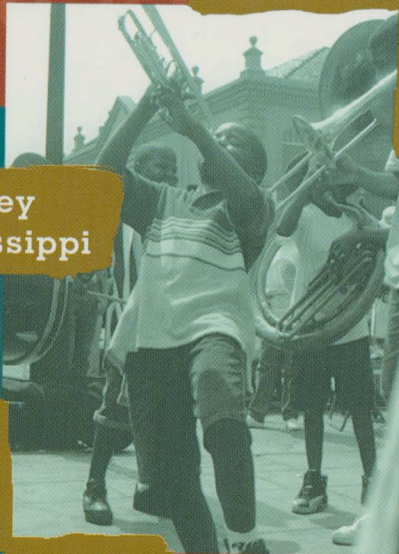


THE MISSISSIPPI
**RIVER
OF SONG**

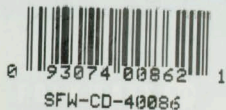
A Musical Journey
Down the Mississippi



Chippewa Nation • Babes in Toyland • John Koerner • Soul Asylum •
The Skål Club Spelmanslag • Wang Chong Lor • Sounds of Blackness •
Karl Hartwich • Manny Lopez Quintet • La Otra Mitad • Greg Brown •
John Hartford • The Bob Lewis Family • Eugene Redmond and Sylvester
"Sunshine" Lee • Fontella and Martha Bass • Oliver Sain • The Bottle
Rockets • Ste. Genevieve Guignolée Singers • Boundless Love Quartet •
Sonny Burgess • Memphis Horns and Ann Peebles • Levon Helm and
James Cotton • Robert Lockwood, Jr. • Big Jack Johnson and the Jelly
Roll Kings • Little Milton • Mississippi Mass Choir • Kenny Bill Stinson •
D.L. Menard • Geno Delafosse • David and Roselyn • Henry Butler •
Irma Thomas • Eddie Bo with Henry Butler • Soul Rebels • Irvan Perez

2-CD set

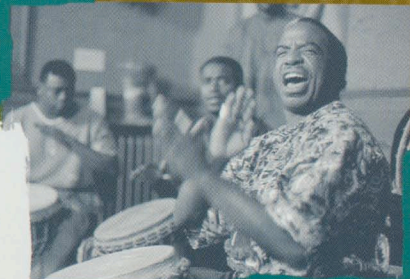
This two-hour, 36-track, musical journey down the Mississippi from the headwaters to the delta captures the power and diversity of American music in the late 20th century. The music, recorded between 1995 and 1997 in small towns and large cities along the river, reflects centuries of interaction and experimentation along America's great waterway. 48-page deluxe booklet.



Smithsonian Folkways

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
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Washington, DC 20560-0953

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THE MISSISSIPPI

RIVER OF SONG

A Musical Journey
Down the Mississippi



Smithsonian Folkways

tajun bluegrass

ythm &
blues

gospel



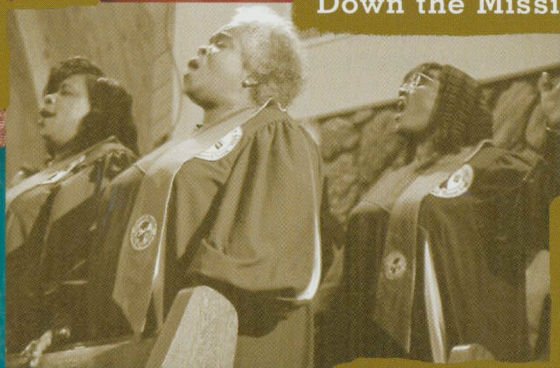
gold folk
rock jazz



THE MISSISSIPPI

RIVER OF SONG

A Musical Journey
Down the Mississippi



Smithsonian Folkways

THE MISSISSIPPI
RIVER OF SONG

1
DISC ONE

Section One: The Headwaters

1. **Chippewa Nation** *Powwow Song*
2. **Babes in Toyland** 22 (Barbers, Bejllan, Herman/Zomba Enterprises Inc., ASCAP, No Dukey Music, ASCAP)
3. **John Koerner** *Sail Away, Ladies* (Arr. by J. Koerner)
4. **Soul Asylum** *I Did My Best* (Dave Pirner/Made to Be Broken Music, ASCAP, WB Music Corp., ASCAP)
5. **The Skål Club Spelmanslag** *Red-Headed Swede* (Ethel Lipske)
6. **Wang Chong Lor** *The Singing Leaf*
7. **Sounds of Blackness** *I'll Open My Mouth to the Lord/I'll Be Ready*
8. **Karl Hartwich** *Kim Marie* (K. Hartwich)
9. **The Manny Lopez Quintet** *Jazz Me Blues* (T. Delaney/Edward B. Marks Music Co., BMI)
10. **La Otra Mitad** *La Unica Estrella*

Section Two: The Midwestern Crossroads

11. **Greg Brown** *Flat Stuff* (Greg Brown/Hacklebarney Music, ASCAP)
12. **John Hartford** *Miss Ferris* (J. Hartford/John Hartford Music, BMI)
13. **The Bob Lewis Family** *Born to Be with You* (Donald Robertson/D. Robertson Music Corp., ASCAP)
14. **Eugene Redmond and Sylvester "Sunshine" Lee** *Milestone* (E. Redmond and S. Lee)
15. **Fontella and Martha Bass** *I'm So Grateful* (Gloria E. Griffin/Leric Music, BMI)
16. **Oliver Sain** *Stop Breaking Down* (John Lee Williamson; arranged and adapted by Oliver Sain/Wabash Music, ASCAP, WB Music Corp., ASCAP)
17. **The Bottle Rockets** *Get Down, River* (Brian Henneman/Bug Music, BMI)
18. **The Ste. Genevieve Guignolée Singers** *La Guignolée*

2
DISC TWO

Section Three: The Southern Fusion

1. **The Boundless Love Quartet** *The Sweetest Song I Know* (Albert E. Brumley/Stamps-Baxter Music, BMI, used by permission of Brentwood Benson Music Publishing)
2. **Sonny Burgess** *T for Texas (Blue Yodel #1)* (Jimmie Rodgers/APRS, BMI)
3. **The Memphis Horns and Ann Peebles** *St. Louis Blues* (W.C. Handy)
4. **Levon Helm and James Cotton** *Going Back to Memphis*
5. **Robert Lockwood, Jr.** *Take a Little Walk with Me* (R. Lockwood, Jr., Annie Lockwood/BMI)
6. **Big Jack Johnson** *Catfish* (Arr. by J. Johnson/Eawig Music, BMI)
7. **Big Jack Johnson and the Jelly Roll Kings** *Shake Your Money Maker* (Elmore James/Longitude Music, BMI)
8. **Little Milton** *Grits Ain't Groceries (All Around the World)* (Titus Turner/Molique Music, BMI)
9. **The Mississippi Mass Choir** *We Praise Your Holy Name* (Jerry Smith/Malaco Music Group, BMI)

Section Four: Louisiana, Where Music Is King

10. **Kenny Bill Stinson** *Taters and Gravy and Chicken-Fried Steak* (K. B. Stinson)
11. **D.L. Menard** *La Porte d'en Arrière* (D.L. Menard/Flat Town Music, BMI)
12. **Geno Delafosse** *Bon Chien* (John Delafosse/Flat Town Music, BMI, Mike Lachney Music, BMI)
13. **David and Roselyn** *Marie Lavaux* (Shel Silverstein/Evil Eye Music, BMI)
14. **Henry Butler** *Basin Street Blues* (Spencer Williams/Edwin Harris & Co., ASCAP)
15. **Irma Thomas** *Time Is on My Side* (J. Ragovoy/Uni Chappell, BMI)
16. **Eddie Bo with Henry Butler** *Check Your Bucket* (Edwin Bocage/Eborville Music, BMI)
17. **Soul Rebels** *Let Your Mind Be Free* (M. Campbell, B. Bernard, D. Moss, C. Watson, L. LeBlanc, S. Johnson, D. Francois/Soul Rebels Music, BMI)
18. **Irvan Perez** *La Vida de un Jaibero* (Serephine Perez)



curator's introduction

This CD presents you with an unusual journey down the Mississippi River, from near its headwaters to an island by its mouth. It is unusual because it is musical; its high points are performances, not silent monuments; its impact should be directly on your ear and your body — you may find yourself dancing. You will linger for some time in cities famous for their contributions to American music: Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans. In these 1990s recordings you will encounter a delightful variety of contemporary musicians who have forged their styles out of the rich musical heritage found along the banks of the river. In spite of this diversity, there are some striking continuities in function and instrumentation. Many are the musical styles used to praise or to please God. Many are the rhythms created for social dances. Guitars, mandolins, and fiddles; trumpets, trombones, accordions, and saxophones; the voices of children, elders, men, and women: all these are sounded in different ways by people with different cultural backgrounds, and for different audiences.

This is local music, enjoyed by local residents as well as visitors. Yet it is also global music, for the sounds from along the Mississippi have been carried far beyond its banks to influence music in Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America — and have been influenced by music from those places. Many of the performers playing here spend some of their time touring in other parts of the world, and their recordings (like this one) have reached even farther.

People play music in the most remarkable variety of places and ways, only some of which are represented on this recording. In many places local chamber music groups perform concert music that is itself an old local tradition (the composer and pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk [1829-1869] was born in New Orleans). Schools, drama groups, and local repertory theaters perform musicals and sponsor talent shows. Residents of many small towns are proud of their community or high school brass bands, have rock or country bands practicing in garages, and also sing lullabies and other songs to their children or grandchildren. Children themselves pass on to one another songs that have endured for tens and sometimes hundreds of years. Some music is domestic, performed mostly at home while doing everyday tasks; other music is intensely personal, performed by people for themselves alone. This recording largely features the music of public and community spaces — religious worship, public festivals, community dance halls,

restaurants, and bars. These are important venues, with a long local history and contemporary significance, but readers should not confuse this recording, for all its richness, with the even broader musical variety found in most communities today.

The Mississippi: River of Song, A Musical Journey Down the Mississippi is a unique recording for Smithsonian Folkways in that it is part of a multimedia project. In addition to this double CD featuring 36 complete performances, products in other media add considerably to what you can learn about the music and artists. A four-part television series, broadcast on PBS in January 1999, presents the artists to you in interviews and performances. For performance context, dance movements, and a feeling of “place,” nothing is better than a videotape or film. But for background information, writing is usually more suitable. Thus a book, *River of Song: A Musical Journey Down the Mississippi* (St. Martin’s Press, 1999), written by Elijah Wald and John Junkerman provides considerably more background on the project as well as many lovely still photographs of the river, the musicians, and the events that were filmed. A series of radio programs, broadcast on many public radio stations in 1999, presents more interview material. These Smithsonian Folkways CDs present complete performances of the same groups featured in the other media but not always the same songs. Educational resource material and teachers’ guides are also available for integrating all these materials into

the classroom. And finally, an Internet site www.pbs.org/riverofsong provides information about where to find the different products, and some original information too. This is a large, collaborative endeavor, and we are extremely grateful to our colleagues who have prepared the other media.

