

r&b ingredients

As the second month of the new year approaches r&b is moving on up. A new trend seems to be developing. Man and woman song teams are popping up. Before guys were singing about chicks and chicks were singing about guys. Now they are teaming up and creating beautiful music together. Records that look to be monsters in the near future are: **Stuff 'n Ramjett** on **Chelsea** with "It's Been A Long Time," **Bo Kirkland** and **Ruth Davis** on **Claridge** with possibly a double sided smash "Easy Loving/We've Got The Recipe" and **Sam Dees** and **Betty Swann** with "Storybook Children". These are ones to watch.

Gene Page, musical jack-of-all-trades, stopped by the **Cash Box** offices last week and talked about, among other things, his new Atlantic release "Lovelock." He really assembled an all-star cast on this one including **Wilton Felder**, **Lee Ritenour**, **David T. Walker**, **Joe Sample**, **Jim Horn** and **Merry Clayton**, just naming a few. "It was a fun LP to make," Gene said, "because all these great talents worked extra hard." Future projects in the works include LPs by the **Main Ingredient** and **Leon Haywood**, and three LPs with **Barry White**, two vocals and one complete instrumental record to be all finished in the space of three weeks. Gene, who has lent his arranging talents to **Barbra Streisand**, **Smokey Robinson** and **Stevie Wonder**, hopes to take his **Gene Page Orchestra** out for a road trip real soon.



PAPA & JOHNNY — Shown above celebrating after their recent Troubadour opening are Buddah recording artist Papa John Creach and Fantasy recording artist Johnny 'Guitar' Watson. Both artists are managed by Danny Kessler and Clancy B. Grass III. From left to right are: Danny, Papa John, Johnny and Clancy.

Gary Gotham called in from New York last week to say that the New York discos are going wild over two new singles: "Salsa" by **Louie Ramirez** and **Jesse Morrison's** "Tell Me Can You Feel It," and driving everybody wild Gary said.

DeLite Records has two winners. Mars is the sign of war and Venus is the sign of love. "Well "Venus" is happening again as **Frankie Avalon** has updated his classic hit in the disco style. It's breaking all across the country in every conceivable market. **Vigor Records** distributed by DeLite has also come up with a monster. "You're My One Weakness Girl" by the **Street People** is picking up stations left and right. It will definitely be a big one. **Bob Scherl** has left **Scepter Records** to go into independent production. Bob has produced many groups in the past including **Ike and Tina Turner**, **Clydie King**, **Brown Sugar**, **Mississippi John Hurt** and **Brenda Patterson**. Bob's address is P.O. Box 2712, Hollywood, Calif.

Martha Reeves dropped by the **Cash Box** offices last week and she looked marvelous. The gal who was a legend in her own time along with the Vandellas is currently doing her own thing now. She records for **Arista** and has a single out entitled "Higher And Higher." She recently has returned from England where she told me "Jimmy Mack" is a monster. She is currently working on a new show with a new band and then plans to go to Germany in March. Right now she is in the studios with **Tony Camillo** working on a new LP. Martha said her sister Lois who used to be one of the Vandellas is currently with a group called the **Quiet Elegance** on **Hi Records**. They will also be having a new single soon. They work as Al Green's back-up singers. Martha who got into TM recently said it has helped her a great deal. She is still the same person she said but now through TM she looks at things in a different perspective. "It's very relaxing and emotionally it is very fulfilling." Martha who has been in the music business for fifteen years sees a trend coming toward reggae rock. I don't know when it will happen but I feel that the reggae will be an influence in this year's music. When Martha does have time off which isn't often she likes to take pop dancing lessons and write verse. Other areas Martha is hopeful to be getting into are films and TV. I've been offered movies before but I turned them down because they were violent. I wish they would make more films that have feeling and substance. I'm not a violent person and could not sacrifice any of my principles by doing films that deal with violence.

The **Stylistics** have released "You Are Beautiful" as their latest single. **Van McCoy** is currently in the studios recording a new single plus recording **Melba Moore**. **Gil Scott-Heron** is off for a European tour February 15. **Natalie Cole** is in Chicago putting the finishing touches on her next LP produced by **Chuck Jackson** and **Marvin Yancey**. Natalie will then get back to L.A. for her appearance on the Grammy show. **McCoy Tyner** has just been named jazz man of the year by Rolling Stone. McCoy is currently in Berkeley recording an LP that will feature **Ron Carter** on bass, **Hubert Laws** on flute, **Billy Cobham** on drums plus an entire string orchestra conducted by **William Fischer**, **Orrin Keepnews** is producing. **Harvey Mason** has just released a single. It's the title track from his LP "Marching In The Streets." It looks like a winner. **Private Stock** has two disco records coming that look to be future killers. They are both from Europe and entitled "Love For Hire" by the **Richard Hewson Orchestra** and "I'll See You In My Dreams" by the **Pearls**. Speaking of dancing the **Biddu Orchestra** has a new LP out. It is a great dancing LP and includes Biddu's hit singles "Summer Of '42" and "I Could Have Danced All Night." A must for dancing fanatics. The **Tower of Power** horn section are currently up at the **Record Plant** recording with **Billy Preston** on his forthcoming LP. Some of the material on the forthcoming LP will be by **Syreeta Wright**. **Chuck Jackson**, who has a smash on his hands with "Needing You, Wanting You," will be releasing his LP of the same title very shortly.



