

Can The White Man Sing The Blues? Ask Johnny Winter

By MICHAEL BENNETT
(Canadian Press Staff Writer
Written For The Associated Press)

Can the white man sing the blues? Johnny Winter, an albino stomp-'n'-shout guitarist, can — but he says it's not the same as Lazy Lester or Lonesome Sundown did it.

And it probably never will be again. "When the life style changes, the music's not goin' to be the same, because it was an emotional music that was kinda spawned in poverty, depression and ignorance," said Winter, a wispy, drawing Texan with silken, flowing hair.

"And once the people got out of that, it got to be like an intellectual thing: 'Well, okay, the blues is part of our heritage, so we're going to keep doin' it,' but they won't feel the same way about it."

"It changed a whole lot from the time people were doin' it in Mississippi. They moved to Chicago and the postwar Chicago blues was a completely different music, a completely different blues than the milder, softer Delta-type blues."

"It might not die, it might live on, but it won't be the same way it was."

Winter was weaned on blues and rock 'n' roll records in Beaumont, a sleepy Texas town just northeast of Houston.

"I learned a lot from a black disc jockey at a black station in Beaumont called KJET radio," he said.

"This guy had a show called the Bon Ton show, Bon Ton Roulle, the Good Times Roll. He called himself Parent-Clarence Garleau was his real name — or Bon Ton and he used to play all his own records."

"I used to call him up and ask him to play things for me. I met him in a music store one day — I was teachin' guitar and I was about 16, pickin' up a little extra bread."

"He came in and I recognized the sound of his voice, never had met him, and I started playin' one of his tunes. It flipped him out."

"In those days, the white people just didn't dig that kinda stuff."

"But if black people really knew you were diggin' it or interested in it, it turned them on."

"He was really extra nice, man. I'd go out on gigs and he'd make sure nobody killed me or anything and let me play with the band. He really helped me a lot."

Winter served his ap-

prenticeship with Johnny and the Jammers, Gene Terry and Downbeats and I and Them, playing small beer and brawl bars throughout the South.

He more recently has made four albums for Columbia Records, each of which has sold over a quarter of a million copies. The most recent, "Johnny Winter and Live," is selling the best of the four.

"Man, you wouldn't believe some of the clubs. Louisiana was where it was really heavy. And it was just exactly like Easy Rider, exactly, man."

"People would come up: 'Hey, man, play "Midnight Hour".' "Midnight Hour?" Man,



Johnny Winter

we've already played that three times.

"Or they'd come up and ask for something you didn't know."

"You couldn't explain you didn't know the song. Nothin' made any difference."

"Those people got pleasure outta goin' out, gettin' real drunk, lookin' for chicks and fightin'."

B. B. King remembers the night this frail-looking white kid walked into the Raven and stole the show seven years ago.

"It was about 10:30 and four or five white cats came in," said King.

"I was havin' trouble with the internal revenue boys then and I figured: "Oh, oh, here it comes!"

"Somebody said: "This is Johnny Winter, let him play some."

"Now I don't let nobody do that because this is my livin'. Then I thought: "If I was in an all-white club and they didn't let me play, I'd think it was another racial thing."

"So I asked him if he was sure he could play. I went to my drummer and said: "One number, that's all, I don't want to blow the gig."

"Man, he played so good he set the people on fire. I told him if he kept goin', he'd do all right."

Correspondent Returns To South Vietnam

(EDITOR'S NOTE: A year ago, Associated Press correspondent Peter Arnett left Vietnam after eight years of covering the war, during which he won a Pulitzer Prize for his reportage. He recently returned for three weeks. Here is his appraisal of how Vietnam looks to him one year later.)

By PETER ARNETT
SAIGON (AP) — American is getting out.

Both militarily and, in a sense, psychologically, most Americans here feel their war is ending.

That is the inescapable impression gathered in a three-week return visit by this correspondent after a one-year absence.

