

## 1B ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## Guy taking his new success in stride

By Winfred B. Cross  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

His life beginning at 60 for Buddy Guy?

It seems so. It's not like he hasn't had a spectacular one up to now. The blues guitar sensation has played in all parts of the United States and Europe with all kinds of great people. Now he's getting the one thing that's seemed to elude him — recognition.

His peers have always recognized him. Ask the Rolling Stones, George Benson, or Guy's idol B.B. King. They'll all tell you he has few peers. Now fans are finding out. Three of the last four CDs Guy recorded have won Grammys. His breakthrough **Damn Right I've Got The Blues** was recently certified gold, his first in his 40-year career.

Now Guy is finishing a House of Blues sponsored tour that brings him to Charlotte Friday at the Blockbuster Pavilion. The tour began July 27 in Portland, Ore., and ends Sunday in Raleigh.

Guy is absolutely giddy about his new found fame, especially the gold album.

"I guess I feel like a kid who got his first bike," Guy said in a phone conversation from his Washington, D.C., hotel room. "Black blues players don't dream of this. We just play music. I feel like jumping up and shouting."

There have been times when Guy just wanted to cry, but the

man's dedication to his music, no, make that love for his music, carries him.

But the success isn't going to his head.

"It's better late than never," Guy said. "But I'm very religious. I believe God gives you things when He knows you are ready. If I would have had this when I was 20, who knows, I could have wasted it. Success overnight to me is a disaster. But if you pay for it, you'll appreciate it in the end. Coming to me at 60, I can just say thank you and I can help someone else."

Guy acknowledges his help. Although he's self taught ("Know one's ever sat down and showed me how to play one lick on my guitar," he says) he praises the blues masters before him.

"Little Walter, Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reid, Lightning Hopkins, Sonny Boy Williams — these are people who didn't do much more than Saturday Night Fishfry — putting a hat down, people throw money down, you get a bottle of liquor and play the rest of the night," Guy said. "I slap myself and try not to think about my success. Those guys before me deserved the gold records and the Grammys. They are the ones that made the music. I'm just trying to carry on."

Carrying on the blues tradition is becoming harder. Critics of the music are saying it's losing its heritage, becoming too white bread for the masses. Guy agrees to an extent. "Shoot, if Eric Clapton made the same songs I make, he'd get played on the radio,"



BUDDY GUY

he said, then laughed. "But without Clapton, Bonnie Raitt and the Rolling Stones, I don't know where our music would be. When the Rolling Stones first came over here to tour, they demanded that the Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters open for them. Promoters were asking 'who's that?' They did more for our

music than any record company."

Guy's also a bit disappointed at his own people. He owns Buddy Guy's Legends, the largest blues club in Chicago. His clientele is 99 percent white.

"Everywhere we play it's like

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Cover  
Cover 2By Jeri Young  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Segu Maryse Condé • Penguin Books • \$14.95



Unbeknownst to many, Africa has a rich and diverse literary legacy.

Through the years, many African writers, Aminata Sow Fall, Bessie Head, Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Camara Laye, to name a few, have garnered international acclaim for their autobiographies and fictional works that depict the everyday lives of Africans.

Language barriers, many of the works were originally written in French, and lack of interest by major American publishers have allowed many of the works to languish unnoticed. "Segu," an epic that tells the story of the war between religions in eastern Africa, is one of the first and best of these works to be translated and distributed by a major American press.

Written in 1987 by Maryse Condé, a native of Guadeloupe, "Segu" introduces the reader to the Traore family, an aristocratic Bambara family of the 18th century. The family, headed by Dousika, finds itself at the center of controversy when one of the sons changes from the religion of the ancestors, Fetish, to Islam. The conversion causes much dissension among the Bambaras and a subsequent string of "bad luck" causes the family to be rejected by the king and the entire village.

Eventually, war breaks out between the Islamic factions, the Fetish and Christianity, the religion of the Tucolor, an eastern African word for Europeans, and the Traores find themselves at the center of the ensuing battle for African autonomy.

Well written and extremely well translated from the original French, "Segu" is an excellent introduction to African literature. The author, translator Barbara Bray and the publisher have gone to great lengths to keep the original work in tact, yet accessible to American audiences. Replete with an excellent dictionary of Bambara terms, maps and footnotes, the book provides an excellent history lesson as well.

Condé, herself of Bambara descent, looks critically at African society and holds nothing back. She discusses in depth the burgeoning miscegenation of colonial Africa, the horrors of the African slave trade, as well as problems caused by the introduction of foreign religions, both by the Arabs and

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## Kino delivers OK first CD, Lyte's better

MC Lyte  
**Bad As I Wanna B**  
Jermaine Dupri,  
Rashad Smith, Carl-  
So-Lowe and R. Kelly,  
producers  
East/West/Electra  
Records

☆☆☆ 1/2

MC Lyte's name is something of an oxymoron. Light, she ain't. She's always possessed mad skills as a rapper and can hold her own with the best of them. She's also the first female solo rap artist to receive a gold record.

