

pieces "Sweet Soul Sister" has the organ and vocals carrying the tune till a "Layla"-like solo raises at the finale. A burning boogie lights up "Carry Me Mama," the vocals sing that he's "hung out on the wire" but the guitar and piano are on fire. "I Got Mud" gets down with some dirty chicken scratching rhythm under sweeping power chords then takes it deeper as Howson cries "can't keep a good soul down" and the guitar is set free to "Make A Joyful Sound" with Allman influences returning on a Dickey Betts like solo and ringing out throughout the melody. For a real change of pace Howson closes with a wish of good tidings and using a hushed reverberating tone gently sings "Until We Meet Again."

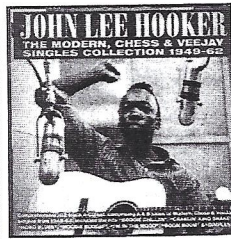
RJ Howson is a musician who truly loves the life he leads and he's put it all on the line in order to "Set It Free."—**Roger & Margaret White**

JOHN LEE HOOKER

Acrobat 4-CD 7103
www.acrobatmusic.net

The legendary Boogie Man, John Lee Hooker, was one of the foremost guiding spirits of the mid-60s blues boom. Early on known commercially as Birmingham Sam & His Magic Guitar, Texas Slim or Little Pork Chops among other aliases, Hooker was born toward the tail-end of August in 1912 to a sharecropping family, led by a Baptist preacher, in the tiny town of Tutwiler, Mississippi in Tallahatchie County, and was influenced early on by both his stepfather—droning, one-chord blues stylist Willie Brown—as well as his running pal Tony Hollins, who was dating Hooker's sister, Alice, at the time. The youthful musician moved to Memphis in his teens and began playing with the likes of Robert Nighthawk but around 1943 he relocated to

Detroit, where he worked at the Ford plant during the day and played the clubs on and near fabled Hastings Street, the dynamic center of the black community's night life on the east side, on the weekends. He also began his recording career in the Motor City in 1948 where his initial session produced the biggest selling "race record" of 1949, "Boogie Chillun," that featured his signature gravel-voiced singing



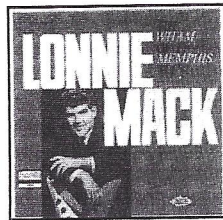
alongside his hypnotic, foot-stompingly boogie-fied guitar rhythms. This 4 CD, 101 track project chronologically spotlights both the A and B sides of all the singles recorded under his own name for the Modern, Chess and Vee Jay labels from 1949 through to 1962, thus proffering a comprehensive overview of his output during this key period of his career as well as an excellent showcase for his one-of-a-kind talent. Naturally, all the hits are here—from the fore-mentioned million seller "Boogie Chillun" and "Crawlin' King Snake" to "Hoogie Boogie" and "Hobo Blues." From "Boom Boom" and "I'm In The Mood" to "Tupelo" and "John Lee's House Rent Boogie." An enclosed booklet features comprehensive liners by Paul Watts along with full discographical and session details. Well worth hunting down!—**Gary von Tersch**

LONNIE MACK *The Wham Of That Memphis Man*

Ace CDCHM-1134

As liners authors Dave Burke and Alan Taylor, of Pipeline magazine, put it

at the outset of their informative, photo-studded liners: "Credited as one of the principal instigators of blue-eyed soul as well as the inspiration for southern rock, road-



house bar-blues and the legion of blues-based guitar-slingers that plied their trade throughout the 60s, 70s and beyond, Lonnie Mack may not be a household name but he was one of the genuine giants of music." Born into a musical family in the backwoods of Harrison, Indiana in 1941, Mack left high school at 13 and spent the next two decades recording for a string of local, independent labels while maintaining an exhausting schedule of one-night stands, playing his Flying V guitar for all it was worth in raucous taverns, honky-tonks and blues clubs before his arresting instrumental take on Chuck Berry's "Memphis" became an out-of-the-blue Top Ten smash in the summer of 1963. It was closely followed by another pull-out-all-the-stops number, penned by Mack and titled "Wham!" As Burke and Taylor note: "Because of Lonnie's plentiful use of the Bigsby tremelo arm on "Wham!" the device became known as a "whammy bar." Originally released on Cincinnati's Fraternity label in October, 1963, Mack's classic, eleven track debut album remains one for the ages—every cut here is terrific—Mack's "lightning fast guitar runs, punctuated with amazing string-bends, an organ-like tone and piercing guitar notes, put most other instrumentalists to shame." Equally accomplished are Mack's hypnotic, blue-eyed soul

