans surveys 'Mississippi Blues Today'. It is also refreshing to note that in addition to the researchers, a real bluesman has the chance to speak for himself: guitarist Luther Allison talks about his life and music for one chapter.

However, for me the highlight of the book is the one hundred-plus pages that contain the David Evans tour-de-force entitled 'Charley Patton-The Conscience Of The Delta'. Evans has been researching the Delta blues since the sixties (and has been responsible for many recordings), and here he shares some of the fascinating material he has gleaned over the years. There are in-depth interviews with Charley's relatives and acquaintances, including the late Tom Rushing whom Patton immortalised on 'Tom Rushen Blues'. Without wishing to detract from the other contributors, it is no exaggeration to say the the book is worth buying for this chapter alone...and it complements nicely Calt & Wardlow's 'King Of The Delta Blues' book, although none of these authors might care to admit it. Just on a practical point, it is worth mentioning that there are many record references given, and there are numerous photographs, maps and reproductions of advertisements. Anyone interested in Mississippi blues should read this book, and although it is now a few years old, is still available from: Robert Sacre, Chaussee de Tongres 117, B-4000 Liege-Rocourt, Belgium (the change of code updates the address given in BBR Boogie #17).

Norman Darwen

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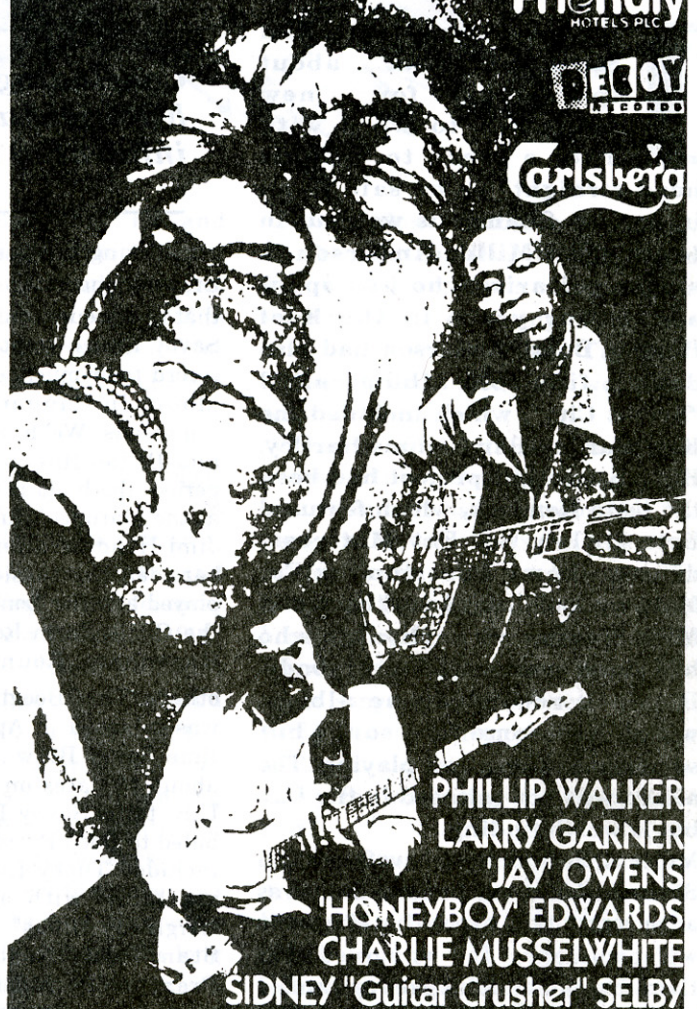
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SAVOY BROWN

by Tim Pratt Part 3

In the meantime Kim Simmonds set about searching for new musicians to work with after a break to "get his head straight" as he said in an interview. Simmonds was put in touch with Miller Anderson, a singer-guitarist who had spent about four years in the Keef Hartley Band. Anderson had also done a fine solo album called "Bright City", which included the Keef Hartley Band minus Hartley. His most recent project had been the band Hemlock, which featured Eric Dillon (ex Fat Mattress) drums, Jimmy Leverton (ex Fat Mattress and Juicy Lucy) bass, and Mick Weaver on keyboards who had done sessions for everybody. Hemlock recorded one album, which had some fine songs but somewhat uninspired playing. The album was not released in the U.S. but is worth finding.

Miller Anderson must have seen Kim Simmonds' offer to join Savoy Brown as an opportunity to expose his songs to a wider audience. It was agreed that Hemlock, minus Mick Weaver, would be absorbed into Savoy Brown. The band began rehearsals and it was shortly thereafter that they learned that Chicken Shack had broken up. Chicken Shack had been together for eight years and had done six albums when Stan Webb decided to pack it in. Webb had the same frustrations that Simmonds had gone through and since misery loves company, Webb was asked to join Savoy Brown.

For the first time in years the British rock press had something positive to say about Savoy Brown. The band was christened the "Boogie Brothers" and much was made about the fact that the band now had three lead guitarists. Stan Webb had a large following, especially in Germany, and big things were expected from the band. In interviews the members said that the band was formed to last, which

Concluding Tim Pratt's historical account of the influential Savoy Brown

considering the past history of Savoy Brown immediately decreased the odds that the lineup would last.

Savoy Brown went into the studio to record their much anticipated eleventh album in January 1974 with the Simmonds, Webb, Anderson, Leverton and Dillon lineup. Also during this period, the band played Showcase gigs at the Marquee Club where they broke Jimi Hendrix' attendance records. In between the sessions the band also played at other London clubs including the Chalk Farm Roundhouse and the Dagenham Roundhouse amongst others. The "Boogie Brothers" album was released in April 1974 by which time Savoy Brown had already done about 30 dates on their seventeenth U.S. tour. Savoy Brown was second billed to Deep Purple and the tour also included Tucky Buzzard. The album starts off with a Simmonds song "Highway Blues" which is sung by Stan Webb. Next is "Me and The Preacher", a Miller Anderson song which has a nice slide guitar solo from Kim Simmonds. "My Love's Lying Down" is Stan Webb's only writing contribution to the album and is one of the better songs. It has great vocals and guitar from Stan Webb. "You Don't Love Me", a Bo Diddley song, has some nice harp playing from Simmonds and vocals from Anderson. Side one ends with "Always The Same" written by Anderson and it's a soft acoustic blues number.

Side two is about the strongest side of any Savoy Brown album. Beginning with "Everybody Loves A Drinking Man", Stan Webb is not credited, possibly being recorded before Webb joined the band. This is followed by Anderson's "Rock & Roll Star" which features a Rolling Stones-like middle section. Next is the title track, which is the best song on the album and also received the most airplay even though

it wasn't released as a single. "Boogie Brothers" was written by Anderson and has hot solos from both Simmonds and Webb. The album's closing cut is "Threegy Blues" by Simmonds, a slow bluesy instrumental with Simmonds and Webb trading solos over Anderson's rhythm guitar.

"Boogie Brothers" peaked at number 101 in the U.S. charts, which had to have left Simmonds and London Records shaking their heads. This was the first Savoy Brown to be released on London Records instead of the London subsidiary Parrot Records. "Everybody Loves A Drinking Man" was released as a single with the flip side being "Ride On Babe" from the "Jack The Toad" album.

The American tour continued through June 1974 and, after returning to England, Savoy Brown played dates through July, which I believe were the last shows the "Boogie Brothers" played together. On an interview album that I have that Simmonds did during this tour, he sounded very excited about the band again so it must have been very disappointing when this version of Savoy Brown split up. My theory is that after the initial excitement of working together, the egos of Simmonds, Webb and Anderson couldn't help but clash. Kim Simmonds said years later that when the band was on the Deep Purple tour, the members got the "star treatment" and when they went out on their own, it was too big an adjustment for the others to overcome.

Miller Anderson went on to form Dog Soldier with former bandmate Keef Hartley. Also in the band were Paul Bliss (bass), Derek Griffiths (guitar, ex Artwoods) and Mel Simpson (keyboards). Dog Soldier did one album and an American tour supporting John Mayall. When the band returned to England, Hartley quit and was replaced by Eric Dillon. Jimmy Leverton's next recording was on Henry McCullough's 1975 solo album "Mind Your Own Business."

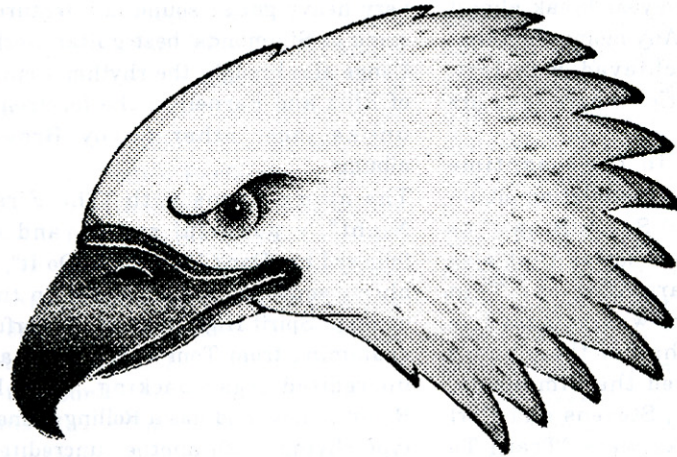
Stan Webb's next project was the Stan Webb Band, which included Robbie Blunt (guitar) ex Bronco, Bob Daisley (bass) ex Chicken Shack, and various drummers. The Stan Webb Band played their earliest dates at The Marquee as early as October 1974. Webb renamed the band Broken Glass in May 1975 and recorded one album on which Miller Anderson was credited as a member. Webb used the name Broken Glass until 1977 when the band became Stan Webb's Chicken Shack. Stan Webb has remained active over the years and members have included Andy Pyle and Ric Lee of Ten Years After.

While all this activity was going on, Kim Simmonds began what had become a familiar job, putting his band back together. Simmonds contacted old reliable Paul Raymond who, after working with Jackie Lynton, did sessions with Andy Sylvester on Danny Kirwan's first solo album "Second Chapter" at the end of 1974.

Also recruited was bassist Andy Rae who had played in Rare Bird on the "Born Again" album in 1974 and singer-guitarist Dave Tedstone. The new Savoy Brown began playing dates in clubs and colleges around London in January 1975. Tedstone stayed in the band long enough to play some dates in Germany and was not replaced when he left.

Savoy Brown entered the studios in summer 1975 to begin work on the follow-up to the "Boogie Brothers" album. During the sessions Dave Bidwell left the band again as he had done during the "Jack The Toad" sessions. The reason given for his departure was for health reasons when in fact Bidwell was having serious drug problems. Bidwell's replacement was Birmingham drummer Tom Farnell who had played with Fairport Convention in 1972 and Mongrel in 1973.

With this lineup of Simmonds, Raymond, Rae and Farnell, Savoy Brown completed the sessions for what was to become the "Wire Fire" album. "Wire Fire" originally titled "Branded" according to a report in Billboard Magazine was released in October 1975 nearly 18 months after the "Boogie Brothers" album. The album was produced by Simmonds and Raymond and was a pleasant surprise. Instead of feuding with lead vocalists,



Detail from Savoy Brown album 'A Hard Way To Go' (Platinum)

Simmonds decided that he and Raymond were capable of handling the vocals and did a surprisingly good job. "Wire Fire" also features some of Kim Simmonds' finest guitar work and for the first time the band was being billed as Savoy Brown featuring Kim Simmonds.

Side one is highlighted by "Stranger Blues", mistakenly credited to Simmonds and Raymond although it was written by Elmore James, and "Ooh What A Feeling" which features fine guitar work from Simmonds. Side two, which includes "Hero To Zero", "Deep Water", "Can't Get On" and "Born Into Pain", is some of the strongest material Savoy Brown ever recorded. There is inspired playing from all the members highlighted by Kim Simmonds great guitar work.

"Wire Fire" only made it to number 153 on the U.S. charts and this poor showing may have been due to the long period between albums. Savoy Brown began yet another U.S. tour, which ran from September to December 1975. Tapes from this tour include the following songs: "Born Into Pain" and "Hero To Zero" from "Wire Fire"; "Tell Mama" and "All I Can Do" from "Street Corner Talking"; and two new songs, "You Don't Have To Go" and "Walkin' and Talkin'". As usual, the performances were very powerful with the band showing their blues roots on the new material. While on the tour some of the shows were recorded and "Walkin' and Talkin'" from the Cleveland Agora show, was chosen to be included on the next album.

Five months after the release of "Wire Fire" Savoy Brown's thirteenth album, "Skin 'n' Bone" was released in April 1976. In the time following the U.S. tour Andy Rae was replaced by former Clouds bassist-singer Ian Ellis.

"Skin 'n' Bone" features five studio tracks and the live "Walkin' and Talkin'". Overall, this is a strong album with the best cuts being "Part Time Lady" and "Walkin' and Talkin' ". These two cuts alone are worth the price of the album.

"Walkin' and Talkin' " features what is probably the hottest guitar solo that Kim Simmonds has ever recorded. The song is given a truly inspired performance and lasts over 12 minutes. Paul Raymond plays great boogie piano and the Andy Rae/Tom Farnell rhythm section keeps the whole song smoking. For some reason, Andy Rae was not credited on the album cover but was definitely in Savoy Brown during the "Wire Fire" tour.

Savoy Brown embarked on an American tour to promote the album in May 1976. On tapes that I have from this tour the band performs the following songs: "Part Time Lady"; "Get Up and Do It"; "She's The One" and "Walkin' and Talkin' " from "Skin 'n' Bone"; "Hero To Zero" from "Wire Fire"; "Hellbound Train"; "Tell Mama"; an untitled blues number, and "The Boogie" which included "Feels So Good". "Louisiana Blues" was also played occasionally. The tour ended on a sour note in July when Paul Raymond informed the rest of the group that he had accepted an offer to join British heavy rock band UFO. Raymond went on to play on four UFO albums and later played in the Michael Schenker Group and Waysted.

With the departure of Paul Raymond, Kim Simmonds purposely took time off, after ten years on the road, to evaluate his role in the band. Simmonds' decision was a difficult one, and he said years later in an interview

that the nearly two-year break almost ruined his career. Any momentum that the band had achieved was lost, especially in America where fans are too quick to forget.