If you wish to explore this music further, the place to start is probably the Web site and the associated products. Another resource is recordings by the same artists — we have listed many of these in the text or on the website. A third place to explore is the Smithsonian Folkways catalogue at www.si.edu/folkways — many of the traditions presented here are extensively represented in the Folkways collection. Finally, traveling to the Mississippi and attending live concerts in some of the places where these songs were recorded will enable you to put together what these media have inevitably separated: the full experience of participation. But while you are planning the trip, it's worth listening to many of these songs over and over, reading the book, viewing the videos, exploring the website, and admiring the musical diversity and continuity found in this remarkable region that slices through the center of the United States, from its northern border to the Gulf of Mexico.

Anthony Seeger, Curator and Director

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Ann Peebles



The Mississippi: River of Song

Liner notes by Elijah Wald

The Mississippi has been the lifeline of the central United States since precolonial times. Native American canoes plied its waters, followed by the boats of French voyageurs, then the steamboats and flatboats of the 19th century, and finally the cargo barges and gambling craft of today. Every new group of travelers brought their music with them, and the river carried the sounds from south to north and back.

"I think the real, true music of the river is just about any kind of music that you can think of, because so many different kinds of people were on the river," says John Hartford, the fiddler, banjoist, singer, and songwriter who grew up in St. Louis and went to work as a riverboat pilot in between building up one of the most respected song catalogues in Nashville. "In the early part of the 19th century we had cut very

few roads, much less highways, and so the only way that culture could really get back into the backwoods was by river. I would say that probably every race and kind of person in the world has traveled up and down the Mississippi at one time or other.

"There's accounts of flatboats that have people playing bagpipes, which would be nice because you would get a nice echo on the hillside, almost like a steamboat whistle. The steamboats, most of them carried a little string band up in the cabin, and a lot of the old boats carried brass bands and steam calliopes. And then, of course, the Black roustabouts down on the main deck, they had their music as well. A lot of the jazz and ragtime songs were derived from old roustabout songs."

River of Song is a project based on Hartford's definition of river music. For five years, a film crew visited the Mississippi, searching out the variety of music to be found from its source in the northern Minnesota woods down to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. We were looking for music that was grounded in its region and

that still had meaning for local communities, but beyond that we were wide open to whatever we might find, from medieval ballads to alternative rock.

The project was the brainchild of John Junkerman, a Boston filmmaker who, following several prize-winning documentary films made in Japan, decided to tackle a project back home in the United States. His idea was that the river was to act less as a focus of the film than as a narrative device, a way of tying together dozens of otherwise disparate styles and approaches to music-making. He hoped not simply to capture a lot of great performances on film but to give a picture of the breadth and variety of American music as it is now, at the end of the 20th century.

During our travels up and down the river, we tried to find music with regional roots, to show musicians who still functioned in and with their communities, and to upset the conventional wisdom that, with the domination of the national media, America has become a single, homogenized culture of Walgreens and MTV. The

more we heard, the more optimistic we became; wherever we went, we found artists who were rooted in their regions and made their music not because they hoped to get on the national charts, but because it was what they loved and what the people around them wanted to hear.

Everywhere, the musicians instantly understood what we were up to; other people would expect us to be hunting for ancient history, for "pure" folk music, or for such tried-and-true themes as the roots of the blues or the journey of jazz up the river, but the musicians understood that we were trying to give a picture of something that was alive and defied the generic labels under which virtually all music is now marketed. Again and again, we found them not only willing but eager to be involved, captivated by the idea of being included side by side with artists they had always respected but who tended to be lumped in different categories. Older performers in unfashionable styles were gratified to find their music standing alongside the work of hot young hitmakers, while the members of the abrasive Minneapolis punk band Babes in Toyland were thrilled to be appearing

in a film with Fontella Bass and a Native American powwow drumming group.

At first, we worried that we might not find enough great music in the North and Midwest to balance the riches we knew lay down in Memphis or New Orleans, but, wherever we went, we found that our problem was rather to decide what we would have to leave out. Many of the decisions were wrenching and made only under duress; bluesman Henry Townsend, in St. Louis, for example, was someone we desperately wanted to include and even went so far as to interview and film, but we simply had so much great blues from the Delta that we could not justify taking away space from one of the many brilliant performers whose sound was unique to the Midwest.

Some of the performers were popular national names. Soul Asylum and Babes in Toyland each had major-label record deals and international reputations; Greg Brown and John Hartford are among the best known and most influential singer/songwriters on the folk scene; Sounds of Blackness and the Mississippi Mass Choir

regularly top the gospel charts; Irma Thomas, Ann Peebles, Fontella Bass, and the Memphis Horns are familiar to any fan of classic r&b, while blues fans all know Robert Lockwood and Little Milton.

Many of the musicians, however, are unknown outside their own communities. Some, like the Boundless Love Quartet and La Otra Mitad, play in styles that should be familiar to many listeners, but they themselves have never appeared on records. Others, like Irvan Perez and the Ste. Genevieve Guignolée singers, will completely surprise most people; even their communities — the Spanish-speaking Isleños at the mouth of the Mississippi and the French settlers of southern Missouri — are unfamiliar to most Americans.

Well known or obscure, professional or amateur, historically resonant or startlingly innovative, the musicians were chosen because we felt that they represented something important about their regions and about American music as a whole. We were not trying to prove that the various regions we visited were particularly

fertile soil; every region has its music, and similarly brilliant artists could have been found in many other places. The Mississippi, though, does have a special magic; it was the legendary line of demarcation between East and West and the lifeline to the center of the country for centuries of European settlement, and it cuts across a variety of climes and cultural belts that made it ideal for our purpose.

The music on these CDs and the songs presented in the radio, television, book, and website that make up the totality of the *River of Song* project represent only a tiny fraction of what was recorded during five years of visiting the Mississippi. Thus what we have made available must be understood to be only the tip of a musical iceberg. For the CD, in particular, where we could not even include one piece by each group we filmed, our choices were always a compromise between wishes and possibilities.

There were a number of criteria that went into the final decisions, along with personal taste. In general, I tried not to duplicate music that

was already generally available. Thus, while we got brilliant versions of Sonny Burgess singing his hits, I chose instead to include his howling rock 'n' roll version of Jimmy Rodgers's "T for Texas." Karl Hartwich and other "Dutchman" bands have recorded plenty of oompah polka music but rarely if ever a solo accordion piece that shows the grace and lightness of this style. Some of the music here, even by established performers, is unique. The Memphis Horns are the most recorded horn section in history but have never before recorded a simple, acoustic set, without a rhythm section, and the included track will be a revelation even to their longtime fans. Fontella Bass is a queen of soul and gospel, but, rather than one of the brilliant solo tracks we recorded, we chose to include one that has her backing her mother, Martha Bass, as she used to do in her teens.

In some cases, songs were chosen because they showed the range and special qualities of a group. Everything we taped by the Mississippi Mass Choir was wonderful, but "We Praise Your Holy Name" was the song that best captured the choir's blend of tight group arrangements

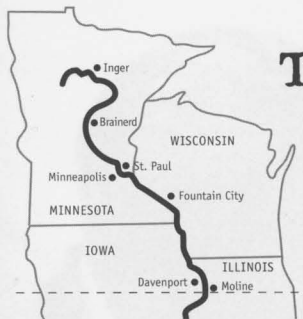
and spectacular soloists. The Boundless Love Quartet sang a full set of Southern gospel gems, but "The Sweetest Song I Know" made the cut because of the harmonica break, a surprising addition to their normal vocal harmonies.

Then there were the songs that are here simply because none of us could bear to leave them out. The Skål Club Spelmanslag is essentially a fiddle orchestra, and it seemed appropriate to feature them playing something from their large repertoire of traditional Scandinavian dance music. Every time we listened to "Red-Headed Swede," however, with its loopy lyrics and musical saw, we agreed that it could not be left off the disc. Time limitations being what they were, this number bounced the fiddle tracks; there is no excuse for this except the pleasures of the cut itself. *Nostra culpa*. Then, there were people who suggested that, given those same time limitations, the Ste. Genevieve Guignolée might be too disorganized for comfortable listening. They were probably right, but who can resist a bunch of revelers bawling medieval French lyrics? Certainly not us.

But enough of explanations. The music should speak for itself, and we hope it will tempt listeners to explore further, to watch the performances and interviews captured on film and read the words of the artists as they talk about their lives and music in the companion book. If *River of Song* has accomplished its purpose, it will introduce people to styles and communities that are new to them and make them want to search out still more music of all kinds, realizing that the hit parade and network variety shows will never reveal more than a tiny corner of America's vast musical tapestry.

Polka prodigy Karl Hartwich and his concertina teacher and mentor, Syl Liebl





Section One:

The Headwaters: Americans Old and New

One of the central American metaphors is that of the melting pot, but in the northern Midwest winters are long, and melting does not happen easily. Along the banks of the northern Mississippi, one still finds the music of wave after wave of immigrants, people who came thousands, hundreds, or just a few years ago. Each group has been affected by its surroundings and its neighbors, but each has also retained a cultural cohesiveness that is much rarer as one moves south.

1. Chippewa Nation *Powwow Song*

Randy Kingbird, Douglas Kingbird, Pete White, Bruce White, and guest singers; vocals and drumming

Recorded at the annual powwow, Inger, Minnesota, August 23, 1997

Chippewa Nation is part of a renaissance of Native American music taking place throughout the United States and Canada. A group of eight Ojibwe men from the Leech Lake and Red Lake Reservations in northern Minnesota, it performs in the contemporary powwow drumming style, mixing Ojibwe rhythms and songs that have been passed on orally from generation to generation with songs and styles adapted from other Native American groups. Chippewa Nation ("Chippewa" is an alternate spelling of "Ojibwe" that is now largely out of favor, but still is widely familiar) was formed some four years ago by Pete White and Randy Kingbird, and its members are all in their twenties

and thirties. They travel to powwows throughout the northern Midwest, performing in the central "drum arbor," seated around a bass drum that they all beat as elaborately garbed dancers circle them, stamping and twirling.

The members of Chippewa Nation are not professional musicians. Their music is a spiritual expression of their heritage and their day-to-day interactions with each other and with the natural world. The Ojibwe of northern Minnesota came to the area more than 300 years ago, and they have been able to retain many aspects of their traditional way of life. For many years, these traditions were suppressed by the dominant Anglo culture, but since the 1960s they have been seeing a dramatic resurgence. The powwow movement is particularly strong, ranging from competition powwows modeled on Western rodeos to smaller,

more traditional events like the annual powwow in Inger. Here, the musicians are in their element, and, every time they take their turn in the drum arbor, people flock to the dance ground.

2. Babes in Toyland 22

Lori Barbero, drums; Kat Bjeland, guitar and vocals; Maureen Herman, bass

Recorded in performance at First Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 28, 1996

Minneapolis has been a hotbed of alternative rock for two decades, but for sheer, abrasive energy, few groups can compare to the trio of young women known as Babes in Toyland, whose punk onslaught has spawned admirers and imitators around the world. One of the pioneering groups of the "riot grrrl" movement (Courtney Love started out in an early version of the band), Babes was founded by guitarist/singer/songwriter Kat Bjeland, who had moved to the Twin Cities from the Pacific Northwest, and drummer Lori Barbero.

