

Big Money: Whites Singing Black

By HOLLIE I. WEST
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The white youth of America have picked up a new fad — playing the blues. Shaggy-haired kids in the cities and small towns are learning blues chord changes almost as fast as they are learning their guitars.

No longer do American youth look to Broadway as a model for vocal stylings. The new demi-model are gnarled black blues singers who paid their dues in the tangled maze of this country's racial mores.

This new interest has been called a "rebirth of the blues." More accurately, though, it should be referred to as an awakening, for the blues has not died in black communities. The gospel-influenced sounds of soul music, or rhythm and blues, may have superseded the blues in popularity in the urban ghettos, but black southerners still like their blues in large doses.

More than anything, perhaps, this widespread popularity of the blues among whites is part of the youth revolution of our time. The young are trying not to be confined to the kind of jack-in-the-box thinking about race and sex that their parents accepted. For many of them, the blues is not a back alley music played by loose-moraled blacks. Their cu-

riosity about the blues may represent a blessing and an act of folly and cruelty.

The blessing is obvious. Forgotten blues performers who never would have seen the light of a commercial day without the blues awakening have been brought out of obscurity and are earning enough from their music to support themselves.

The cruel irony of these developments, however, is that the black bluesmen, the pioneers and originators, always find themselves in the second billing position on programs with white bluesmen. And the difference in money paid to blacks and whites is so lopsided that it staggers the imagination.

Janis Joplin, ballyhooed for the last year as the top rock star, is given space on the covers of the national slick magazines and earns \$10,000 for a night's concert work. But Willie Mae Thornton, one of Miss Joplin's chief stylistic models, remains in the financial minor leagues, earning in a year what Miss Joplin may make in several days.

Compared to her model, Miss Joplin is a poor excuse for a blues singer. She is probably well on her way toward ruining her voice under the strain of trying for the harsh, raucous sounds that black performers use naturally.

The publicity given to Miss Joplin's career had not been equalled until Co-

lumbia Records helped bring Johnny Winter on the national scene earlier this year. Winter has immersed himself in a variety of styles, none of which he has brought any originality. He journeys the imitative route through the music of Ray Charles, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

Despite the absence of a fresh musical approach, Winter was signed for one of the most spectacular contracts in the history of the recording industry — an initial fee of \$300,000 and a long term contract calling for \$600,000. B.B. King, the most creative bluesman on the current scene, has not seen such money for a recording contract.

Record company officials know a good thing when they see it. They recognize the music of Johnnie Taylor and James Brown cannot be sold en masse to white teen-agers because it has too much blackness. Exceptions can be made for the watered down black sexual imagery of Jimi Hendrix, who has surrounded himself in an absurd melange of electronic sound and guitar burnings, or the Chambers Brothers, a mediocre former gospel group that sings a pallid combination of soul and rock.

The general rule is to sell white groups that are engaged in a latter day version of black face.

This is an important part of the his-

tory of American music and there is little black blues musicians can do about it. Avant-garde black jazz musicians solved a similar problem by enveloping their music with so many Afro-Asian influences that it would be completely outrageous for white musicians to imitate them.

This avenue is not open to bluesmen who must keep their music simple, for the blues cannot incorporate outside musical influences as easily as jazz.

What can be done about the inequities of contracts and artist fees for black innovators and white imitators? Probably not much in the foreseeable future.

Record companies, particularly major ones such as Columbia and RCA Victor, can do much more in the way of promoting black musicians. But with a company like Columbia reaping 60 per cent of its record sale profits from rock music, the prospects for change are not bright.

White musicians recognize the inequities, but few are doing anything about it. There is the policy of the rascals to play only concerts where the audience is 50 per cent black, but they are rare among white groups. What other group would give up the prospect of earning \$15,000 to \$20,000 for each concert date?

The situation seems beyond repair. Money talks and businessmen listen.



Andy's Son Debuts on Low Note

Singer Andy Williams' latest addition to the family, Robert Andrew Williams, has only a big yawn for photographers as the baby and mother,

singer-actress Claudine Longet, leave the hospital in Burbank, Calif. The couple has two other children. (AP)

From Country to Pop

Bugsy Maugh Finds a Chord

By LEONARD FEATHER
The Los Angeles Times

"It's hard to talk about my music intelligently," says Bugsy Maugh. "It loses too much in the translation. It's not blues or jazz or country. It's everything — straight ahead."

Charles Maugh is one of that growing horde of young musicians who can claim a heritage in several traditions. Consider that he emerged from obscurity just two years ago, playing with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and singing in a style that suited that rough-and-rugged, extrovert group. Then listen to his composition "Give Me Time to Love You," on his own new Dot LP, "Inside Bugsy." You'll hear an ethereal, lyrical waltz with a background that suggests Gil Evans. Just how far can your pendulum swing, Mr. Maugh?

