

SAM BROS. 5



With Daddy "Good Rockin" Sam





People can hardly believe it! They come around the bandstand and look behind figuring to find a tape machine playing all the music. But no, the young Sam brothers are up there on the bandstand playing that driving music all by themselves — just the five of them! They play that pulsing Louisiana Zydeco — that mixture of old Creole French music blended with a shot of Rhythm & Blues and a good portion of Soul and Funk!

Leon Sam is the lead singer and plays the accordion. Only fifteen years old (born August 20, 1964) his voice is already mature and fully in command. His older brother Carl (November 11, 1961) plays guitar, Rodney (April 7, 1963) is on drums, Glen (July 15, 1966) on bass, and the youngest Calvin (March 12, 1968) scrapes the rubboard. The Sam Brothers Five are the youngest children of Mr. & Mrs. Herbert and Ruby Sam and they live in Scott, Louisiana, just outside Lafayette. Daddy Herbert Sam, also known as "Good Rockin'" Sam and heard on two selections on this album, was born in 1924 near Opelousas of a musical family. His father plays accordion, so does his mother, and also two brothers play that push and pull music! They grew up working in the fields and on weekends the house parties would be their entertainment,

with just an accordion accompanied by a washboard beater for rhythm.

Zydeco music developed at the time when Herbert Sam was growing up. The name is the phonetic spelling for the French word for snap beans: Les Haricots, and the title of one of the most popular Southwest Louisiana dance tunes in the 30s was ZYDECO (Les Haricots) SONT PAS SALE (Snap Beans — Not Salty). Since then Zydeco has been used to describe not only the music but the good times, dance, food, and socializing that goes with it! The first Creole accordionist to make records was Amade Ardoin who began his recording career in the late 1920s (note Old Timey LP 124). Since then Zydeco has gained in popularity throughout the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast area in the 40s and 50s and is known around the world today largely due to the ever increasing popularity of the now undisputed King of Zydeco: Clifton Chenier. Some people call it Zydeco, others call it La La, French, or just "push and pull". It's a unique sound and it now seems in good hands with the Sam Brothers Five who at present are obviously influenced by Clifton Chenier, but in time will doubtless develop a sound of their own.

Herbert Sam moved to Houston, Texas in the 1950s, worked as a roofer and played

Zydeco at night. In 1961 I heard him at a Sunday afternoon Zydeco contest held at a lounge just off Dowling Street, and made a tape. One cut I issued on Arhoolie's LP of early Zydeco music (LP 1009), but I later lost track of him. So imagine my surprise when I saw this young group playing Zydeco at the 1979 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and with them a man who certainly looked familiar — and sure enough, it was their father whom I had last seen and heard in 1961! Throughout his career Herbert Sam had problems with various band members who weren't dependable, and one night he used his son Carl to play drums. Slowly he replaced the whole band with other sons. At first club owners gave him trouble and said: "what's this?" when they saw the young boys set up the instruments. But by now the Sam Brothers Five have become a popular attraction and every club owner is after them to perform. The first job the boys played was a talent show at school in 1974. They have since appeared on Channel 13 and 39 in Houston and at many dances. In 1977 the family moved back to Louisiana where they have been on Channel 10 in Lafayette, and their reputation has spread. They have played dances as far north as Mississippi and out in West Texas and this summer they decided to take a vacation in California, where they have played clubs and dances and appeared at the 7th annual San Francisco Blues Festival produced by Tom Mazzolini.

All five brothers are very close and are delightful youngsters. They like school and enjoy baseball and fishing. The youngest ones are in the Little League where Glen is a good pitcher and the leading home run hitter. They also enjoy horse racing, and three of them want to be jockeys, which is a strong tradition in Southwest Louisiana where horse racing is a very popular sport with just about everyone. Here then is the premier album by the Sam Brothers Five — a young group following in the Zydeco tradition but no doubt destined to make their own mark and to evolve their own unique sound.

(Chris Strachwitz — August 1979)



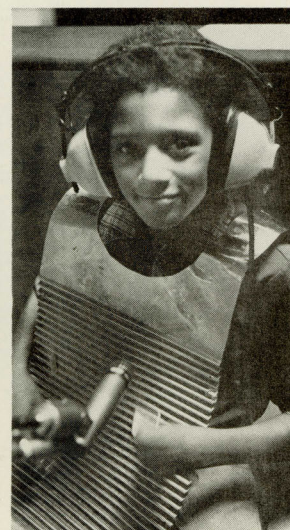
Leon



Glen



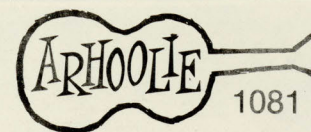
Carl



Calvin



Rodney



**GOING DOWN TO BIG MARY
SUGAR CANE PATCH
I'M A HOG FOR YOU
LAFAYETTE ZYDECO
COUNTRY BOY
S.B. 5**

**LAFAYETTE SPECIAL
LA LA WALTZ
MAMA*** (Herbert Sam)
**ROLL ME BABY
GOOD ROCKIN' SAM'S BOOGIE***
(Herbert Sam)
S. A. M.

Leon Sam - vocals and accordion
(organ on SAM)
Carl Sam - guitar
Rodney Sam - drums
Glen Sam - bass
Calvin Sam - rubboard

*Herbert Sam - vocal and accordion

Producer: Chris Strachwitz
Assistant producer: John Lumsdaine
Engineer: Lucy Sherak
Studio: Sierra Sound Lab. - Berkeley, CA
Recording date: July 12 & 13, 1979
Cover photo of Sam Brothers by Joe Wilson
Cover photo of Herbert Sam and all photos on
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Cover Art: Wayne Pope

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