Barbero took up drums at Bjeland's urging and is entirely self-taught, and she provides the group's rhythmic heart, an incredible mass of flailing arms and legs that propels the band with irresistible energy and roots it in deep rhythms that she likes to describe as "tribal." Bjeland, meanwhile, grinds out sheets of wailing guitar noise, over which she sings in a voice that ranges from a pained, ominous whisper to a banshee howl. Maureen Herman, who has since left the group, was the bassist at the time of filming, and her solid sound held the middle together.

"22," with obscure lyrics by Bjeland that seem to refer to East Indian gods, among other things, and the final count up to the title number, shows off the Babes' ability to grind out music that sounds harsh but turns on a dime. Barbero's drumming cues the tight rhythm shifts, while Bjeland moans, whines, and screams the lyric.

3. John Koerner *Sail Away, Ladies*

John Koerner, vocals and twelve-string guitar; Tony Glover, harmonica; Willie Murphy, keyboards; Peter Ostroushko, mandolin; Dakota Dave Hull, guitar

Recorded at Palmer's bar, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 27, 1996

"Spider" John Koerner hit the folk-blues scene in 1963, together with his partners, Dave Ray and Tony Glover. Koerner, Ray, and Glover stormed out of the Midwest and set the country on its ear with their rambunctious, freewheeling take on the blues tradition. Thirty-five years later, Koerner remains one of the most quirky and original performers on the American scene. After a brief retirement from music, he came back as a traditional folk singer, performing old chestnuts like "Shenandoah" and "Careless Love" but reshaping them into unique, personal statements that remain true to the tradition and yet have a funky, rhythmic drive that is Koerner's alone.

"In a sense, what I do is similar to something like Cajun music," Koerner says. "You've got a traditional thing, but it's not for just sitting around quietly, listening. I learn most of my stuff in the bars, and you've got to punch it out in the bars, and that

picks people up and livens them up. I'm trying to not put them to sleep; I'm trying to have them feel the power of these songs."

"Sail Away, Ladies" was recorded at Koerner's regular hangout, Palmer's, where he tends bar between musical outings. He was accompanied by the cream of the Twin Cities' sidemen, musicians who have known one another for decades and came to the attention of a national audience with the success of public radio's *A Prairie Home Companion*. The song shows Koerner's unique take on the folk repertoire, transforming the traditional sea chantey into a rocking barroom workout.

4. Soul Asylum *I Did My Best*

Dave Pirner, vocals and guitar; Dan Murphy, guitar; Karl Mueller, bass; Sterling Campbell, drums

Recorded in the band's rehearsal space, Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 26, 1996

The most successful band to emerge from the fertile Twin Cities rock scene of the 1980s, Soul Asylum started out as a hard-edged speed band called Loud Fast Rules. "We spent our formative years practicing in our bass player's mom's garage," guitarist Dan Murphy says. "We were there for two or three years. And you know, we didn't have any big aspirations or anything, it was just a hell of a lot of fun. We'd just get together and piss off the neighbors."

As Soul Asylum, the band retained some of its early edge but added a new melodiousness that took it to the top of the alternative rock scene. Singer/songwriter Dave Pirner wrote complex,

intelligent songs that he likes to place in a continuum reaching back to balladeers like Woody Guthrie. Despite its national success, Soul Asylum has remained proudly based in the Twin Cities, rehearsing in a looming warehouse on the Mississippi's east bank. "I Did My Best" is Soul Asylum at its most melodic, with a sound recalling the early Band.

5. The Skål Club Spelmanslag *Red-Headed Swede*

Paul Wilson, vocals and harmonica; Arnie Anderson, musical saw; Mary Wilson, guitar and second vocal

Recorded in Arnie Anderson's living room, Brainerd, Minnesota, March 24, 1996

A Scandinavian massed fiddle orchestra, the Skål Club Spelmanslag includes some dozen fiddlers, as well as a double bass, a guitar, and two accordions. It specializes in traditional Swedish and Norwegian dance tunes, some passed on in Minnesota Scandinavian traditions and others learned from recordings and musicians from the old countries. The group was formed some six years ago by Paul Wilson, a folk singer, fiddler, and accordionist based in Brainerd. "I was thinking, as the generations get farther removed from their immigrant past, it might be better if we try to band together all the people who are interested in our Scandinavian heritage," he says. "We call it Skål Club, because 'skål' is a Swedish word that means 'to your health' — you usually have a little drink after saying it, but it could just be coffee or whatever. Then, 'spelmanslag' is a Swedish and a

Norwegian word that means 'player's group,' but it has come to mean 'fiddler's group.'"

While most of the Skål Club's repertoire is made up of traditional fiddle music, Paul also specializes in the comic vaudeville style sometimes called Scandihoovian. "Red-Headed Swede" is a typical song in this genre, with its exaggerated dialect and references to Scandinavian immigrant foods and customs, all delivered with the good-natured humor of people who, when making ethnic jokes, choose to kid themselves rather than others.

6. Wang Chong Lor *The Singing Leaf*

Wang Chong Lor, vocals and banana leaf

Recorded in Wang Chong Lor's living room, St. Paul, Minnesota, August 1, 1997

The Twin Cities have the second largest population of Southeast Asian immigrants in the United States (after Los Angeles). The tribal, hill-dwelling Hmong came here after being forced out of their homes in Laos, and their vibrant community exemplifies the continuing contributions of new peoples to the American cultural mix. While attempting to assimilate to modern-day America, they have retained cultural and musical traditions that reach back before the dawn of recorded history.

Wang Chong Lor spends his days at the Hmong Cultural Center, a small storefront in a grey, unimpressive shopping mall, passing on his lore to the young members of the Hmong-American community. He plays the full range of traditional Hmong instruments, a unique assemblage ranging from the simple leaf, on which masters will play

complex, soaring melodies, to a variety of flutes and the *qeej*, a reed mouth organ.

As Hmong is a tonal language, the melodies are also a sort of language, and an adept musician can play a whole lyric without ever saying a word. The segment here alternates phrases played on a banana leaf with the same phrases sung. Someone familiar with the form and language would be able to understand the played phrases almost as easily as the sung ones. The leaf is, according to some musicians, the oldest of Hmong instruments. Because of the volume a good player can get, it was used to communicate from mountainside to mountainside.

7. Sounds of Blackness *I'll Open My Mouth to the Lord/I'll Be Ready*

Sounds of Blackness, vocals

Recorded at Profile Music, Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 31, 1997

From its origins as a student group at Macalester College to the top of the gospel charts, the thirty-member ensemble known as Sounds of Blackness has explored the breadth and continuity of the African-American experience. "My goal was to establish a legitimate Black music ensemble that performed the entire spectrum of African-American music in its proper context," says founder and leader Gary Hines. "I wanted to do everything from West African music to field hollers, work songs, spirituals, blues, jazz, gospel, reggae, ragtime, r&b, hip-hop, jazz, rock 'n' roll — the full spectrum. Because it's all a family of music that emanated from an experience: You can't understand the 'Glory

Hallelujah' of the gospel with knowing about the pain of the blues. And that's the meaning of the name: Each style of the music is a unique sound of blackness, and collectively they are the Sounds of Blackness."

After years as a popular group in the local community, known for its annual shows on Christmas and Martin Luther King Day, the group teamed up with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, producers of artists from Prince to Janet Jackson, and immediately hit both the gospel and r&b charts. Since then, every album has made the charts, and the Sounds have toured all over the United States, as well as to Europe and Japan. Along with their tight choral arrangements and smoking rhythm section, the members bring a message of African-American pride and self-reliance, doing their best to give something back to the community that originally produced their music.

This spiritual medley shows the Sounds at their most traditional, singing in tight, a cappella harmony.

8. Karl Hartwich *Kim Marie*

Karl Hartwich, "German" concertina

Recorded at the Dam Saloon, near Fountain City, Wisconsin, August 2, 1997

The "Dutchman" style of polka is beer-drinking, good-time dance music, developed by German immigrants in rural Minnesota and Wisconsin. Sometimes called oompah, it is distinguished by the thumping bass sound of the tuba and by its use of a distinctive member of the "free reed"

family of instruments, the "German" concertina. Karl Hartwich is a concertina virtuoso and singer who leads one of the most popular current bands, the Country Dutchmen, based in the area around La Crosse. With the recent boom in polka music, he has been touring all over the central United States, from Wisconsin and Illinois down to the Southwest, filling dance floors wherever he goes.

Hartwich was a child prodigy on concertina, playing at dances between sets by his mentor, Syl Liebl, a legend in Dutchman music, and he has some of the nimblest fingers in the field. "Kim Marie" is a rare solo recording, showing off his light, lyrical style. It was recorded on the veranda of the Dam Saloon, a bar on a raft anchored to the banks of the Mississippi just below lock and dam 5A, four miles south of Fountain City, Wisconsin, and has the added attraction (or distraction, depending on one's view) of Karl's occasional commentary.

9. The Manny Lopez Quintet *Jazz Me Blues*

Manny Lopez, cornet; Manny "Dude" Lopez III, drums; Tewanta Yerington, piano; Jeff D. Clauss, trombone; William H. Hale, bass

Recorded at the 11th Street Bar and Grill, Davenport, Iowa, July 27, 1997

Davenport, a regular stopping place of the riverboats that brought jazz up the Mississippi and birthplace of the legendary jazz cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, remains a mecca for enthusiasts of the music that has come to be known as Dixieland. Manny Lopez, the son of Mexican immigrants, grew

up playing trumpet in local mariachi bands but was inspired by Herb Alpert to stretch beyond the traditional Mexican repertoire. Over the years, he has become a leading figure on the Quad City jazz scene, leading his five-piece band through regular sets in a local restaurant.

"Jazz Me Blues," a Dixieland standard, was recorded during the annual Bix Weekend, a jazz festival and city celebration honoring Beiderbecke's legacy. While most of Lopez's repertoire is somewhat more modern than this, he performed the song as a special tribute to Bix, playing a cornet that once belonged to Davenport's most famous citizen.

10. La Otra Mitad *La Unica Estrella*

Nene Lopez, vocalist; Henry Rangel, guitar; Pedro Rangel, bass; John Mallette, accordion; Richard R. Jimenez, percussion; Gerardo E. Bojorquez, trumpet; Gonzalo Lopez, trumpet

Recorded at Willie G's, Moline, Illinois, July 26, 1997

La Otra Mitad is a straight-ahead barroom dance band in the Mexican *norteño* style, which blends polkas, waltzes, brassy horn charts, and bright accordion riffs with Mexican song forms like the *corrido* and *ranchera*, as well as such modern additions as Colombian *cumbia* and even the occasional burst of rap. The band was formed by Mexican-American youths whose parents came to the Quad Cities area around Davenport, Iowa, and Moline, Illinois, in the 1930s and 1940s to work on the area's farms, the railroad, and in the Moline meat-packing plants.