London Records in the meantime decided to release a compilation album titled "The Best of Savoy Brown" as part of a collectors series that also included Ten Years After and Thin Lizzy. The album was released in March 1977 and half of the album's eight cuts featured the Simmonds, Youlden, Peverett, Stevens and Earl lineup. The tracks were "Train To Nowhere", "Louisiana Blues", "I'm Tired", "Needle and Spoon" and "A Hard Way To Go". The other cuts were "Tell Mama" (the edited single version), "Hellbound Train" and "Wang Dang Doodle" which featured the Simmonds, Walker, Sylvester, Raymond and Bidwell lineup. The album includes fine liner notes by James Spina, but to me it is a bit of a disappointment because of the song selection. It is acceptable to the casual fan, but to the more serious fan it is a letdown. Some of the early British singles would have made the album a bit more interesting.

Also released in the 1977 Collectors Series on London was the reissue of the Warren Phillips and The Rockets album. The album was retitled "Before Foghat Days" and again included great liner notes. For many Savoy Brown/Foghat fans this was their first chance to hear this album (myself included) and listeners were not disappointed. By this time Foghat had become one of America's favourite bands and had released six big-selling albums.

In the early months of 1978 Simmonds, Ian Ellis, Tom Farnell and an unknown keyboard player began doing occasional shows in and around London to try out some new material before going into the studios. The keyboard player was asked to leave because Kim Simmonds thought that the approach was too safe. It would have been like replacing Paul Raymond after an 18 month wait.

Savoy Brown went into Rockfield Studios with producer Robert John "Mutt" Lange to work on what was to become the "Savage Return" album. Kim Simmonds and Ian Ellis wrote all the material and with Lange's help turned out one of the best Savoy Brown albums ever. "Savage Return" has a

very heavy guitar sound and features some of Simmonds' best guitar work. Lange also brought the rhythm section of Ellis and Farnell to the forefront, unlike most other Savoy Brown albums.

The album opens with "The First Night", a powerful rocker, and is followed by "Don't Do It Baby Do It", a bluesy sounding cut especially in the ending. "Spirit High" features powerful drumming from Tom Farnell and an uncredited organ backing. "Play It Right" is next and has a Rolling Stones type rhythm with another uncredited keyboard bit. "Walk Before You Run" closes side one and has a fine Simmonds solo over an almost heavy metal riff. Side two begins with "My Own Man", a straight-ahead rocker, that would be the opening song on the following American tour. This is followed by "I'm Alright Now", a bluesy song that has a nice Simmonds guitar solo. "Rock 'n' Roll Man" is next and is, as the title states, a rock and roll song with another uncredited piano break and a fine double tracked solo from Kim Simmonds. "Double Lover" closes

...back in England, Kim Simmonds made what had to be one of his most difficult career decisions. After years of neglect by music fans and critics in England, where Savoy Brown's last three albums weren't even released, Simmonds decided to move his base of operations to the U.S. This decision led to the break up of this version of Savoy Brown.

side two on a heavy note with yet another powerful keyboard backing and some fine drumming from Farnell. The song builds to a climax with a fiery guitar solo from Simmonds.

Savoy Brown came to the U.S. for their first tour in two years in the summer of 1978 to coincide with the release of the "Savage Return" album. Again, as in the past, new numbers made up a large part of the live shows. Older concert favorites like "Tell Mama", "Street Corner Talkin'" and "Can't Get Next To You" were also part of the sets. As good as the studio versions of the songs were, the live versions were even better. In a show that I saw on this tour, Kim Simmonds played like his life depended on it. Ian Ellis on bass and vocals was a crowd favourite and Tom Farnell was solid as ever on drums.

Savoy Brown completed the tour - on which Aussie rockers AC/DC opened

many shows - and returned to England.

While back in England, Kim Simmonds made what had to be one of his most difficult career decisions. After years of neglect by music fans and critics in England, where Savoy Brown's last three albums weren't even released, Simmonds decided to move his base of operations to the U.S. This decision led to the break up of this version of Savoy Brown.

Ian Ellis and Tom Farnell stayed together and formed a group called Night Life, which barely made it past the planning stages. Ellis next appeared on two albums recorded by former T. Rex and Pretty Things guitarist-vocalist Jack Green in 1980 and 1981.

Kim Simmonds settled in Mansfield, Ohio after marrying an American girl. Savoy Brown always had a large following in the Cleveland, Ohio area and he figured that this was as good a place as any to start over.

Through 1979, Simmonds rehearsed a new lineup, which included drummer Richie Carmichael and bassist D.C.

whose real name is a well kept secret. Simmonds and drummer Carmichael shared the vocals and the results were surprisingly good.

Simmonds took the new band on the road in the Spring of 1980 playing small clubs in a tour that I believe he financed himself. The band sounded similar to the previous lineup in that the songs were very guitar oriented with a very powerful rhythm backing. On tapes that I have from this tour, Savoy Brown played old favorites "Tell Mama" (with a long slide guitar intro), "Street Corner Talking", "Hellbound Train" and "Wang Dang Doodle". The new songs, which sadly were never released, included "That's What It's All About", "So You Wanna Play In A Rock and Roll Band", "You've Got To Lead The Way", "Man On Fire", "Cat On A Hot In Town", "Break My Heart", "Double Talkin' Man" and "I Trusted You". These eight new songs would

have made a great album and might have done if Savoy Brown's American label London hadn't gone out of business. All the material is strong with "You've Got To Lead The Way", "Man On Fire" and "I Trusted You" being about the best of the lot.

This lineup was short-lived as news came that Kim Simmonds and Savoy Brown had signed with Accord/Town House Records, a subsidiary of Capitol Records in the U.S. The new lineup was announced as Simmonds, along with singer Ralph Morman (ex Joe Perry Project and Bux), drummer Keith Boyce (ex Heavy Metal Kids and Bram Tchaikovsky), guitarist Barry Paul (ex Heavy Metal Kids) and bassist John Humphrey (ex Lion credited as Steve Humphrey).

Savoy Brown began work on an album at Jennifudy Studios in Hollywood, California. Also involved in the sessions was keyboardist John Sinclair, who had played with Keith Boyce and Barry Paul in the Heavy Metal Kids and had also played in Lion with Humphrey. Sinclair also had played on The Baby's album "Head First" in 1979.

These sessions became the "Rock 'N' Roll Warriors" album, which was produced by Richie Wise. Kim Simmonds wrote or co-wrote all the songs on the album except "Lay Back In The Arms of Someone". This song was written by British hitmakers Chinn and Chapman and was released as a single with "Don't Tell Me I Told You" from the album as the B side prior to the release of the album. For those who had never heard Ralph Morman's vocals, the single sounded like a Rod Stewart release.

"Cold Hearted Woman" opens side one with a heavy guitar riff and harmony solos from Simmonds and Barry Paul. "Georgie" follows and has a very commercial sound. "Bad Breaks" at almost six minutes is the longest song on the album. It's a bluesy cut with fine solos from both guitarists. "Don't Tell Me I Told You" is a three chord rocker on which the Humphrey/Boyce rhythm section really burns. "This Could Be The Night" completes side one and became the last song in the band's live sets before the encores.

"Lay Back In The Arms of Someone" opens side two and is one of the better songs on the album. "Shot Down By Love" follows and has more fine guitar

interplay between Simmonds and Barry Paul. "Bad Girls" is next and is an uptempo rocker that became an in concert favorite. "Got Love If You Want It" is another heavy riff song with fine solos. "Nobody's Perfect" completes side two with some nice slide guitar playing from Kim Simmonds.

"Rock 'N' Roll Warriors" was released in April 1981 after Savoy Brown had been on the road playing the songs since November 1980. On the first leg of the tour of small halls and clubs the band played the following in most of their shows: "Tell Mama", "Can't Get Next To You", a cover of the Rolling Stones' "No Expectations" and from the new album "Nobody's Perfect", "Got Love If You Want It", "Bad Girls, Bad Breaks", "Shot Down By Love", "Don't Tell Me I Told You" and "This Could Be The Night". Another new song, "Save Me One More Time" was played but not included on the album. On the second leg of the tour after the album had been released "Cold Hearted Woman" and "Georgie" were added to the set.

Accord Records also released a four song 12" promotional record, which included "Lay Back In The Arms of Someone", "Georgie", "Cold Hearted Woman" and "This Could Be The Night", all of which were the same as the album versions.

Savoy Browns' show at the Rainbow Music Hall in Denver, Colorado on June 27, 1981 was recorded for release as a live double album. The album, "Greatest Hits Live" was released in the U.S. in December 1981 with no promotion at all. Songs on the album included "Street Corner Talking", "I'm Tired", "Hellbound Train", "Train To Nowhere", "Can't Get Next To You", "All I Can Do Is Cry", "Needle and Spoon", "Tell Mama", "Wang Dang Doodle", "Louisiana Blues", "The Boogie" and a studio track, "Run To Me" that was eventually released as a single.

There is not a weak spot on the whole album and this lineup is, in my opinion, one of the strongest Simmonds ever put together. The guitar work of both Simmonds and Barry Paul is the highlight of the album, each playing fiery solos on each track. The Keith Boyce/John Humphrey rhythm section added new life to the old studio tracks and were well up in the mix on all the songs. The only thing somewhat

distracting about the album was hearing Ralph Morman's vocals on songs originally sung by Chris Youlden and Dave Walker. Morman's vocal delivery was very different from the originals and took some getting used to.

The only thing that I found disappointing about the "Greatest Hits Live" album was the song selection. "Louisiana Blues" and "Train To Nowhere" were from 1968, "I'm Tired" (1969), "Needle and Spoon" (1970), "Street Corner Talking", "I Can't Get Next To You", "All I Can Do Is Cry", "Tell Mama" and "Wang Dang Doodle" were all from 1971. This album was recorded in 1981 and the ten year period from "Street Corner Talking" and "Rock 'N' Roll Warriors" was totally ignored. Some great material was recorded during this period and at least some of it should have been included on the album. Five of the seven songs from the "Street Corner Talking" album are on "Greatest Hits Live" and although the tracks are strong, the album could have had a bit more variety.

By the time "Greatest Hits Live" was released, this version of Savoy Brown had already split up. In all my years as a Savoy Brown fan, the break up of the Simmonds, Paul, Morman, Humphrey and Boyce lineup was one of my biggest disappointments. Having seen this version of the band in concert and watching the interplay between the members on stage, I thought that Simmonds had finally formed a stable lineup. I had the opportunity to talk with Kim Simmonds at the concert and he was very enthusiastic about the direction that the band was moving in. I should have known better considering the past history of the band. The period after the break up of this version of Savoy Brown was very quiet (as usual) with little if any mention of the band in the Rock Press. As far as recordings go, the German label Line Records released an album titled "Just Live" (some copies were pressed on white vinyl) that featured the "Looking In" lineup of Simmonds, Peverett, Stevens and Earl. The album was recorded during the U.S. tour in 1970, not 1972 as the liner notes state. "Just Live" opens with "Poor Girl" with awful vocals from Peverett that are over mixed. Another track from "Looking In", the instrumental

"Sunday Night", is next and has a nice guitar solo from Kim Simmonds. "Leavin' Again", the best song from "Looking In" is next and is even better than the studio version. Side one closes with "It Hurts Me Too", originally done on the live side of the "Blue Matter" album. This is probably the best song on "Just Live" due to the hot guitar solo from Simmonds.

Side two opens with "Louisiana Blues" which lasts almost 17 minutes and features a long guitar bit by Simmonds that was a regular feature during the "Looking In" tour. The last two tracks on the album are from the Warren Phillips and The Rockets album. The songs are "You Gotta Run Me Down", "Blue Jean Boogie", "Choo Choo Ch' Boogie" and "Encore Blues". The playing is a bit sloppy and makes me wonder why it was included on the album instead of some of the other songs that were done on the tour.

Overall, "Just Live" is worth having from a collector's standpoint, but artistically it shows the major weak point of the "Looking In" lineup; Peverett's vocals.

The year 1982 began and ended on a quiet note for Kim Simmonds and Savoy Brown. If any live dates were played or any recording done, it was a well kept secret. In Europe, two albums were released in 1982 that may be of interest to Savoy Brown fans. The first is a Dutch compilation titled "The Best of Savoy Brown" that, unlike the American and British compilations from 1977 and 1978, doesn't rely on the standard tracks, although the most recent song on this album is from 1974. The album includes the following: "Highway Blues" (1974), "Casting My Spell", "Coming Down Your Way" and "Jack The Toad" (all 1973), "Doin' Fine" (1972), "Let It Rock" (1971), "I'm Crying", "Poor Girl" (both 1970), "Train To Nowhere" (1968) and "Shake 'Em On Down" (1967). Also included on the album is "Walking By Myself" the British single from 1968 that I don't believe is on any other album. The album also has great liner notes by Brian Harrigan.

The second album was released in Spain and was part of the Historia De La Musica Rock Series and the cover features a nice stage photo of the "Jack The Toad" lineup. The songs included on the album are: "Train To Nowhere" (1968), "Louisiana Blues" (1968), "I'm

Tired" (1969), "Needle and Spoon" (1970), "Tell Mama" (1971), "A Hard Way To Go" (1970), "Wang Dang Doodle" (1971) and "Hellbound Train" (1972). For some reason the people that compile these albums deny the band's existence after 1973.

The next news regarding Savoy Brown came near the end of 1983 when the band did a tour of small clubs in the eastern U.S. I saw one of the shows on this tour and came away somewhat disappointed. Unlike past tours when the band played mostly new material, this time the band concentrated on older songs. I have a tape of the show and it includes the following songs: "Louisiana Blues," "I'm Tired," "Street Corner Talking," "Can't Get Next To You," "Looking In," "Wang Dang Doodle," "This Could Be The Night" and "Tell Mama" (with the long slide guitar intro). The unreleased songs include "Cold Cold Feeling" (a slow blues), "Down The Road Apiece" (by Chuck Berry), "Wee Wee Hours" (another slow blues) and Wilbert Harrison's "Let's Work Together" as an encore with a local Baltimore guitarist named Jeff Adams guesting. The other members of this version of Savoy Brown included Tommy Amato (drums), Andrew Jerome (guitar and vocals) and Stutz Bearcat (bass). The

...Kim Simmonds did what a lot of people thought he should have done much sooner. After 18 years, and countless personnel and musical changes, the Savoy Brown name was dropped in favour of The Kim Simmonds Band.

band was very tight and seemed to be enjoying themselves on stage.

