

RHYTHM 'N' BLUESIN' BY THE BAYOU: Rompin' & Stompin'

Ace CDCHD 1388 (66:23)

TABBY THOMAS: Teenagers/ Teenage Queen; JAY NELSON: Silly Filly Oh Baby; WONDER BOY TRAVIS: She's Got Eyes Like A Cat/ She Went Thataway; LESTER ROBERTSON: Schooldays Schooldays; KING KARL: Walkin' In The Park/ When I Leave Here; TV SLIM: Flat Foot Sam; LONESOME SUNDOWN: California Blues/ What You Want To Do It For; JOHNNY SONNIER: Sad Lover; OTIS SMITH: You're So Good Looking; BILLY TATE: Pray On (Pray On My Child); LEROY WASHINGTON: Learn To Treat Me Better/ You Can't Trust Nobody; JOE RICHARDS: You'd (sic) Better Change; CHUCK MARTIN: Dilly Daddy; JAMES 'SUGAR BOY' CRAWFORD & HIS CANECUTTERS: Round And Round; BIG WALTER: San Antonio; LITTLE VICTOR: You Done Me

Wrong; CHARLES SHEFFIELD: Boogie Children; CLASSIE BALLOU: Oh Mama (Cajun Blues) (aka Hey Ma Ma)/ Lucille; KATIE WEBSTER & ASHTON CONROY: Baby, Baby; CAROL FRAN: Tomorrow; LESTER ROBERTSON & THE UPSETTERS: My Girl Across Town; IVORY JACKSON: I'm A Country Boy

Ace Records has had a rich gumbo vein running through it since its inception and has issued a steady stream of LPs, then CDs, covering just about every strand and backwater of Louisiana music. I had my own introduction to the swamps, like so many of my generation, via the Stateside 'Authentic/Real R & B' vinyl issues of the early '60s. I have since had cause to be grateful for the extra schooling meted out over the years via the efforts of Bruce Bastin, Peter Thompson and other stalwarts; and chiefly, for me, through Ace's extensive releases, particularly their Excello re-issue programme shepherded by John Broven. Each time that it seems that there can be little left to release, Ace opens another treasure trove and the Broven Memorial Seat is now occupied by Ian Saddler who has already compiled a healthy number of releases under his 'Bayou' banners. The real beauty of these has been the mouth-watering quantity of perfectly decent unreleased tracks (not only alternates), enabling him to offer some sub-division into parallel series, with no watering-down of quality; 'Boppin'', 'Bluesin'', 'Swamp Pop' – and 'Rhythm & Bluesin'' By The Bayou', of which this is the second collection.

This release showcases work by five lynchpin indie producers of the area, J.D. Miller, Eddie Shuler, Floyd Soileau, Carl Graffagnino and Sam Montel. Some of the artists had tracks in the first 'volume' and several even rather fittingly carry the thread back to those 1963 LPs, with tracks by Lonesome Sundown, Leroy Washington, Charles Sheffield, Jay Nelson and the recently-departed Tabby Thomas. Tabby kicks off here, taking Bobby Charles' song at a faster lick than the writer did in an earlier 'Bayou' release and this sets the tone of much of the collection, which often has more rhythm than blues and many tracks that rock like hell. In addition there is some decent swamp pop from Johnny Sonnier with 'Sad Lover', Lonesome Sundown's 'California Blues', which is a stomping 'Kansas City' clone and Charles Sheffield's 'Boogie Children' – not Hooker's but a mardi gras-based bluesy rocker. The strangest track is probably Classie Ballou's Cajun patois holler, over acoustic guitar ('Oh Mama') – chaotic but oddly compelling, as is his ragged, unreleased 'Lucille'.

Most of the tracks are similarly unreleased, though even the issued ones are pretty obscure anyway outside die-hard collectors, so most of the album has that feel. Of the better-known perpetrators, Sugar Boy offers a commercial 'Round & Round' and Walter Price's ragged but churning 'San Antonio' stands out. Wonder Boy Travis played in Chenier's band and Clifton brings some fine soloing to 'She Went Thataway'. Best tracks include the only distaff offerings – Ashton Conroy's declamatory blues set against Katie's sassy insults; and the estimable Carol Fran's bluesy ballad is just too glorious to have stayed in the can –



though that could be said of so much of the set. There are genuinely no duffers here, even if you can see why many did not make the catalogue. So, if almost any of Ian's previous compilations has been up your personal bayou, then you can safely make this your next Louisiana Purchase. There are also numerous references to 'further volumes' (note the comforting use of the plural!), so the well's clearly far from running dry.

Brian Smith