

Vocally, Wayne Walker had the potential to earn himself a much bigger name than he eventually did. He had a fine, distinctive voice and was equally adept at performing country as he was at rockabilly. What held him back as a performer was the fact that he suffered badly from stage fright when facing a large audience. However, mentored by Tillman Franks and Webb Pierce, both of whom recognised his talent as a singer and a songwriter, Walker became a regular on the Louisiana Hayride where he proved to be very popular. In the early 1950s Pierce founded Cedarwood Publishing and he did not hesitate to get Walker to sign up as a writer. During his recording career Walker cut tracks for Chess Records, ABC Paramount, Columbia and, latterly, Starday. On this generous 33 track compilation from Toro Records, he can be heard singing sixteen songs, a blend of straight country and rockabilly. Ironically, following his untimely death in 1979, at the age of 54, European fans 'discovered' his music and he became something of an icon for many rockabilly aficionados. A prolific writer, Walker had in excess of 500 songs registered with BMI many of which were recorded by major artists and went on to become hits. But, returning to *HOW DO YOU THINK I FEEL*, the remaining 17 songs are all Walker originals which were recorded by others. Jimmy Lee Fauthree, recorded for Capitol Records, but for a short while he and Wayne recorded as a duo and two of their recordings, *Lips That Kiss So Sweetly* and *Love Me* are among the 17 selected tracks. Jimmy Lee also teamed up with Country Johnny Mathis for a brief period, and a further two songs by this pairing, *What 'Cha Doin' To Me* and *Sweet Love On My Mind* have found their way on to this collection. Red Sovine recorded a number of Walker's songs over the years and there are a couple of his efforts, *Outlaw* and *How Do You Think I Feel* which have been included. Then, there's Johnny Burnette rocking it up with *Sweet Love On My Mind* along with Kitty Wells and Webb Pierce joining forces on *Can You Find It In Your Heart*. Pierce, who recorded many of Walker's songs, shows up again, this time performing one of his early hits, *Holiday For Love*. Brenda Lee can be heard really opening up the throttle with *Rock The Bop* while Ray Price offers *I've Got A New Heartache* which gave him a sizable hit in 1956 and was revived thirty years later by Ricky Skaggs. The final two songs on this compilation are of particular interest. It was Elvis who recorded *How Do You Think I Feel* on his second album but the story behind *Are You Sincere* is worth recounting. Apparently, after writing the song, Walker hawked it around to



various artists but no one appeared to be interested in it. Beginning to believe it was a failure; Walker reputedly sat in on a game of poker. Convinced he had the winning hand, but being short of cash, he staked half the writers' credits on the final call. He lost, but not long afterwards Andy Williams recorded the song, which became a huge hit! Since then *Are You Sincere* has been recorded numerous times by various artists and has the rare distinction of having received a million plays on radio.

Apart from some of the artists who have been included on this album, Walker's songs have been recorded by many household names including Anne Murray, Jack Greene, Janie Fricke, Carl Smith, who had the original cut on *Cut Across Shorty* which Walker co-wrote with Marijohn Wilkin and which was also a big hit for the late Nat Stuckey, Eddie Cochran, Ernest Tubbs, George Strait, Faron Young, Patsy Cline, who scored with *Leaving On Your Mind*, and the late Jimmy Dean who followed up his monster hit, *Big, Bad John* with Walker's *The Cajun Queen*.

Four years before his death in 1979, Wayne Walker was deservedly inducted into Country Music's Songwriter's Hall of Fame. This present collection, sub-titled *The Singer and his Songs* is a fitting tribute to Wayne Walker. **LK** www.eltorrerecords.com

Wilma Lee & Stony Cooper HEARTBREAK STREET Righteous Psalm 23:26 ★★★★☆

Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper married in 1939 and found success with their own band, the Clinch Mountain Clan. During the 1950s and 1960s they signed with Hickory Records and the 25 tracks on this album have been selected from their Hickory recordings. The album title accurately sums up what one can expect, a collection of heartbreak songs, many relating to lost love, a few tragic songs and a smattering of sacred material. Stylistically the duo is very traditional while musically it is the banjo, mandolin, guitar, fiddle, Dobro and steel which provide just the right vehicle for their voices. When they sing duets their voices blend extremely well although it must be said that on the majority of songs it is Wilma Lee who sings lead. Her style, as one might reasonably expect, follows that of other female artists who found success between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. There is nothing highly polished about her vocals and on a number of songs one will detect a strong vibrato, but it is a style which those who prefer a more traditional approach to what is heard these days, will appreciate. Wilma Lee started out singing gospel songs with her family band in the 1930s. Stony, a gifted



musician, played fiddle and guitar with the group but when the couple married and formed their own band, which leaned towards bluegrass, they joined the WVA Jamboree in 1947, becoming one of the most popular acts of the time. After ten years as members of the Jamboree, they were invited to join the cast of the Grand Ole Opry.

