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Bobby Womack's *It's All Over Now* is given one of the best readings I've heard, thanks in large part to the presence of Gospel Love Tones, but fleshed out nicely by the band members. Bearing little resemblance to the Rolling Stones version that most folks recognize, this is more compact, minus any twang. If the Holmes Brothers had sung it, it would sound something like this.

It's good to see Vachon step outside of his role as leader of Roomful of Blues. This side project is a solid winner.—**Mark E. Gallo**

Mississippi John Hurt
Live At Oberlin College
4-15-65

RockBeat CD 3387

Mississippi John Hurt was born in the early 1890's in tiny Teoc, Mississippi, raised in near-by Avalon and playing guitar for a living by the time he was a teenager. Working during the week as a sharecropper, on the weekend he quickly became a "first call" for local barn dances and parties, singing with a richly gentle yet raw voice alongside some remarkably flowing, brilliantly slide-work embellished guitar lines. By 1928, Okeh Records was in town recording him and on the heels of his decades later "rediscovery" in the early sixties, he was one of the hits at the illustrious 1963 Newport Folk Festival—leading the way for other "discoveries" such as Son House (with whom Hurt shared the bill on this Oberlin date), Skip James, Bukka White, Robert Pete Williams and more. Among the hymns and traditional songs here are "The Angels Laid Him Away," "Here I Am, Oh Lord, Sing Me," "Casey Jones," "Candy Man," and "Make Me A Pallet On The Floor." Complementing these are a slew of folk/blues staples such as "Salty Dog Blues," "Shake That Thing," "Frankie And Albert" and "Hard Times In The Old Town Tonight." Great

sound and Hurt at his best.—**Gary von Tersch**

SHARON LEWIS AND TEXAS FIRE *Grown Ass Woman*

Delmark Records 4121 North
Rockwell, Chicago IL 60618
www.delmark.com

Sharon Lewis may be the new face of real Chicago blues. She first hit the stage at Buddy Guy's Legends May of 1993 and has been honing her sound ever since. Sharon Lewis is a vocalist with rough power like a young Koko Taylor and her band, Texas Fire, features Stephen Brammer on guitar, Roosevelt Purifoy - keyboards, Andre Howard - bass, Tony Dale on drums and the horns of Kenny



Anderson - trumpet, Hank Ford - tenor sax and Jerry DiMuzio on baritone sax. Filling out the sound on a few cuts is the harp of Sugar Blue and Chicago guitar slinger Joanna Connor. With a dozen original songs split evenly between Miss Lewis and guitarist Stephen Brammer it seems almost an afterthought to add two covers at the end.

Sugar Blue's harp leads into Miss Lewis' rousing theme "Can't Do It Like We Do" for this modern testimonial to Chicago blues and to double down adds some horns to proclaim "Hell Yeah" she's got the party started. The blazing guitar of Joanna Connor burns throughout "Chicago Woman" as these ladies lay out what they're all about. Chilling to a country piano, Sharon's voice sweetens to a lovelorn lament on "They're Lying" as the horns punctuate her lines. As the drummer steps up the beat Steve Bell plays some furious harp and Sharon forcefully states

that she'd rather be an "Old Man's Baby" than a young man's fool, if you want to live a wonderful life. "Grown Ass Woman" is Lewis' ultimate declaration that she's the real deal and has everything she needs, on stage or off. The second half of this CD's songs are written by Stephen Brammer but Sharon is still in charge as the guitar follows her lines on "Don't Try To Judge Me." The easy stroll of "Walk With Me" has the baritone purring as the guitar and piano brighten to near smooth jazz but Sharon's strong, assured vocals keep it centered. "Call Home" has the light breezy touch of a top 40 R&B from the '60's, the airy horns and guitar counterpoint Sharon's vocals. Brammer's guitar is showcased on the classic-sounding "Home Free Blues" and Joanna Connor's guitar rings the siren calls to "Freedom" because you're not free till we're all free. Sugar Blue closes the originals as Sharon says she's a full-grown woman and won't stand for no "High Road" excuses. Finishing with two covers, "Why I Sing The Blues" really showcases how good Lewis and her band are by pitting them against B. B. King and Warren Haynes' "Soul Shine," bringing forth another side of Sharon to shine.