Workers by day, the members of La Otra Mitad get together on weekends to provide entertainment for

the large local Mexican-American community; they also pride themselves on their ability to adapt to other audiences, playing Italian, Jewish, or rock 'n' roll music for parties and family celebrations throughout the region. They are keepers of the true bar-band tradition, musicians who play not because they are self-involved artists but because they like to see people dancing and having a good time.

"La Unica Estrella" is a typical *ranchera*. It is a romantic song in which the singer laments, metaphorically, that the single star in his sky is becoming covered with clouds.

The Midwestern Crossroads

The land bordering the Mississippi as it runs through Missouri and Illinois is where the old river highways, the Missouri, Des Moines, Illinois, and Ohio, join the mainstream of the river for the journey south to the main port of New Orleans, and its towns were defined by the river traffic. By history, if not by geography, this region became for many people the center of the United States. In the 19th century, it was the divide between East and West, and traces of that division still hold good. West of the river, the prairies begin, the land of cowboy boots, cattle, and myth. East is White America's version of the "old country," the towns that liked to consider themselves as centers of civilization on the border of the barbarous wilderness. In later years, when the national migration pattern became as much south to north as east to west, this area was once again an important point on the journey, and a place where some travelers would choose to remain.



11. Greg Brown *Flat Stuff*

Greg Brown, vocals and guitar; Bo Ramsey, guitar

Recorded in Greg Brown's dining room, Iowa City, Iowa, July 29, 1997

Greg Brown is the preeminent singer/songwriter on the contemporary Midwestern folk scene, and became a national figure in the 1980s as house songwriter for *A Prairie Home Companion*. Brown's music is a surprising fusion of Midwestern roots and a searching, quirky imagination that took him east to New York's Greenwich Village in 1969, west on the beatnik-hippie trail, and on to Las Vegas, where he had a job ghost-writing pop songs. All the sounds he came across along the way combined with the church music and country fiddling he had

heard growing up in southern Iowa, and the result is a hip, funkyly rhythmic blend that somehow retains its rural innocence. After his stint on *A Prairie Home Companion*, Brown returned to Iowa City, and he has become the center of a small but vibrant local scene. In recent years, he has teamed up with a local blues-rocker, Bo Ramsey, who has added a new, raw edge to the music.

"Flat Stuff" was written many years ago, as a wryly affectionate description of Midwestern topography: "Flat stuff, flat stuff, way out to the setting sun." "My friend Carl was the one who said it," Greg says, remembering how he came to write the song. "We were driving along the Mississippi, and we were coming up out of the river valley into the flatland. And he said, 'We're going into the flat stuff now.'" Greg does not sing the song very often any more, and Bo, who was unfamiliar with it, adds gently evocative notes around Greg's melody.

12. John Hartford *Miss Ferris*

John Hartford, vocals and fiddle

Recorded on the riverboat Twilight, Le Claire, Iowa, August 20, 1997

John Hartford is a true devotee of river lore. Though best known as the writer of "Gentle on My Mind" and as one of the most innovative and idiosyncratic bandleaders and musicians in the country/bluegrass world, he has long maintained a parallel existence as a Mississippi riverboat pilot. Hartford grew up in St. Louis listening to stories and songs of the old steamboating days. His musical impulse came from seeing Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs's trendsetting bluegrass band, and

from the old-time dances that were still being held in the area during his youth in the 1950s. He later moved to the West Coast, where he became a regular on the Smothers Brothers television show, and on to Nashville, where he put together a band featuring Vassar Clements and Norman Blake that became the cutting edge of a "new traditionalist" movement on the country scene.

Today, Hartford lives most of the year in Nashville, still writing songs and touring on the concert circuit. Every summer, though, he comes back to the river. "Working as a pilot is a labor of love," he says. "After a while, it becomes a metaphor for a whole lot of things, and I find for some mysterious reason that if I stay in touch with it things seem to work out all right."

"Miss Ferris" is a tribute to the elementary school teacher who inspired Hartford's early infatuation with Mississippi steamboating. He sings it to the accompaniment of his own fiddle, strumming damped chords under his vocals and playing a melodic bridge between verses.

13. The Bob Lewis Family *Born to Be with You*

Lil' Bob Lewis, vocal and fiddle; Joy Lewis Calhoun, mandolin; Bob Lewis, Sr., guitar; Nanette Lewis, bass and vocal; Rory Ezell, mandolin and vocal; Kevin D. Hendrix, banjo

Recorded during a lunchtime jam session at the Western Illinois Bluegrass Days, Hillsboro, Illinois, July 24, 1997

Bluegrass is popular throughout the United States, and nowhere is it more enthusiastically appreciated than in the prairie country of Iowa, Illinois, and

Missouri. This is the area that produced the music's current standard-bearer, Alison Krauss, and local fans still remember her debut as a child prodigy, setting the region's festivals on fire with her blazing fiddle breaks. At the Western Illinois Bluegrass Days, old and young players come together to trade licks, eat watermelon, watch an array of popular bands, and jam into the wee hours of the night.

The Bob Lewis Family, based in southern Missouri, is one of the region's most popular bands. Bob Lewis set out to raise a family band, and he has met with startling success. His son Lil' Bob is a fiddle virtuoso, and his daughter Joy was recently given a new mandolin by the Gibson Company in recognition of her brilliant instrumental skills. With the rest of the family singing, playing, clog dancing, and even tossing in some cornball comedy routines, the Lewises are favorites throughout the Midwestern circuit. They still travel together in a big mobile home, and a toddling third generation promises to keep the family tradition alive for a long time into the future.

"Born to Be with You" is a fine example of bluegrass music's ability to borrow and adapt songs from other genres. It was originally a Top 10 hit for the Chordettes, a pop vocal group in 1956, and was brought into the bluegrass repertory by the innovative banjo player and bandleader J.D. Crowe in the late 1960s. The Lewis Family's version shows off the tight sibling harmonies that are a hallmark of family bluegrass ensembles.

14. Eugene Redmond and Sylvester "Sunshine" Lee *Milestone*

Eugene Redmond, recitation; Sylvester "Sunshine" Lee and his drumming group, African drums

Recorded in a rehearsal room at the Katherine Dunham Dynamic Museum, East St. Louis, Illinois, November 2, 1997

East St. Louis is one of the fabled Midwestern cities that, with its largely African-American population, nurtured some of the hottest players in jazz, blues, and r&b. One of the oldest blues songs tells how the singer "walked all the way from East St. Louis," and, in the 1950s, the city nurtured the rough-hewn show bands of Chuck Berry, Little Milton, and Ike and Tina Turner. Miles Davis grew up here, sneaking into local clubs to hear the latest jazz sounds.

Today, East St. Louis seems at times like a city under siege, but African-American artists are still working hard to instill a sense of pride and history in the younger generation. Two of the guiding lights of the local scene are the poet Eugene Redmond and the drummer Sylvester "Sunshine" Lee. Both have been associated with the arts association headed by dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham, and it was with Dunham that Lee started out studying the African drumming tradition. He has since trained several generations of African drummers, reminding Black youngsters of their roots in the Old World.

Eugene Redmond is a widely published poet, a major figure in the cultural blossoming of the 1960s. While many of his peers headed for the

coasts and their more visible literary scenes, Redmond has opted to remain here, on his home turf, and his poems are deeply rooted in his environment. "Milestone" is a tribute to Miles Davis, who grew up nearby in an apartment upstairs from his father's dentistry office.

15. Fontella and Martha Bass *I'm So Grateful*

Martha Bass, lead vocal; Fontella Bass, second vocal and piano

Recorded in Mt. Beulah Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri, February 15, 1995

Fontella Bass grew up on the gospel highway, then made a side trip to the top of the soul charts before coming home to the church. By the time she was in her teens, she was touring across the Mid- and Southwest, playing piano for her grandmother and her mother, Martha Bass, a member of the ground-breaking Ward Singers. In her late teens, she crossed over to the secular world, joining Little Milton's band as a pianist. One day, when Milton was off the bandstand, she took a vocal solo, and her singing career was launched. Soon she was up in Chicago, at Chess Records, cutting "Rescue Me," one of the defining hits of the soul revolution. When the hits stopped coming, Bass married jazzman Lester Bowie, and moved first to Chicago and then to Paris, France, singing both r&b and jazz. In the end, though, she came back to St. Louis and gospel music.

"I'm So Grateful" is a glance into Fontella Bass's early life. Once again, she is playing piano and

singing backup for her mother. Martha, Fontella, and Martha's son David Peaston have made several successful gospel albums in the 1990s, but all featured full band arrangements, and this is a unique chance to hear the Basses as they used to sound on the road. Martha Bass's deep, roughly powerful voice shows the experience of her seventy-five years, and her daughter supports her with passionate intensity.

16. Oliver Sain *Stop Breaking Down*

Oliver Sain, vocals, keyboards, and saxophone; Michael Harris, guitar; Michael Rota, drums; Jimmy Hinds, bass

Recorded at BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups, St. Louis, Missouri, November 6, 1997

Oliver Sain encompasses in his memories virtually the entire history of the blues. His grandfather was Dan Sane (*sic*), partner with Frank Stokes in Memphis's legendary Beale St. Sheiks, among the first blues stars of the 1920s. Raised around Greenville, Mississippi, he came to St. Louis to join his friend Little Milton and worked as Milton's bandleader through the glory days of St. Louis r&b. As other local stars got famous and moved away, he built a recording studio and set himself the task of keeping St. Louis r&b alive.

Over the years, Sain has established himself as the heart of the local scene, supporting the old guard and nurturing young talent. His Oliver Sain Revue makes an annual appearance at the St. Louis Blues Festival, and throughout the year he can be found working in local clubs. Far from living in the past,

he is always immersed in new projects, recording with old friends like piano legend Johnny Johnson or training up a new singer.

"Stop Breaking Down" is taken from the repertoire of the legendary harmonica master John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson. Sain's rolling piano underlies the piece, and, when he switches to saxophone, his playing has honking power and earthy humor.

17. The Bottle Rockets

Get Down, River

Brian Henneman, vocals and lead guitar; Tom Parr, rhythm guitar; Mark Ortmann, drums; Tom Ray, acoustic bass

Recorded in the Bottle Rockets' apartment, upstairs from the Hi Point Bar, Festus, Missouri, February 15, 1995

Three high-school buddies grew up in Festus, Missouri, an industrial town downriver from St. Louis, listening to Buck Owens records and Aerosmith. Eventually, they put together a band, playing honky-tonk music. There was only one problem: "We have this natural inclination to get excited when we play, and we'll just turn around and turn the amps up," Brian Henneman says. "We just can't help it. So we were louder than we should have been, more abrasive than we should have been, and we weren't doing anybody any favors." Rejected by their hometown crowd, the boys kept playing for themselves. "We eventually evolved into the Bottle Rockets and went into St. Louis, and nobody told us to turn down; I think everybody is deaf up there. We turned the amps up, and it turned into a whole new thing. There we

were, rocking like Aerosmith, playing country songs basically, and that's the thing we have been mining ever since."