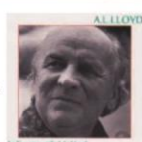
Hickory Records was founded by Acuff-Rose Music in 1954 so it comes as no great surprise to find that many of the songs recorded by the duo came from the pens of writers contracted to Acuff-Rose. Among these were Wilma Lee herself whose compositions, *Heartbreak Street* and the gospel flavoured *Have Faith In Me*, are included in this collection. Fred Rose was not slow in recognising Hank Williams' talent as a songwriter and he did not hesitate in signing him to a publishing deal. Hank had a tendency to write many truly tragic songs, and Wilma Lee covers two of them, *On The Evening Train* and *Six More Miles* along with Fred Rose's song of redemption, *The Black Sheep Returned To The Fold* and Roy Acuff's grim warning, *This World Can't Stand Long*.

Narrations were popular during this period and two of them appear here. The first, *The Legend Of The Dogwood Tree*, is recited by Wilma Lee and it works well, but the second, *The Story Of The Three Nails*, narrated by Stony, is overly long and really does stretch one's credulity. However, taken as a whole, *HEARTBREAK STREET* will prove to be a welcome addition to the collection of those who appreciated the music of a duo which was once hugely popular, and for those who want to explore the music of a bygone age, it could prove to be a very good place to start. **LK** contact@righteous23.com

A L Lloyd AN EVENING WITH A L LLOYD Fellside Recordings FECD220 ★★★★

An inspiration to all of those that have come to enjoy our 'folk tradition' this album should be required listening

In the early 1970s I spent a day of my ill-spent youth in the company of A L Lloyd at a college in the Elephant & Castle, London. I distinctly remember this because I went especially to see 'Bert' having been steered in his direction via the music of Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention. Being (at that time) more adventurous and with an inquisitive mind I was intrigued to find the source behind much of the material utilised by bands of the folk-rock genre. He was a jovial raconteur whose often humorous takes on the roots of the British tradition have rarely been captured 'live' but on repeated listening to this recording from 1972 you can certainly see



why Steeleye and Fairport were similarly inspired by ribald tales such as *The Widow Of Westmorland's Daughter* or the wishful thinking of Henry Lawson's *The Shearer's Dream*. The enjoyment of being in Lloyd's company is endorsed by an audience that lustily swells the chorus of the shanty *Doodle Let Me Go* but just as easily respects the big ballads including a five minute *Prince Heathen*. Bert was a colourful character that brought to life the songs he sang (often with a wry smile on his face) and much of this is evident on a recording that has been lovingly restored by producer Paul Adams. An inspiration to all of those that have come to enjoy our 'folk tradition' this album should be required listening. **PF** www.fellside.com

Bert Sommer THE ROAD TO TRAVEL Rev-ola Records ★★★★☆

New York folk/pop singer/songwriter's four-decade old first



The late Bert Sommer (who died in 1990), a self-taught musician who was raised on Long Island, recorded four albums of which *THE ROAD TO TRAVEL* (1968), released by Capitol Records, was his first. Sommer delivered a memorable ten-song set on the opening day of the Woodstock Festival. After Warner Bros. purchased the music/film rights, signed to a rival label, Bert's performance was expunged from Warner's subsequent Woodstock releases. Until last year that is, when three songs appeared on the six-disc, 40th Anniversary release.

In 1967 Sommer co-wrote *And Suddenly* with the Left Banke's founder/genius Michael Brown and teamed with Ivy Ivy, both featured Bert's lead vocal, they were released as a band single (much to the chagrin of the other group members). Sommer went on to star in *HAIR* on Broadway—in the role of Woof—and on the West Coast. Inspired by his Woodstock appearance Bert penned the Top 40 hit *We're All Playing In The Same Band* while still on the festival site. It closed *INSIDE BERT SOMMER* (1970) his sophomore album and only release on Artie Kornfeld's Eleuthera Records.

