

# Crying More Salty Tears

**Water "Wolfman" Washington, *My Future Is My Past* (Anti- 87595; 48:54 ★★★★★)** Walter Washington, a New Orleans blues and r&b veteran, has been open to singing jazz in the studio since the 1980s. On this recent austere session, his rich voice hedges that way in a sage, deliberate manner as it reflects the sensitivity or strength found in the lyrics to ageless classics. "I Just Dropped By To Say Hello," a bittersweet remembrance, probably hasn't been rendered so stirringly since Johnny Hartman owned the tune. His pairing with estimable vocalist Irma Thomas for David Egan's "Even Now" is a godsend. Emotionally decisive on other tracks, just the Johnny "Guitar" Watson tune "Lone Ranger" fails to impress. Not incidentally, there's a fair amount of Washington's high-quality blues guitar work, too.

Ordering info: [anti.com](http://anti.com)

**Teresa James & The Rhythm Tramps, *Here In Babylon* (Jesi-Lu; 52:57 ★★★★★)**

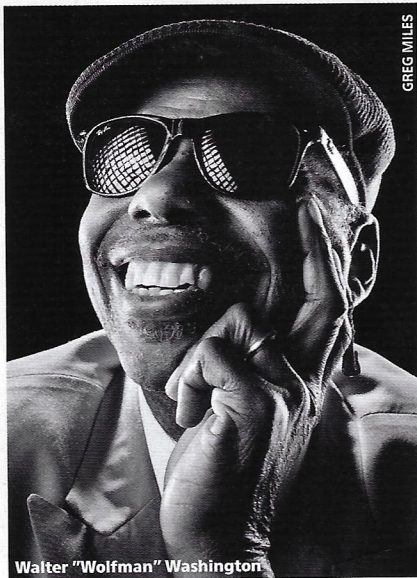
Vocalist Teresa James is as talented and emotionally true as any of her peers, making one strong record after another since the 1990s. Her latest finds her in top form, an evenness of temperament in play on most of the songs that were penned by her trusted producer-bassist, Terry Wilson. When James occasionally heats up her delivery, there's even more evidence of her abundance of spirit. Wilson and the other Tramps craft a winning sound derived from Memphis, Texas and West Coast influences.

Ordering info: [teresajames.com](http://teresajames.com)

**Tim Woods, *Human Race* (Self Release; 53:26 ★★★½)** Not your garden variety guitarist, Tim Woods uses his thumb to get a mix of electro-magnetic lead lines, chords and bass figures. His sophomore album isn't so ordinary, either. After beginning with three decent blues-rock numbers, "Take A Minute" arrives as the game changer. The Pittsburgh-area musician steps up as a vocalist and songwriter to grip our attention with an exceptionally melodic and intelligent plea for everyone to slow down and go about healing the world with compassion; no weak sentiment intrudes.

Ordering info: [timwoodsmusic.com](http://timwoodsmusic.com)

**Geoff & Maria Muldaur, *Pottery Pie* (Omnivore 241; 41:23 ★★★½)** The Muldaurs were making Americana albums long before the term was coined. This reissued 1970 Reprise album encompasses folk, gospel, hillbilly-style Tin Pan Alley, Bob Dylan, camp and unadulterated blues. The latter wins out. Maria is coy, sultry and wistful while singing Memphis Minnie's "Me And My Chauffeur Blues," and the emotional coloring of Geoff's vocal on Son House's



Walter "Wolfman" Washington

"Death Letter Blues" hasn't faded over time.

Ordering info: [omnivorerecordings.com](http://omnivorerecordings.com)

**Michael Bloomfield, *San Francisco Nights* (RockBeat 3403; 54:21; ★★★)**

Anyone unaware of or needing a reminder of Mike Bloomfield's superiority as a guitarist should go straight to his Sony Legacy box set, *From His Head*. This patchwork of solo-acoustic and electric-band tracks from Norman Drayton's trove of tapes has too few instances displaying his guitar acumen.