While in New York during the Savoy Brown tour, Kim Simmonds guested with the New York based blues band The Blues Blasters. The Blues Blasters' show at the TRAX Club in New York City on February 19, 1984 was recorded and released as an album called "Live From The Open Road." Kim Simmonds plays on three of the album's five tracks; "Lucille", "The Breeze" by J. J. Cale, which has a long slide guitar intro similar to the "Tell Mama" intro. The third song is "Louisiana Blues", which is one of the best versions of this song that I have ever heard. The other songs on the album are "Psycho Ward" and "Every body Say They Love Me" both of which feature vocalist and harp player

Speedo Jones. All in all, this is a very good album and well worth finding. "Live On The Open Road" was released on the New York based Right On Red Records and may be difficult to locate. During the following months of 1984, Kim Simmonds did what a lot of people thought he should have done much sooner. After 18 years and countless personnel and musical changes, the Savoy Brown name was dropped in favour of the Kim Simmonds Band. This led to problems with promoters who insisted on advertising Savoy Brown instead because of name recognition that would draw larger crowds.

The Kim Simmonds Band took part in the 1984 Rock and Roll Legends Tour that also included Mountain, led by Leslie West and Corky Laing and, surprise of surprises, Miller Anderson on bass and vocals. In some concert reviews, Anderson was referred to as Lou Anderson (ex Savoy Brown) for some reason and went on to play with Mountain for another year. Anderson left in 1985 due to differences over songwriting credits. I have a demo tape from this period and the songs are very good. Anderson next played in Stan Webb's Speedway, a great band that also included Andy Pyle on bass.

The Kim Simmonds Band was a very

good band that, unfortunately, never made an album. I have a demo tape from this lineup and the songs and playing are great with the music being much heavier than anything that Simmonds had played before. He reportedly told fans at some mid-western U.S. shows that he could no longer support himself playing blues music. The new band had a much more contemporary sound but couldn't land a major record deal and split. The only recording that Simmonds did during this period was in August 1984 when he guested on one song on an album called "Burning At The Speed of Light" by Thrasher. The album was released in 1985.

It was reported in mid 1985 that the New York based Relix Records had signed Kim Simmonds and would be

releasing a live Savoy Brown album that had been recorded in Central Park in August 1972 during the "Lion's Share" tour.

Savoy Brown "Live In Central Park" was released in October 1985 and featured the Simmonds, Walker, Raymond, Pyle and Bidwell lineup. According to the liner notes, this concert was voted the best of the summer of 1972 by the readers of *The Village Voice*, the one-time bible of the New York City rock. The liner notes say that the album is dedicated to drummer Dave Bidwell who had died from a heroine overdose in 1976.

The songs on "Live In Central Park" include "Let It Rock", "Shot In The Head", "The Saddest Feeling", "Can't Find Ya", "Tell Mama", "Love Me Please" and "Hip Shake". The album captures the power of what many Savoy Brown fans consider the band's performing peak. The show was originally a radio broadcast and the tape that I have also includes "So Tired", which was the opening number and "Hate To See You Go" both from the "Lion's Share" album. The edit in "Tell Mama" is on both the album and the tape and destroys the song.

Relix Records, whose roster of artists also includes Hot Tuna, Flying Burrito Brothers, Kingfish, Robert Hunter and Jorma Kaukonen, released the "Relix Sampler" in December 1985. The album featured tracks by these artists as well as two tracks by Savoy Brown. The Savoy Brown tracks were "Tell Mama" from "Live In Central Park" and a previously-unreleased version of "Train To Nowhere", which is worth the price of the album for Savoy Brown fans. "Train To Nowhere" marks a reunion of sorts since it features Chris Youlden on vocals and Kim Simmonds on guitar, although the guitar was overdubbed along with Speedo Jones' harp and background vocals. The original recording was done during an ill-fated attempt to record a Chris Youlden solo album in 1979. The "new" arrangement is pretty close to the original version, but it's the matter of hearing Youlden and Simmonds together again that makes the track special. Perhaps Relix has some other recordings from these sessions that might be worth releasing.

On the night of January 21, 1986, Relix Magazine celebrated its thirteenth anniversary with a show at

the Lone Star Cafe in New York City. In a later issue of the magazine, it was reported that Kim Simmonds, backed by Speedo Jones (vocals and harp) and Chris Ronanelli (bass), played a 45 minute set of acoustic blues songs and told the audience that this would be the direction in which he was heading. It was Simmonds' first-ever acoustic set and was very well received by the audience.

Simmonds was true to his word. In September 1986, Relix Records released "Slow Train", an album that featured a live side taken from the Lone Star Cafe show that included "Little Red Rooster", "Come Back Baby", "Another Man Done Gone", "Ramblin' On My Mind" and "I'm Ready". The most notable thing about the songs are Kim Simmonds' vocals, which had become stronger and more confident over the years. Another highlight was the harmonica playing of Speedo Jones.

The studio side of "Slow Train" is Kim Simmonds alone on "Slow Train", "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl", "Bone Shakin'", "It's Too Late" and "Meet Me In The Bottom". In Simmonds' liner notes, he states that he truly enjoyed making the album because he was able to display his blues roots on acoustic guitar.

As much as I enjoyed the "Slow Train" album and seeing Kim Simmonds recording again, I couldn't help wishing that he would have showcased his electric blues guitar playing as well. Artistically, Simmonds must have been satisfied but commercially there seems to be little chance of success for this type of solo venture. American guitarists, Stevie Ray Vaughn and George Thorogood are selling millions of albums by playing the same type of music that Kim Simmonds has been playing for twenty years.

In October 1986, Kim Simmonds began playing dates in New York with a new version of Savoy Brown, which included Jim Dagnesi (bass and vocals) and Al Macomber (drums and vocals). In January 1987, Arnie Goodman, who had been involved with the Kim Simmonds Band, was contacted by former vocalist Dave Walker about the possibility of rejoining Savoy Brown. It seems that Walker had heard the "Live In Central Park" album and it seemed the right time for a possible

reunion.

After a short period of rehearsals, the new Savoy Brown began a U.S. tour in March 1987 and continued until June 1987. During this tour, the band announced that Savoy Brown had signed a record deal with GNP/Cresendo Records, a label that had brought Robin Trower and John Mayall back to life in the U.S.

On a tape that I have from this tour, Savoy Brown played the following older songs in their sets: "Goin' Down", "Let It Rock", "Can't Get Next To You", "Hellbound Train", "Can't Find You", "Shot In The Head", "Street Corner Talking", "Louisiana Blues", "All I Can Do Is Cry" and "Wang Dang Doodle". The new songs included "15 Miles To Go", "Just For Kicks" and "Rock and Roll Man." The audience reaction to the band was great and Walker and Simmonds really seemed to be enjoying themselves. In a phone conversation that I had with Kim Simmonds in May 1987, he was very enthusiastic about the band and his claim of playing better than ever is proven by one listen to the tape.

In June 1987, Savoy Brown went into the studio to record their long-awaited album. I've learned that there was enough material recorded for two albums and that the band had signed a three record deal with GNP/Cresendo. On completing the sessions, Savoy Brown went back on the road, and in addition to the songs that were played on the first leg of the tour, the following songs from the new album were played: "Runnin' With A Bad Crowd", "Breakin' Up" and "Limousine Boogie",

The "Make Me Sweat" album was released in the U.S. in January 1988 on GNP/Cresendo and the first thing one notices about the album is the great cover (a purely chauvinistic assessment). The lineup of Kim Simmonds (g.v.), Dave Walker (v), Jim Dagnesi (b) and Al Macomber (d.v.) is augmented by various keyboard players and at one time there was talk of adding a permanent keyboard player. (Paul Raymond's name was mentioned.)

The second noticeable thing about "Make Me Sweat" is the song selection. The album includes great new versions of Savoy Brown classics "Tell Mama", "A Hard Way To Go" and "Shot In The Head" and the first studio version of

"Goin' Down", which opened Savoy Brown's live shows in the 1971-1972 era. The album was produced by Neil Norman and is very well mixed.

"Make Me Sweat" opens with "Limousine Boogie", written by Simmonds and it gets the album off to a rockin' start with great guitar work by Simmonds. Next is "Just For Kicks", by Russ Ballard, and it includes a monologue intro by Dave Walker that changes nightly in the live shows. "Good Time Lover", written by Simmonds and Dave Walker is next and reminds me of Long John Baldry with a boogie piano backing. "Goin' Down" is next and has nice guitar work from Kim Simmonds. "Hard Way To Go" is next and is, in my opinion, the best song on the album. Dave Walker's vocals are great and would do Chris Youlden proud. "Don't Tell Me It's Over" closes side one and is the best of

the new songs with great vocals and guitar.

"Runnin' With A Bad Crowd" opens side two and is reminiscent of the old blues standard "Oh Pretty Woman" and again has some fine guitar playing from Simmonds. "Tell Mama" is next and is a slightly different arrangement, where the original version built to a gradual climax, this new version gets right to the point. "Shot In The Head" (written by Aussies Vanda and Young) originally done on the "Lion's Share" album is next and is pretty close to the original version with some nice piano playing. "Breakin' Up", written by Simmonds, is next and is closer to mainstream commercial rock than anything else on the album. "Make Me Sweat" closes with "On The Prowl", a group collaboration that features a spoken dialogue by Walker over an uptempo rock rhythm.

All in all "Make Me Sweat" is a very good album and the members all seem very enthusiastic about the future of Savoy Brown. Audience reaction to the band and the new material has been very good and hopefully this will generate some much deserved commercial success. It's also great to hear Kim Simmonds and Dave Walker together on record again.

In closing, I'd like to thank Kim Simmonds and his various band mates for providing me (and many others) with a lot of good music and memories over the years. Hopefully, all the hard work and dedication has been worth it. Long may you rock!

My thanks also go to Arnie Goodman for his support and to my good friend Klaus for letting me tell the Savoy Brown story.

The End.

SAVOY BROWN, opening European Tour 91, Bochum, Zeche, 8th of April JUST NOT ANOTHER BAND FROM THE USA

This report started in 1969 - and ended 22 years later. How come? A Decca sampler, "The World of Blues Power," brought - alongside Mayall, Dupree, Mickey Baker etc. - Savoy Brown. As a result, I bought nearly every album over the following years. So don't expect much retention from my side.

Bochum's Zeche presented Savoy Brown to the Ruhrgebiet and 500 fans attended a hundred minutes of Blues Rock. The band mixed up songs from the seventies and the eighties, mainly material from "Street Corner Talking", "Hellbound Train" and "Kings Of Boogie". These three albums had featured Manchester's Dave Walker - and so it was on this night. Every announcement he made was keenly applauded! Highlights of the show were "I Can't Get Next To You", "All I Can Do" both soulfully sung by Dave. "Bad Intentions" featured him on harmonica. Even the second encore was a highlight: an extended, rocking Boogie version of "Hip Shake" featured Jeff Howell on bass and Rick Jewett on keyboards. Missed the name of Kim Simmonds so far? Standing a little behind Dave Walker, he led the band, playing - in his very own style - lots of very good rocking slide guitar. But after the praises, the criticism: the sound was awful and shrill and it was much too loud - even for Blues Rock!

After the show, I had the chance to get further details about the band when I met a happy, communicative, Kim Simmonds backstage for a little interview. The tour included Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland ending with two dates in Spain - Madrid and Barcelona. Savoy Brown's line-up with Simmonds, Walker, Jewett and drummer Pete "Rastelli" Mandillo was completed some months ago by bassplayer Jeff Howell, ex-Foghat. Kim is New York based, has "family ties over there" and is constantly working with the band in the States. He remembered the sixties when "Savoy Brown started as Blues purists", turned to Blues Rock, lost appreciation in the UK - "because people liked to hear Fleetwood Mac, Chicken Shack and Ten Years After, but after all I have fabulous memories."

It was thrilling to tell a former leading member of the 60s British Blues scene about 90s British Blues scene. He really knew nothing nor had he heard anything about the current scene but he was highly interested to hear about it and his final question was: "What is Bob Hall doing?"

Joachim Kirstein

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BACK ON THE BOARDS

Paul Rowan, AKA Little Matthew, is back on the boards with OPTIMISTIC INTENTIONS. Pete Feenstra chats to a UK veteran of the blues harp.

“I got the name LITTLE MATTHEW from Jack Dupree who I had worked on and off with since 1966. This was 1971...and I was in my twenties...and heard Jack was over to cut an album. I thought to myself, I ought to be on this, and tried Transatlantic without success for three weeks. Anyway via my brother I heard Sam Charles had been trying to get hold of me, and it turned out Alexis (Korner) had suggested they call me because Jack had been looking for a harp player called Little Matthew, but nobody knew who he was. Word got back to Alexis and he thought it must be me. So off I went to Morgan studios in Willesden to do the session with Pete Kirtley, Huey Flint, Bernie Gallagher, etc. Now I used to play with Jack at Les Cousins club, which was owned by the Matayeo (?) family - but Jack used to call them Matthews, and couldn't remember my name - so I became Little Matthew. The next day I caught up with him in the studio bar, tapped him on the shoulder, and he went... 'Why! Little Matthew!' So here I am twenty years later and I've finally started to use the name.”

In a long and varied career full of as many stop-and-starts, as highlights, blues harmonica player Paul Rowan a.k.a. Little Matthew, has played blues, jazz, soul, standards, reggae and finally come back home to the blues with his new band Little Matthew & The Intentions. Curiously perhaps, his long career has involved more solo and duo gigs than anything else and an immediate explanation might be the

rich tone of his playing that more than holds its own amongst any other instruments. Nonetheless as many harp players will tell you, their chosen instrument is usually well back in the pecking order when it comes to hiring musicians for bands or even sessions. And yet Paul Rowan has managed to play with heavyweights ranging from Alexis Korner and Long John Baldry to Muddy Waters, Rick Estrin and long-time blues aficionado Duffy Power. With Little Matthew & The Intentions Paul has finally settled for a Chicago influenced band that he hopes will break into the burgeoning new blues

“...In fact, Jo Ann Kelly and I wanted to carry on playing acoustic and ignore the fact that things were changing. I suppose, in a way, we were anti-amplifiers. You know, real music was acoustic, that sort of thing. But in truth our position changed very quickly...it had to, otherwise we wouldn't have got any more gigs.”

scene. For Paul Rowan master of the tongue blocking technique, possessor of an awesome dirt-sounding resonant tone, it's been a long time coming, but as he explains, he enjoyed the musical excursions along the way.