With the addition of bass player Tom Ray, the Bottle Rockets came to national attention along with such other Midwestern roots bands as Uncle Tupelo, Wilco, and Son Volt, and made their reputation as one of the hardest-edged and most iconoclastic alternative country/rock bands around. "Get Down, River," recorded at their crash pad above the Hi Point Bar in Festus, shows them in a relatively quiet mood. The song is Brian Henneman's testament to the Mississippi flood in the mid-1980s; the Hi Point, as befits its name, was one of the few places not inundated.

18. The Ste. Genevieve Guignolée Singers

La Guignolée

The Ste. Genevieve Guignolée Singers, mass vocals; Bill Miller and Joe Kemper, fiddles; Duke Blechler, vocal solo

Recorded in the dining room of the Main Street Inn, Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, December 31, 1995

Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, lays claim to being the first permanent European settlement west of the Mississippi. Founded by French traders, it remained for centuries a French enclave in the midst of an increasingly Anglophone Midwest. Today, the last generation of native French speakers seems to be disappearing, but old traditions still remain. The most visible is La Guignolée, a medieval French custom analogous to English wassailing. Every New Year's Eve, the descendants of Ste. Genevieve's French settlers don bizarre and archaic costumes

and wander from bar to bar, singing a begging song that harks back to the Middle Ages.

"The song asks for a piece of meat — forty feet long, if I remember right," says Duke Blechler, leader of the current Ste. Genevieve singers. "And if the people didn't have a piece of meat to give them, they would ask for their eldest daughter. Take her out, wine her and dine her — which doesn't sound very good, you know."

In every bar, the singers are welcomed as town heroes, and, as the night wears on, they begin to sway a bit, and the French lyrics become harder and harder to understand. The spirit of the musical tradition keeps coming through loud and clear, though, until the last singer stumbles home to catch a few hours sleep before New Year's morning mass.

Section Three:

The Southern Fusion

The river flows into the Deep South, heartland of the blues and breeding ground for rock 'n' roll and soul music. This is farm and plantation country, and Memphis, the regional metropolis, is far less distinct from its rural surroundings than are Minneapolis, St. Louis, or New Orleans. Its population retains strong country roots, and its musical history has been made by all the folks from the surrounding fields who came into the city to record and sell their music, just as the plantation owners came in to sell their cotton bales to the national brokers.

The plantations, built by African slaves and later worked by African-American sharecroppers, created a population in which Blacks were the majority; while their political power was brutally curtailed, they were a dominant influence on music. All the musicians to come out of this area, whatever their race, have been deeply affected by Black traditions. Despite segregation, Black and White musicians have traded tunes and played together for generations, from the days when Mississippi John Hurt was working at dances with the White fiddler W.T. Narmour to the Stax studio scene that produced the Memphis Horns. The mixing was not easy, but it made for a unique musical world that could produce a White r&b singer like Elvis Presley and a Black country star like Charley Pride.

1. The Boundless Love Quartet *The Sweetest Song I Know*

Huell Tilley, Aaron "Flip" Mayo, Charles Martin, and Jill Brewington, vocals; Cindy Allardin, piano; James Renfro, harmonica; Chuck Burton, guitar

*Recorded at the First Baptist Church, La Center, Kentucky,
November 5, 1997*

Western Kentucky has a long and honorable music tradition, though most of the area's greatest performers had to leave home to find wider acclaim. Those who have stayed are generally unknown outside the region, but that is not because of any lack of talent. In small-town churches, Southern gospel music continues to rock the congregation, complex harmonies and split-second rhythmic shifts serving to accent a message of faith and redemption.

The Boundless Love Quartet, based in the tiny town of La Center, is typical of the best the Southern gospel style has to offer, a multi-generational group that mixes old-time soul with youthful spirit. Backed in loose country style by an ensemble that includes piano, guitar, and harmonica, the quartet runs through old standards and gospel pop songs that recall the trend-setting work of the Blackwood Brothers, the group that once inspired youthful singers like Elvis Presley. "The Sweetest Song I Know" is a typical example of contemporary Southern gospel; it takes its inspiration in the classic hymn "Amazing Grace" but is cast in an upbeat, strongly rhythmic style that owes a heavy debt to the African-American quartet tradition. The Boundless Love's version is rendered distinctive by the harmonica solo; this instrument, not typically part of a gospel group, is testimony to the gospel church's ability to adapt secular instruments to the Lord's work.

2. Sonny Burgess *T for Texas* *(Blue Yodel #1)*

Sonny Burgess, vocals and guitar; J. R. Rogers, guitar; Kern Kennedy, piano; Jim Aldridge, harmonica; Doug Greeno, bass; Dewight Levine, drums

Recorded at the King of Clubs, Swifton, Arkansas, October 14, 1997

Back in the 1950s, White farm boys and girls all across the South discovered that, if they turned their radio dials to the right frequency, they could hear music that was a lot more exciting than anything playing at the local square dance. In surprising synchrony, these young people began to mix a bit of this wild music with the haunted strains of Hank Williams and the acoustic overdrive of Bill Monroe's bluegrass. When Elvis Presley hit, they were ready, and dozens followed his lead to the Memphis offices of Sun Records.

One of the new wave of what would come to be called rockabilly artists was Sonny Burgess, who had been tearing up roadhouses in his hometown of Newport, Arkansas. Newport was in Jackson County, one of the few wet counties in an area dominated by prohibitionists, and boasted a formidable strip of honky-tonks where music, gambling, and wild living were the order of the day. Burgess and his Pacers were the kings of the local scene, the hottest, rawest White rockers around.

"T for Texas" shows the country/blues overlap of the first great White bluesman, Jimmie Rodgers, upshifted into rockabilly overdrive. The band is playing at the King of Clubs, the last survivor of Jackson County's infamous strip of saloons out on



Highway 67. Even on what is usually considered a country song, Burgess proves that he is a rocker to the soles of his boots.

3. The Memphis Horns and Ann Peebles *St. Louis Blues*

Ann Peebles, vocals; Andrew Love, tenor saxophone; Wayne Jackson, trumpet; Paul Brown, piano

Recorded at Easley Studios, Memphis, Tennessee, October 15, 1997

In the 1960s, Stax Records and its competitors defined a new style called Southern soul. The names on the record labels tended to be those of singers, but what made the records cook was the churning rhythms of the backing musicians. The Stax rhythm section would become famous as Booker T. and the MGs, and the horn section would make its mark first as the Mar-Keys. Two of the Mar-Keys went on to still greater acclaim as the Memphis Horns: Wayne Jackson and Andrew Love have become the most recorded horn section in the world, playing with everyone from the classic soul stars to later rockers like Sting.

Love is the son of a Black preacher, while Wayne's father was a White traveling salesman, but the first time they played together they realized that they were two of a kind. "There was something about the way our tones blended," Love says. "His sound and my sound, it was just perfect." When the bottom dropped out of the local soul boom, they hit the road, becoming studio stalwarts who could always be relied upon to sail in and add that certain sound that, to a world of listeners, would always say "Memphis."

"St. Louis Blues" has the Horns backing Ann Peebles, the soul diva who came to Memphis from St. Louis and burned up the charts in the early 1970s with "I Can't Stand the Rain" and a string of other hits. Peebles and the Horns are long-time buddies; Jackson and Love played on her early hits, and they have toured together on recent soul packages. This recording, however, is unique, the first time any of the three have recorded in a stripped-down acoustic setting that allows Jackson and Love to show their ability as soloists (after an introductory duet on "Blue Monk") as well as punching in their trademark riffs between vocal lines, while Peebles shows off impressive blues chops.

4. Levon Helm and James Cotton *Going Back to Memphis*

Levon Helm, vocals and drums; James Cotton, harmonica; Earl Cate, guitar; David Renko, saxophone; Jim Spake, saxophone, Ernie Cate, keyboards; John Davies, bass; Joe Mulherin, trumpet; Jack Hale, trombone

Recorded on the riverboat Memphis Queen, at the King Biscuit Blues Festival, Helena, Arkansas, October 10, 1997

One of the highlights of the 1997 King Biscuit Blues Festival was a "Midnight Ramble," held on a riverboat and featuring Levon Helm, a bunch of his Arkansas buddies, and harmonica legend James Cotton. Helm grew up in Turkey Scratch, just outside of Helena, and used to come into town to sit at the feet of the *King Biscuit Show's* musicians as they broadcast from the local radio station. He went on to be the wailing voice and solid drummer of the Band, the group that arguably invented the

whole concept of American roots music in the late 1960s after a stint as Bob Dylan's backing band.

Every year, Helm comes home to play the King Biscuit Fest, sometimes with his Band mates and sometimes with the Cate Brothers, a group of hometown friends. In 1997, he was joined by the Cates and James Cotton, who came up in Muddy Waters's band and became one of the trendsetting Chicago harmonica players and bandleaders. "Going Back to Memphis" is a nice, rowdy roadhouse workout that gives everyone a chance to stretch out and show their stuff.

5. Robert Lockwood, Jr. *Take a Little Walk with Me*

Robert Lockwood, Jr., vocals and guitar

Recorded in the performers' lounge at the King Biscuit Blues Festival, Helena, Arkansas, October 10, 1997

For a lot of people, the Mississippi Delta is virtually synonymous with the blues. Robert Lockwood, Jr., is part of the younger generation that put the Delta on America's musical map in the 1930s, then brought the music north to Chicago. Stepson of the Delta's most famous early star, Robert Johnson, Lockwood cut his first record in 1941, then teamed up with harmonica king Sonny Boy Williamson on the *King Biscuit Show*. This daily radio program blanketed the Delta and introduced a new, electric sound that influenced a generation and helped shape what somewhat paradoxically, has come to be called Chicago blues.

Lockwood went on to play jazz and pop music but returned to the blues in the 1960s and has been playing it ever since. These days, he can usually be heard fronting a crack electric band, most of whose players are young enough to be his grandchildren, but he can also play acoustic blues that he learned from Johnson as a teenager. "Take a Little Walk with Me," which he first recorded at that 1941 session, is a reworking of Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago," itself a reworking of Kokomo Arnold's "Original Kokomo Blues." (*For many years Lockwood went by the name Robert Jr. Lockwood.*)

6. Big Jack Johnson *Catfish*

Big Jack Johnson, vocals and guitar

Recorded in Big Jack Johnson's back yard, Clarksdale, Mississippi, April 2, 1996

While other blues musicians headed north in search of blues stardom, Big Jack Johnson stayed down in the Delta, and his music has a raw, country feel that city bands somehow can never capture. His father was a fiddler, and Johnson grew up in the old, acoustic tradition, then was turned on to the new sounds coming over the radio: the King Biscuit musicians, B.B. King, Elmore James, and all the other stars. He put together a style that borrowed from many musicians but always remained rooted in his home soil.

"Most guys that played here left here, and they changed their style," Johnson says. "They don't play like the Delta anymore. But I do. It's a feeling. You know, you play the Delta, it means you've got to feel it. When we was writing these

songs, we had a feeling, and when we sang these songs. That Chicago stuff is fast, you know. They don't have that feel."