The sights and sounds of withdrawal are everywhere.

You see it in Quin Nhon, again a fishing village and no longer the hectic, noisy supply center for the thousands of GIs who fought the bloody battles at Ia Drang and Dak To. The airfield is closed. The few Americans are civilians.

You see it flying over Vietnam. The broad Vietnamese highlands remain studded by the

circular patterns of firebases and encampments that were torn in war's haste from the jungles by men and bulldozers. But a close look reveals they are abandoned.

You hear the sounds of withdrawal in the conversations of the middle and upper level Americans.

When I left Vietnam a year ago there were many American officials and military men who still identified Saigon's goals with those of the United States, a "We will prevail together" philosophy. One hears much less of that now, in three weeks of

traveling around Vietnam and looking up old acquaintances many now in high positions.

The Americans who have directed the U. S. effort in Vietnam, spending years working in the provinces in dusty, scummy towns, or using their expertise to move mountains in Saigon, seem assured that President Nixon means what he says about pulling out. Even men known as hawks seem to accept the fact that the situation has changed.

"Always there was tomorrow," commented one young American, fluent in

Vietnamese and an expert on the country, as we talked during dinner.

"There was always the hope that years of advice and coaxing would finally surface adequate leadership in the Vietnamese army, when the Saigon government would cleanse itself of obvious corruption and petty self-interest and begin to respond to the needs of the countryside, when the enemy would pack and go home," he said.

There is no tomorrow for the Americans now in Vietnam.

"Any reforms and programs

not realized today will unlikely be implemented when we leave," the young American said.

High on the list of remaining problems is military leadership. "We know all the secrets of counter-insurgency," one experienced American commented. "We have perfected techniques of pacification and indoctrination that are superb."

One American worker said: "The only reason we stay on now is paternalism. We have got to let go now for better or for worse. We cannot hold on to the Vietnamese forever."

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Instrument Detects Smog, Noise Booms

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The Royal Australian Air Force has an instrument which it claims will show when the time is ripe for a city to have bad smog or damaging supersonic booms.

RAAF research physicists, directed by Prof. V. D. Hopper, developed the equipment which can probe through the earth's atmosphere and detect different layers of air.

They claim the system is the only quick, cheap and practical way of doing the job. The orthodox method has been to send up balloons laden with expensive instruments and radio equipment.

The new system uses an acoustic sounder with very high frequency sound waves. These are projected into the atmosphere like the headlights of a car.

When the "beam" hits layers of air which have differing temperatures or humidity, some of the sound waves are bounced back and recorded.

The system was developed as part of a broad atmospheric

research program, but authorities charged with combating smog and alleviating supersonic booms already are showing interest.

The acoustic sounder is likely to be marketed commercially for around \$11,200.

The physicists say the worst city smogs are caused by what is known as an inversion layer — a layer of cold air which lies above and traps warm air near the ground. The cold air forms a barrier so that smoke and other gases are trapped in the warm air near the ground, and build up.

The worst supersonic booms are caused by the same situation — the shock waves penetrate downwards and are then trapped in a huge "reverberation box" near to the ground.

The RAAF academy's new acoustic sounder can monitor the sky above cities and airports, and give warnings when conditions favorable to the build-up of smogs — or damaging supersonic booms — develop.

Waters In Pacific Up To 78 Degrees

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (AP) — The Pacific off San Diego is warming steadily, forcing commercial fishermen to go hundreds of miles north to find tuna and albacore.

The ocean heated . . . degrees Monday, the highest since the National Weather Service began keeping records more than 25 years ago.

"Sport fishing is almost down to nothing," said Dr. Nathan

Clark of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. The albacore fishing industry is "ruined for the year," he said.

The water temperature began climbing about three weeks ago, Clark said, as the result of a drop in north-northwesterly winds which normally force cold air into the San Diego Bay area. In addition, there has been less than normal cloud coverage over the coastline.