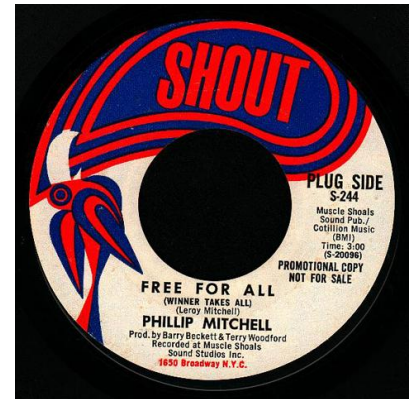


STEVE GUARNORI TRAWLS THROUGH ANOTHER SELECTION OF QUALITY SOUL MUSIC

Silent Majority were one of the obscurer groups to record for Hot Wax in the early 70's. Everyone should know and own a copy of their £7 dancier "Colors of my love" (7008). Far harder to find, because as far as I can tell it never got beyond "demo" copy stage is their second release right at the end of 1971 "Something new about you" (7112). This is a tremendous dancier from Ronnie Dunbar – what a cracker. After some twinkly vibing, it breaks into classic Invictus dance territory, crashing beat, hammering pianos, rolling tempo. Yet curiously was "missed" from Sequel's Hot Wax tribute CD. Perhaps volume 2!

The group are remembered as arch soul chameleons - starting life as the Formations, and later metamorphosed into Hot Ice; oh and they wrote the Wilson Pickett anthem "Don't let the green grass fool you" in 1972. I suspect a pressing fault meant that Buddah who distributed the label at the time didn't let many copies out of the factory. On balance miles better than "Colors of my love", a side that is itself no bad record, and another to recommend to any readers under 18, who might not have got it.

The Majority recorded four sides in one session for Hot Wax, three of those sides made it onto vinyl ("Colors" twice, as it was also reissued as the B side to "Something new..."). That means there's an unissued side out there somewhere!



Over in NYC, there's an interesting 'Red' Greg Carmichael connection between that old favourite The **Four Flights** "All I want is you" (Almeria 4002 - a Red Greg subsidiary) and a version recorded two years later by **Conversion** on Sam 5017. I think it may be the lead singer. For anyone that doesn't know, both versions are good 70's dancers, rhythmically tight, with lilting harmonies. Conversion benefited from Greg's own production and arrangement, as well as a more confident performance from the lead singer. Conversion also had "Sweet thing" (Vanguard 35233) a spacey jazz funk mover aimed unashamedly at the dance floors; penned by Leroy Burgess.

So, somewhat predictably we move to Chicago, where we have **Fran Oliver** "Tomorrow may not come", which is a busy shuffling wailer for Funky Bunky Shepperds BBS label (0579), one of several small offshoots of the "Bunky" label. Included in the website is that fateful moment when Bunky signed a distribution deal with Florence 'buy now pay later' Greenberg of Scepter-Wand. Fran's a very enthusiastic singer, showcased with a northern type backing, swirling strings, bongos et al. "You won't get away" is more of the same, but slightly slower, still busy and cluttered. A Johnnie Cameron arrangement, and as we know he was very instrumental in developing the female soul sound in Chicago in the late 60's. I have one other by Fran, an earlier Betty Everett style R&B dancier from about 1965. "Next time you see me" (Sonar 103) is an example of a sound on a tiny label from South Indiana Avenue. A small combo of instruments keeps the backing tight as a drum, as a young Fran wails and swoons along in

time. As the beat never lets up, it's ideal northern, if a little primitive for these ears. By the way I can certainly support Heather Dowling's review last issue of **Geraldine Jones** "I'm cracking up" on the same label (101).

....Into the 80's for some more Motor City madness. Back in about 1981 modern soulies were raving about **Executive Force** "Midnight loving" (New Age 115). That was one of three releases the group had on the label and the next release sounds far better in the late 90's. "Let me show you the way" (116) being a great early 80's two stepper - brass, great harmony and plucked strings, a good vocalist and that unmistakable strutting two step beat....sides that are rapidly disappearing off the face of the earth.