Bugsy grew up in St. Joseph, Mo., where he was born March

7, 1942, the son of a railroad engineer. "I found an old guitar of my father's stowed away in the attic. It surprised me. He was a big man, with fingers like bananas." Bugsy taught himself a chord here, took a lesson there, and at the age of 11 wound up playing at 4-H clubs in the area.

He led local groups, then he played C and W piano for Carl ("Blue Suede Shoes") Perkins.

After six months with Tiny and the Royals at a club in Omaha, Bugsy decided that the meat-packers' paradise was his personal heaven too. He has lived in Omaha ever since. Buddy Miles, a drummer friend in that city, landed a job with the Butterfield Band and in due course, when Butterfield needed a bass guitar player, the word went out for Bugsy.

By this time there were more Maughs than the pocket-book could handle: Bugsy, Mrs. Maugh and the infant Greg. Paterfamilias had to put down the guitar in favor of a steady day

job. "I worked in a steelyard, with a 50 pound hook in each hand, directing a crane, and I loaded trucks on the docks."

Dropping the hooks as if 100 volts had shot through them, Bugsy answered the Butterfield call and resumed his romance with the blues. For 18 months, and a reputed 200,000 miles, he provided a driving bass guitar sound and a strident but soulful voice for the Butterfielders, until he left last December to try his own wings.

He feels he is now more sophisticated and jazz-oriented. "On the new LP we hired some fine studio cats, sat around and rapped, got a good feeling going in the studio."

He thinks the volume peak has finally been reached in pop. "It will subside a little and musicians will really try to come to terms with their instruments. This will help bridge the gap, and then the music industry will go right where it should go, with people of all ages playing together."



DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

DEAR ABBY: IF A WIFE LIKES TO GO TO FORTUNE-TELLERS and has her own money, I don't see where her husband has the right to forbid her to go!

I went to one that really fascinated me, and when I came home and told my husband about it, he threw a king-sized fit. He said they are all a bunch of fakers, and people who go to them are suckers.

Abby, I work and earn my own money, so I can't see where my husband has anything to say about how I spend it.

I am not saying that this fortune-teller got everything right, but the first time I went there she called me by my name and she had no way of knowing I was coming as I made no appointment. So, if she is such a phony, how do you account for that?

LIKES FORTUNE-TELLERS

DEAR LIKES: There are tricks to every trade, you can be sure, and if I knew the answer to that, I'd be a fortune-teller.

DEAR ABBY: Please don't send me to my minister or doctor about this because I just couldn't face them with it.

I am a 27 year old, recently married man. My wife is a nice girl with whom I went for nearly two years. All this time I never laid a hand on her. Don't get me wrong, I am no angel. I laid my hands on plenty of other girls before I got married, but they were not the type I wanted for a wife.

My problem is that I love my wife, but I can't perform my husbandly duties. I don't know how else to say this, but I am no man at all with her. I never had this problem with the tramps I went with. What is wrong with me, and what can I do about it?

ASHAMED AND EMBARRASSED

DEAR ASHAMED: Your "hang up" is "nice" girls. Your mother [or father] probably told you that "nice" girls were not for laying hands on, so now, even tho it is perfectly all right, you've been "conditioned" to react negatively to "nice girls." Don't be ashamed to discuss it with your family doctor. He's familiar with the problem and will direct you to the professional help you need.

DEAR ABBY: After my fiance and I sent out our wedding invitations we received word from relatives "requesting" that certain other people [usually THEIR relatives] be invited, too. As a favor to the first person who made such a request we sent an invitation to her son. Now it appears that we failed to send one to her DAUGHTER, too, and the whole family is up in arms and taking sides. The fact that the mother failed to mention her daughter's existence is denied, and now we are made out to be the ogres.

We've sent "last minute" invitations and have written letters of "apology" explaining the oversight, and hopefully things are being smoothed out. But where do people get the nerve to call and demand invitations for their relatives whom we do not even know?

We have received any number of such requests and I am disgusted. By the way, it's only two days before the wedding, and guess who the only people are who have not responded or indicated in any way that they are coming? UPSTATE N.Y.

CONFIDENTIAL TO SAN FRANCISCO DAD: This is only a suggestion, but ask your teen-age son why he doesn't start shifting for himself now—while he still knows everything.

Everybody has a problem. What's yours? For a personal reply write to Abby, Box 69700, Los Angeles, Cal. 90069, and enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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