

Billboard Album Reviews

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GOLDEN EARRING—N.E.W.S., 21 Records T1-1-9008 (PolyGram). Producer: Shell Schellekens. The Dutch quartet renewed their lease on U. S. rock fans with their first album for 21, and this new set could build an even broader base. An added use of electronic textures and vivid percussion effects offer new twists, but the band's underlying sense of guitar-driven dynamics remains unchanged and ripe for harder rock formats.

ELVIS PRESLEY—Elvis: The First Live Recordings, The Music Works PB 3601 (Jem). Producer: Not listed (EP). Five performances from "Louisiana Hayride" stints in 1955-56, coupled with between-songs banter and a spoken reminiscence from show host Frank Page, comprise this \$6.98 set of previously unissued tracks. Sonics are predictably muddy, and the playing is rough-hewn, but the essence of his early style shines through on both signature tunes and covers.



DAVID FRIZZELL & SHELLY WEST—In Session, Viva 23907. Producers: Snuff Garrett, Steve Dorff. While this award-winning duo makes mellifluous mood music, they excel on more country-inflected numbers like "Silent Partners" and "Betcha Can't Cry Just One." It's the originals like these that keep them from sounding like Music Row's answer to Steve & Eydie.

JOHNNY LEE—Til the Bars Burn Down, Warner Bros. 25056. Producer: Jimmy Bowen. Bowen's done a fine job of injecting fire into Lee's latest effort: the pacing, song choices and production are diamond-sharp. Lee benefits from the new energy throughout, especially on "I Won't Give Up," "Say When," "One More Shot" and the title track.

SPOTLIGHT—Predicted to hit top 10 on Billboard's Top LPs & Tape chart or to earn platinum certification. **POP/BLACK/COUNTRY/JAZZ-FUSION/GOSPEL/CLASSICAL**—Picks in these respective categories predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the format listed. **RECOMMENDED**—Other releases predicted to chart in the respective format; also, other albums of superior quality. All albums commercially available in the U.S. are eligible for review. Reviews are coordinated by Sam Sutherland at Billboard, 9107 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210 (telephone: 213-273-7040). Country albums should be sent to: Kip Kirby, Billboard, 14 Music Circle East, Nashville, Tenn. 37203 (telephone: 615-748-8100).

GUS HARDIN—Fallen Angel, RCA CPL1-4937. Producer: Rick Hall. There is more love-related pain anatomized in this album than one might encounter in a week at a singles bar. Hardin's genius is that she elevates the randomly pathetic to the universally tragic. Both the vocals and backing here are lean, springy and tough.



TANIA MARIA—Love Explosion, Concord Picante CJP-230 (Concord Jazz). Producer: Tania Maria. The fiery Brazilian singer and pianist moves more boldly into pop and r&b territory with this fourth album. Her typically ebullient vocal work and lusty keyboard attack are matched here by a large and varied backing band, while the balance of ballads and uptempo workouts is effective. Pop and urban crossover potential shine here.



DVORAK: NEW WORLD SYMPHONY—Chicago Symphony, Solti, London 410 116. A committed performance by Solti, full of tension and magnificent statement, abetted by a full measure of support from his skilled band and solo woodwinds. London's current promotion in behalf of the Solti catalog and the album's reduced list price promise extra measures of sales.



VARIOUS ARTISTS—Hinds' Feet On High Places, Eden EDN-105. Producer: Not listed. This is a beautifully packaged audio version of the classic book by Hannah Hurnard. Music is performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

WILLIE NEAL JOHNSON & THE GOSPEL KEYNOTES—The Golden Greats of Willie Neal Johnson & The Gospel Keynotes, Nashboro 7278. Producer: Not listed. This anthology proves an energy-packed "best of" collection that completely lives up to its name.



BON JOVI—Mercury 814 982. Producers: Lance Quinn, Tony Bongiovi. A young East Coast quintet led by singer Jon Bon Jovi, this band shrewdly couples heavy metal dynamics with hook-laden songs and rippling electronic keyboards, yielding an uptempo brew that could click with AOR, new music and pop fans. Reliably strong production by the Quinn/Bongiovi team gives added punch.

WHITE ANIMALS—Ecstasy, Dread Beat DBLP-1984. Producers: Timothy A. Coats, Kevin Gray. "Ecstasy" is White Animals' third album, and it's easy to see why they're one of Nashville's finest rock bands: The original material is sharp and lively. One cut, "Don't Care" is now on MTV. Worth a listen. Contact: P. O. Box 121356, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

Billboard's Recommended LPs

pop

FRANKIE LAINE—So Ultra Rare, Score FLP101. Producers: Jerry Massengill & Frankie Laine. Contact: (213) 994-0307. Laine's second LP in a month offers 12 memorable evergreens, none ever issued in album form. Laine is in top fettle with these 1946 titles, and the double-fold jacket and notes are superb. A potential big seller.

country

JOHN STANFIELD—12-String Moonrise, June Appal JA044. Producers: John Stanfield, Mark Williams, David Meeks. Dazzling and inventive picking, mostly in a folkish mode.

jazz/fusion

MEL POWELL—The Unavailable, Pausa PR9023. Producers: Various. (Reissue). One of the most gifted pianists of the Big Band Era is splendidly spotted on a dozen titles, taken from his Capitol output of the late 1940s. Backings are by a quintet and sextet. The LP fills a void; Powell has not been active in jazz in 35 years.