Larry Hale

Larry Hale is someone I have always liked. When I was still at school and living in Tonbridge, and saving my pennies to go to Wigan for the first time, Kim Styles played me a tape he'd recorded there the previous week. On the tape amongst the Yvonne Baker's and Bobby Paris's was Hale's "Once" (Diamond 203) and I fell in love with the sound on that record-raucous, headbanging maniacal stomping soul. Hale was screaming his way round the USA, encouraging everyone to take up his dance; on top of this were the strategically timed Wigan handclaps - I couldn't wait to go! Yet Hale was no one flop wonder. Of his other flops... "Sometimes / In front of her house" (UA 701) are early R&B influenced Horace Ott arranged dancers with handclaps, subdued backing and a Drifters type feel. Far better is a Fontana (1937) side. "I broke up inside" is a 6Ts dance type

sound, from around 65, with good clear vocals and a catchy tune. "Theres nothing else I want to do" is slow, but still rolls along, albeit gently as guys "shoop shoop" to support Larry's plaintive vocal.

....One of the last records to fall into place in my Fame collection was **Marcell Strong** (1475) and "Mumble in my ear". An archetypal southern deep ballad. Marcell has a voice that grates, so the plucked guitar runs, and muted sax help improve the performance. Rick Hall produced.

Na Allen - Man of mystery

Na Allen is another journeyman, flirting with, but never quite gaining the success he deserved. First out of the starting blocks as far as my collection can tell on Atco 6753 in 1969 for "No easy way down" –a contemporaneous and dynamite version of the Walter Jackson epic on Wand (11247). Altogether now "Your toy balloon has sailed to the sky". Arranged by Willie Mitchell, it's an extremely good version with a clearer vocal delivery than Jackson. Penned of course by Goffin and King – Carole again. Yet this is no one-sided wonder, turn it over for a diamond dancier "Thanks for nothing" a crossover item with classic Hi Rhythm section backing that'd keep the Yarmouth dancefloor alive and kicking. Most people know Na for his later side "Everytime it rains" (Ronn 47), well known in crossover circles and 70's soul coffee morning groups; an archetypal imitation Memphis type beater this time arranged by Rudy Robinson. My favourite record of Na's though is his early Janus debut "if you want to hold on" (170) which I acquired from Butch last

year. It's a real rocking "Hi studios" style uptempo number; a kind of hard horn driven sound. The rhythm is tight as a drum and for a self penned number the song is extremely infectious - impossible to keep still to. Rounded off with a baritone vocal, this is certainly a number that can do some damage to dancefloors in crossover rooms. The flip "***I was telling her about you***" (the Luther Dixon-Kenny Gamble and Thom Bell song) is a beat ballad, again catchy. It is also the same as the B side of his version of "***Open the door to your heart***" (Janus 197), itself not a bad track, though in reality far too fast a version of Darrell Banks' immortal classic.

His third Janus release "***I'm my own man***" (180) is missing from my collection as a 45 (I have it on an album) - can any readers oblige with a copy? Anyway its one of those early / mid 70's heavy numbers. If I said this had shades of the Temps in their "***Papa was a rolling stone***" phase you'd know what I mean. He finally surfaced on the tiny Pedestal label on a Phillip Mitchell gem in 1973 "***Hard to do without you***". This tune is pretty much a rip off of Al Green's "***I'm still in love with you***" hit, with lolloping beat and guitars. Good stuff!

Time for some northern, and off my Verve shelf falls a **Robert Banks** single. A side he recorded way back in the dark and dusty mid 60s. "***A mighty good way***" (10545) has a big voiced singer rocking his way through a self penned uptempo number, which tells us his lot in life is pretty good. That review leads us nicely onto Robert Banks arrangements and productions. Firstly **August Moon** and "***Wasted years***" (O-Gee 100). Known to some, a silky smooth vocalist on a sharp on the fours dancer. Very simple construction with backing singers "***doo doop-ing***", piano twinkles, horns blast and a beat that never lets go. "***You're together baby***" is an old style stomper, lots and lots of bass. A Stafford sound.

The next in line, as they say and finally for Mr Banks (at least for this issue) we move onto Spectrum and the flip of a rich ballad "***When love comes***" from that Soul Brother - Soul Sister duet of **Hoagy Lands and Lily Fields**. "***Beautiful music***" (126) is a complex and vibrant shuffler, bursting with energy fuelled by a propelled beat. Combine this with some soulful wailing and breaks to give a dancers delight. There are some throat tearing hoarse vocals from Lands while Lily's voice soars into the stratosphere. A cheapie and a goodun.

