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11. **Midnight Train** (5:45)
12. **Big Drought In California** (5:35)
13. **Tom's Boogie** (2:45)

Tom McFarland – vocals and guitar
Bobby Broadhead – drums
Steve Ehrmann – bass

Selections # 11-13 previously unreleased.

1-10 originally appeared on Arhoolie
LP # 1079

All selections composed by Tom McFarland and ©
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by BUG Music Co.

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Recorded at Sierra Sound Labs,
Berkeley, California in 1978

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Other photos courtesy Thomas
McFarland

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Wayne Pope

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10341 San Pablo Ave.
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TOM McFARLAND

Travelin' with the Blues



Tom McFarland



Listening to Tom McFarland's "Goin' Back to Oakland" on this album conjures up all sorts of images and feelings about the blues, not least of which are the thoughts of all the blues people who have sung the blues on that side of the Bay at one time or another. "Goin' Back," says McFarland philosophically, "is about getting to where you belong as opposed to all the places you could be." Indeed!

For McFarland, of course, that has meant eight years of playing the blues in Portland, Oregon bars under the pseudonym of Sunny Black, followed by another three years in Seattle under his own name before the breakaway to the San Francisco Bay Area blues scene. "I felt if I was ever going to be accepted as a legitimate blues artist I had to be accepted here first."

If moving to the Bay Area was getting to where you belong, it also meant giving up some good paying jobs; however, the probability of recognition coupled with the chance of recording an album outweighed any doubts, and so along with his growing

family, he moved to Richmond in 1976. There he quickly cornered a job at the renowned blues spot, The Playboy, a Richmond bar that had been featuring blues for as long as anyone could remember.

After assembling a group, McFarland ended up performing as the house band for the following eight months with in between guest shots at Eli's in Oakland, where he won over the regular patrons with his soulful singing and guitar playing. At Eli's "Goin' Back To Oakland" naturally became a requested favorite, followed by the usual inquiries as to when he was going to put it out on a record. "Oakland deserves more credit than it gets when it comes to the blues," muses McFarland over performing at Eli's. "When I do that song it always gets a warm reception because no matter what, to the people here Oakland is home."

And what about Tom McFarland? He was born in Los Angeles in 1945, but spent much of his youth in the tiny rural community of Sunny Valley, Oregon, where his father worked as a logger. His entire family was musical, including his cousin, the late jazz great, Gary McFarland.

At ten Tom began playing guitar and by age 12 was intently listening to the records of Gene Vincent and Elvis Presley. A brief stay in Los Angeles while attending junior high school resulted in visits to Watts which changed his outlook towards life and music completely. Not long after that he discovered the music of B.B. King, which crystalized his musical ambitions.

"B.B. answered all my questions. I knew I was meant to do something musically, but I didn't know what that was until I heard him." This discovery led to other guitarists, such as T-Bone Walker, Freddie King, Scotty Moore, Barney Kessel, Merle Travis, Chet Atkins, and Kenny Burrell, all of whom have influenced McFarland's musical style. Out of this came the first of many groups, including a stint in 1962 with an authentic R&B band, followed by a hitch in the Army, which resulted in some performances around Europe.

In 1966 Tom moved to Portland, where he formed the first of his many bands there and a long residency at the White Eagle, a bar where he developed a loyal following and more than a handful of newspaper

clippings to prove it. However, by 1973, Portland's vision had quite understandably become much too myopic for McFarland and he decided to move to Seattle.

If Portland was a big town, then Seattle was a big city with a large port and a booming aircraft industry. Seattle also had a history of some blues activity with the former Oakland blues pianist George Hurst, and for a brief while, Sonny Rhodes. Albert Collins was and remains a frequent visitor and there were others, locals like Isaac Scott and L.V. Parr. Scott and McFarland became close friends, and Scott, who recently recorded his first album for Red Lightning Records, paid homage to McFarland by recording his "Goin' Back To Oakland." Parr, a former guitarist with the Johnny Ace band, had a great influence on McFarland's playing. If anything, Seattle seemed to mature and strengthen McFarland's commitment to the blues.

Now with the release of this album, Tom McFarland appears to have finally completed some of those long-awaited goals. He certainly has captured the attention of the Bay Area music scene in two years with his superb performances

both in the clubs like the Coffee Gallery and at concerts like the 1977 San Francisco Blues Festival, and while his memorable West Coast tour with Chicago great Otis Rush has garnered him some rave notices, it also established him as an outstanding new blues discovery. I'm sure you will agree after listening to this album, that Tom McFarland is a refreshing new performer with something to say!