JACK TEAGARDEN—A Tribute, Pausa PR9026. Producers: Various. (Reissue). Twelve well-remembered performances by the late Texas trombone virtuoso are presented, with the Big Gate's "Peg O' My Heart," "If I Could Be With You" and "Casanova's Lament" included. Beautifully played, beautifully recorded.

classical

MUSSORGSKY/ASHKENAZY: PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION; BORODIN: POLOVTSIAN DANCES—Philharmonia Orchestra, Ashkenazy, London 410 121. Those thrice familiar with the Ravel orchestration of "Pictures" (and who isn't?) may at first suffer a slight case of disorientation, but they will also be refreshed by the opportunity to experience a masterpiece from unexpected perspectives. **PROKOFIEV: THE VIOLIN CONCERTOS**—Shlomo Mintz, Chicago Symphony, Abbado, Deutsche Grammophon 410 524. Probing interpretations that offer much more than facile fingers and beautiful sound, although these qualities are also abundantly present.

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Heartland Beat

They've Got The High School Blues

By MOIRA McCORMICK

High school students on Chicago's South Side are getting the blues, and nothing could be finer. Having long dismissed blues as "old people's music," some fortunate teens here are discovering the music's spirit, relevance and timeless universal appeal.

Members of the second-period class at Martin Luther King High School at 4445 S. Drexel have been studying the roots and learning to play blues since November under the tutelage of drummer Jimmy Tillman, a 23-year veteran of the blues scene here and member of the Chicago Blues All Stars band. The culmination of this blues project is a nine-song album entitled "Martin Luther King High School's Tribute To Muddy Waters," set for release later this month, which spotlights the vocal, instrumental and writing talents of selected students along with the Chicago Blues All Stars. The program is funded by a \$4,000 grant to Tillman from the Chicago Council on Fine Arts.

Tillman, 42, had taught blues classes at several other black elementary and high schools in the Chicago area before approaching King High School's Harvey Burton, band director and music department head, with his proposal for the current course. As a result, "blues artist in residence" Tillman has been taking over Burton's music class twice a week since last November to teach the his-

tory, structure and spirit of the blues, and also to give students a basic grounding in the workings of the music business. "If they want to be professionals, they should learn something about the industry before they leave high school," he states.

Regular guest speakers in class have served both to illuminate some aspect of the industry and to give insiders' advice regarding the production of the Muddy Waters tribute album, says Tillman. They've included producer Willie Henderson (Chilites, Tyrone Davis), arranger Tom Tom 84 (Earth, Wind & Fire, Genesis), session guitarist Maurice Vaughn, vocalist/guitarist Mighty Joe Young, and copyist George Patterson (Jackson Five, Ramsey Lewis).

After learning the basic 12-bar blues, the 30 class members were encouraged to write their own blues songs for possible inclusion on the album. Four were finally chosen, with five songs made famous by Waters completing the LP, including "I'm Ready," "She Moves Me, Man," "Got My Mojo Workin'" and "Hoochie Koochie Man."

Talent auditions yielded lead vocalist/guitarist Darnell Harvey and pianist/vocalist Leaneer Harris, both 16, along with vocalists Kimberley Anderson, 16, and Brenda Brown, 17. Harvey penned the bluesy "Hard Way To Go" and Harris the doo-wop "Young Love" for the tribute album,

while Anderson composed both the "female sequel" to the former and "I've Got the Blues Over You," based on the "Hoochie Koochie" riff. Sophomores Herman Pruitt and Curtis James contribute background doo-wops to "Young Love." King High's band and choir may also be involved in the recording, according to band director Burton.

"King High School's Tribute To Muddy Waters" figures to be a Chicago production from start to finish. With backing from the Chicago Blues All Stars (which includes several sons of Willie Dixon), the students laid down tracks at PS Recording Studios on the near South Side, engineered by noted Chicago r&b producer Paul Serrano and produced by Tillman. Mastered at PS and pressed at nearby Precision Record Labs Ltd., the first 500 copies will be marketed at the school by the students. Proceeds are to go towards a second pressing, which Tillman says will be distributed in area stores.

Aside from the thrill of cutting a real 24-track album, students involved in the project express amazement at how radically their feelings about the blues have changed in a few months. "We were more into rock ourselves," says Darnell Harvey of himself and Leaneer Harris, who front their own band True Destiny, "and we hadn't planned on going into the blues. But I enjoy the blues now that I know the concept, the feel

of it—it talks about what's happening today."

Harris is even more direct. "I didn't want to do blues music, and I didn't like Muddy Waters," he stresses. But since Tillman's blues course began, says Harris, "I'm listening to blues records now." He figures the school album could help make the blues acceptable to black teenagers.

Part of the acceptance problem for urban teens, says Kimberley Anderson, is that "too many black families don't play the blues at home." Adds band director Burton, "It was hard to get the kids to sing blues at first, because it's old folks' music. But it's in there."

"Young people should be exposed to the blues. It's the basis of American popular music."

After the album project is finished, drummer/instructor Tillman plans to continue work on two video presentations of the life of Muddy Waters, one originating from King High School and the other from the Newberry Center community facility.

★ ★ ★

Heartland Beat welcomes news releases, announcements and suggestions. Send details to this column c/o Billboard, 150 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60606.



JOINT EFFORT—Toni Tennille and company listen to the playback of her forthcoming collection of '30s and '40s tunes, "More Than You Know." Pictured at the Ocean Way Studios in Los Angeles are, from left, bassist Andy Simpkins, engineer Alan Sides, contractor Johnny Osiecki, producer Geoffrey Weber, an unidentified listener, Tennille, arranger Sammy Nestico, pianist Paul Smith and, seated, production assistant Gerald Webber.