"The whole damned worlds gone crazy" - well that was **John Gary Williams** view on life. I junked the LP in Peterborough for £1 in Fat Pete's shop in 1992. Yet completely ignored is his 1975 Truth side "***Ain't no love without your love***" (3227). This is a wispy midpace floater, with smooth orchestrated backing, flutes, loping beat and all that jazz. "***Come what may***" is another side worthy of a listen,

smoky and spaced out 70's stuff. Incidentally this guy is not the same as either Johnny Williams (there were two). Nor is he **John Williams** who recorded the old stomper (and "***Working in a coal mine***" rip off) "***Do me like you do me***" down in New Orleans on Sansu 472. I hope that clears up any confusion! Mentioning "***Come what may***" - Garry Cape turned up a version by **True Image** on Watt. Now call me a philistine, but I don't rate their "***I'm not over you***" side for Super Smash. Judge for yourself - it's been hammered in just about every club for the last three years or so. True Image were a male /female group (led by Clarence Mann) from Alabama who achieved their best success working with Tommy Tate and Joe Shamwell. Of their two Juana sides "***It's only a matter of time***" (1949) remains a jewel in the crown - a lush strings / vibes, sing-a-long toe-tapping gorgeous ballad. Their previous release Juana 1947 "***Different kind of love***" is an uptempo schmaltzy disco version of **Ronnie Mcneir's** Tortoise International classic - stick with McNeir's version - it's 100 times better. Over at Glades their "***It ain't fair***" (1754) is an infectious funky down-home archetypal southern sound. So to their version of "***Come what may***". It's brilliant, quite slow, a floater in fact. Male and female leads alternate, soulfully. On balance far better than the original. It must be quite scarce.

Will 'Bama soul ever have it's day?

Georgia on My Mind

It certainly is... and for something a little different we trip down south, to a semi-forgotten corner of the soul world for some left fielders.

Before I start, I'll take you back to last issue when I reviewed **Tierra and Teah Louise** on Midtown and Coastal in our "***Seperated at Birth***" feature. You see my record collection is divided; 7's and albums in the record room, 12's in the garage. And it wasn't til one hot summers day in June that I ventured into my garage, and while thumbing through some 12s, suddenly realised that Coastal records of the 80's, was the same as Coastal Records in the 1990's, and from Georgia to boot. In my 12" collection I have four tunes to worry about. So to make amends, we'll run through those quickly - in reverse order...

Vari should be well known to modern soul fans, "***Nobody like you***" (1024) being a big voiced floater....Larry "Lazz" Davis group, **The Lazzistics** side "***Hangin' tuff***" (1022) is a classy stepper, far better than the title might suggest...**Bob Jeffreys** "***My little baby***" (1020) is an effervescent uptempo jittery dancer that is easy to like. Finally **New** (1010) is an oddball. Side A "***You happened to me***" is a remake of the Teah Louise side done 90's style. Coupled with "***My love with you***" an updated sound, to the tune of Tierra's "***Just loving you***" .only slightly faster - worth it if you cannot afford to shell out

the dosh for Tierra. So what else was on this label? Anyone got a listing?

Hermon Hitson "***Walking in the park***" (Lisa 7003)....Here is an artist best remembered for his northern soul floorshaker "***Yes you did***" (Minit 32072). I can still recall hearing this for the first time- Richard Searling blasting it through the Wigan Casino speakers...and, a teenager from the Smoke being mightily impressed!...Here is a label best remembered for its **Clinton Harmon** side "***Lets make a new start***" (7001), a nice midtempo listening record, sadly marred by poor recording - one for the armchair though. Put together these two ingredients of Hitson and Lisa Records, and the result is quite dramatic. From 1977, "***Walking in the park***" is a gentle floater, just about danceable. Full of whiny guitars and set at an ambient lazy southern tempo. It's catchy - you'll love this one! Atlanta soul...the beat goes on...