Ordering info: [rockbeatrecords.com](http://rockbeatrecords.com)

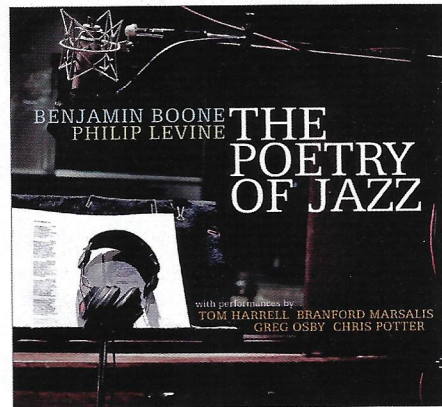
**Various Artists, *The Best Country Blues You've Never Heard* (Rough Guide 1362; 74:24 ★★★½)**

This U.K. collection of 25 songs by forgotten recording artists from the late 1920s and '30s hits the traditional bullet points: good singing and good guitar, mandolin and harmonica work, mainly of the vigorous Delta or relaxed East Coast-style. Bob Campbell is all sinister business wielding "Shotgun Blues," and Water Coleman makes an off-color request, "Mama, Let Me Lay It On You." State-of-the-art noise reduction of analog tape-hiss increases the attraction of meeting these and other unknowns, such as Willie Reed and Spark Plug Smith.

Ordering info: [worldmusic.net](http://worldmusic.net)

**Ghali & Mama's Boys, *Let The Demons Out* (Ruf 1250; 47:55 ★½)** What the Belgian band lacks in originality is partially offset by vigorous technical competency. Or is it demonic possession? A passable cover of Little Willie John's "I'm Shakin'" gets lost in a blitz of freaky originals, among them "Hiccup Boogie" and "4 A.M. Fried Chicken." **DB**

Ordering Info: [rufrecords.de](http://rufrecords.de)



## Benjamin Boone/ Philip Levine *The Poetry Of Jazz*

ORIGIN 82754

★★★★★

Like a whiskey aged in charred casks, not a gin—which Pulitzer-winning poet laureate Philip Levine at first taste thought was hair tonic—this collection of world-weary words framed by quick-witted saxophonist/composer Benjamin Boone should be taken neat and steep sampled.

Levine grew up in Detroit, and as a teenager during the '50s worked in car manufacturing plants. His general cynicism about the workplace is at odds with the historicizing Studs Terkel, and his uncomplicated lines are delivered with bleak soulfulness. Levine, who died in 2015, insisted on recording live in the studio with the musicians, even though, in his 80s at the time, it reportedly took a toll on him. Boone states, nevertheless, he delivered his text, often in first takes, with consummate confidence.

Non-nostalgic jazz pedants might find some of these romanticized riffs on the following somewhat obvious: Sonny Rollins' Williamsburg Bridge woodshedding; the tragic early departure of Clifford Brown; and Bird's forlorn "Lover Man" phase. But these vintage meanders bear repeat listening.

Levine and Boone bring it closer to home on the poignant, floaty "Soloing (Homage To John Coltrane)," with lovely, tidal strokes from Branford Marsalis. Despite the star turns, Boone not only distinguishes himself with uncluttered, affecting orchestrations, but by passionately balancing intellect and emotion.—*Michael Jackson*

**The Poetry Of Jazz:** Gin; Making Light Of It; The Unknowable (Homage To Sonny Rollins); Yakov; They Feed They Lion; I Remember Clifford (Homage To Clifford Brown); The Music Of Time; Soloing (Homage To John Coltrane); Arrival; A Dozen Dawn Songs; Plus One; Our Valley; Call It Music (Homage To Charlie Parker); By The Waters Of The Lobregat; What Work Is. (73:08)

**Personnel:** Benjamin Boone, alto and soprano saxophone; Philip Levine, poetry, narration; David Aus (2–6, 10–14), Craig Von Berg (1, 7, 8, 10), piano; Spee Kosloff (1–3, 7, 9, 10, 12), Nye Morton (4, 5, 11, 15), bass; John Lauffenburger (6–8), Brian Hamada (1–3, 6–8, 10, 12), drums; Gary Newmark (4, 5, 11, 14), Stefan Poetzsch, violin (10, 15); Karen Marguth, vocals (1–7); Max Hembd (4, 5, 10), Asher Boone (6), Tom Harrell (6), trumpet; Atticus Boone, French horn (6); Chris Potter, tenor saxophone (6); Branford Marsalis (8); Greg Osby (12), alto saxophone.

Ordering info: [originarts.com](http://originarts.com)