vocals (often in front of the stupendous Charmaines vocal group) with gospel hollers and heartbroken screams multiplying the music's thrusting power and rapturous aura. Personal favorites include two inspired sacred covers (The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi's classic "Where There's A Will" and Martha Carson's rousing "Satisfied") along with all the groundbreaking instrumentals. Lonnie died last April, with this release already in the works. Now it stands as a fine memorial to an early guitar hero. Back in the day (I graduated from high school in 1963) this was one of those scant "all killer, no filler" LPs. Long live Lonnie Mack!—**Gary von Tersch**

MISSISSIPPI HEAT

Cab Driving Man
Delmark CD 848

THE FAT BABIES

Solid Gassuh
Delmark CD 257

The heat on the stove is cranked all the way to "Hi" once more for the twelfth chapter in the quarter-century history of the quarter-century history of the interesting clinical psychiatrist Pierre Lacocque's tight Mississippi Heat band. His ardently eloquent harmonica work and savvy songwriting skills (often composed from a woman's perspective and frequently commenting on contemporary issues) are ably aided and abetted by a roster of heavy hitters—most notably earnest vocalist Inetta Visor, eloquent guitarist, vocalist and songwriter Michael Dotson, bassist Brian Quinn and groove-deep drummers Terrence Williams and Kenny Smith and keyboardist Chris "Hambone" Cameron. Saxophone maven Sax Gordon also "special guests" on five tracks with his soulful insinuations particularly effective on both the title

song—an atmospheric nod to Cab Calloway's stony, cabaret-blues approach—as well as on an inspired cover of Sarah Vaughan's memorable toast to her "Smooth Operator." Lacocque's exemplary originals run the gamut from low-down Delta and Chicago blues and boogie woogie to party-down-den numbers, R&B ballads and cajun reveries with subject matter that "runs the gamut of the human experience from the purpose of life to the glory of love," as lin-



ers author Greg Easterling accurately puts it. Further ravers begin with the opening "Cupid Bound," "Flowers On My Tombstone," "Life Is Too Short," "Mama Kaila" and the closing shout-out "Hey Pipo." An entertaining and rootsy musical

THE FAT BABIES



smorgasbord of the highest order! Play loud! Which brings us to another recent Delmark release, featuring the Windy City's most popular vintage hot jazz band—the Beau Sample-led Hot Babies. Sample plays string bass, with Andy Schumm on cornet, John Otto on either clarinet or alto sax and Paul Asoro on piano and the occasional vocal—he particularly shines on a deliriously exciting "Egyptian Ella," Benny Goodman's "After A While" and the visionary "Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?" Tenor banjoist and guitarist Jake Sanders and drummer Alex Hall round

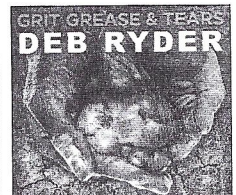
out the hot-to-trot septet. Currently in residency at the world famous Green Mill in Uptown on every Tuesday and on every Sunday at the Honky Tonk BBQ in Pilsen (where this after-hours recording was done) the fresh-faced combo is musically soaked in the idiom's early days as they pay a vibrantly fresh tribute to a host of the era's, often unsung, trailblazers—from Wingy Manone and Bud Freeman to Johnny Dodds and Albert Wynn. From Muggsy Spanier and Punch Miller to Lillian Armstrong and Clarence Williams—that never fails to have the dance floor full in no time flat. Other recommends include a modernistic "Delirium," a flag-waving rendition of Luis Russell and Paul Barbarin's "Doctor Blues" and a fiery cover of Thomas Dorsey's dazzling "Parkway Stomp." A "solid gassuh" through and through, as Louie would put it.—**Gary von Tersch**

DEB RYDER

Grit Grease & Tears

Bejeb Music 2016

This third album by chanteuse Deb Ryder is a winner. It doesn't hurt that she has enlisted the talent of drummer and ace producer Tony Braunagel, whose efforts are enforced by Johnny Lee Schell on guitar and Mike Finnigan on keyboards. (Recognize



those names? That's the core of the Phantom Blues Band, Taj Mahal's ace ensemble for the last couple of decades.) A slew of other top-flight musicians make appearances, but the focus is appropriately on Ryder's