Of other Hitson recordings deep soulfans should know his "***Too much for the human heart***" (Atco 6566), which gained a belated release on the excellent UK 70's label Special Agent (5003); he had another Minit side, "***She's a bad girl***" (32096) an uptempo brass laden late 60's groover. His Sweet Rose 45 from 1972 "***You can't keep a good man down***", has been praised so highly by Rod Dearlove, I simply can't top his words!

Fast forward to 1982 for **Zeal** "***Dont'cha know***" (Potential 1090), a classy two step ballad / dancer from a male group full of harmony, and a committed lead singer. The song comes from southern Georgia - a small town of less than 6,000 people in the middle of nowhere - blink and you'll have driven through it. I've never seen another copy of this, so it's probably quite tough to find.

Staying with good 80's, but a tad faster we have **Marshall Downing's** beefy ballad "***Almost had a good thing***", a good listening record (Magnum 1114), made by weaving tenor sax and gospelly femme backing singers. A song that gets better the longer it goes on. Penned by our old friends Clayton Ivey and Frank Johnson and from a tiny label based in Marietta Georgia, a town of some 40,000 people made famous in Theodis Ealey's 90's anthem "***If you leave me I'm going wit'cha***" (Ichiban 1164-CD).

....Still in Georgia - can you handle it?

Tony Troutman recorded his, I think debut release, for the Gramaphon label. It's a gorgeous £2 sound - deep soul with a beat. Title "***I truly love you***" (457118). A great record, that pops up everywhere. Mention of that old Gramaphon side, leads me to mention that **Clarence Mann** cut two 45's for the label in the mid 70's. Mann of course was the lead singer of **True Image** - we're back to where we started half a page back...Maybe it is a small world!

Jeanne & Darlings

I promised to showcase Jeanne & Darlings last time. They were a foursome

(led by Jeanne Darling) who sang back ups on many records by Otis Redding, Judy Clay, Mable John and William Bell. Their Volt debut came with a powerhouse sound **"How can you mistreat the one you love"** (151). A Hayes-Porter gem, clip clop clapping beat, an infectious hookline and some 'telling it like it is' from Jean. (This actually credited Jean & The Darlings). A test you can all try at home - put it on and keep absolutely still - it can't be done! **"That man of mine"** is a good old deep ballad. By the way **"Mistreat"** was updated in 1973 by Katie Love (Stax 0151). That version has a poppier, more of a 70's feel, being faster with bongos strings and a younger sounding singer.

They followed that release with **"What's gonna happen to me"** (156). This has guitar runs and a lazy drum beat and trademark Stax brass on a deep soul tale of a departing boyfriend. **"Soul Girl"** answers Sam & Dave with some gusto!

In February 1968 they tried again with **"Hang me now"** (159) an uptempo affair with the band cooking up a storm, probably not one of their best sides though. **"What will later on be like"** is a bluesy ballad.

Next up was **"I like what you're doing to me"** (4005) another deep soul side, piano led with plenty of soulful delivery as the Darlings complement a hollering Jeanne. **"It's unbelievable"** puts them with an early Groovesville production for the label, co-penned by Don Davis. The side is a punchy big 'tick tock' beater Jeanne wailing **"I'm like a kite flying on a string"**.

"Standing in the need of your love" (4015) is a somewhat lighter poppier sound - obviously influenced by what other girl groups were doing by now (e.g. Hot Wax, Supremes etc.). A nice record though.

For their last release the powers that be let Jeanne loose on two self-penned numbers. The better side is **"Let them see in me"** (4028). Infact it's one of her best sides being a lush midpacer with strings and more subdued backing. By now we were at March 1970, the group recorded no more for Volt.

Back to the deep, and recorded in yer garage style too. **Donald Lee Richardson & The Executives** - a group who had us in the palm of their hands, here downhome and rough on **"Bring your love home to me"** (Soulville 1020), a record I have two copies of. Basic stuff here, a slow guitar riff, funeral style brass and a sad guy, backed by some even sadder ones. Fades after two verses so too short, but has all the characteristics of a deep soul gem.