SOUL ON SOUL — The Soul Train Gang are shown above making an appearance on Soul Train. The L.A. based group are from left to right: Gerald Brown, Judy Jones, Hollis Pippin, Pat Williamson and Terry Brown. The show will air Feb. 7.

Barry White will make an appearance at the **Radio City Music Hall** February 11 along with **Love Unlimited** and the all-girl **Love Unlimited Orchestra**. The engagement will include songs from his soon-to-be-released LP "Let The Music Play" and Love Unlimited Orchestra's new LP "Music Maestro Please."

A lovely couple came up to the offices last week. Their names are **Bo Kirkland** and **Ruth Davis**. Currently the two have one of the hottest singles to be released this year. Both sides of the single are great — "Easy Loving" is a warm sensuous ballad and "We Got The Recipe," an uptempo cooker. Born in Yazoo, Mississippi, Bo has been in L.A. for a long time. He always wanted to be a singer because as he said, "I know this sounds like a cliché but music is a universal language. Nothing perks you up more than a song. Music has given me the opportunity to say what is on my mind. Singing gives me a good feeling inside. Music is very special to me and that's why I am happy singing. I think now having worked with Ruth that I've finally found the right combination and am hopeful that the vibes we have put together will reach the people across the country." Ruth is a Pisces and she is from Brush Island, Arkansas. Ruth said her grandfather first got her hooked on singing. "We would always sing together and then my grandfather would always have me sing at church events parties and all kinds of community events. Ruth previously was a member of the **Ikettes**. She enjoyed the experience a lot even though it was very rough sometimes because of hectic scheduling. Currently the two are working up an act and plan to showcase their material in a special preview in Los Angeles in the very near future. This couple is definitely one to watch in the near future.



MERCURY PURIFIED — Mercury Records has just signed the Purify Brothers. Shown above at the signing are from left to right: Bill Haywood, national promotion r&b, Stan Bly, v.p. promotion, Don Schroder, manager of the Purify Brothers, Jules Abramson, senior v.p. marketing and Charles Fach, executive v.p.

Motown Records is hot and looks like they will continue to be hotter. **Willie Hutch** is coming with a new single entitled "Party Down," which will be released Feb. 10. **Diana Ross** will also have a new LP coming the 10th. One cut on the new LP to watch closely is a disco-oriented tune entitled "Love Hangover." It is a nine-minute cut and is something a bit different for Diana. **Smokey Robinson** will also have a new LP coming on the 10th. The LP will be entitled "Smokey's Family Robinson." **David Ruffin's** next single will be released Feb. 13 and will be "Heavy Love."

Due to the recent explosion of other artists doing tunes from the **Jobete** catalog has prompted Motown to release an LP entitled "Motown's Original Versions." The LP will contain such great original material as "How Sweet It Is," "I Heard It Through The Grapevine," "Heat Wave," and many other great Motown oldies. Other single product from Motown to watch out for is a **Yvonne Fair** single entitled "It Should Have Been Me," and a new one by **Joe Frazier** on **Prodigal** entitled "Little Dog Heaven."

Jeff Lane has another monster group on his hands and he has been working day and night with **Brass Construction** preparing the group for public appearances. Jeff will be in L.A. this week for confabs.

Shared a spot of supper with **Hugh Masekela** as he was in town. Hugh will be releasing a very exciting vibrant LP shortly on **Casablanca** entitled "Colonial Man." The LP is political in the sense that through words and music Hugh is trying to explain the real and true image of Africa in cuts like "Cecil Rhodes," and "Vasco Da Gama," and what they really mean to Africans. Through this LP Hugh is trying to open more of the native African sounds to the people in the U.S. and to expose them to the many intricate rhythm patterns. "Music is everything to the African people," Hugh said. "It is more than entertainment. Every type of thing that is imaginable is made up into a song. I would like to open the door so to speak for other African groups to expose their music to the world. People in the U.S. have no idea of the situation in South Africa. I feel the music of Africa is just beginning to emerge due to the fact that the eyes of the world are looking at Africa because of all the wars breaking out. What is happening is that the people there are trying to break the bonds of colonialism. Now the other powers are stepping in to maintain their vested economic interests.

"The rest of the seventies will be full of violence in Africa. Africans are not a violent and biased people, however they are misplaced in their own countries. Hugh feels the time for third world music is now and hopes very soon to start producing other groups from Africa. Now he spends half the year in Africa and half in the U.S. working with groups. "That's the one thing that always attracted me to music, it's everything and anywhere." ... that's soul.

jess levitt