"Catfish" is a Delta classic, recorded by Robert Petway in 1941 and later adapted by Muddy Waters. Johnson's version starts off showing how the song used to be played, then picks up the tempo in his own variation, blending Waters's verses with older ones. This is a rare example of Johnson's acoustic style (he did not even have an acoustic guitar around the house, and had to borrow one for this recording), but he is likely the best acoustic player currently in the Delta. His playing is an astonishing blend of the oldest regional picking styles and his own innovations.

7. Big Jack Johnson and the Jelly Roll Kings *Shake Your Money Maker*

Big Jack Johnson, vocals and guitar; Frank Frost, keyboards; Sam Carr, drums; David Porter, bass

Recorded at Thompson's Grocery Store, Bobo, Mississippi, April 2, 1996

Johnson usually works with his own band these days, but he made his name as a member of the Jelly Roll Kings. The Kings (originally called the Nighthawks) were a trio filled out by harmonica and keyboard man Frank Frost and drummer Sam Carr, and they were famous as the hottest band in the Delta. "There wasn't a real blues sound around here till Frank Frost and Sam Carr hit town," Johnson says. "Before that, guys had like six, seven horns in the band and this guy was playing guitar, he didn't know anything but chords, and it mostly sounded like jazz music. People'd go out,

though, 'cause that's all they had. Until Sam and Frank come to town with the blues. Man, them cats could get it! I tell you. I got with them too, that kind of sweetened the pie a little bit, you know. That's how the blues really got cranked up here. We cranked them up."

"Shake Your Money Maker" is a Delta standard from slide master Elmore James, recorded during a rare reunion of the Jelly Roll Kings. As Carr and Frost hold down a grinding beat, Jack starts off playing essentially James's part, then solos out into the stratosphere. The performance was in a classic Delta juke joint, a grocery store at a crossroads near Clarksdale that pushes the shelves back against the wall on Saturday nights and sells beer out of the cooler.

8. Little Milton *Grits Ain't Groceries (All Around the World)*

Little Milton, vocals and lead guitar; Rod Hurt, rhythm guitar; Larry Weathersby, saxophone; Steve Maylor, trumpet; Al Wilder, bass; Jason Hicks, drums

Recorded at the Flowin' Fountain, Greenville, Mississippi, October 13, 1997

In the 1950s, blues evolved into a gospel-tinged style that would ease seamlessly into the Southern soul sound of the next decade. The reigning kings were based at first in Memphis: artists like B.B. King, Bobby Blue Bland, and Little Milton. Milton Campbell started out as a teenage guitar player in Greenville, Mississippi, recorded for Sun Records, then headed up to St. Louis and spent years there, filling the clubs in competition with his fellow Mississippian Ike Turner.

Signed to Chess Records, the Chicago label that defined down-home blues, Milton had a respectable string of blues hits, then came into his own in the 1960s as a soul-blues singer and balladeer. His uptown sound, full of rich horn lines and singing guitar solos, is the antithesis of the Jelly Roll Kings' rough-hewn approach, but there is no questioning his depth of soul and emotion. Today, Milton records for the Jackson-based Malaco label. While he is often underrated by White blues enthusiasts, he is one of the most consistent sellers in the Southern blues market and continues to draw a faithful body of African-American fans to the string of clubs known affectionately as the chitlin' circuit.

"Grits Ain't Groceries" was one of Milton's biggest hits of the 1960s, a greasily humorous protestation of love. It unfortunately does not feature Milton's incredible guitar work, but the songs that did were all around ten minutes long, and his solos were so fluidly inventive that it seemed a crime to edit them. For the ebullient power of the vocals, this was in any case a high point of his show.

9. The Mississippi Mass Choir *We Praise Your Holy Name*

The Mississippi Mass Choir, vocals; Alisa Patrick, soloist; David Curry, organ; Jerry Smith, keyboards; Sam Scott, drums

Recorded at Anderson United Methodist Church, Jackson, Mississippi, October 12, 1997

Frank Williams, leader of one of the South's most popular gospel quartets, the Jackson Southernaires,

had a dream. He wanted to put together a choir that would show the world all that Mississippi had to offer. With a few associates, he proceeded to spread the word that he was seeking singers throughout the state, and soon the audition tapes were rolling in. Williams picked out the best few hundred cassettes and called those singers in for auditions. In the end, he had roughly a hundred of the greatest singers in a state long famous for its depth of musical talent. He brought them together, rehearsed them, and called them the Mississippi Mass Choir.

Frank Williams is dead, but his dream lives on. Mississippi Mass is the most successful choir in gospel music. Every record it makes shoots to the top of the gospel charts, and several have lingered on those charts for years. It is the down-home soul and sheer technical brilliance of the singers that have set Mississippi Mass apart and kept it consistently ahead of the imitators that have sprung up in its wake. The group has toured Europe, Japan, and most of the United States, astonishing audiences with its unique blend of tight, modern arrangements and old-time churchy passion.

"We Praise Your Holy Name" shows the two sides of Mississippi Mass, the impeccable vocal arrangements and the shouting, old-time power of the soloists. As the choir rolls like a tidal wave, Alisa Patrick soars over them, singing with a sanctified fervor that keeps threatening to get out of control but always remains perfectly synchronized with the group as a whole.

Section Four:

Louisiana, Where Music Is King

Louisiana is a world unto itself, and music is a big part of what makes it special. Or, more accurately, Louisiana is several worlds, each completely distinct from the others. North Louisiana is part of the Deep South; New Orleans is part of the Caribbean; the Cajun country is a sort of southern Quebec with bayous and a rich African-American heritage; as for the Isleño area at the Mississippi's mouth, it is a tiny pocket unto itself. Each of these areas has its own music and food, two things which tend to go together in Louisiana and which are valued here as in no other part of the country.



10. Kenny Bill Stinson *Taters and Gravy and Chicken-Fried Steak*

Kenny Bill Stinson, vocals and guitar

Recorded on the terrace of the Wharf Master's House, Natchez-Under-the-Hill, Mississippi, October 18, 1997

In northern Louisiana, country and blues come together, and a quirky breed of songwriter is born. Jerry Lee Lewis and cousins Mickey Gilley and Jimmy Swaggart come out of here, as does swamp country singer/songwriter Tony Joe White. Kenny Bill Stinson is thus part of a long tradition.

"Where I'm from is kind of like a train-wreck of country music and blues," Stinson says. "They kind

of crashed together and blew up there. So I play a blend of country, blues, rock 'n' roll — whatever I can throw together to make a living. I've been playing music, it seems like, ever since I was a baby. My mother said that I came out singing, not crying, and I've been hollering and yodeling and warbling ever since."

"Taters and Gravy and Chicken-Fried Steak" is a paean to north Louisiana cooking. Stinson leads a band that rocks parties and barrooms throughout northern Louisiana, but here he is on his own, his guitar chopping out a solid boogie rhythm under his twangy vocals.

11. D.L. Menard *La Porte d'en Arrière* (*The Back Door*)

D.L. Menard, vocals and guitar; Robert Jardell, accordion; Leo Abshire, fiddle; Terry Huval, steel guitar; Christine Balfa, guitar; Becky Menard Moreland, vocals

Recorded in D.L. Menard's yard, Erath, Louisiana, September 14, 1997

Guitarist and songwriter D.L. Menard is a local legend in the bayou country. "The Cajun Hank Williams," he started out as a country singer, the guy who would sing the latest English-language hits in between the older French numbers. In his teens, though, he met Williams at a local show, and the country star told him he should be proud of his own culture and play his own music. Menard reacted by reshaping Williams's "Honky Tonk Blues" into the most popular Cajun song since "Jole Blon," the picaresque "La Porte d'en Arrière," or "The Back Door."

That was back in the early 1960s, and over the next four decades Menard has written hundreds of songs, all in French and illuminated by his keen insight and sure lyrical touch. He is also a popular bandleader, the finest old-time entertainer in Cajun music. His shows are a mix of irresistibly danceable music, heart-wrenching vocals, and strings of weird non-sequitur and offbeat philosophizing.

This version of "La Porte d'en Arrière" has D.L. accompanied on second vocals by his daughter and backed by two of the leading lights of the modern Cajun scene, Robert Jardell and Christine Balfa, as well as two old friends, Leo Abshire and steel guitarist Terry Huval. The steel guitar is

eschewed by Cajun music revivalists but was ubiquitous in Cajun bands during Menard's youth, and its high whine fits perfectly with his country-Cajun sound.

12. Geno Delafosse *Bon Chien*

Geno Delafosse, accordion and vocals; Joseph "Cookie" Chavis, guitar; John "Pops" Esprite, bass; Germaine Jack, drums; Steven Nash, rub board

Recorded at Slim's Y-Ki-Ki, Opelousas, Louisiana, September 12, 1997

Geno Delafosse is a standard-bearer for traditional zydeco, the popular music of the Creoles, or Black Francophones, who have lived alongside the Cajuns for centuries. In an evolution that parallels what has happened in the Anglophone South, Black French music has seen a startling and imaginative evolution over the last century that often left the White French music looking rather stolid and conservative by comparison. Geno's father, John Delafosse, helped set off the latest wave of zydeco, helping to revive the popularity of the harmonically limited but rhythmically unstoppable button accordion.

Delafosse took over his father's band a few years ago, and he has proved himself one of the most versatile musicians in south Louisiana. Moving with ease between the one-, two-, and three-row button accordions and the piano accordion favored by zydeco king Clifton Chenier, he can play everything from old-fashioned waltzes, two-steps, and *jurés* to blues and soul hits. Meanwhile, at his home in Eunice, Delafosse tends to his other passion, keeping up a stable of six fine riding

horses. With his white cowboy hat and colorful shirts, he exemplifies a cowboy tradition that — though few Northerners know it — was never limited to White Anglo-Saxons.

“Bon Chien,” which Delafosse learned from his father, has a classic zydeco feel and the wonderful lyric, “Un bon chien a deux jours” (“A good dog, he’s got two days”). Delafosse has the most varied repertoire on the current scene, and many of his songs belong in the huge area of overlap between the Cajun and Creole traditions, but he also plays stripped-down, rhythm-driven workouts such as this, which have formed the basis of the current zydeco craze among young African-Americans in southern Louisiana.

13. David and Roselyn *Marie Lavaux*

Roselyn Lionheart, rumba box and vocals; David Leonard, guitar, harmonica, and vocals

Recorded on Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 22, 1997

The streets of New Orleans have been the training ground for many of the city’s brightest talents, and they remain a free-form showcase for everything from brass bands and a cappella groups to tap dancers, magicians, and a virtuoso on the musical glasses. David and Roselyn have been singing on these streets for over twenty years, raising three children and sending them off to college with coins and bills thrown into David’s guitar case by enthusiastic passersby.

David and Roselyn met in the Air Force Band in 1959 and married shortly afterwards. They first came to New Orleans in 1963, as part of a voter

registration drive, but did not relocate to the city until the 1970s. Ever since, they have been a regular sight on Royal Street or a corner of Jackson Square. They are a striking pair: David with his high hat, flowing white hair, goatee, and bushy moustache, plays guitar and harmonica, occasionally switching over to trumpet for an old jazz standard. Roselyn, with her dark, African features, long braids, and wide hats, plays mandolin, guitar, and various sizes of African thumb piano, from the tinkling kalimba to the thumping rumba box.