Back East, NYC, and **Billy Nichols** is famed for two things. Discovering Millie Jackson, and for the early modern stomper **"Diamond Ring"** (West End 22126). This is one that has not stood the test of time, and the mediocre flipside **"One woman"** now sounds a much better side, rolling along at just above a two step tempo, and quite a nice lift. He also recorded every now and again, and one

example is a nice little ballad for Sue **"You can't fool this fool"** (Sue 10). Possessing the familiar "works every time" combo of horns and guitars (and double bass unless my ears deceive me), it's late 60's and from the Big Apple but mimics a sound more at home in Memphis. The official A side **"Shake a leg"** I like also, being a cross between James Brown and Junior Walker. Frantic funk with a pounding beat, sax's bleating away, bongos, good stuff! I know there are Sue collectors out there so some detail. This release came out at a time when Sue shared it's releases with Juggy Murray's Symbol label. It was sandwiched between Wilbert Harrison's **"Lets work together"** (Sue 11), and **The Superbs "The dawning of love"** (Symbol 8). Sue 9 by the way was a Juggy Murray film score - funkster instrumental **"Oily"**. The Superbs 45 is a Paul Kyser production - a girl group sounding like a late 60's Supremes ala "Love child", only with a stronger vocalist. Tunes from the age of Aquarius, flower power, mini skirts and all that jazz. Meanwhile **Millie Jackson's** debut often gets mentioned, but never gets reviewed. On MGM 14050 **"A little bit of something"** is a beaty midtempo song, again with strong southern overtones. **"My heart took a licking"** is an uptempo number with jittery beat and thumping rhythm. known in northern households, and whilst the backing is powerhouse, it still can't overpower Millie J as she wails **"This time I'm gonna be sure and try love a different way... Twice the fool, ain't too cool. I'm always the one to pay"**.

Seperated at Birth

Time to open our Seperated at Birth files. This time we go to Muscle Shoals and one Sidney Austin. Firstly for Sidney records a **Chester Pruitt** ballad **"Lonely man without love"** - a slow ballad about a man who's life is no longer worth living, brassy bits, synths and southern 'ooing' from the ladies. **"Gotta get off"** is an example of 80's guitar led strident dance music - strut your funky stuff, it's pretty hypnotic with it's tempo changes, for a while at least. The handclap machine is switched on sure, so perhaps not for 'real music' purists but catchy, and one dancers from that Clifton Hall genre would have enjoyed. Incredibly the title is repeated 140 times, so you could conservatively say it's a shade repetitive! The telephone number is scratched out on my copy, so presumably imported for the modern scene in the early 80's.

Linked by same label design, writer credits and MRE Inc. we have Eagle Records and **Tuwanda Terrell** on an airy ballad **"Lonely girl without love"** which is the same song as the Chester Pruitt one, but from a female perspective. Coincidence? Na. Synths and pianos hold it all together, and it is an attempt at a Neicy / Denise Williams style of vocal delivery. **"Treat me right baby"** is maniacal fast disco shite - DMX - Yuk.

I finally managed to get me a **Sy Hytower "I know your leaving me"** (Carmen 1002). I know it came out on Goldmine's "Modern Soul IV" CD, and is revered amongst soul collectors. Here's a scan just to tickle yer wrigglers. For those that don't know it, Sy does his best to mimic Bobby Womack on a bubbling midtempo dancer - there sounds like a whole orchestra in there, lots of plucked strings and things. For those that know it, it's from 1975, Hollywood, and was pressed up at Delta. Looking by the number **Δ97367-X**, it's turn on the pressing plant was probably surrounded by northern soul bootlegs! At least one "importer" (as bootleggers were sometimes called by their friends) used to use this plant for "pressings" (as bootlegs were sometimes called) at about this time. **"Wild love"** the official A side (why?) is more moody Womack style sounding off on a smoky ballad. Weird guitar and piano effects, before breaking into a (too) heavy chorus. Very spaced out.

No East Coast girl of the week this time, so we can spotlight **Vivian Copeland**. Over to Spring Valley New York for some significant sides. Most readers will know her x-over rave **"He knows my key is always in the mailbox"** (D'Oro 3500) either through Vivian of Sandra Phillips' All-Platinum version. The other side of that was a side that had previously come out on Mala (577) **"So nice I had to kiss you twice"**. Another side known to many is **"Chaos in my heart"** (1002), a lolloping chugging dancer with bleating horns arranged and conducted by Gene Redd. A rolling and infectious number with some good lyrics **"I'm a victim of deep frustrations... My nights are filled with hallucinations... Since we've been apart"**. Then there's a nice version of **"Oh no not my baby"** (1006), with chinking guitar beat and twinkling vibes. This is backed with **"I don't care"** which is the same song, but with a shortened title to the B side of her aforementioned Mala release **"I don't care what he's done"**. Anyway it's a cracker of a side, a wonderful East Coast floater with great group support and a tidy little crossover dancer to boot. This time Richard Tee arranged.