“I actually started playing, or trying to play the harmonica by sheer chance back in 1964. I was at a bazaar where Topic records had a stand, and they kept playing an EP by Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee. It was the first time I'd heard the instrument, and the sound grabbed me. So I went straight out and bought a harp, took it home and tried to play it. It wasn't an immediate success - what I didn't realise was that I had bought a G

mouth organ. “Then somebody started to tell me about bending notes, but not realising the key was too low, I more-or-less thought about giving it up. The next Christmas I happened to be at a party, and bumped into a guy who was playing a harp in E, and I asked to have a blow. The first couple of notes I played I bent, so I went out and bought an E harp. After three or four months practising, I thought that's it, and went down the West End to hustle some gigs in clubs.

“I headed for Les Cousins in Greek Street and ended up on stage with a couple of guys called Simon Lawrence and Dave Terry (who I think ended up later in something like Elmer Gantry). We did a couple of numbers, but there were hundreds of harp players there - or so it seemed. But I was naive at the time and just took a chance and found myself on stage doing things - I didn't

really realise how I was doing them. “The important thing was no one was laughing, although I was in front of the flashiest player I had ever seen called Moxy who was clocking me whilst I played. By the end of the night I somehow managed to stagger back to Clapton and spent the next few days trying to remember how I'd done the stuff on stage. So it was a period of a lot of practice. By about a year later, I was back in the clubs and played with everyone I could. I'd get up with Long John Baldry on an all-night set, and build up my repertoire of people I'd played with. So the week after Baldry I'd jump up - say I'd played with Baldry and so-and-so - and kept

building it up like that. Eventually just about everyone knew me. I also ended up at Ken Colyer's club Studio 51 and also started to play with the late Gerry Lockran, just doing duo's.

He died not long after unfortunately. He was a great performer - played like Big Bill Broonzy and had a voice like Ray Charles. Gerry taught me an awful lot and I'd play with him as often as possible."

Paul's excursions into the west end quickly brought him into contact with performers who had abandoned the acoustic blues for amplification. It was the beginning of a major change in the blues scene - one that almost led to Rowan's exclusion.

"I started out as an acoustic artist. Even to this day I don't really believe in effects. But back in the early days I never thought of playing any other way. In fact Jo Ann Kelly and myself wanted to carry on playing acoustic, and ignore the fact that things were changing. I suppose in a way we were anti amplifiers You know, real music was acoustic, that sort of thing. But in truth our position changed very quickly after that. It had to, otherwise we wouldn't have got anymore gigs!

"Strangely enough the shift to amps led to me getting into a lot of other musical styles I wouldn't have done otherwise. For example I thought modern jazz was a lot of noise until I played it, I thought both Country and Soul were slush again until I played them and more recently I considered Reggae music to be out of time until I came to understand and play it. I ended up playing all styles, out of the blues and I suppose you could say I've come back into the blues full circle."

Despite an enviable number of credits to his name, Paul remained mainly a solo or duo artist with no real aspirations to head a band...."There were a few local bands who played Chuck Berry who I tried to convert to the blues, but generally I continued to play with different people."

One of Paul's more notable associations came with guitarist Stefan Grossman with whom he recorded the famous "Hot Dogs" sessions.

"I had a love hate relationship with Stefan. We kept falling out, didn't see each other for long periods but ultimately ended up playing together again. Even when we first hooked up we argued. He had played with the



Paul Rowan (left) with Mississippi Fred McDowell at the Mayfair Theatre - late '60s

Reverend Gary Davis and was of the opinion British musicians couldn't play the blues. I begged to differ. So we went to Les Cousins, and I thought we'll really give it to him, and do the blues all over him! (laughs). Anyway he chased after me after that. But the other problem was I like joking on stage - I think it's part of the entertainment, but Stefan wanted to be the main man with the jokes. I couldn't work like that. Overall he was good to me. I mean, I got paid...which was something, and I ended up playing with Son House through Stefan on an album called Ragtime Cowboy Jew. Sam Charters produced it, and it was my first recording that actually saw the light of day, although I had laid down some stuff before with Moxxy (Mick Gehlen)

Rowan's consummate ability on the harp didn't lead to any ego problems. Indeed as he explains, it was a lack in the belief in his own ability that probably

held him back.

"I basically never thought I was good enough to play professionally. I'd often think I was faking it...pretending. I now realise its all about self confidence. A lot of musos have a sort of split personality over this. On the one hand its, 'yeah I can play' and on the other hand they don't believe it. I was very much like that, and it was Alexis Korner who helped and encouraged me to do more. I used to do Alexis' head in about this. I first met him in 1966 at Les Cousins. I went down there to play with Baldry and he was down there with his wife. I just went up to him and said, 'Hello, how's Ollie Beak? (He was doing the kids show Five O'Clock Club at the time). He used to have Duffy Power up with him sometimes, and we had some great sessions. To me Alexis was the single most important figure on the British blues scene. I used to love his singing, his attitude and his knowledge. He

taught me so much; things about concepts of music I hadn't even thought about - like themes and structures. He opened up jazz to me, taught me a lot about people generally, and myself in particular, and was above all a great human being." His greatest quality and most important element to me was his ability to encourage people and make them believe in themselves. Beyond that he'd make you appreciate music - not just looking at a three chord, twelve bar blues, but rather looking at influences, different people's tuning. He basically opened up my ears, and I don't think there is anyone else around like him today. I still miss him greatly."

Paul ended up on a few duo and trio gigs with Alexis out of town and sat in with Alexis, Danny Thompson and Terry Cox as well as working intermittently with Korner and Mick Taylor who was on the Stones payroll at the time. He also enjoyed a stint with the now editor of Folk Roots Ian Anderson.

"We had a semi acoustic trio around 1969, playing country blues and the like. Sometimes we were a duo and sometimes a trio with say Bob Rowe on bass. Ian played his National steel guitar, and it was through him that I played with Mississippi Fred McDowell. Fred was staying at Ron Watt's place, downstairs. I came round to go to a gig and Fred was in the room and asked me to join him whilst he got his guitar in tune. He ended up asking me to work with him which was great, but I found it uncomfortable, and basically very hard. He played his guitar bottleneck style which I wasn't used to. Funnily enough I've heard some of his records since and I'm still not comfortable with it. He never played straightforward and had a habit of holding a note for an eternity. I couldn't figure out what I was supposed to do in the meanwhile!"

True to form, the association lasted a while with Anderson before Rowan once again floated about on the scene, hooking up with Long John Baldry again.

"I think it was around '69 and Baldry had a pop hit behind him and was doing cabaret-type gigs. In short I got to play quite a few of them and some better gigs like The Half Moon, Putney, and trips out to Swindon, Middlesbrough, Brighton etc. There

was talk of an album and US tour. The album was supposed to be produced by Rod Stewart on one side and Elton John on the other. To cut a long story short, there was a misunderstanding and I left the band. Immediately afterwards I was very down and thinking of packing it all in before I received a call from Alexis to do a session for the BBC - I think it was the Mike Raven Blues show. Alexis basically threatened never to talk to me again if I didn't do the gig and carry on playing."

Happily Paul Rowan continued to play, but if anything the blues was losing popularity and credibility in the early 70's as Progressive rock came to hold sway.

"I think it was in 1972 that a particular incident led me away from the blues. I was due to play the Marquee with DUFFY POWER...we had a support spot. Duffy's manager at the time threw a wobbly saying Duffy wouldn't play a supporting role, so I said something like, 'well go and get us some gigs then'

"Anyway me and Duffy had split up shortly afterwards. I was listening to a lot of black music and Duffy was worried about getting gigs..you're too black'

"So I thought to myself well maybe I'm playing with the wrong people. So on the strength of this I thought I'd check out what black people were actually playing in London. It was literally a case of getting down to the biggest black club in Britain - the All Nations in London Fields, and jumping up and just playing."

To this day Rowan still has some of the demo's he cut with reggae bands, his dirt sounding, steam driven harp, brilliantly counterpointing the dub back beat.

"We had some great sessions, and at one stage there was talk of some tour dates with Alton Ellis, but the band never ended up on the road, which was a shame, because Alton was one of the greats."

Paul continued his stylistic diversity up until around '76 when "a combination of inverted racism, and stale music led to me moving on. I didn't like the DJ toasting stuff, and reggae had runs its course....once they started using synth drums, and churning out that poppy stuff, I lost interest." Ill health caused Paul to

temporarily disappear from the music scene, before teaming up with a fine guitarist/singer from the US Mick Green (no relation) a collaboration that took Paul to Belgium for some lucrative dates.

By '86 Rowan was once again sitting in with people as he had all those years ago, before an invitation to Jersey led him to judge the World Harmonica Championships in October '87; "It was awful" jokes Paul; "Tommy Reilly and Larry Adler, etc., were there, but round every corner there was a harp player. Imagine over 200 harp players, and every second minute one would jump out at you and go wah wahl". (laughs). Happily Paul has finally settled into Little Matthew & The Intentions - a Chicago influenced band - which he joined after being prompted by fellow harp man Laurie Garman.

Asked about collective influences, Paul answers "threats, but joking apart, I'm into the whole gamut of players from Sonny Terry and Hammy Nixon to both Sonny Boys, Little Walter & Big Walter, James Cotton and Junior Wells. I've more or less played every style from Be Bop to Soul so there's a lot of room in the band for different influences." Anyone catching the band will enjoy the musical repertoire of Paul and guitarist/vocalist Les Wraight. But it is Rowan's sheer technique that really catches the eye. "I don't really practice at my tone - its something I've always had - though I do practice playing generally. I use a tongue-blocking technique and as far as I know only a handful of players employ it ...Laurie Garman is one, and I think Paul Lamb uses it to play chords. I find it gives me greater depth of sound and more control over the chords, as well as better timing. When you play the lip-pursing way, I find you are only playing half the harmonica. James Cotton, Carey Bell and Junior all use it and I think Charlie Musselwhite is doing it now...although he didn't before. It all leads to a clearer, bigger sound. I'll always remember a review I read of Sugar Blue at the Montreaux Jazz festival when they called him Caucasian sounding."

Paul aims to work hard with Little Matthew in the future and build up a lasting band: "We rehearsed nine months before our first gigs." He draws much of his inspiration from the

likes of Rick Estrin who he vied with back in '68 for the job of Muddy Waters' harp player; "Carey Bell held the job at the time, and I tried to nick ahead of Rick and Paul Osher." The fact that both Estrin and Bell are still out their prospering augurs well for Rowan's future: "My aim now is to keep the basic unit together and develop our music, and work regularly."

As an interesting postscript Paul is currently interested in a concept called Polarisation: "The manipulation of gravitational energy that surrounds everything - especially at the point of manufacture. The aim is to change the effect from adverse to beneficial, so things like records, CD's and even instruments can come up sounding cleaner, clearer and brighter."

Polarisation is a controversial

theory/process discovered by Peter Bell, and with an increasing number of endorsements by blues players and musos alike, it looks set to run and run. Judging by the awesome tone of Paul Rowan's, nay Little Matthew's, harp I suspect, just like his band, there is going to be a lot of interest shown in the coming months.

Pete Feenstra

LIVE

Review

PAT GROVER'S BLUE ZEROS, Ellington's, Swansea, 21/12/91

We all know how much the likes of Gary Moore have done to promote the blues - albeit a somewhat heavy-on-the-treble, rock guitar-dominated sort of blues - in this country in recent years. And whilst it's but a short step from Moore to blues circuit regulars such as the Hamsters, Walter Trout or Mick Pini, I can't help but wonder what any Moore-inspired baby blues boomers would make of an outfit like Pat Grover's Blue Zeros. There are no over-the-top guitar histrionics here, and they don't feel compelled to send you home with distortion-wracked eardrums. Like those other casually excellent groups, the Bob Pearce Blues Band and Paul Lamb & The King Snakes, the Zeros play the blues with genuine understanding and feel, and are not afraid to trade off volume for balance.

Grover is a veteran of the various Brunning-Sunflower bands and of the 'American Blues Legends' tours which were such a feature of the British scene

during the mid-70s; his discography can boast sessions with such luminaries as Eddie Burns, J.B. Hutto and Johnny Mars, so it's perhaps no surprise that his own outfit achieves a degree of authenticity quite beyond the ken of most of our domestic groups. This was the second time in a few weeks I'd made the trip to see the band at the headquarters of the Swansea Blues Society; they'd impressed me enormously on the earlier occasion, so I was more than keen to get a second helping. They're a five-piece - Grover sings and shares guitar duties with the excellent Paul Alabaster, Andrew Hawkey is a fine keyboards player (and a useful occasional harp and-vocals man) and the rhythm section, drummer Rob Gillespie and Maynard 'Outdoor Man' Hooper, bass, are perfect backroom boys, deft of touch and with plenty of swing.

There's a remarkable freshness about the Zeros' work, even though the set list is largely drawn from those same Chicago sources that fuel our heavier-handed groups. Wisely, they avoid the most obvious material (no 'Hoochie Coochie's or 'Mojo's for this mob), but even so, tunes such as 'Nine Below Zero', 'Reconsider Baby' and 'Big Road Blues' can seem turgidly familiar in the wrong hands. Fortunately, here they emerged full of sparkle and free from fake, sledgehammer passion. 'Zero' in fact, pointed out the definite vocal similarities between Pat Grover

and the second Sonny Boy, although the same composer's 'Checkin' On My Baby' - which had appeared earlier - seemed to owe far more, in mood and tempo, to the Wells/Guy reading than to the original. It also served as a vehicle for some of the best playing of the evening, with Grover, Hawkey and Alabaster each taking a solo before the two guitarists settled into an exciting call-and-response session that would have done justice to a hard-riffing horn section. Snooks Eaglin's 'Hey Lawdy Baby' was one of the obscurer items on the bill and was again distinguished by some notable keyboards work; numbers by Hawkey himself, B.B. King and Junior Parker (...well, a loosely adapted 'Feelin' Good', anyway) brought the set to a rousing close and more than confirmed my impressions of the earlier gig. This is one band that most definitely deserves wider exposure. Come on, you festival promoters, give these guys a break.

Paul Lewis



ROCKIN' RODENTS

MICHAEL PRINCE RATTLES THE HAMSTERS' CAGE

First of all, let's try and appease any dissenters out there. No, they are not a blues band, but have their roots firmly in the blues and have a healthy respect for blues and other closely related musics. There has apparently been much discussion about this in other quarters, but now we are called "Boogie" this writer for one feels we should also look at all good music forms which have blues connections. The band themselves are quite clear on this. They openly voice their hatred of "purists" and believe they are instrumental in turning many younger listeners on to the blues proper via their music, which they like to call "blue wave."