With this new CD "Grown Ass Woman" Sharon Lewis proves she ain't no blues diva but a real down home blues chanteuse.—**Roger & Margaret White**

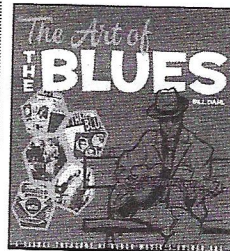
BOOK

THE ART OF THE BLUES

By Bill Dahl
University of Chicago Press

An absorbing, coffee-table sized visual assessment of black music's golden age relayed through music journalist Bill Dahl's informative

commentary alongside a graphically marvelous array of posters, album covers and assorted media advertisements that have artfully shaped the idiom's identity over the course of the past century. Beginning with colorful sheet music folio covers from the early twenties, Dahl and alert "art consultant" Chris James move on through always-vivid "race" record media advertisements to eye-catching 78



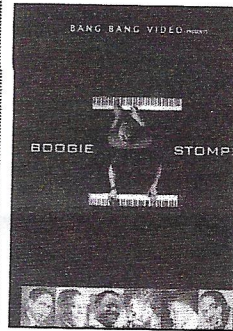
rpm label designs for concerns both big (Columbia, Victor, Vocalion, Bluebird, Okeh) and small (King, Dootone, Fire, Sears Roebuck's Conqueror, Variety, Rhumboogie, Modern) and a host of others. In addition, special attention is justifiably accorded to William Alexander's humorous label cartoons on many of Roy Milton's postwar Milton offerings as well as to the arresting series of portrait covers that the mysterious Fazzio created for the Crown budget LP label and to celebrated Playboy magazine photographer Don Bronstein's work for Chess Records, where he "raised the bar" for blues LP jackets with his penetrating head-shot cover of Little Walter for his debut album, Sonny Boy Williamson's skid-row *Down and Out* photo shot and Howlin' Wolf's descriptive *Moanin' At Midnight* cover, among many others. Onto a large collection of concert and movie posters—this is my favorite section with the likes of Bessie Smith, Johnny Otis, Count Basie, Lena Horne, Otis Rush and on an on—all lavishly reproduced. More than 350 color images in all. Well worth the tab.—**Gary von Tersch**

DVD

BOOGIE STOMP

Bang Bang Video rib@baldorilaw.com

Blues has all kinds of Boogie, but when you're talking 'bout Boogie



Woogie you know it's all about that fleet fingered piano man with a heavy left hand knocking out the rhythm. Occasionally you'll find a band with a piano player that can play a song or two but the days of boogie woogie masters filling a room with sound from a battered upright box all night long and never playing the same song twice may be coming to a close if not gone already. The DVD "Boogie Stomp" is a last chance to capture that spark of primal improvisation while it's still here. The genesis behind this project was Bob Baldori, a musician who started his career in the '60s playing in a rock n roll band, having hits on the charts and becoming Chuck Berry's band of choice for his mid west tours, discovering Bob Seeley in his own home town. Baldori had become an accomplished Boogie Woogie player but upon hearing Seeley he knew he'd found a master. Bob Seeley had made a comfortable, unassuming life for himself working thirty-three years playing nightly to small but appreciative crowds in a piano bar inside an upscale seafood restaurant, Charley's Crab. But Seeley is literally the last living link to Boogie Woogie originators like Mead Lux Lewis, Albert

Ammons and Pete Johnson, who he saw and learned from and called friends in the '30's and '40's. With Seeley at 88 years like the 88 keys he mastered, he likes to call himself the last man standing in Boogie Woogie.

Bob Baldori wrote, directed and presented a historical narrative, interviewing musical historians on the origins of jazz and its evolution of this barrel house sound, photos of the originators of the music and footage of jazz bug dancers give weight to this documentary but it's the interactions between these two lifelong musicians as they perform the dueling piano stomp that the core of this disc. Together they traveled with a film crew in tow holding concerts in Toronto, New York and then on to Russia, performing to appreciative audiences in an attempt to revive interest in this exciting art form. Disbursed among the great piano performances they run into many obstacles along the way with behind the scene pressures and frustrations between the dueling goals over success and fame and the wall of frustration they encountered trying to convince agents and promoters that age shouldn't matter.—**Roger & Margaret White**

Movie

I AM THE BLUES

Eyestee

In 1979, when this film's maker, Daniel Cross, came to meet a whole host of blues characters touring in a Winnebago in his native Canada — it had helped instill a love and respect for the art form and the artists. Jump ahead 40-some odd years later and Mr. Cross, with The Ponderosa Stomp's Dr. Ike helping facilitate the proceedings as he did with that earlier Canadian road trip, spends portions of three years being a fly