Staying with young female singers **Donna Frisco** had a neat little dancer in **"I love everything about you"** (Showtime 2453). The better side tho' is **"The same things that made me laugh"**. With a propelled beat and a very clear young singer backed by bongos and guitars, later joined by full orchestral accompaniment. Another one that will grow on you. Pat Brady supplied.

Bobby Thurston on Avco

I like **Bobby Thurston**, but there's so much inaccurate info about him. His mentor was Washington D C's Billy Stewart. Before his widely acclaimed Mainline LP (including the old Richard Searling Al Johnson & The Hitmen cover up **"Just ask me"** (Mainline 12747) he cut a 45 for Avco. So folks, its sweet soul time and **"This can't be happening to me"**

(4665). A lovely floater with banks of strings. The lyric about his girlfriend crashing her car and dying is the sort of thing you'd expect to find those Country and Western moaning minnies going on about. The worse line is "Why did the angels take her from me" - pass the sick bag p-l-e-a-s-e. Disappointing as the lyrics might be, they're more than compensated for by the tune and the vocals of B.T. Lester-Brown penned.

The **Mighty Pope** turns up from time to time. Of particular interest is his RCA version of **Jesse James "If you want a love affair"** (50250) which is very good, and which I think only came out on Canadian release. Even better is a 45 he recorded for Private Stock (45157) "**Tower of strength**". This is a Sam Dees - Bettye Crutcher co-authored rich 70's beat ballad, augmented by great vocals and almost a chorus of enthusiastic ladies pitched against an ambient beat.

West Coast

Staying with the total amateurs, but moving back to California, and onto 1991 we have a curious little 12 by **Black Pepper "You keep running out of gas"** (Golden Wax 1119). Written, produced and arranged by our old mate Roger Hatcher, it's a real throwback sound with an expressive female vocalist. She's complaining that her man ain't got what it takes to keep her sexually satisfied. Hmm. It's simple rhythmic structure becomes hypnotic and the record is short enough to keep the listener interested, not just for the cliched lyrics either!

A mid 80's outing that used to turn up on odd occasions, but has now disappeared is **James D Hall "I'd like to get into you"** on his own JDH label (1001). Marshall McQueen and other latter day West coast soul heroes get in on the action, of what is a fastish dance sound from 1985.

Before we leave the West Coast just time to quickly mention Tangerine records, which has more than its fair share of goodies. We will be spotlighting some of them! Only one this time **Bobby Joy "You sweet devil you"** (981), a record they picked up from the tiny Sentry label. This starts like the intro to The Muppets before breaking into a string led uptempo northern soul dancer. Pounding beat, soulful vocals make this so easy to glide around a highly polished dancefloor to. Great tune also - it's just like a Chris Bartley record on Vando, and a Van McCoy type of dancer too. But no, it's West coast and Wally Roker produced - Wally take a bow! "**Letter from a soldier**" by contrast is one of your Vietnam letters back home.

'Nam Corner

There are quite a few Nam collectors out there, so respect. One I love, and this issues stupid name is **Private Charles Bowens & The Gentlemen from Tiger Land "Christmas in Vietnam"** (Rojac 111). Starting with the "last post" before breaking into a crawl, backed by chimes,

tight drums and little else, apart from the soldier. Bowens sings about how he's stuck in some fox hole, how he hates to kill, how he's read his baby's letter 1,000 times, and how miserable he is with a dark dark Christmas in Vietnam. Killer. Another of my faves is the B side of **Joe Medwick's** bluesy deep "**Stealing**" (East West 55101). It's called "**Letter to a Buddie**" and is really a rap / spoken word job, but nonetheless hilarious. Basically Joe is telling his mate in the jungle how his been round his wife's home, and read his letters home -which are a bit slushy! Ha. He then goes on to say how his wife is selling all his stuff, has crashed the Mustang, and how she's doing Clyde who is rooming at their house while he's away at War. Jeepers. He signs off "**Give those Viet C's the devil, and don't forget to write**". Blimey when the poor bloke gets that letter he'll probably shoot himself!