THE ROAD TO TRAVEL was produced by Kornfeld and engineered by future Grammy winner Brooks Arthur (Bette Midler, Janis Ian, Dusty Springfield) while Sommer composed the eleven songs. An orchestra and electric band share the backdrop on album opener *And When It's Over* and elsewhere in this collection. The support players in the aforementioned band included Ron Frangipane (piano), Hugh McCracken (guitar), Danny Kooch (guitar), Al Giorgoni (guitar), and Country Joe alumni David Cohen (guitar). During early 1968

Donovan enjoyed a number 2 UK and number 26 US pop hit with *Jennifer Juniper*. Sommer's light and airy *Jennifer* vocal bears comparison with Leitch's, but where the Scot's character was fictional, Bert pays tribute to Jennifer Warnes who starred in the West Coast production of *HAIR*—Jennifer's something you handle with care, Fragile as crystals of glass.'

Things Are Goin' My Way is a baroque pop oeuvre, while Bert's *Hold The Light* lyric presages the Woodstock ethos with 'And I've seen where I'd like to be, It's a place where your mind is free.' Bert's vocal on the title song runs the gamut from wispy (ala *Jennifer*) to a deep and resonating baritone, and he adds falsetto to his vocal range on *She's Gone* and *A Simple Man*. **AW**
<http://www.bertsommer.com/>

Various Artists
YOU BABY: WORDS & MUSIC BY P.F. SLOAN AND STEVE BARRI
Ace CD TOP 1264
★★★★



A fitting finale to a fascinating musical journey

If they had never written or performed a hit song, multi-talented New York musos Phil Sloan and Steve Barri could still boast several claims to fame. When Phil was an a&r man at Chicago's Vee-Jay Records, he was sent some demo recordings by an ambitious Englishman named Brian Epstein featuring his group the Beatles. An excited Sloan ran to label boss Lou Adler and said he thought they would be bigger than Elvis—only to see the arrogant Adler rubbish the Fab Four and dump the discs in the nearest waste-bin. Undeterred, Sloan offered to buy the demos himself, whereupon Vee-Jay relented and snapped up the first four Beatles records for Stateside release. A shrewd move and, not to be outdone, Steve Barri would a few years later sign two eccentric young musicians to the ABC-Dunhill label. The pair went on to justify Barri's faith in them by creating some of the most sublime jazz-rock music ever as Steely Dan. But P.F. Sloan and Steve Barri were most influential as songwriters, coming together under producer Adler in 1963 and conjuring up a series of wide-ranging hits for a whole slew of artists from genres as diverse as folk-rock and surfing sounds. They also cut a few successful discs themselves under pseudonyms like Philip and Stephan and the Fantastic Baggy's. Their songs were bright, poppy and melodic and were snapped up by some of the biggest acts of the mid-1960s. The 5th Dimension cut

Another Day, Another Heartache, the Mamas and Papas took *You Baby* into the US charts, while in Britain the Searchers enjoyed success with *Take Me For What I'm Worth* and Herman's Hermits had a smash with *A Must To Avoid*. Jan and Dean, the Turtles and even cool jazzman Mel Torme are all featured here to good effect and the album closes with Phil Sloan's greatest hit—the global number one *Eve Of Destruction* by Barry McGuire. A fitting finale to a fascinating musical journey. **BK**

Scott Carter
THE BEST OF SCOTT CARTER
Promotional Album. CD
★★★★

22 tracks of contemporary country music



This is not overtly a gospel album, but listening to the CD several of the songs contain some very commendable thoughts such as the Scott's original song *Love Keeps Knocking* and *Feed The Children*. Possessed of a fine singing voice, there isn't a duff track and the style of music is good contemporary modern country. Whilst I have enjoyed listening to this album, the one drawback is that there is nothing absolutely outstanding that I could recommend to readers or listeners. Scott has had a good career and is a commendable professional artist but it just seems a pity that he has missed out on having a few outstanding songs to make him the major star that his talent actually deserves. **DB**
<http://www.myspace.com/scottcarterusa>

The Quebec Sisters Band
TIMELESS
FiddleTone Records CD0101
★★★★

Timeless music with delightful harmonies and first class fiddling



Grace, Sophia and Hulda Quebec (pronounced kway-bee) have made the UK connection with a short, but highly successful first tour this summer. This album, released in the US in 2007 is now more readily available in the UK and is a real gem. 'Timeless' is very much an apt description as these three talented young ladies—along with band members Joe McKenzie and Drew Phelps and special guest Dennis Crouch—perform a refreshing blend of western swing (Bob Wills & the Texas Playboys), hot jazz and swing standards (Benny Goodman), western (Sons of the Pioneers), vintage country and traditional

Texas style fiddle tunes.

