

Although all the group's tracks from its nine singles are on the set, the set itself is presented as the first tracks from its 1960 Herald LP, and then the remaining tracks available from the same source, containing tracks that were unissued as singles, although many were available on the similar Relic CD of (quite a few) years ago. A nice tribute to a talented vocal group, certainly one that deserved more success than it ever received.

**Byron Foulger**

**BOBBIE 'MERCY' OLIVER: Mississippi Mudd**

Almost Famous Productions 857264001003 (36:00)

Hex On Me Remix Part 1/ Ramblin' Mind/ Highway 61/ First Luv/ Mississippi Mudd/ Luv Is The Loc/ Hex On Me Part 2/ I Like Pretty Women/ Jazzy Harmonica Blues

**BOBBIE 'MERCY' OLIVER: Simply Bobbie**

Almost Famous Productions 857264001140 (38:35)

You'll Never Luv Me And Leave Me/ I Just A Nobody/ Simply Bobbie/ Bang Bang Bang/ Left Hand Woman/ Devil Eyes/ Blues Train/ Devil Eyes Part 2/ Soul Food

On 'Mississippi Mudd' and 'Simply Bobbie', Bobbie Oliver wrote all the music, did the arrangements, production and mixing, and it was recorded at BMO Studio. Not content with all this he sings, plays harp, and bass. Now some would call this spreading yourself around a tad thinly.

Unfortunately it shows, some of the songs are pretty poor, 'Hex On Me', which you would expect to be menacing and evoking a feeling of impending doom sounds about as threatening as a wet night in Torquay! 'Mississippi Mudd' is a dreadful draggy instrumental where the spotlight is shone on Bobbie's skills on harp; and I'm afraid he comes up wanting. 'Jazzy Harmonica Blues' is neither jazz nor particularly bluesy. If I had to classify the musicianship, it would have to be shambolic, pub band quality, if it really is one John R. Martin on drums he does a perfect imitation of a drum machine.

There are a couple of bright sparks on the horizon though, 'Highway 61' is a good song, dragged down by a poor arrangement, this is a number that a decent producer could do something with. Similarly 'Devil Eyes' has potential, but is sunk by the performance.

Is there anything that could be salvaged from all this? Not much I'm afraid, Bobbie Oliver needs to get some good material and better musicians, he needs to concentrate on vocals as he has a decent voice, but most of all, get a producer into the studio who knows his business. Older African/American bluesmen are getting thin on the ground, we need guys like Bobbie Oliver, but sadly these poor recordings are only doing his reputation harm.

**Phil Wight**

**PAUL RISHHELL & ANNIE RAINES: A Night In Woodstock**

Mojo Rodeo MOJR 1950 (58:27)

Custard Pie/ Canned Heat Blues/ Dallas/ Got To Fly/ It'll Be Me - I'll Be Looking For You/ Old Man Mose/ Blues On A Holiday/ Can't Use It No More/ I'm A Lover Not A Fighter/ Moving To The Country/ Bad Credit/ Blue Shadows/ Orange Dude Blues

This American duo have become very popular on the international blues circuit over the last decade or so, though the process began when young Annie first sat in with Paul in her home town of Boston, Massachusetts, in 1992. Guitarist and singer Paul, born in Brooklyn in 1950, once had a job warming up for Son House, and both he and harmonica player, and much more occasional singer, Annie Raines frequently worked with John Sebastian, the former jug band revivalist and founder of sixties outfit The Lovin' Spoonful (who took their name from the lyrics of Mississippi John Hurt's 'Coffee Blues'). Sebastian puts in a guest appearance here, as does keyboards player Bruce Katz. The jug band connection is actually a little stronger than that though, as this CD is a direct result of a film director wanting footage of the duo working with Sebastian for a jug band documentary.