I chatted to front man Snails' Pace Slim before they went on stage to a very appreciative audience in Hastings recently. He explained that the band have been together for about 3 - 4 years and effectively stole the name, which projects an initial image that is the absolute antithesis of their music, from the Sex Pistols who used it once to get over some council ban on a live

appearance. It was clearly meant as a bit of a joke, but they did not anticipate the mini rodent culture which was to evolve, complete with all the examples of name-play they were to later use (e.g. their latest video release "Burnin' Vermin'" which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue). Slim, who admits responsibility for the name says "I just thought it was a great name for an aggressive group! It has hurt us though because some people admitted later that they hadn't bothered to come and see us because they thought we'd be a load of rubbish from the name. It was just meant to be an ironic sort of joke and I think when fans see the artwork on the T-shirts they enjoy the joke."

One of this country's hardest working bands, they recently did a major tour supporting fellow-Essex band Dr. Feelgood, which took them to a lot of new areas, as they had previously played mainly in the South East corner of England. The Hamsters took

Workin' - on rock legends and is going out later this year, probably on Channel 4. Naturally they wanted to do something on Jimi Hendrix, and they wanted to contact people who were in some way involved with the legacy of Hendrix and they'd heard that we are regarded as this country's major exponents of his music, not that I would have thought that we were. But whenever we go to a new town we receive comments on the Hendrix material."

I can wholeheartedly confirm this vicious rumour, as I've yet to hear another band attempt Hendrix songs and pull it off as effectively. Snail's Pace continued, "I've never really looked upon it as any big deal, but for some reason it seems to have caught people's imagination, which is fine. I don't play anything like Jimi Hendrix, but just try to capture the spirit of his music". This, I feel, has to be admired as slavish copies would undoubtedly be

"(Mickey Jupp)...is great. As far as I'm concerned, anyone who can write 'When I'm with you girl I get an extension, and I don't mean Alexander Graham Bell's invention' is worthy of an Ivor Novello Award."

advantage of the tour to start establishing themselves in these new parts of the country, something other bands often fail to do, even when supporting big names and even when they are good bands themselves. This they achieved by actively going out of their way to reap some kind of benefit from the Feelgoods tour.

The Hamsters have just been asked to be involved in a Hendrix documentary. Slim explained "We've just finished filming an interview for a new series - which I think is likely to be called Mojo

downright embarrassing.

Whilst they have a reputation for their Hendrix material, one should not allow this to overshadow the rest of their repertoire. Another major influence and source of great songs is Mickey Jupp, also originally from the Sarfend Delta, but now resident in the north of England. Slim rates Jupp highly: "Mick's great, a great artist. I think he's one of the best songwriters this country's ever produced. He's a brilliant lyricist. As far as I'm concerned, anyone who can write

'When I'm with you girl I get an extension, and I don't mean Alexander Graham Bell's invention' is worthy of an Ivor Novello Award"

These lines are from "Switchboard Susan," which features in the Hamster's song list, as does "Blues for the Blues" which the Hamsters regard as a kind of protest song against manufactured popular music. Slim considers Mickey Jupp has influenced just about every musician over 30 from the Southend area, adding "He's one of the great British rockers. I think the man's a genius".

We then went on to other influences on the band. Slim considers "You are influenced by everything you hear, whether you like it or not. Little things creep in. I've never had one main influence. In the early days of the band we did odd country and jazz things. In terms of guitar influences I've listened to so many people, but if I had to sit down and listen to someone currently, it would probably be Jerry Donahue or Danny Gatton. I first heard of Danny Gatton when he played with Robert Gordon and then I read a review in Rolling Stone which said he sounded like three guitarists playing at once, so I sent for the album. He's amazing - sounds like Charlie Christian, Les Paul and Merle Travis all playing at once!" It's interesting that Snail's Pace Slim mentions these names, when the overall sound of the band, for which he is mainly responsible as lead voice and instrument, is decidedly blues-based. Of Gatton's latest release for Elektra

They moan that no-one likes it but at the same time they really don't want anybody else to have it. They're what Robert Cray described as 'bluenatics'." At this point I quoted the example given to me by Roy Bookbinder years ago that he considered this purism (which is really tantamount to racism) to be primarily a British thing. He said he could get well-paid college gigs in the States, but had to struggle for gigs over here, unlike some of the older bluesmen who were, in reality, past their prime. Slim agreed "I think that people like Gary Moore and to a lesser



extent ourselves do more for the blues than some of the dodgy old black guys who come over here and can't play any more. At least we are taking the blues to kids that have never heard it.

"Be they blues, jazz, folk or whatever, they're always moaning that their music doesn't get properly serviced by the media. It's their own fault because they're so precious about it and don't really want anybody else to share it...They're what Robert Cray described as 'bluenatics' "

he says "It's the ultimate in country-blues-rockabilly-jazz-Telecaster abuse. It sounds like Albert Lee in a bad mood." (See BBR Boogie No. 16 for more on Danny Gatton.)

We then got on to the subject of blues purists and Slim explained he had no time for them.

"Be they blues, jazz, folk or whatever, they're always moaning that their music doesn't get properly serviced by the media. It's their own fault because they're so precious about it and don't really want anybody else to share it.

There's more to be achieved by introducing the blues to young kids, than playing "Dust My Broom" to some 40-year old who grew up on it. Another thing that annoys me about purists is that if you push them they'll admit they'd never heard of Howling Wolf until they bought a Rolling Stones record."

This attitude can also be traced back to a time when Snail's Pace Slim was just plain old Barry Martin, presenter of the excellent programme Red Hot Black & Blue on Essex radio in the

mid-eighties, when he would slip in the latest punk hit to attract younger listeners to the show. They were then turned on to the likes of Muddy, Wolf, Robert Johnson and other big names from the world of blues, not to mention others from jazz, folk, country etc. Slim commented, "That's where I think Peel went wrong by playing a couple of hours of 'Death by Milkfloat' followed by a blues. If his show had been equal measures of everything like mine was, he would have had less chance of alienating people."

I wonder how many Boogie readers listen to John Peel now? Around about this point our interview drew to a logical conclusion as the venue began to fill up with expectant Hamsters fans. They were not disappointed as the band played impeccably for just under two hours without a break. Like all great musicians, they have a knack of making it all look so natural and effortless. A quick mention in despatches for the other two Hamsters is needed here, as they inevitably tend to get overlooked as Snail's Pace is lead vocalist, lead instrumentalist and spokesman for the band. This is a pity as they are an absolutely first-class rhythm section. On tasty bass and backing vocals is the exotically titled Ms. Zsa Zsa Poltergeist (or Andy Billups to his nearest and dearest) and on drums and backing vocals is the rock-steady Alan Parrish, known to Hamster fans as Rev. Otis Elevator. Being the rhythm section in a three-piece is not an easy task, but these lads excel.

So if the Rockin' Rodents come to your town or nearby, which is highly likely with their intensive gigging schedule, and assuming Boogie readers are above purism, give them a try and prepare to be entertained. This is one area where the Hamsters score over many other outfits, because not only are they extremely proficient musicians, but they also aim to entertain their audience.

Photos and text: Michael Prince

JON HISEMAN

INTERVIEWED by
TREVOR HODGETT

John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames and The Graham Bond organisation would be on anyone's list of the top British blues and r'n'b bands of the sixties.

And, incredibly, Jon Hiseman drummed with all of these bands, before forming his own jazz/blues/rock band Colosseum in the seventies.

Following his performance at the Belfast Festival's Guinness Spot with his own quartet, featuring saxophonist Barbara Thompson, Hiseman reminisced about his extraordinary career.

"When I was semi professional, Jack Bruce, myself, Henry Lowther and Lynn Dobson were in a group called Group Sounds 4. Jack introduced me to Graham Bond, which is how I got the Graham Bond job.

"Graham was an extraordinary character. He was always crazy - in the nicest possible way. He was never concerned with the consequences of his actions, which finally led to his downfall, but it also gives you a tremendous kind of crazy freedom to cross barriers. So the fact that he could start off as a refrigerator salesman, whilst playing saxophone in his spare time, so that he could get voted the new star alto player by the Melody Maker, and he could then form a rhythm and blues band singing traditional blues music, and then pick people like Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker, means that he had a strange kind of vision.

"He was always searching and of course, like all people who are in the front of things, he missed the boat. If you're trying to make lots of money you have to play music that ordinary folk can understand and he never did that.

"He was a serious 22 grain a day heroin addict. He came to Ireland to do a Cold Turkey and when he came back he was crazy - I mean crazy in a different term. He was never really normal again, but he always played beautifully."

Hiseman played in the Graham Bond

Organisation with Bond and Dick Heckstall Smith after Bruce and Baker had left. "The universities were the centre pin. You would go to Manchester University and the bill would be the Graham Bond Organisation, The Moody Blues and Jimi Hendrix.... On one Saturday night! That was normal business."

Hiseman also recorded with Bond. "I did a version of Wade In The Water, which I think was released as a single. And then Graham got some money from Polydor and we went into Olympic and started recording at midnight and we finished at six.

But the money from Polydor, as I understand it, he used for drugs. The tapes remained there for years unpaid for. Subsequently they were issued on Solid Bond. I've never been paid for Solid Bond and I've never bothered to get involved cos for six hours work who gives a damn?"

Hiseman stayed with Bond a year. "It was my first professional job, and to be a year in a band seemed an age. I left and Georgie Fame immediately offered me a job.

"We did a lot of cabaret because he'd had hit records. He did a Christmas season every year at the Mayfair Theatre. The Sooty Show was in the afternoon and Georgie in the evening. Georgie decided that the band should warm up the audience before he came on. We went out there with Lynn Dobson, a bass player, myself, and John McLaughlin and we played some serious strange music for fifteen minutes with Georgie standing in the wings going 'Yeahhh'. He loved it."

Hiseman next signed on with John Mayall. The last two or three months were the best because he sacked the whole band except for me and Micky Taylor. He was on a new thing then, which was no rehearsals. He'd say, 'A blues in C' or a blues in F,' and he would start playing and we had four bars to come up with an original feel and he would make up the words as he went along. We spent three months

doing very successful gigs like that."

Mayall has sometimes been depicted as a ruthless bandleader. "No, no, John's a sweetie. He was absolutely direct. There was no side to him. He'd call the band together and he'd say, 'You're fired, you're fired, you're fired,' and he'd laugh. Now I think that's a lot less hard than creating bad feeling and talking about people behind their back. To me that's the right way to do it. I thought he was wonderful."

Hiseman next had a brief interlude with John McLaughlin and Jack Bruce. "We played some of the early stuff that Mahavishnu subsequently did. I came with a jazz feel and it was Billy Cobham who saw the potential for turning those things into a funky situation. Billy was Brazilian, so he could bring something to it that I never could have with my background. That's why John went to America and found Billy."

Hiseman then formed Colosseum with Dick Heckstall-Smith, Dave Greenslade and Tony Reeves.

"We held auditions for a guitarist/singer, and that was Colosseum's downfall. I don't think we ever got anybody that was the absolutely right mix. We had James Litherland. Listening to some of the things that we did now, they were amongst our best things, but we were not happy that he had a big enough persona or voice to carry us through to a major rank.

"Dave (Clem) Clempson came in on guitar and did the singing with Mark Clarke, the new bass player, but again they really couldn't handle major vocals.

"And then Chris Farlowe came in, who we thought would take us into the big time. In Germany they thought he was wonderful and the band went onto another notch. But in areas where we'd already been seriously successful they didn't like the change.

"After we'd been with Chris for a year we began to feel he wasn't the right man for the job. He appeared to lose interest to the point where he rang up the day before one tour of Sweden and said his voice had gone. We suspected that he actually wanted to stay in the U.K. to carry on his business, cos all the time he was running a business.

"We started to audition singers, unbeknown to Chris, and halfway through Clem said, 'I've had an offer

LETTERS

Dear Editor

I must compliment you on the balance maintained between reviews of the current blues activity and the informative historical articles emanating from the great blues boom of 1964 - 70.

However, I would like to see you (or more precisely your subscribers) exert an influence on the record companies regarding the re-release, particularly in CD format, of some rare and desirable albums from the blues boom era.

Personally I would be delighted to obtain CD versions of Johnny Winter's "Progressive Blues Experiment", Keef Hartley's "Halfbreed", John Mayall's "USA Union" or "Empty Rooms" or some Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation

As an initial suggestion, this influence might take the form of a petition to the record companies, the compilation of a most desired "Blues Boom Top Ten" or more ambitiously, some especially commissioned projects via yourselves as intermediaries between the record companies and the (hopefully substantial) market provided by your readership.

Perhaps in the not too distant future, we'll be able to turn to page 7 for this issues special offer!

yours sincerely
Chris Andrews
Leicester

Dear Editor

I like the new BBR Boogie very much indeed and I enjoyed the Charlie Musselwhite article, and The SE13 Blues Connection by Mel Wright which was very interesting about the Lewisham bands etc., with old adverts from the early sixties era.

It is very nice to know that Boogie is now out monthly. Just one complaint, that is the gig lists are always out of date when we receive it at the end of each month.

Brian Jessup
Morden,
Surrey.

from Humble Pie. They want to pay me £200 a week and give me a Bentley', and I said, 'Son, you should do it.' I then was faced with finding a singer and a guitarist, and I called the band together and said, 'Fellas, I've had enough.'

By this stage Hiseman had been on the road for five years. "There were no tours. You just worked. You had bookers in offices in London booking you and they didn't give a shit. You crisscrossed the country in the most lunatic way, with amazing drives which nobody these days would ever do. It was a different age.

"Just at the time we knocked Colosseum on the head the idea of tours was beginning and if the management had said: 'Take three months off. Think about what you want to do....' But they never did. They were stupid."

Colosseum's only American tour was a disappointment. "We went to the first night, which was Bridgewater in Maine and the gig was for the night before! We'd missed it by a day.

"The second night was at the Boston Tea Party, opposite the Byrds, and we went down a storm. We thought we'd cracked America. But from that moment on we never really went down as well as we thought we would. We were way ahead. We played the Fillmore West and the support band was the Chicago Transit Authority and they said, 'What an interesting idea to use jazz solos with vocals and rock rhythms. They were playing very twee, three part harmony pop. Nine months later they changed their name to Chicago and copied us exactly.'

Following the demise of Colosseum Hiseman formed Tempest. "I wanted to do something much simpler. I got Alan Holdsworth in and I got Ollie Halsall in, but it was never simple enough."

The name 'Colosseum' was resurrected. "Gary Moore rang me and said, 'We ought to do something together. I was going to Germany and playing with the United Jazz and Rock Ensemble and funding rehearsals. We'd been working for nine months and I could not give this band away because everybody was blackmailing me. They were saying, 'Call it Colosseum something and you got a deal,' and that was unfair.