o0000o

Emanuel Taylor is or was an occasional Detroit recording artist, who wrote his own product, at least two sides of which were put out on Bernard in the late 70s. "**Remember me always**" (077) is a deep ballad that's nice enough and turns up without too much trouble. Far harder to find is his "**You really got a hold on me**" (078), a powerhouse late 70's dancer. Right from the blasting horns at the beginning it develops into a toe tapping rolling uptempo sound. Very infectious so much so that it often gets pulled out for a spin in my house! Even the lyrics are catchy as Taylor hollers "**I'm a prisoner...Set me free**". Propelled beat, strong vocalist, aimed at the discos of the time no doubt - don't let that put you off. It is a hard one to find, and will undoubtedly cost a small wedge - don't let that put you off either!

Soul from Prison

Wise old soul heads will know that prisons have churned out their fair share of soul singers, Johnny Bragg, and so on. Turning to the early 70's we have **Power of Attorney** who provide this month's "**Polydor -a soul label after all**" feature. "**Turn around**" (14259) is a side they picked up from a smaller label, and involves one of those prison groups (like the Escorts). And what a weird record this is! Starting as a sweet soul ballad, with some tortured singing from a zealous baritone lead, who judging by his pained expressive voice must have been on the rack when he recorded this! A chorus takes us into part two of the song, which starts with a drum roll, before breaking into an uptempo rhythm. Short on lyrics, strong on vocal intensity. Good listening record, produced by Stan Vincent.

There were several Aquarius labels bouncing around. Chicago was home to one of them. Chicago's Aquarius records was a kind of offshoot from Ric Williams Zodiac label, famed for Ruby Andrews, Chuck Bernard and the curiously named **Lovehorn ("If"** being a delightful falsetto led ballad (1031). Aquarius was to

Candace Love what Zodiac was to Ruby Andrews. Running quickly through the better sides I have - old Adey Pierce tells me there may be some more. The label got off to a flying start with a hit "**Uh Uh boy that's a no no**" (4010) - flip that for a great version of the Bridges-Knight-Eaton song "**Wonderful night**" - great dancer, shame about the twee lyrics. Incidentally I reckon this version, despite being far easier to find is far better produced than Ruby Andrews on version (Zodiac 1007). Next up was **Pam Bowie "He's all I need"** (4011)- a real good mid pace floater with swirling strings building up to a strong chorus. "**Everlasting love**" (not the Robert Knight song) is tougher / meaner, with harmonica and a pounding beat. Pam, I think was one half of **Pat and Pam** who had some credible material within their recording repertoire. Of particular merit are "**I'm the one who loves you**" (Our Own 10010) an uptempo, uplifting "**Love uprising**" style stormer, from an early division of GEC. Also "**Hey love**"(Daydreaming 1062), another uptempo sprint to the finishing post.

Candace Love tried next with a ballad "**I want to get back**" (4012), an enthusiastically delivered tale of dark clouds in the love department, with a nice feel. "**Never in a million years**" is another slowie love song. Curiously then there is a big gap, just as there was in Zodiac's releases. Aquarius 4050 has Candace on "**Peace loving man**", not very good, sounding like something from "**Jesus Christ Superstar**". "**Something's gonna happen**" by contrast is a crawling mid pacer, though despite some good string work, is nothing special. "**Heaven & Hell**" (4051) is altogether better, almost like a Freda Payne song on Invictus the way it builds up. "**I want to get back**" is a straight reissue of 4012. So what else was on this label...answers on a postcard please.