The songs range from East Coast blues (more Blind Boy Fuller & Sonny Terry than Sonny & Brownie) and Son House inflected material to full-blown blues band performances. There is a very fine cover of Jerry McCain's excellent 'Bad Credit' and Lloyd Glenn's 'Blue Shadows' is performed B.B. King style, whilst there are even hints of blues-rock with 'Moving To The Country'. There is also a little bit of knockabout jazz, with a swinging cover of Louis Armstrong's 'Old Man Mose', and a ballad medley that unfortunately does mark a real dip in the programme (the remainder of the set is far better). The tracks represent a summing up of the duo's career so far, and their fans will certainly enjoy it, as will many whose tastes are inclined to the modern blues.

**Norman Darwen**



Bobby Rush, Chicago Blues Festival 2007. Photo: Mike Stephenson.

**BOBBY RUSH: Look At What You Gettin'**

Deep Rush Records DRD 1004 (44:02)

Another Kind Of Fool/ Ain't No Love Like My Baby's Love/ Let Me Love You/ Look At What You Gettin'/ I Got 3 Problems/ Hooked On You/ Get Up, Show Me What You Working With/ She's Fine/ I Should Have Left You/ She Ain't Lovin' Me Like She Oughta/ Train And My Hound Dog

Mr. Rush's new CD is the sixth from his own Deep Rush label. He wrote all the songs and handled the production chores along with Keith Ruff who also features on guitar and drums, along with a core band fattened out by the synth.

As most will know, Rush is the master for mixing and matching lines and melodies from other songs, from various sources and making them his own. Obvious examples on this disc are the opener 'Another Kind Of Fool' which occasionally has some similarities to Ronnie Baker Brooks' 'Stuck On Stupid' and 'She Ain't Lovin' Me Like She Oughta' where Rush uses the famous title from J.B. Lenoir's 'Mama Talk To Your Daughter' mixed with heavy doses of funk. The first mentioned song is starting to get some considerable airplay on the myriad of soul/blues radio stations in the Southern areas of the USA.

On the first few numbers Bobby attempts to modernise his sound, aided by the wispy and at times distorted guitar lines from the aforementioned Keith Ruff. Throughout, Rush fans will be pleased with the liberal doses of funk, r&b, and blues that he brings to his music. He can also tell a humorous tale set to music, with 'I Got 3 Problems' being a good example. He's got three women on the go at the same time. One's good in bed, one's got lots of money and the other's a real good cook. However it all goes wrong for our man as the ladies find out about each other so one's left him for another lover, another has gone back to live with her mother and Rush is trying to salvage it all. I guess this would go down a storm in a live setting.

Rush fans will know what they are getting and for others it's as good as anything he has put out over the recent years and it represents this remarkably talented artist well.

**Mike Stephenson**

**SHIRLEY & LEE: Rock**

Bear Family 15785 AR (72:51)

Let The Good Times Roll/ Keep On/ Comin' Over/ Two Happy People/ Feel So Good/ Takes Money/ I'll Thrill You/ That's What I'll Do/ I'll Do It (Deed I Do)/ I Feel Good/ Do You Mean To Hurt Me So/ Everything (When I Saw You)/ That's What I Wanna Do/ I Want To Dance/ Marry Me/ Before I Go/ Don't You Know I Love You/ Rock All Nite/ Rockin' With The Clock/ The Flirt/ Live On The Farm/ Everybody's Rockin'/ Come On And Have Your Fun/ All I Want To Do Is Cry/ When Day Is Done/ Like You Used To Do/ I'm Old Enough/ Hey Little Boy/ Somebody Put A Juke Box In The Study Hall/ Let The Good Times Roll/ I'm Gone

The great New Orleans producer Cosima Matassa is quoted in the booklet notes as saying of Shirley Goodman's singing, that it was 'like a razor blade. We used to joke, when she sang, you bleed!'. Too right - it's a high, grating, monotone squawk that frequently wobbles off-key. Her partner Leonard Lee's voice may not have been one of the greats, but he was much more melodic, with a decent vibrato adding a bit of depth to his sound. Apparently, it was virtually impossible for the duo to sing together, which is why with a few exceptions they tend to alternate verses rather than harmonise.

And yet they sold so many records, making hit after hit together and packing them out as a live act. Maybe Shirley's vocals had the cartoon appeal of a tweety-pie or a chipmunk. Or maybe when listeners heard the 'Sweethearts Of The Blues' (as they were promoted) they were able