“Marie Lavaux” is a crowd-pleasing favorite from David and Roselyn’s vast repertoire, which ranges from church songs to folk music, country hits, blues, jazz, and plenty of New Orleans r&b. Roselyn holds down the rhythm on the rumba box, a Caribbean instrument made by placing tuned metal tongues on a big, wooden box. The background noise is the traffic of the French Quarter.

14. Henry Butler *Basin Street Blues*

Henry Butler, piano

Recorded upstairs at the Funky Butt, New Orleans, September 18, 1997

Henry Butler’s name is not a household word, but over the last decade he has established himself as the finest all-around pianist in New Orleans, a city known for its piano masters. Originally trained in classical music, both voice and piano, Butler has broadened his technique in many directions, becoming equally at home in jazz, blues, and r&b. He toured with the Verve Big Band and is

an acclaimed club performer in his own right. He is also something of a historian of New Orleans music and can present a one-man chronicle that reaches back to the days when Jelly Roll Morton was helping invent the music now known as jazz in the red light district of Storyville.

“Basin Street Blues” shows both Butler’s immersion in the tradition and the extent to which he refuses to let it limit him. Starting off with a relatively straight-ahead, stride-style reading of the New Orleans standard, he soon is throwing off cascades of oddly accented, harmonically quirky runs, without ever losing the swing and melodic sweetness of the original tune.

“I learned ‘Basin Street Blues’ in the mid-’70s, when I realized that I was going to take this gig that was catering to tourists, mostly,” Butler says. “‘Basin Street’ is one of the classics here in New Orleans, and most pianists play it in the stride style, which I do too, but that gig was when I first started taking a tune like that and just playing the hell out of it, really playing it like I wanted it to be played, as opposed to playing it just as a cocktail pianist or as background music.”

15. Irma Thomas *Time Is on My Side*

Irma Thomas, vocals; Charles Elan III, saxophone; Warner Williams, keyboards; Emile R. Hall Jr., saxophone; Arthur Bell, guitar; Robert Harvey, bass; Wibert J. Widow, drums

Recorded at the Lion’s Den, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 21, 1997

New Orleans has been a steady producer of r&b talent, from Fats Domino and Professor Longhair

to the Neville Brothers. Irma Thomas first hit in the 1950s as a teenager, with one of the rawest, hottest records ever to come out of the scene, “You Can Have My Husband (But Please Don’t Mess with My Man).” She continued through the 1960s, with hits like “It’s Raining” and “Wish Someone Would Care.”

Other singers of her generation have retired, or limit their appearances to festivals and oldies packages, but Thomas’s reputation has only grown with the years. Today, she is hailed as the “Soul Queen of New Orleans.” She continues to record well-produced albums of new material and fills clubs and concert halls around the world. This is due both to her vaulting, churchy voice, which can be reminiscent of such other soul queens as Aretha Franklin and Patti LaBelle, and to her stage presence. Thomas radiates a Southern warmth, drawing audiences into her world and making them glad they came. She is completely at home onstage, and her manner has a casual ease and humor that are instantly engaging.

“Time Is on My Side” will be familiar to a lot of listeners as a Rolling Stones number, but Thomas did it first, back in 1964. “My version was in the charts at the time the Rolling Stones decided to cover it,” she says. “At that time, that was what they called the ‘British Invasion,’ and I got invaded by the British and that went out the door. For a long time I wouldn’t sing it; it wasn’t until Bonnie Raitt and I did a New Year’s Eve show together, when she enticed me — she said that we should take it as our torch song, because time has been on our side. So I put it back into my repertoire.”

16. Eddie Bo with Henry Butler *Check Your Bucket*

Eddie Bo, piano and vocals; Henry Butler, electric piano; Renard Poché, guitar; Mark A. Brooks, bass; Raymond Weber, drums

Recorded onstage in Armstrong Park, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 13, 1997

Eddie Bo is a New Orleans landmark. One of the classic generation of pianists that includes Allen Toussaint and Huey "Piano" Smith, he had several strong regional hits in the early 1960s, all featuring a rocking Caribbean rhythm and offbeat humor. Today, Bo remains a stalwart of the French Quarter, playing several afternoons out of every week at Margaritaville. He was playing the gig for years before Jimmy Buffett bought the club and changed its name, and is set to remain into the foreseeable future.

Along with his musicianship, Bo is a street-corner philosopher and an evocative booster for his hometown sound. "There's that mysticism, that little extra beat that you can always tell comes from New Orleans," he says. It's an extra beat inside the beat that we can't seem to explain to people. We call it a stutter step, that extra step that the second liners do [in the street parades]. We incorporate that from when we are children, and when you hear it, then you know it, 'cause there's only one set of people that's able to bring that forth, to incorporate that extra little thing that's going on in there. Mister, you can tell New Orleans anywhere you go."

"Check Your Bucket" is Bo's reworking of his 1962 hit "Check Mr. Popeye," which had to be withdrawn

when the cartoon character's studio objected. Bo is backed by Henry Butler on electric keyboards and Butler's band. They had not planned to play the tune, but an audience member shouted it as a request, and Bo sailed right in. The other musicians fell in behind him as if they had been rehearsing with him for years — which, in a sense, they had.

17. Soul Rebels *Let Your Mind Be Free*

Mervin Campbell, trumpet, lead vocals; Byron Bernard, saxophone; LuMar LeBlanc, snare drum and rap; Cannon Williams, trumpet; Derrick Mose, bass drum; Michael Woods, percussion; Damion Francois, tuba; Will Terry, saxophone, Herberts Stevens, trombone, Winston Turner, trombone

Recorded at Joe's Cozy Corner, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 20, 1997

The Soul Rebels are the most exciting of a young generation of marching bands that, raised in the classic New Orleans brass band tradition, pound home rhythms ranging as far afield as reggae and hip-hop. Rapping, soul-shouting, and blasting out an assault of what is, in the truest possible way, heavy metal, the Soul Rebels play a music that is not exactly jazz, not exactly r&b, but is unquestionably the hottest dance sound around. As long cars cruise the back of town, their windows rolled down, the hip, angry street sound of brass bands like the Soul Rebels blasts from the tape decks that anywhere else would be playing the latest L.A. gangsta rap.

While the Rebels have a hometown reputation almost as tough as their music, offstage they are thoughtful and articulate. They dream of a

worldwide success that would allow them to bring back some prosperity to the hard, poor neighborhoods where they got their start and still live. Their lyrics speak of the problems of life in the ghetto but also of brotherhood and hopes for a brighter future, and their music is utterly uplifting, its fiery power forcing the listeners to forget their troubles, hit the floor, and dance.

"Let Your Mind Be Free" is the Soul Rebels' theme song, and they play it as they march in the Crescent City's famed jazz funerals and street parades, passersby joining in the chant of "Soul Rebels, Soul, Soul Rebels." A marvelous hodgepodge, it slides from street chants to brass band fanfares, reggae, and Jamaican toasts.

18. Irvan Perez *La Vida de un Jaibero* *(The Crab Fisherman's Song)*

Irvan Perez, vocal

Recorded on a small boat near the mouth of the Mississippi, September 19, 1997

Out on Delacroix Island, in the swampy ground where the Mississippi breaks up and flows out into the Gulf of Mexico, a group of immigrants from the Canary Islands have preserved a pocket of Spanish culture for almost two centuries. The Isleños still sing a cappella ballads that hark back to the Middle Ages, as well as newer songs about local pursuits like shrimping and muskrat-trapping.

Irvan Perez, a retired trapper, fisherman, and carver of wooden duck decoys, is the finest singer in the Isleño community. Now in his seventies, he sings in a high, clear voice, carrying the listener back to

a slower, quieter time when people entertained themselves during long hours in the swamps. Taking his small boat out through the waterways, he navigates the twisting maze of channels and pools as easily as a city dweller would make his way down a familiar street, all the time telling tales of the old days, before the oil boom brought English-speakers out to the islands.

"La Vida de un Jaibero," or "The Crab Fisherman's Song," is one of Perez's favorites: "I recall when my father wrote it — that was in the '30s — we were fishing crabs. If you had a hurricane and the [musk]rats were driven out of your land, then you had no choice but to go ahead and fish crabs or something. The month of February is the worst month, because the crabs will bury if it's cold, and they don't bite.

"The song talks about an individual that goes ashore to cut the grass, and a swarm of bees get on him, and he hasn't made enough money to even get a haircut, so his hair is long and it gets tangled up in the branches and he can't get out. It's comical, really, and finally it tells you, 'When a poor man dies, a fisherman, don't bother mourning, 'cause he's gone to a better world.'"



Discography

We have included a maximum of three recent recordings for each artist. For a more extensive discography see *River of Song: A Musical Journey Down the Mississippi* (St. Martin's Press, 1999) or www.pbs.org/riverofsong

Babes in Toyland

To Mother. Twin Tone Records 89208-2, 1991.
Fontanelle. Reprise Records 26998, 1992.
Nemesisters. Reprise Records 9 45868-2, 1995.

Bass, Fontella

Rescued, The Best of Fontella Bass (early recordings).
Chess CHD-9335. MCA Records, 1992.
No Ways Tired. Nonesuch 9 79357-2, 1995.
Now That I Found a Good Thing. Jewel 5060, 1996.

Bo, Eddie

Check Mr. Popeye. Rounder Records 2077, 1988.
Eddie Bo and Friends. BO-SOUND BO-2295, 1995.
Available through: Eddie Bo Productions, P.O. Box 50997,
New Orleans, LA 70150-0997.

Bottle Rockets

The Brooklyn Side. Originally released on East Side Digital
Records, 1994. Re-released by Tag Recordings 92601-2, 1995.
24 Hours a Day. Atlantic 83015-2, 1997.

Irma Thomas

Boundless Love Quartet

There are no recordings of the Boundless Love Quartet, but country gospel style fuses traditional Southern White religious singing, as heard on *Southern Journey Volume 4: Brethren, We Meet Again*, Rounder 1704, with the upbeat, jazzy style pioneered by the Golden Gate Quartet, who can be heard on *Swing Down, Chariot*, Columbia/Legacy CK 47131. This fusion was popularized in the 1950s by the Mississippi-born Blackwood Brothers, who can be heard on: *The Blackwoods*, Chordant Music Group 44905 (1997).

Brown, Greg

The Live One. Red House Records 78, 1995.
Further In. Red House Records 88, 1996.
Slant 6 Mind. Red House Records 98, 1997.

Burgess, Sonny

We Wanna Boogie. Rounder Records SS36, 1990.
Tennessee Border. Hightone 8039, 1992.
Sonny Burgess. Rounder Records 3144, 1996.

Butler, Henry

For All Seasons. Atlantic Jazz 82856-2, 1996.
Blue After Sunset. Black Top Records 1144, 1998.

David and Roselyn

Gospel from the Streets of New Orleans. SONO 1033, 1993.
Gumbo Ya Ya. SONO 1041, 1996. Available through Sounds
of New Orleans, 5584 Canal Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70124,
tel: (504) 484-7222.
Dirty Old Men. Ordnung & Hartman Records, Berlin, 1997.
Contact David and Roselyn, P.O. Box 70813, New Orleans,
LA 70172.