Though this is the kind of music you were more likely to hear in the 1940s than 2010, the Quebecs are showing that today's audiences are blown away. They stormed the Cambridge Folk Festival in July—they raise their fiddles and play, then the girls sing their vintage-style three-part harmony, and audiences marvel. Sounds simple, but it works. On this album they take the listener through the whole gamut from Spade Cooley's harmonic *Shame On You* through the wild swing of *Take the 'A' Train* to the western balladry of *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*. Each song is performed to perfection, the sisters' voices intertwine in astonishing three-part harmony whilst the fiddle playing is of the highest quality. Add the extraordinary rhythm guitar of Joey McKenzie and the swinging upright bass of Drew Phelps, and the Quebec Sisters Band becomes a force of nature. **AC**
www.quebesistersband.com

Eddie Cochran
ROCKS
Bear Family BCD 17136 AR
★★★★

Just what it says on the label



Though Eddie Cochran was a renowned rock'n'roller, his roots were very much in country music, and even in his most raucous rock'n'roll numbers, you can detect those country music influences. His first forays into music in the early 1950s were strictly country with such bands as the Melody Boys and the Bell Gardens Ranch Gang. Later he got together with Hank Cochran (no relation) to form the hillbilly duo the Cochran Brothers. After they split-up, Hank moved to Nashville and became one of the most successful songwriters in the history of country music. Meanwhile, Eddie pursued a highly, if short-lived career in rock'n'roll and in a short three year period before he was killed in a car crash in April 1960, he recorded such classics as *Twenty Flight Rock*, *Summertime Blues*, *C'Mon Everybody*, *Weekend* and *Somethin' Else*, all featured on this 35-track CD which is the very essence of Cochran's uptempo work.

Though he kept his recordings quite simple—mainly just his own dynamic electric lead, stand-up bass, rhythm guitar and occasional drums or percussion—there was an intrinsic raw excitement that literally jumped out of the grooves of the vintage vinyl records. Most of the songs were penned by Cochran and often they mirrored a typical teenage rebelliousness as in the timeless *Summertime Blues* and the

equally powerful *Somethin' Else*.

A groundbreaking artist, he was a major influence on the punk music of the 1970s, not to mention such British rock'n'rollers as Joe Brown, Marty Wilde and Billy Fury. His versions of Carl Perkins' *Blue Suede Shoes*, Little Richard's *Long Tall Sally* and *Cut Across Shorty*—the latter featuring Crickets Jerry Allison and Sonny Curtis—were stamped with his own personality and owed little to the original versions. **AdC**
www.bear-family.de

Gene Vincent
ROCKS

Bear Family BCD 17134 AR

★★★★
Just what it says on the label



Like Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent's roots were very much in country music and members of his Blue Caps band were recruited from the Virginians, a local country and western band from Virginia. Unlike Cochran, Vincent struck gold with his very first record with the international rock'n'roll classic, *Be-Bop-A-Lula*. Recorded in Nashville on May 4, 1956, the original plan was to use Music City session players, but Vincent's guitarist Cliff Gallup was so hot that the Blue Caps were used on that and all subsequent sessions. Vincent specialised in wild, frantic untamed rock'n'roll numbers with blistering guitar solos and his Blue Caps adding call-and-response vocals to his hiccuping lead vocals. This worked exceptionally well on such numbers as *Jumps*, *Giggles and Shouts*, *Who Slapped John* and *Jump Back*, *Honey*, *Jump Back*.

Though Capitol Records' a&r guru Ken Nelson was anti-rock'n'roll and tried desperately to steer Vincent more towards country-flavoured ballads—which it must be said he could handle with great skill—it was the uptempo, country-styled numbers like *Lotta Lovin' Dance To the Bop* and *Crazy Legs* that worked best in the late 1950s. The latter was written by future country singer Jerry Reed and featured the teenage jargon of the time that became a hallmark of Gene Vincent's work.

All in all thirty uptempo gems highlighted by Vincent's manic, often breathless vocal workouts and biting lead guitar work that cuts through these tracks like a scythe at harvest time in a field of corn. **AdC**
www.bear-family.de

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