Suddenly I discovered I was £7,000 in debt and I went to Gerry Bron, the manager of the original Colosseum and

said, 'I got a band and I'll call it Colosseum II,' and he said, 'Come in the studio next Wednesday' We did three tracks and he gave us a £60,000 deal on the spot!

"The material that Gary wanted to play was very complex. He'd done the very simple Skid Row thing and wanted to come where we'd been with Colosseum. I was trying to have a nice rock band like the Allman Brothers.

"We worked our butts off. And they nearly got Electric Savage away, which was the best record I've made to date. Gary got itchy feet. He wanted to try his luck elsewhere and we split up in 1978. I thought he was a wonderful guitarist."

Colosseum II was Hiseman's last 'rock' band. "The volume was getting to me. It was *loud*. The audience that we needed to play Colosseum II music to needed to be semi intelligent and they couldn't cope with the volume, and the kids who came, it wasn't Status Quo enough. People like Andrew Lloyd Webber, who we knew, would come and they'd have to wear earplugs. They'd love the music, but say it was a horrendous experience. But Gary would not turn down.

"When I finished with Colosseum II, Jack Bruce, myself and Alan Holdsworth formed a trio. The trouble was Jack wanted telephone numbers. I said, 'You've got to play this music at medium to soft level, compared with a rock group. You've got to go to Germany, tour all these wonderful 800 seater clubs, and we can be incredibly successful as a cult band. But if you tell a record company that you want £150,000 to play instrumental music, with Alan Holdsworth playing seriously-way-out guitar, it'll never happen.' And it never happened."

Hiseman instead joined his wife Barbara Thompson's band. "I had so many contacts that I ended up running the band. The joke is I've played to the biggest crowds for the longest time than any of the bands I was ever in, including Colosseum. This has been by far the most successful band I've ever been with and I've earned more money with this band than any other band I've ever been with. It's been ten years of continuous success!"

Trevor Hodgett

BLUES, JAZZ and POETRY

Pete Feenstra catches up with the enduring blues, jazz and poetic talents of PETE BROWN and DICK HECKSTALL SMITH.

PETE BROWN & DICK HECKSTALL SMITH have been around long enough, and been in enough "projects" to furnish several volumes of script. Yet after three decades of working together, and separately, in bands such as Coliseum, Graham Bond Organisation and Piblokto, the dynamic duo are still working at their respective talents. And after years of interweaving between projects and bands, both Pete and Dick find themselves on Brown's new Intercoceter label. Significantly perhaps Brown's effort "Ardours Of The Lost Rake" is crammed full of surreal lyrics, vignettes and cameos of situations real or imagined. Dick on the other hand has continued to experiment with his Afro jazz and blues influences to come up with the kind of approach that effortlessly matches the new young turks of the jazz field. Titled "Wozanasu" the album is Dick's definitive calling card, and marks a long overdue effort from a veteran of the British blues and jazz scene.

What is interesting about both characters are the diverse ways in which they came to embrace the blues - a musical form that although not readily apparent in recent works, is still at the core of their musical environment. Given Pete's long and varied involvement in bands like Cream and the Graham Bond Organisation, our conversation naturally drifted to the late sixties and early seventies. Now, much has been made of the mystique of Graham Bond, and I have never paid much attention to some of the more curious stories surrounding him, so I left Pete to cover what he could remember of his and Dick's involvement. Mission concluded, I duly went to change tapes, only to discover the Bond period failed to make it on to the machine - the tape had jammed. Is this curious, or merely the up-shot of a duff tape?

What follows therefore, are some recollections of the early days, and some background to what both Pete and Dick are up to now, with the Graham Bond period, and Brown's sojourn into the world of A&R rep to follow at a later date.

PETE: "We first collaborated around 1961, although I'd met Dick before that round about 1960 at the Cafe Des Artistes. I used to just hang out, and eventually started to do some jazz and poetry sessions with Mike Horowitz. That later developed into a loose band."

DICK: "That was also the time we started rowing in Graham Bond who had already retired before that! But he returned, an inspired character, breathing fire. He suddenly started coming around a lot more again and playing all over the place. I think it might have been Elkington who rowed him in, in the first place. It may have been the case that Graham knew him through some pharmaceutical contact. *(laughs)* In fact I think it was on an Elkington gig that Graham first showed up and said he might start playing again. I believe he *(Elkington?)* is in Accra or Sierra Leone now, at the university there!"

Pete Brown meanwhile had been concentrating on his poetry and actually making a living.

"I was reading and performing my own poetry, we did the poetry and jazz both together and apart, but it was akin to jazz. The band we put together included people like Stan Tracy, Laurie Morgan, Jeff Clyne...sometimes it might include Gordon Beck, Bobby Wellins, Johnny Birch etc so it certainly had a jazz bent."

The blues connection was a gradual one as Brown and his troupe frequently headed out of town to do gigs on the same evening as other bands.

"We started off with arts festivals, coffee bars, jazz clubs, uni's, colleges, and later on it all led to a residency at

the Marquee. What happened was that we ended up doing the Tuesday and Alexis Korner's mob would do the Thursday, or vice versa, I can't remember which."

"Was I in that?" interrupts Dick.

"Yes, it was the only time I ever got into the place for free." laughs Pete. "You had to pay to play even in those days."

One of the first trips out of town led to an apocryphal story concerning John Mayall. Pete takes up the story.

"Eric Clapton, Hughie Flint, etc., were in the band, and I had a poetry gig with Brian Patton earlier in the evening at Southampton university. But before the band went on, we were all asked to judge a beauty competition. Being severely stoned or whatever, there was this horrendous sight of me, Brian, Eric and John all leching over these poor students. We all knew who was going to win, so she dashed off the moment the contest finished. Anyway, this was the night I found out about John Mayall's "democracy". I got a lift back to town in his van - I think it was a Commer, and it was freezing cold in the middle of winter. Mayall got himself sorted on a sort of ledge with a mattress, sleeping bag, hood, and blankets and we were all left freezing cold on these tiny seats...bumping all over the place." *(laughs)*

Pete Brown's shift into the world of rock and blues came about through an increasing number of contacts that spread from jazz through to blues.

"Basically, because I knew Dick, Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker and Graham Bond, I gradually became involved in music. A year later I finally tried to put a band together with me singing, and Dick as well. We actually did some demo's. Now, this was long before Colosseum, Mahavisnu, The Battered Ornaments, etc., and a whole load of people came down to see the band rehearse. The lineup was Dick, John Mungford, Danny Thompson, John

Mitchell, a great keyboard player who now plays percussion, John McLaughlin, Laurie Allen and me. The general consensus was, 'Nah! they're a bunch of jazz has beens', and this was barely 1967!"

"Refugees from the nucleus" adds Dick. The basic band became The Battered Ornaments, but not without organisational problems as Pete explains.

"Dick helped me enormously, because basically, I didn't trust my manager at the time. We had the band just about together, but we needed a producer for the album, and so Dick ended up co-producing it, because he was the only person I trusted."

Dick recalls his first experience as a producer as follows; "I didn't really know anything technically. It was a case of sitting there in the box and saying things like, 'wouldn't it be nice if we did such and such?' And the general response was, 'What on earth are you talking about?'"

"I suppose, as Pete says, it was more to do with arrangements than anything. I'd come out and end up playing what I thought could contribute to the piece (or the arrangement). Where I thought there was room for some improvisation, I'd hum it, and generally try and stress the relative emphases and balance. This is probably what they now call production today, the major difference being that I don't think we had an overall picture of what the album should sound like, as they do today."

"I don't think anyone had any idea." laughs Pete. "Dick was a major creative input into that project. He was the only person I could trust. I mean I'd had hits by then with Cream, but the Battered Ornaments was different. It was words first, then the music. With Cream it was the music of Jack Bruce, which was more blues influenced, and then the words. With the Ornaments, the mixture was more eclectic and wider. It was more jazzy, folk, generally more anarchic and included poetry set to music."

Whilst with Cream, Brown cemented his name in the annals of both blues and rock & roll. "Sunshine Of Your Love," "I Feel Free," "White Room," "Politician," etc., proved you could combine both humour and the surreal within the confines of a blues-rock outfit.

"I generally thought of the words and Jack put together the music for Cream. Sometimes it worked simultaneously, but the thing people tend to forget about Cream is that they were a road band. You know, they were on the road the whole time. In fact just about everyone at the time was. And nobody really thought about making money from records. That part of the music scene was reserved for a different part of the business. So the situation was we would come back off the road for a few days, and have to come up with some new ideas fast. So albums like "Disraeli Gears" were recorded in four



Pete Brown and trumpet

fucking days! And that's just what we did, and how we worked. Whoever came up with the ideas the fastest got recorded first."

The pressure to come up with new material at the drop of a hat was one that Brown was familiar with. He'd done the same thing on the poetry circuit.

"I'd been doing poetry for six years, and making a living from *NOT* writing books. I made my money from readings, and because there were not huge amounts of venues, you kept working the same ones - particularly in Liverpool. This meant you continually had to come up with more stuff, otherwise the punters would get bored."

Pete therefore had a good grounding before slipping into the Brown/Bruce song writing partnership. "It was a continuum of developing material for performance from the reading. It was a healthy pre-requisite for rock and blues lyrics. The other factor in my life was that I'd also listened to a wealth of jazz and blues stuff. Blues lyrics in

particular interested me.

"I'd listened extensively to T-Bone Walker, Robert Johnson, Sleepy John Estes and even Victoria Spivey, and realised that a lot of different people were into the same thing...that is, most musicians I knew, with the notable exception of Ginger Baker who was into some obscure version of Polynesian rhythms that he once asked me to put lyrics to. I think the whole lot got lost on the plane home once, and never saw the light of day. But generally everyone from Dick to Graham, Jack and myself were into everything from traditional blues to Charles Mingus, and that was the axis of inspiration."

Brown's Battered Ornaments should have done better than merely become a cult band. With his Cream days behind him, Brown discloses that the band actually sacked him a few days before the projected Stones In The Park gig. "That might have broken us big. I mean it was a band with people like Chris Spedding, Rob Tait, Nisar Khan, Roger Potter, Pete Bailey and even Charlie Hart on violin at one stage." Piblokto followed, yet another imaginative Brown project.

"Where did the name come from?" asks Dick.

"A friend of mine used to use it as an exclamation mark, but it originally came from the poet Lawrence Furling Getty in a novel called Her. It's an eskimo itching disease!"

"I had wanted to work with Jim Mullen since catching him in Glasgow. I already knew Graham Bond...and Roger Bunn joined. I knew him from an association with Davy Graham. I think the combination of my jewishness and his madness was a lethal mixture. The whole thing was very experimental, full of odd time signatures, but never losing sight of a melody (typical of Bunn), and there was lots of improvisation and, of course, we never lost sight of the blues...a bit like the Grateful Dead, but less boring and full of ideas. We'd do a rock song in say 7/8 and then a blues in 11, not your regular kind of set!"

Pete Feenstra

Part two, next issue, will include the life and times of Piblokto; on the road with Graham Bond; life in an A&R department; and Pete's return to recording with Dick.

JOE LOUIS WALKER

Interviewed on 8/4/91 by

PETE SKINNER and NORMAN DARWEN

Interviews are seldom held under ideal circumstances and this one was no exception. When we arrived at Otis Grand's house Joe had not been awake for long and was anxious to prepare for that evening's gig at Putney. With the release of his fourth Hightone L.P. "Live at Slim's", his contract with the label has expired. We had a lot to ask, and not much time to ask it in.

Pete Skinner. When you were interviewed by Norman a few years ago (*1) you mentioned that you saw Magic Sam at the Matrix Club in San Francisco was it just the once you saw him?

Joe Louis Walker. Yeah

Pete Skinner. What was your impression of him?

Joe Louis Walker. I felt sorry for him because there were only six people in the club, and the club owner came after he played one set and told him to chuck it in, wrap it up, nobody's here. So I went up and met him, talked to him for a few minutes. I was glad the next night because he played the Winterland Auditorium with John Mayall and there was a big crowd and I think from that gig he got offered to go to England that was being set up for him but he died. (*2) But he seemed like a very nice person when I talked to him.

Pete Skinner. When you recorded your second L.P. "The Gift", you started using different musicians in the studio. why?

Joe Louis Walker. Well, I wasn't happy with my band. I didn't like the drummer I had I shouldn't say I didn't like him, I just say he was strong in some areas and weak in some other ones and I needed somebody who could play in all different areas and the drummer and, to an extent, my

keyboard player at that time were a very strong touring band but as far as in the studio, with all the subtleties, they weren't that strong as far as I was concerned. To be honest, about the strongest person in the studio for the first two or three records was Henry (Oden). He'd been in the studio before - he knew - but he didn't have to write, sing, direct - he didn't have to do that. All he had to do was pick up the bass. So I had to get in the studio and learn how to convey all that exuberance from the stage to the studio and its not easy - it never was easy.

Norman Darwen. Why is it Volume One on "Slims" - are you expecting a Volume 2?

Joe Louis Walker. Well we made enough for two albums and we might do another one if we can agree - I'm free now, I'm not under contract to anybody, so if we can agree on all the different deal and financial situations maybe we'll put out another one.

Norman Darwen. What sort of things are there still in the can?

Joe Louis Walker. Bluesy stuff.... 747, Don't cha know Baby... Just a Little Bit, Every Night and Every Day, One Woman - a lot of bluesier things.

Norman Darwen. What unissued stuff is there left with Hightone, studio things?

Joe Louis Walker. Nothing, and if

there was they couldn't let it out anyway 'cos I'm not under contract with them.

Norman Darwen. So Slim's Volume two, if that works out and that's it?

Joe Louis Walker. That's it.

Norman Darwen. What kind of following have you got in the states and what sort of places have you been playing?

Joe Louis Walker. Its sort of like I've got in England - a lot of people listening to it. We've been playing Slims, big clubs like the Town and Country we're playing bigger venues now. We're playing the Shoreline Ampitheatre with Fats Domino and playing the Universal Ampitheatre's tribute to Willie Dixon. SDI play some big, big venues and I play smaller places like Larry Blake's... Different places... various.

Norman Darwen. "Don't Play Games" on "Slims" really blew me away. Have you thought of doing any solo gigs?

Joe Louis Walker. Yeah, I'm going to do some when I get home, then I may do a few here in England, depending on what I get (offered) here.