Delafosse, Geno

French Rockin' Boggie. Rounder Records 2131, 1994.
That's What I'm Talking About. Rounder Records 2141, 1996.

Hartford, John

Morning Bugle. Rounder Records 0356, 1995.
Aereo-Plain. Rounder Records 0366, 1997.
Wild Hog in the Red Brush. Rounder Records 0392, 1996.

Hartwich, Karl, and the Country Dutchmen

Is Everybody Happy. Karl and the Country Dutchmen, 1991.
Available through Karl and the Country Dutchmen,
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Smithsonian Folkways SFW 40088, 1998.

Helm, Levon, The Band

Across the Great Divide [Box]. Capitol/EMI Records
89565, 1994.
Live At Watkins Glen. Capitol/EMI 31742, 1995.
High On the Hog. Pyramid Records 72404, 1996.

Johnson, Jack, or The Jelly Roll Kings

We got to Stop This Killin'. MC Records MC-0033, 1996.
The Jelly Roll Kings, Off Yonder Wall. Fat Possum 80310, 1997.
All the Way Back. MC Records MC-0035, 1998.

Koerner, "Spider" John

Raised By Humans. Red House Records 84, 1992.
Star Geezer. Red House Records 84, 1996.
One Foot in the Groove. Koerner, Ray, and Glover,
Tim/Kerr Records 137, 1996.

La Otra Mitad

There are no recordings of La Otra Mitad, but there are thousands of available CDs in the *norteño* style, including *Chulas Fronteras & Del Mero Corazon* (Arhoolie 425), *Tejano Roots* (Arhoolie 341), *15 Tex-Mex Conjunto Classics* (Arhoolie 104), *Borderlands: From Conjunto to Chicken Scratch* (Smithsonian Folkways) SFW 40418.

Lewis Family

Dreamin'. HL Records 0796-01, 1996.
You Can't Ask Too Much of My God. 1997. Contact Bob Lewis,
106 Young Street, Doniphan, MO 63935.

Little Milton

Greatest Hits. Malaco, Mississippi 7477, 1995.
Malaco, Mississippi.
Cheatin' Habit. Malaco, Mississippi 7483, 1996.
Malaco, Mississippi.
For Real. Malaco, Mississippi 7494, 1998. Malaco, Mississippi.

Lockwood, Robert

I Got to Find Me a Woman. Verve 314 537 448, 1996.
King Biscuit Blues. Blue Sun, 1996.
The Baddest New Guitar. P-Vine Special PCD-2134.

Lopez, Manny

There are no records of Manny Lopez's group. The roots of his music are in the work of Dixieland revivalists like Eddie Condon and Lu Watters, or Kid Ory's and Bunk Johnson's bands. Bix Beiderbecke's work has been reissued in many forms. His greatest small-band recordings are those done with Frankie Trumbauer.

Lor, Wang Chong

[Genre:Hmong Qee] For Hmong music, refer to
The Music of the Hmong People of Laos. Arhoolie 446, 1995.

Memphis Horns

The Memphis Horns are best known not for their own recordings but for their work on thousands of Memphis soul recordings as studio players in the 1960s and early 1970s. These included virtually all the records of Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Rufus and Carla Thomas, some of Wilson Pickett's greatest work, and more other artists than can be counted. Their solo albums include:

Flame Out. Lucky Seven, Rounder Records 9201, 1992.
The Memphis Horns. Telarc Records 83344, 1995.
Wishing You a Merry Christmas. Icehouse Records 50630, 1997.

Menard, D.L.

En Bas du Chêne Vert (album with Dewey Balfa and Marc Savoy). Arhoolie 312, 1989.
Cajun Memories. Swallow 6125, 1995. Ville Platte, LA.
Le Trio Cadien (album with Eddie LeJeune and Ken Smith).
Rounder Records 6049, 1992.

Mississippi Mass Choir

It Remains To Be Seen. Malaco 6013, 1993.
Malaco, Mississippi.
Greatest Hits. Malaco 6021, 1995. Malaco, Mississippi.
I'll See You in the Rapture. Malaco 6022, 1996.
Malaco, Mississippi.

Ojibwe (Chippewa Nation)

Ojibway Music from Minnesota, A Century of Song for Voice and Drum. Minnesota Historical Society 339-8, 1989.
tel. (651) 296-6126.
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(2-videotape set with 40-page booklet).
Smithsonian Folkways SFW 48004.

Peebles, Ann

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Fill This World With Love. Bullseye Blues 9564.
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Perez, Irvan

Spanish Decimas from St. Bernard Parish. Louisiana Folklife
Center C-088, 1988. Louisiana Folklife Center, P.O. Box 3663
NSU, Natchitoches, LA 71497, tel: (318) 357-4332.

Redmond, Eugene

Songs from an Afro/Phone: New Poems. East St. Louis: Black
River Writers Press, 1973.
*Drumvoices: The Mission of Afro-American Poetry: A Critical
History*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1976.
The Eye in the Ceiling: Selected Poems. New York: Harlem River
Press, 1991.

Sain, Oliver

The Best of Oliver Sain. NASH 4218.
St. Louis Breakdown - The Best of Oliver Sain. Excello, 1997.
Party Hearty: The Best of Oliver Sain. Excello [import], 1998.

Skål Club

Live at the Lake. 1993.
In the Woods. 1995. Self-distributed by Paul Wilson,
3016 Nokay Lake Road, NE, Brainerd, MN 56401.

Soul Asylum

Grave Dancers Union. Columbia 48898. Sony Music
Entertainment, 1992.
Let Your Dim Light Shine. Columbia 57616. Sony Music
Entertainment, 1995.
Candy From a Stranger. Columbia 67618. 1998.

Soul Rebels

Let Your Mind Be Free. Mardi Gras Records 1020, 1995.

Sounds of Blackness

Night Before Christmas, A Musical Fantasy.

Perspective Records 9000, 1992.

Africa to America: The Journey of the Drum.

Perspective Records 31454 90062, 1994.

Time for Healing. Perspective Records 31454 9029 2, 1997.

Stinson, Kenny Bill

For similar music, refer to Tony Joe White.

Thomas, Irma

True Believer. Rounder Records 2117, 1992.

Walk Around Heaven: New Orleans Soul, Gospel & Sacred.

Rounder Records 2128, 1994.

The Story of My Life. Rounder Records 2149, 1997.

Related Materials

The River of Song television series is available on video from Acorn Media, (800) 474-2277.

The book *River of Song: A Musical Journey Down the Mississippi* is available through St. Martin's Press (800) 288-2131.

The website, located at www.pbs.org/riverofsong, includes teacher's guides.

Related Music on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Cajun Social Music (SFW 40006), includes live and studio recordings from the 1960s.

Crossroads, Southern Routes: Music of the American South (SFW 40080). The best introduction to the music of the South, this CD-Xtra, produced in collaboration with Microsoft Corporation, includes sixteen musical selections, hundreds of photographs, extensive text, video clips, and audio samples from related Folkways recordings. The disc plays in any CD player; the CD-ROM track requires compatible computer.

Iowa State Fare (SFW 40083) is a selection from among the many musical styles performed in Iowa. Produced in conjunction with the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission, Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and the Iowa Arts Council.

Louis Moreau Gottschalk: American Piano Music, played by Amiram Rigai (SFW 40803). New Orleans-born composer whose works drew on elements of Southern music in the 19th century.

Mississippi's Big Joe Williams and His Nine-String Guitar (SFW 40052), features 1961 recording of this blues legend.

Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960-1966 (2-CD set, SFW 40084) documents this period of social and cultural transformation.

Field to Factory: Voices of the Great Migration (SFW 90005). An audio documentary about African Americans who migrated from the rural South to the urban North between 1915 and 1951.

Mahalia Jackson: I Sing Because I'm Happy (SFW 90002)

Wisconsin Powwow and Naamikaaged: Dancer for the People (2-videotape set with 40-page booklet) (SFW 48004). Focuses on the Ojibwe powwows of northern Wisconsin.

Credits

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Sound editing: Todd Hulslander and Joanna Champagne

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Smithsonian Folkways CD compiled, annotated, and produced by Elijah Wald

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Multitrack recording: Big Mo (Greg Hartman and Kevin Wait), Jim Medlin, Keith Falgout, Audio for the Arts

Mixed by: Greg Hartman, Kevin Wait, Ron Freeland, and Pete Reiniger at Big Mo Recordings

Recorded as part of *The Mississippi: River of Song*, a multimedia project conceived, produced, and directed by

John Junkerman for the Filmmakers Collaborative and the Smithsonian Institution

Photos by Theo Pelletier

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Little Milton and The Mississippi Mass Choir appear courtesy of Malaco Records.

Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie appear courtesy of Rounder Records.

Jack Johnson appears courtesy of MC Records.

Soul Asylum appears courtesy of Columbia Records.

About Smithsonian Folkways

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes or by special order on CD. Each recording is packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Mail Order
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 7300
Washington, DC 20560-0953
phone (202) 287-7298
fax (202) 287-7299
orders only (800) 410-9815
(Discover, MasterCard, and Visa accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the Center, please consult our Internet site (www.si.edu/folkways), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on "database search").

Or request a printed catalogue by writing to: Catalogue, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7300, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0953, USA. Or use our catalogue request phone (202) 287-3262, or e-mail folkways@aol.com

Folkways at 50

This 50th anniversary honors the Folkways legacy and launches the Folkways Trust Fund. The fund will enable Folkways to preserve its historical collection at the Smithsonian Institution through the use of emerging technologies. Major sponsors include: BMI (The American Performance Rights Organization), Columbia Records and Sony Music Entertainment, KOCH International, Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and TRO (The Richmond Organization). For information on how to become a sponsor, contact Anthony Seeger, Director, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, by phone at (202) 287-3251 or by e-mail at tony@folkways.si.edu



Leo Abshire and D.L. Menard

Section One: The Headwaters

Chippewa Nation
Babes in Toyland
John Koerner
Soul Asylum
The Skål Club Spelmanslag
Wang Chong Lor
Sounds of Blackness
Karl Hartwich
The Manny Lopez Quintet
La Otra Mitad

Section Two: The Midwestern Crossroads

Greg Brown
John Hartford
The Bob Lewis Family
Eugene Redmond and Sylvester "Sunshine" Lee
Fontella and Martha Bass
Oliver Sain
The Bottle Rockets
The Ste. Genevieve Guignolée Singers

Section Three: The Southern Fusion

The Boundless Love Quartet
Sonny Burgess
The Memphis Horns and Ann Peebles
Levon Helm and James Cotton
Robert Lockwood, Jr.
Big Jack Johnson and the Jelly Roll Kings
Little Milton
The Mississippi Mass Choir

Section Four: Louisiana, Where Music Is King

Kenny Bill Stinson
D.L. Menard
Geno Delafosse
David and Roselyn
Henry Butler
Irma Thomas
Eddie Bo with Henry Butler
Soul Rebels
Irvan Perez