Cajun Corner

Down to New Orleans next and our old friend **Tony Owens**. He's made more soul records than you can shake a stick at, but for this issue I am only going to focus on a couple. Firstly a £2 pick up was his Island (059) outing "**The letter that broke my heart**" - from 1976, a reasonable midpaced floater. Far more significantly though is one of the records he made under the Soul Sounds / Soulin' series of related labels. Known to many will be his old northern sound "**This heart can't take no more**" (145). Much better though is his original version of "**I need I need your love**", a song known and revered for the Philharmonics 70's version. Tony provides a 100% pure soulful delivery on this moody just below midtempo item. Slower than the Philharmonics sure, but the soulful exuberance outweighs any loss of pace in the record. It came out around 1968 on Soulin' 147, and is a killer you'd love. By the way his early 70's Listening Post side (101) "**You've got to pay the**

price” is a firm favourite with many southern soulfans (southern England!). Next up one of several very rare late releases for the Instant label; you know the one with the sax on the label. Take time out for **Veda** **“You make me feel so real”** (3333). Written and produced by Emmanuel E J Morris, an uptempo dance sound from 1977. A romp with an expressive female lead pitted against a rolling tempo and some rather strange sound effects, that can either make the song grate or great, depending on where you sit in the musical parliament of soul music. Me ? I found the effects detract only marginally from what is after all a rolling ambient dance sound, aimed (very poorly I might add) at dancefloors; even in 1977 this would have had the commercial appeal of a slug in a salad.

Jimmy Lee Jones

Regular readers will know I don't review my acetates. Despite having a credible shelf full, I don't really see the point in reviewing stuff you can't get or won't hear. That being said Yarmouth season ticket holders will be familiar with one I play by **Jimmy Lee Jones** **“Love sweet love”**, acquired from Capt'n Clark of the Norfolk regiment over a year ago. Great 70's as that is, and I don't think it ever came out (?), as far as Jimmy Lee is concerned it maybe the tip of the proverbial iceberg. I am not sure how many Jimmy Jones there actually are. Certainly there was a Jimmy L Jones who was involved in a load of Mar-V-Lus productions, and he is

the same one who turns up for **“Yesterdays mistakes”** (Twilight 130) (as by Jimmy Jones)- a sensitive ballad, and real winner. Anyone who cannot find this, should get the Kent Twilight CD for a listen.....In the early / mid 70's there was a guy called Jimmy Jones and sometimes Jimmy Lee Jones who had a run of releases on Deke Atkins 'Deke' label – I have three, again there may be more – a free coconut from Mark for any reader naming any. **“Lonely room in Memphis”** (5411) builds quite nicely, shades of **“Rainy night in Georgia”**, all about a guy separated from his main squeeze. **“Pack it up and bring it back”** is an uptempo Stax style beater. **“Do what comes natural”** (5412) is 70's funk-ee c/w **“I'm so glad I got you”**, a cool floater with a lazy groove. Confusingly this was co-penned by Jones & Blumenberg; the Jones in that case being Johnny Jones (who also wrote and later recorded a version of Billy Butler's **“Right Track”**). More funky testifying came in the shape of the next release **“Live and let live”** (5413) – quite OK tho' with groovy electronic keyboards. The b side **“I don't mind confessin”** is another floata-bloater, a mite like a slowed down Tyrone Davis. None of these Deke sides are rare, the first (recorded in Memphis for maximum effect) is probably the least often seen. A Jimmy Jones pops up for one encore in my collection- 1976 and that well known loping dancer **“Ain't nothing wrong making love the first night”** (Conchillo 1) - a fiver well spent. So there you have it

Jimmy Lee Jones, one man or three different singers? I am sure he (they) has (have) made some other records also, but I haven't got them!

Get In the Philly Groove

For my money one of the finest crossover sides in a long while is the hard to find **Crusaders** **“You pay for love”** (Philly Groove 155)....We have an early groover from the Stan Watson label, that bombed without so much as a buy you or leave you. From about 1970 this is group soul with attitude, the tune rambles along, as the boys croon on, and the whole thing has a pleasing ambience. Think of another Philly side from that era- The Dynells **“Let me prove that I love you”** and you'll get the tempo and style. This group seem to have disappeared (or maybe changed their name, due to the more famous jazz Crusaders). Philly Groove was enjoying it's biggest successes with the Delfonics (incidentally check out their Cameo Parkway double headed side for two ace falsetto led ballads **“You've been untrue / I was there”** (472) - neat examples of early work of those wizards Thom Bell and Wm Hart, the groups lead singer). Meanwhile sides like the Crusaders and Mary Holmes were slipping out, unnoticed and unwanted by anyone. But there again the amount of good and rare soul records proves the point that popular music culture and good taste are not natural bedfellows!