Norman Darwen. How much do you feel part of the local scene over in the bay area?

Joe Louis Walker. Well I'm a big part of it, I've been in it for quite a few years now. Its a nice blues scene, it really is.

Norman Darwen. Who's impressed you on the local scene.

Joe Louis Walker. I like Maurice Mckinnies, I like Cool Papa.

Norman Darwen. How is Cool Papa? I heard he wasn't that good.

Joe Louis Walker. I heard one of his legs got amputated up to the knee, but he's doing a bit better now.

Norman Darwen. Tell me about your new bass player and how you got him?

Joe Louis Walker. Art Love? He played with the Staples Singers and a lot of bands around home. He came from Chicago. My cousin was going to do the gig, Ted Wysinger, but he couldn't do it and so Art's name came up and I'm really lucky to have him.

Pete Skinner. I thought you'd have trouble replacing Henry as he could play both old and modern styles.

Joe Louis Walker. There's a lot of guys at home who can do that, but there's a lot of guys at home who either they can't travel, like Ted, or any



number of things. But Art, he can travel and he has a good attitude.

Pete Skinner. How did you get Paul Revelli with you - 'cause he's a good drummer.

Joe Louis Walker. Great drummer, great singer too. I got in touch with him in San Francisco. There's a lot of guys who are aware of me, and I auditioned and I'd been through so many drummers, and he seemed to fit in and stick real good.

Pete Skinner. Vocal-wise the singers in your band blend really well with you - was that a factor in your hiring them.

Joe Louis Walker. Not really - actually I didn't even know that any of them sang. (On "Live at Slim's"...) its Paul and Jeff (Lewis) the trumpet player that's singing on "Bit By Bit" and all these reviews say its Huey Lewis - Huey doesn't open his mouth - he's playing harmonica.

Pete Skinner. Tell us about the inclusion of "Little Village" in your live set, and your Jimmy Reed style harmonica playing.

Joe Louis Walker. Its one of my favourite Sonny Boy Williamson songs. I was playing harmonica at fourteen or fifteen, I just never... I do a lot, I play Piano - I may play it on one of these

records one of these days. I just gotta feel comfortable.

Pete Skinner. "I don't know why" has a strong T. Bone Walker influence.

Joe Louis Walker. Well, T. Bone Walker is to me like B.B. I used to go through my mother's and father's record collection, play all the records and just sort of take it for granted. Then I'd listen to that, listen to B.B., skip past that to go to Buddy Guy or somebody... after a while when I start listening I go back, back to B.B. and T. Bone all the time. So I started listening to them more... sinks in.

Pete Skinner. What offers to record have you had recently?

Joe Louis Walker. Antone's, Alligator, Sonet called me. A lot of little labels have called me - I don't know what I'm going to do, I'm just glad to be free right now.

Pete Skinner. Do you feel you might have to compromise a bit to reach a wider audience?

Joe Louis Walker. Well, I don't know, I don't feel its a thing of.... I know a lot of guys that have gone on to bigger and better things. If you make a concrete, knowledgeable thing to compromise you sort a defeat yourself right away.

Bar the pleasantries, that was it. If however you're wondering what this Slim's Club is like, **Otis Grand** had this to offer: "Slim's is a wonderful club, anybody who's anybody plays there - its like the Town and Country of San Francisco. Its owned by Boz Scaggs and his brother runs it and it features a lot of top acts and its got a great T. shirt and beautiful waitresses!" It would, we suppose be spurious to ask if they do mail order, or how much p+p you have to enclose before they'll send you a waitress!

***NOTES**

(1) Blues and Rhythm No39 Sep/Oct 1988

(2) Magic Sam was part of the 1969 American Folk Blues Festival, appearing at the Royal Albert Hall on October 3rd 1969. He died 29/11/69. We assume Joe Louis was unaware that he took part in this tour.

We would both like to thank Otis Grand for arranging this interview.

HENRY McCULLOUGH

interviewed by Trevor Hodgett

Who was the only Irishman to perform at the Woodstock Festival? And who played guitar on Jesus Christ Superstar? And who was the guitarist in Paul McCartney's Wings?

The answer to all these questions is Henry McCullough, who in addition has played with Joe Cocker, Stevie Marriot, Carol Grimes, Frankie Miller and countless other blues and rock luminaries.

Inevitably for an Irishman of his vintage Henry's career began with showbands, such as the Skyrockets and Gene and the Gents.

"Being allowed to go out and play music was fantastic," he recalls. "We did everything: from Chuck Berry to Jim Reeves, old time waltzes and a bit of comedy - Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren's Goodness Gracious me. The punters all loved that.

"It initiated me into the showbiz end of music which stood me in good stead for later years whenever I got involved with Paul McCartney, because he was a bit showband as well - all wearing the same jackets. Only flashier!"

With the advent of the British beat boom Henry began to feel stifled in the showbands. He was invited to join the People, a Belfast group based in Blackpool. "Chrissie Stewart, the bass player, heard I wasn't too happy in the showbands and gave me a call. That was my chance - to go off and join a beat group. They were all living in one room - not a very good scene. These four boys with check hipster trousers, going out for £7 a night. And I arrived straight from the showband scene with seventeen mohair suits! There was great money in showbands."

Tiring of poverty The People retreated to Dublin and took off. "It was great in Dublin, but after we peaked in the clubs in Dublin there was nowhere else to go but London. Into the van, gear in back, writing in lipstick, OFF

TO LONDON.

We lived in the van in Camden Town. There was a hole in the roof so we had to park under this bridge. Five of us, including a roadie, who split for obvious reasons.

"Anytime we came across a gig we used to go down to the toilets in Leicester Square to change our gear, to wash and brush up. We got this gig at the middle Earth with Pink Floyd. Procol Harum, at the time of Whiter Shade were headlining.

"We came on at three in the morning. Mike Jeffries and Chas Chandler were in the audience and they came up and said, 'Sign this contract.' We said, 'No problem.'

"They sent us to Majorca for three months to write original material. We came back with only one song. It was because of too many banana daquiries!"

Chandler tried to mould the band, whom he rechristened Eire Apparent. "He said, 'Henry, you can't stand like that - you've got to stand with your legs apart.' I said, 'Look, I can't really get into this.' but I went along with getting green velvet trousers and big furry hats and having my hair permed. It was ignorance on everyone's part.

We did a package tour with Hendrix, the Move, Amen Corner, Pink Floyd, The Nice and The Outer Limits, who became Yes. It was incredible.

"Hendrix was always very distant. You could have a smoke or a drink with

him, but at no time did I ever feel at ease with him. No-one ever did. He wouldn't snub you, but you'd be afraid around him. He had this thing about him. You could never go up and say, 'How're you doing Jimi?' As a guitar player he was something else. I couldn't fathom it at all. He was too much for everybody."

Eire Apparent toured the States with Hendrix and Eric Burdon and The Animals. "Eric Burdon was a psychedelic man. I found it really hard to work under those conditions. He would switch on his tape recorder in his pocket (you didn't know it was there) and ask you these absurd questions. And then he'd play it back. You can imagine What that was like. He'd write it all down and say, 'This is for my new film.' He wanted to be The Lone Ranger! Great singer."

In Toronto disaster struck. "When I got back to the hotel after the gig these police were there. The usual trip. There was a little bit of grass on the table - enough for a joint. (Eire Apparent singer) wee Ernie Graham burst out crying. He was afraid they were going to do him for it but I said, 'No, that's mine.'

"They took me to court and let me out on bail. Chandler and Jeffries gave me a one way ticket to Dublin. I had to give Canada a miss for seven years. I was shellshocked getting the sack. They said, 'It's really bad for the image.' It was a pop image they were after. I was the most rebellious in the band. They probably felt I was a thorn in their side. If they got me out, it might be easier to manipulate the rest."

Back in Ireland Henry joined the seminal electric folk band Sweeney's



Men, with Johnny Moynihan, later of Planxty, and Terry Woods, now with the Pogues.

"We went to London for a couple of gigs. I was staying in The Madison Hotel, which was a haunt for people like John Lee Hooker and Freddie King. Joe Cocker was staying there with Chris Stainton and they were looking for a guitar player, for the Grease Band.

"I was getting a wee bit bored with not having drums or bass, so I went down to audition at the Marquee, and that was it.

At first we used to split the money five ways, until Joe began to have more success and then the money would go

back to the office and we got £50 a week. No royalties or session fees. Nothing. You did it all because it was all rolling with the flow. You never thought about what would happen if it breaks up."

Was it awesome playing with such a phenomenal singer? "Once you get involved working with people, regardless of how talented, you become immune to anything like that. It's like mates. 'Go out there and sing a bit, Joe.'"

The Grease Band were reputedly wild rock 'n'roll outlaws. "We were all fairly wild. Get paid, go to the bar, go home, get sick....No it wasn't quite that bad! We did one tour with Gene Pitney. We

were wilder than Gene Pitney, but nothing serious."

Cocker cracked America after his performance at the Woodstock Festival in front of half a million people. "You get more nervous playing in someone's front room," explains Henry surprisingly. "But to walk on stage and look onto a sea of people was brilliant. It was such a good set - the first time I ever got to turn up full with Joe. You were flown in by helicopter an hour before your time, then straight out again."

Henry believes Cocker's rock casualty image is outdated. "He's married, settled down, got an old lady who's looking after him. If he'd been left to

take care of himself I don't think he'd have made it."

After Cocker threw in his lot with Mad Dogs And Englishmen the Grease Band played on the original LP of Jesus Christ Superstar. "I loved it. It was so unusual. I could never read the guitar parts, so I would go in an hour beforehand and Andrew Lloyd-Webber would sit at the piano and show me how it went. He wasn't after session musicians - he was after feel. He knew if he took the time beforehand, it would be worth it."

In 1972 Henry joined Wings. "I got an invitation through Denny Laine to go for an audition with McCartney. We played for two or three days. He says, 'Do you want the gig?' and I says, 'Aye.'

"He is a perfectionist. You just have to go along with that. 90% of what we played on each song was the same every night, so it was almost like being back in the showbands. If he had a song that he wanted he would say, 'This particular lick would fit in here.' so you would play that lick. But if there was a section where there was a gap you were allowed to make up what you wanted, as long as it fitted."

Wings' first tour of Britain was low key. We just got in the back of the transit, with the truck behind, with dogs and kids and just turned up at Universities. He would stick his head round the door and say, 'Is it alright if we play here tonight?' and of course that was it.

McCartney was busted on Wings' European tour. "The office had sent out a bit of grass, but was supposed to doing it subtly. They'd just put it in a piece of brown paper and taped it up and by the time it got to Sweden there was twigs sticking out. So it was on the cards."

Despite the fame, Wings didn't make Henry's fortune. "I was on £70 a week. Enough to get yourself a motor. No session fees. We got a £500 bonus for the Red Rose Speedway album and there was the odd perk - after the album we jetted off in a Lear Jet to Morocco for a few weeks.

"But I don't resent anything. He was great to work with. He is a very respectable family man. He liked to come home, sit down, watch Cilla Black and smoke a joint. Who doesn't nowadays?"

"I left of my own accord. We'd got on really well together. He knew I wanted to go off to my own thing. We were rehearsing for Band On The Run and I just got up one morning, packed my car, didn't say anything to anybody, and left.

"Two months later he drove to Victoria where I was staying. He wrote me a cheque for £5,000 and he says, 'Here Henry, thanks very much. I really appreciate it and I know what's what. Nice one.' We drank a half bottle of whiskey, smoked a couple of joints, shook hands and that was that. He's a lovely man. A genuine, hardworking person and a dedicated artist."

Subsequently, Henry's Wings' colleague Denny Laine sold his story to the Sun. "I think he's a wee shite. Anybody that does that for a few quid really it's disgusting. I was not surprised, there was no brown in McCartney's arse when Denny Laine was about. I think what he did was the pits.

"Whenever (drummer) Denny Seiwel left Wings we got together with Mick Weaver and Chrissie Stewart and it was a band called Druth. We lived in Chicago for three months and then we went to San Francisco and did the Andy Fairweather Low album Spider Jiving

"Ahmet Ertegun came down to hear Druth. He mustn't have liked us very much. But it was great 'cos he was in a white suit, big cigar. 'Hey Ahmet, give Aretha me number!'

"Anyway that all fell through and I met up with Joe again and we decided to put something together, but neither two of us were in any fit state to put anything together.

"We went up to this ranch in Santa Barbara and were there for six months and we rehearsed one song - With A Little Help From My Friends. The bass player from New York was on smack. Bad news, man. And Jimmy Karstein was into his guns and Mick Weaver and his old lady were into each other. I think she might have changed sex at some point. It was hectic. I was drinking tequila first thing in the morning with a teaspoonful of mescaline.

"Great - a few psychedelic freaks, a smackhead and the drummer into guns. I mean, it makes a fucking great combination! And Joe was trying to keep his belly in by lying on a bottle of

Courvoisier."

A recent biography of Cocker (A Little Help From My Friends by J P Bean) alleges that at this time Henry pulled a gun on Cocker. "Jesus, I didn't read that! Are you serious? No, not at all." Henry left the debacle. "I got sacked. Everybody was just too out of it."

He later picked up his career with the likes of Eric Burdon, Carol Grimes, Frankie Miller, Roy Harper, Ronnie Lane and the late Steve Marriot. "He was electric. Fucking great singer and great guitar player. Fantastic. It's not good enough for him to die like that. He deserves a lot more."

Henry has also recorded several solo lps, including one for George Harrison's Dark Horse label. "He seemed like a nice chap, but I didn't spend that much time with him. When he lost the (My Sweet Lord) lawsuit, everybody had to go their own way."

In the mid eighties, on a holiday home in Ireland, an accident nearly ended Henry's career. "My hand slipped down a kitchen knife and severed the tendons on three of my fingers. Thankfully it was the right hand. The fingers were dropping off, but they did micro surgery and put it back together again."

Henry was unable to play for nine months. "Just to get over the injury itself was first and foremost. The guitar playing was second. I was signing on. It was difficult, but it's all good for a laugh. It makes you cool your suedes. Everything in life works itself out. If you feel strong enough in yourself you know you can cope.

In recent times Henry has been playing superb gigs throughout Ireland with his own band and has recently produced and performed on and LP featuring unknown talent from his home area in the north of Northern Ireland for which he is seeking a deal.

Having rocked through the sixties, seventies, eighties and into the nineties, this great survivor still retains his enthusiasm. "I'm wide open for gigs!" he declares happily.