Just read what he has to say about the songs: *"Travelin' With The Blues" is about the economics of being a blues musician and surviving. "You Can't Take It With You" is about an existential attitude; paying attention to now. "Gasoline Blues" is a humorous song about the high price of gasoline, but really it's about sex. "You're Killing Me" is one of the songs I've been working on for years that gradually came together, it's a general song about a man-woman relationship, but I don't personally identify with it. "Goin' Back To Oakland" contains my best guitar solo. "Street Walkin' Woman" is all about prostitutes in Oakland (which was a wide open scene along McArthur Blvd. at that time). "Juicer's Blues" is about drinking. "Blues Got Me" is*

about some personal experiences I've had. "Blues Up And Gone" is a happy blues, actually it's a tribute to my wife. "Telephone Blues" stems from a past experience I had with a woman."

About the performers:

Drummer **Bobby Broadhead** is a native of the Pacific Northwest and has been regularly associated with Tom McFarland since 1971. He has also worked, primarily in Portland, Oregon, with a number of other blues bands, most notably led by Paul Delay, Steve Bradley

and Gordon Keane. Since coming to San Francisco in 1974, Broadhead has played engagements with Lowell Fulson, Lightnin' Hopkins, as well as Otis Rush on his 1977 West Coast tour.

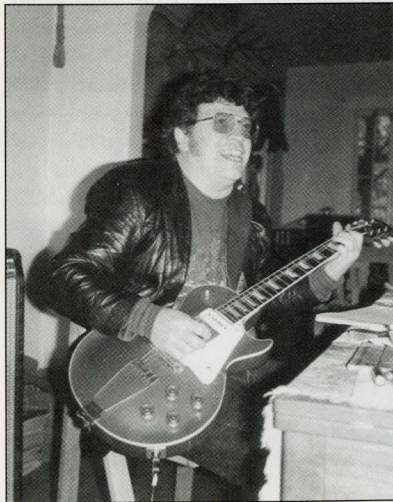
Bassist **Steve Ehrmann** is from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and has lived in the Bay Area for the past five years. He has performed in Milwaukee with Wild Child Butler and has backed Big Walter Horton, Lightnin' Hopkins, Charlie Musselwhite and Sunnyland Slim.

Tom Mazzolini – San Francisco, May, 1978



Some comments from his son, Thomas McFarland:

Tom McFarland was born Jan. 30, 1945, in Los Angeles. He was brought up in Oregon, where he learned to play his brother's guitar, and soon took it for his own. Tom moved to Seattle in 1973, leading the only blues band that had steady work in the Seattle area, at that time. They played at classic nightclubs



such as the Boulder on 1st & Pike Street, as well as Place Pigalle.

In 1976 McFarland left for San Francisco, where he began touring with blues greats Lightnin' Hopkins, Otis Rush, and Charlie Musselwhite. Tom's first major album, "Travelin' With The Blues" was released shortly afterwards with Arhoolie Records.

In 1981, Tom moved back to the Pacific Northwest. Living in Vancouver, Washington, he traveled across the I-5 bridge into Portland, Oregon, and played weekly in the expanding blues scene there. 1986 brought on Tom's second album release, "Just Got in From Portland" on Flying Heart Records. He stayed in Vancouver for six years, but in 1987, Tom and family moved slightly northward up to Tacoma, where Tom continued to play at local hotspots such as the Jolly Roger, the New Orleans, the Mint, the Owl Cafe, and many others. He was also a regular at the Seattle Bumbershoot Festival. In 1990, he released his biggest album yet, "Voodoo Garden," again on Flying Heart Records.

Through the years Tom played in many different incarnations of Seattle blues bands, sharing the stage with the likes of Mark Dalton, Mike Lynch, David Brewer, John Hodgkin, Leslie Milton, Dave Conant, Dick Powell and Isaac Scott. Tom contributed to many other prominent blues artists' albums throughout the 1990's, and was also featured on the albums "Live



at the Roadhouse," on Criminal Records, and "Rose City Blues Festival," on Po-town. Tom McFarland's influences included Pee Wee Crayton, T-Bone Walker, and B.B. King.

In 1996, McFarland had a short stay in Clinton, Mississippi, and later lived in Terre Haute, Indiana. He had been living in Salt Lake City for three years, where on September 3rd, 2004, he passed away at age 59, from a hereditary heart condition.

Tom McFarland was a loving husband and father of two, and is survived by his mother, wife, his two children, and two grandchildren. His voice was seasoned from innumerable nightclub dates, and his songs reflected the emotions of an expressive artist. He changed the face of the blues in the Pacific Northwest, and his influences will never be forgotten.

Thomas McFarland – 2005

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In Memoriam (Jan 30, 1945 - Sept 3, 2004)
This is the late West-Coast native, Tom McFarland's first album (plus three bonus tracks), for the first time on CD. Subject matter ranges from personal relationships, to prostitutes, from blues musician's wages to the price of gasoline. Some humorous, some serious, all composed and performed by this remarkably tasteful and subtle blues singer, guitarist, and composer.

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