

## BLUESIN' BY THE BAYOU

Ace CDCHD 1368 (69:50)

SILAS HOGAN: Just Give Me A Chance\*\*/ Sitting Here Wondering\*; SLIM HARPO: That's Alright\*\*; LAZY LESTER: Late In The Evening\*\*/ I'm Gonna Leave You Baby\*\*; CLIFTON CHENIER: Worried Life Blues; THADDEUS DECLOUET: Catch The Morning Train\*/ Trouble Trouble\*; LIGHTNIN' SLIM: Big Fat Woman (aka I'm Him)\*/ I Ain't Got No Money\*/ Stranger In Your Town\*\*; JOE RICH: Dreaming, Dreaming/ Lonesome Lover; JIMMY DOTSON: Oh Baby; MR MOJO: They Say The World Loves A Lover\*\*; JIMMY ANDERSON: In The Dark In The Park\*/ I Want You I Need You\*\*; BLUES BOY DORSEY: Walkin' Out My Door\*\*; JOE MAYFIELD: I'm A Natural Born Man; BOOGIE JAKE: Early Morning Blues\*\*; HONEY BOY ALLEN: I'm A Real Lover Baby\*\*; BOOZOO CHAVIS: Forty One Days\*\*; TALTON MILLER: Long Journey (Life's Journey)\*\*; LEFT HAND CHARLIE: Gonna Miss My Lognion\*; LONESOME SUNDOWN: I'm A Samplin' Man\*; LEROY WASHINGTON: Lost Love Letter Blues\*\*; SYLVESTER BUCKLEY: I Can Be On My Way\*\*; JOHNNY SONNIER: Slow Walking Fever And The Asiatic Flu\* (\* = first issued in 'reissue' programmes; \*\* = previously unissued)



First of all I'd like to pass comment on how nice it is to be reviewing a real blues/r&b issue, featuring unissued tracks; there aren't all that many of those about these days! Now, according to track annotations with the booklet for this set of Louisiana recordings by producers Jay Miller and Eddie Shuler, the tracks issued in the '50s and early '60's appear to number five and there are nine that were issued in the late '70s and '80s (I've presumed as part of vinyl reissue programmes, such as Flyright's 'Jay Miller' and Charly's 'Goldband' series), which leaves fifteen that are heard for the first time, or so it would seem.

I'm not saying that the figure of fifteen is incorrect, but as so many of those fifteen *titles* have been issued previously, mainly in those reissue programmes, I have my doubts. I could of course check through all those Flyright and Charly albums I've mentioned and compare the tracks, but for the rate I'm getting for this review ... no chance. There are three tracks that appear new to me and that I can't find mentioned in 'Blues Records'; Jimmy Anderson's 'I Want You I Need You', Honey Boy Allen's 'I'm A Real Lover Baby' and Lonesome Sundown's 'Lost Love Letter Blues'; the lyrics for these don't suggest to me any alternative titles.

Silas Hogan starts the set off, one of a number of Miller artists reckoned to imitate Miller's biggest down-home star, Lightnin' Slim; neither of his tracks would contradict that view, though his 'Chance' is certainly more up-tempo than most of his or Lightnin's recordings, but 'Sitting' is much more 'typical'; Harpo's number is one of his fast, rockin' numbers, a version of 'You'll Be Sorry One Day'. The still performing regularly Lazy Lester provides two numbers as you would expect them to be; Lester didn't play harp on all Miller's recordings where one was needed, but he certainly characterises the blueprint for Miller's blues harmonica style. Both Clifton Chenier's and Thaddeus Declouet's tracks are towards the (very) bluesy end of the zydeco spectrum, Chenier's 'Worried Life' being, I think, his 1959 outing on Zynn; featuring an impressive guitar break from Wonder Boy Travis. The three Lightnin' Slim tracks are, at least for Slim, quite varied; 'Big Fat Woman' has a very sparse sound, emphasised by 'box slapping' (by Jockey Etienne I presume), 'Stranger' is typical Slim ('well blow your harmonica son') and 'Money' is very rocking, certainly for its accredited 1957 recording date, very like Leroy Washington in fact, whose own track as it happens is more like a Lonesome Sundown track! Joe Rich provides two enjoyable, though gentle paced, Slim Harpo-styled blues, Jimmy Dotson's track was issued in 1960, a nice minor key shuffle blues and the unknown Mr Mojo, who refers to himself by that name in his lyrics, should really have recorded more than the one session that produces his atmospheric contribution to this set.

Jimmy Anderson never tried to be like any one else but Jimmy Reed and his two tracks are proof of this,

but unusually he doesn't play harp on 'I Want You' – and 'Blues Records' indicates he plays harmonica on *all* his recordings! Blues Boy Dorsey has a very white-sounding voice, but his is a nice blues stroller, Joe Mayfield provides a fast paced number, excellent echo-laden harmonica in the break; Boogie Jake's 'Early Morning Blues' is an earlier version of his 'hit' and when it comes to copying styles, Honey Boy Allen almost sounds more like Lightnin' Slim than Slim himself on his track. Boozoo Chavis provides a more typical zydeco number than say Chenier or Declouet, Tal Miller's slow blues doesn't have much of a regional feel to it; the same can be said for Lefthand Charlie's 'Lognion'; anyone got an idea what/who/where Lognion is? Lonesome Sundown's 'Samplin' Man' is a rather gimmicky effort, Sylvester Buckley's mush-mouthed vocal emphasises the Jimmy Reed-styled number he sings and finally there is Joel Sonnier's 'infectious' number, it's a talking blues in Jack Dupree vein, with 'walk-on' vocal interjections from Mr. Calhoun, Lightnin' Slim, Sonny Martin and Lazy Lester – interesting!

While I think, as an overview of the release, the numbers featured indicate that both Shuler and Miller knew which numbers and which takes they recorded were the ones to have release as a single, these other numbers would be pretty high on any other producers' release schedules and whether or not my doubts over a number of the unissued tracks actually being unissued until now are relevant, let me say that this is still one issue to get; it really is a good player, from beginning to end.

***Byron Foulger***