Trevor Hodgett

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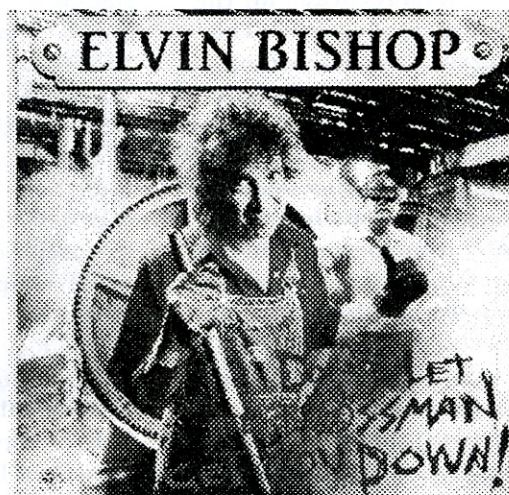
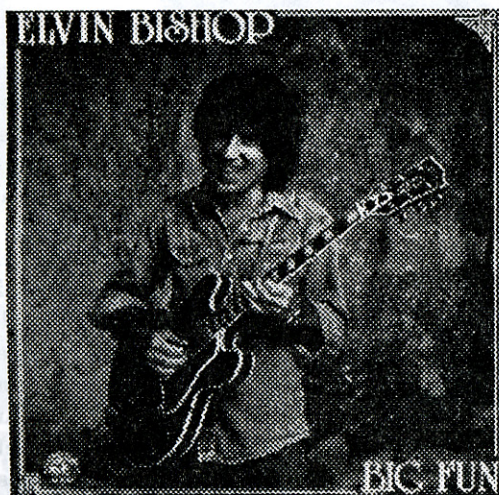
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Obituaries: The boxing bluesmen

With the recent deaths of three American bluesmen, Willie Dixon, Champion Jack Dupree and James 'Thunderbird' Davis, we pay our own tribute to two of them who did so much for the blues in Europe.

Willie Dixon the Allrounder

Willie Dixon was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on April Fool's day in 1915, but as it turned out, he was far from being anybody's fool. Indeed he was the man who dominated the Chicago blues recording scene in the fifties, through his control of recording sessions for the Chess label.

Before moving to Chicago, he started singing in Gospel groups and later on took up double bass. He moved to Chicago in 1935 and for a while he was a professional boxer. His serious music career started when he recorded for the Bluebird label on bass with The Five Breezes. Other recording followed with variations of this group such as The Four Jumps of Jive and The Big Three Trio. This recording spell was successful for a number of labels during the decade and his experience in the studio probably led to him getting the production on Robert Nighthawk's great session, for the pre-Chess label Aristocrat, which produced *Black Angel*.

This started off the fifties decade for Dixon and laid the foundations for his great influence on the Chicago recording scene, with numerous songs and re-adaptations of traditional songs for the main Chess Recording artistes of that period: Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter and even some great Otis Rush numbers on Cobra in the mid fifties.

Probably because he was writing so much for these various artistes,



his output was erratic, to say the least, but as well as the crass numbers, there was a solid body of songs which still can't be touched today, due in no small part to the talent of the main performers themselves, plus the recording feel achieved in those small studios - a galaxy away from today's high technology, space age surroundings.

Yet he could also plumb the depths in his songwriting but the worst aspects of his commercialism occurred in his own performances when he was determined to capitalise on the interest generated by folk audiences on the European scene. The least said about this, the better.

There is no doubt that his prolific songwriting output and his overall control of the Chicago recording scene, whether as producer, music publisher, A&R man, agent and general fixer, never mind about

his musical contribution, stifled the scene to an extent but it was still an outstanding blues decade. Set aside all the negatives however, and Dixon's allround contribution to the blues scene will probably never be equalled. His indirect influences continue even now, through the persistent use of his songs by both American and European blues performers. His control of many of the Artistes in Chicago also meant he helped to slant our perception of blues whenever he was involved in European presentations too. Love him or hate him, you certainly can't ignore him, would have summed up most people's feelings one way or another.

These notes are based on Mike Rowe's Eddison Blues Books 1973 issue of Chicago Breakdown. Get a copy!

Champion Jack Dupree the Entertainer

Champion Jack Dupree was born five years earlier than Willie Dixon, in 1910. He was born in New Orleans and was orphaned early on. He left the orphanage at age 14, by which time he'd learned the piano, and probably his entertaining skills as well. He was influenced by the barrelhouse pianists around the clubs and began playing professionally when he was twenty. The depression of the thirties more or less paid



to the music and he claimed that it was at this time that he took up professional boxing, though as a lightweight, unlike Willie Dixon who was a heavyweight. By the forties, he was back in business and recorded for a variety of labels through until the sixties, before leaving for England in 1959. He married a Yorkshire woman and settled in Halifax for many years. Later, he moved to Europe, but came back regularly to perform in Britain. It looked as though he would never return to the States but eventually he got

back there for The New Orleans Heritage Festival a couple of years ago, only to fall ill. He recovered from that and did a few more visits to Britain in between other European jaunts. I met him in the mid sixties when we used to gig at The Nag's Head in Wycombe and remember still the first gig we did with him, when he wandered on stage in the middle of a number and joined in. I was doing *Long Distance Call* at the time, and I'll be thinking of Jack when I next do it. He was one of these musicians who played by feel rather than by rules and his idea of twelve or 16 bar blues was anarchic to say the least, but he had a happy knack of getting it together, so that the irregularities were just another part of the show. He had a humorous approach to his music and apparently little respect for Mother-in-Law types, knew how to make the most of a handkerchief as stage prop, and never failed to entertain.

He liked to drink too, (who doesn't?) and somehow his barrelhouse approach to goodtime music managed to survive the European tendency to water down and sophisticate those American bluesmen who reside over this side of the water. Jack was rough and ready in his music and his life and has played a great part in giving us the feel of the New Orleans blues over here. Raise your glasses one more time!

Graham Vickery

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**MUSICIANS AVAILABLE/WANTED
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BLUESNEWS BLUESNEWS BLUESNEWS

Here is the programme for The Fourth Burnley National Blues Festival to be held over the Bank Holiday

Thursday 16th April
MECHANICS THEATRE
8pm

SIDNEY 'GUITAR CRUSHER' SELBY

Is an entertainer with an intense, almost hypnotising voice and a track record of accompanying artists such as Ben E King and The Drifters through to John Mayall and Robert Cray
DAVID 'HONEYBOY' EDWARDS

Both an eyewitness and a practitioner of the blues and the blues guitar - the last surviving player of the Mississippi blues of the 20's and 30's. This man toured with Joe Williams, was there when Robert Johnson died, migrated to the Chicago electric blues, played with Howlin' Wolf and many, many others - truly a 'blues legend made flesh'.

+ **THE NORMAN BEAKER BAND**
LATE NIGHT CLUB AT THE FRIENDLY HOTEL
11.45pm
ATLANTA ROOTS

Friday 17th April
Friendly Hotel 11.00am
MEET SIDNEY 'GUITAR CRUSHER' SELBY
Shuttle Bar
FESTIVAL STAGE
12.00 noon
RECORD, BOOK & INSTRUMENT FAIR
Friendly Hotel
12.30pm
BACKSTAGE SESSION
with Honeyboy Edwards
Theatre Bar 1.00 pm
ACOUSTIC ROOM WITH MAX HAYMES
MECHANICS THEATRE
8pm

JEROME 'JAY' OWENS
Blind blues guitarist from Florida, with a background in church music, who has played lead guitar for Al Green, Donny Hathaway, Latimore, O V Wright. He's a major songwriter and arranger, who delivers a 'Hot, sweet, vibrant sound in a 'high energy performance'
+ **INNES SIBUN BLUES EXPLOSION**

Started the year with a bang on the Paul Jones Show on Radio 2, consolidating their reputation as the band playing 'new generation blues'. Their 'soul meets jazz meets funk' style is sure to set the hall alight.

+ **BOB BROZMAN**
LATE NIGHT CLUB AT THE FRIENDLY HOTEL
11.45pm
ROGER HIGGINS
BOTTLENECK BOOGIE BAND

Sat 18th April
Shuttle Bar 12.00 noon
FESTIVAL STAGE
Foyer All Day
RECORD, BOOK & INSTRUMENT FAIR
Theatre Bar 1.00 pm
ACOUSTIC ROOM WITH MAX HAYMES
Tudor Room 4.00pm

Songwriting Seminar
with Larry Garner
MECHANICS THEATRE
8pm
CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE BAND
'Charlie stands with James Cotton, Junior Wells and Carey Bell as living grand masters of blues harmonica' Charlie grew up in Memphis surrounded by blues players, then in the '60's headed up highway 51 to Chicago to play with Little Walter, Muddy Waters, Big Joe Williams and John Lee Hooker. "An awesome and authentic musician who electrifies his audiences".

+ **HELEN WATSON BLUES TRIO**
"Premier blues diva" Helen Watson has sung her own songs on TV on both "No Limits and live on Wogan. She and her co writer and regular player Martin Mcgroarty are joined by former Burnley Hohner Harp Champion Clive Mellor for their festival set
LATE NIGHT CLUB AT THE FRIENDLY HOTEL 11.45pm
PETE MITCHELL SMITH & THE BLUES CREW

Sunday 19th April
Shuttle Bar 12.00 noon
FESTIVAL STAGE
Foyer All Day
RECORD, BOOK & INSTRUMENT FAIR
Tudor Room 12.30pm
GOING DOWN SOUTH with Bob Groom
Theatre Bar 1.00pm
ACOUSTIC ROOM WITH MAX HAYMES
MECHANICS THEATRE
8pm

LARRY GARNER
A new young blues sensation from Baton Rouge. Guitarist, singer, songwriter, winner of the B B King 'Lucille' Award, his style is described as falling between Joe Louis Walker and Albert King with a helping of Louisiana blues by way of Chicago... and as 'preaching blues'. Larry's influences include the Reverend Charlie Jackson and the legendary Reverend Utah Smith.
+ **BOB PEARCE BLUES BAND**
Bob Pearce is your man as far as the blues is concerned" said Paul Jones. Vocalist, guitarist, harp virtuoso, acclaimed as the real thing by visiting blues performers like Louisiana Red, Lefty Dizz and Carey Bell, Bob now has the

chance to stand on the stage they stood on and prove it.
LATE NIGHT CLUB AT THE FRIENDLY HOTEL
11.45pm
DOCTOR BROWN'S BLUES BAND

Monday 20th April
Shuttle Bar 12.00 noon
FESTIVAL STAGE
Foyer All Day
RECORD, BOOK & INSTRUMENT FAIR
Theatre 1.00pm
Hohner Festival Harp Championship
Compered by Julian Dawson
TudorRoom 4.00pm
JULIAN DAWSON HARMONICA WORKSHOP
MECHANICS THEATRE
8pm

PHILLIP WALKER
Is a major blues talent' with his background in Texas hot guitar, an early period with Clifton Chenier, The King of the Zydeco, and lots of work with Ted Hawkins and last years Festival star Rosco Gordon. If you want expressive vocals, inspired writing, individual style, beautiful guitar technique and deep blues feeling... this is the man!

OTIS GRAND BLUES BAND
Otis and the crew are no strangers to The Mechanics... last year the full band closed the festival with Rosco Gordon and this year the toughest West Coast outfit around will be providing the backing for Phillip Walker.

+ **JULIAN DAWSON**
LATE NIGHT CLUB AT THE FRIENDLY HOTEL
11.45pm
BAKERLOO BLUES BAND

BLUESNEWS BLUESNEWS BLUESNEWS

The Gloucester Blues Festival is as follows:

Thursday 16th April

Concert:
OTIS GRAND AND THE DANCE KINGS and THE ELMORES
8.30 Main Hall

Friday 17th April

Film:
CHICAGO BLUES/BIG CITY BLUES
11.00 Cinema
Concert:
BLUESIQUE
1.00 Main Hall

Film:
A LIFE WELL SPENT/ALONG OLD MAN RIVER
2.15 Cinema

Lecture:
'I FEEL LIKE GOIN' 'HOME'
2.15 Recital Room

Workshop:
COUNTRY BLUES GUITAR
4.00 Recital Room
OPEN STAGE
5.00 Cinema

Concert:
HONEYBOY EDWARDS and DAVE PEABODY
7.00 Main Hall

Concert:
ANGELA BROWN with THE HARPBREAKERS
9.00 Main Hall

Saturday 18th April
Film:
GOOD MORNIN' BLUES/BLUES LIKE SHOWERS OF RAIN
11.00 Cinema

Concert:
90% PROOF
1.00 Main Hall

Film:
A WAY TO ESCAPE THE GHETTO/HOOTIES BLUES
2.15 Cinema

Lecture
BLOWIN' THE BLUES
2.15 Recital Room

Workshop:
LAP STEEL, SLIDE AND

NATIONAL STEEL
4.00 Recital Room
OPEN STAGE
5.00 Cinema

Concert:
BOB BROZMAN
7.00 Main Hall

Concert:
FORD BLUES BAND/JAY OWENS with THE INNES SIBUN BLUES EXPLOSION
9.00 Main Hall

Sunday 19th April
Film:
A LIFE WELL SPENT/ALONG THE OLD-MAN RIVER
11.00 Cinema

Concert:
SNATCH IT BACK
1.00 Main Hall

Film:
CHICAGO BLUES/BIG CITY BLUES
2.15 Cinema

Lecture:
'THEM WHITE BOYS'
2.15 Recital Room

Workshop:
BARRELHOUSE AND BLUES PIANO
4.00 Recital Room
OPEN STAGE
5.00 Cinema

Concert:
KING CLEARY
7.00 Main Hall
Concert:
THE CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE BAND and BARE WIRES
9.00 Main Hall

Monday 20th April
Film:
A WAY TO ESCAPE THE GHETTO/HOOTIES BLUES
11.00 Cinema
Concert:
BIG MAN CLAYTON and THE MIGHTY

HOUSEROCKERS
12.00 Main Hall
Film:
GOOD MORNIN' BLUES/BLUES LIKE SHOWERS OF RAIN
2.15 Cinema

Lecture:
DOIN' THAT SOUTH CAROLINA RAG
Workshop:
SLIDE GUITAR
2.30 Craft Suite

Workshop:
BLUES HARMONICA
4.00 Recital Room
OPEN STAGE
5.00 Cinema

Concert:
JOHNNY SHINES
7.00 Main Hall
Concert:
JOHNNY SHINES with THE JUNKYARD ANGELS
8.30 Main Hall

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