She's may very well be reaching for her second gold record. Lyte's latest, **Bad As I Wanna B**, finds her at the top of her lyrical game with music that slams.

She certainly is in fine voice. Lyte possesses one of the sexiest voices in the rap world. It's deep and growling, but purely feminine. It commands attention. Take her gold single "Keep On, Keepin' On," from the "Sunset Park" soundtrack. She's a woman who's confident of her sexuality and in control of her man (You better believe it's time to give a toast to/The women of the decade, too bad to be played). It may turn off some men, but how many males have bragged about the same thing and have gotten nothing but praise.

Lyte isn't afraid to brag about her skills on the mic, either. "Have You Ever" and "Cold Rock A Party" are old-school jams that bring back the day when rappers were talking about how they could whip a crowd into a frenzy, not capping someone.

This isn't the kind of release that's full of socially conscious messages like recent stuff from The Fugees, De La Soul or a Tribe Called Quest. This is mostly sex and partying. But Lyte does address some issues in "Druglord Superstar" in which she dumps a drug-dealing lover who won't leave the life and "Two Seater" in which

she tells a friend "no smoking weeda in my two seater."

The language throughout this CD is fairly rough so I wouldn't recommend it for kids. But I can say this is one of the most listenable rap CDs I've heard this year. You go, Lyte.

Michael Brooks and  
The Nation  
**Choice To Rejoice**  
Michael A. Brooks,  
producer  
CGI Records

☆☆☆

Michael Brooks has made quite a name for himself as a choir director since leaving Commissioned some years ago. As a producer, he's crafted two fine CDs for his Greater Emmanuel Mass Choir.

Brooks is now turning his attention toward The Nation, a six-piece vocal ensemble that makes a sparkling debut on **Choice To Rejoice**.

The group's vocals are based more so in the rich tradition of choir singing than a small ensemble — kind of the same thing Richard Smallwood does with his Smallwood Singers. There's plenty of sound coming from this enthusiastic group.

Most of the music is praise and worship with a good dose of contemporary gospel thrown in. The songs are strong, which should be no surprise. Brooks wrote many a good tune while with Commissioned and he continues to hone his skills on this project.

There's not a bad song on this CD, but if it has a fault it's that it may be a bit too low-key. There are a couple of times where I wished the ensemble would drop its polished sound and cut loose with some unbridled emotion. What's here is fine, but a little more here and there would have made this release sparkle instead of just glistening.

There are some choice cuts. "Praise His Name" has a calming effect that should soothe the most troubled soul. The



KINO WATSON

title song is a joyful mix of r&b and contemporary gospel, nearly approaching hip-hop. The harmony is tight and free flowing. "Help Me To Fight" is the CD's most moving performance. The uncredited female lead adds subtle jazz-like phrasing over a silky arrangement. She nearly cuts loose towards the end, but she remains restrained. Very, very nicely done.

Kino Watson  
**True 2 The Game**  
Kino Watson and  
Erik "Big Free" Smith,  
producers  
Columbia Records

☆☆ 1/2

Kino Watson is doing his best to put Dallas, N. C., on the map. I dare say he's the first from that small town to get a major recording contract.

Watson puts that contract to good use on his first CD **True 2 The Game**. It's much like you hear on any urban station these days — songs of love and, well, sex — but Watson does have a slight edge over some of

the current balladeers, he can actually sing.

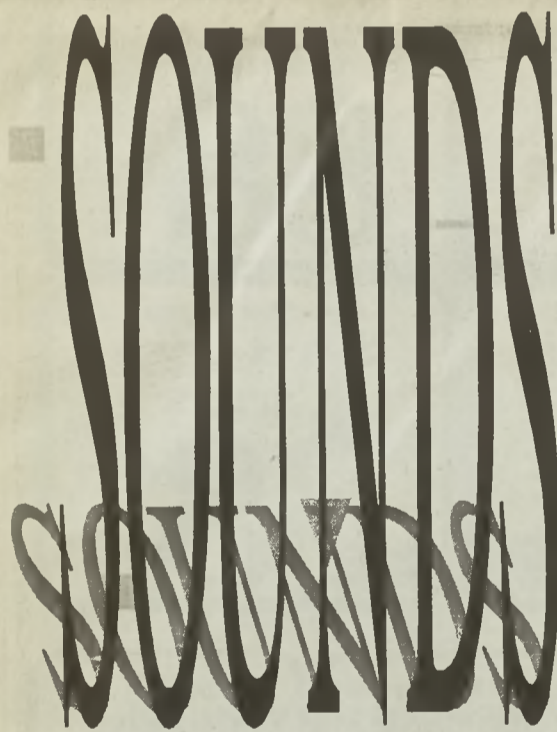
Watson doesn't possess a spectacular voice, but it's a good one. It doesn't have a lot of range but he doesn't over tax it with difficult material. Most of the stuff here is simple in construction.

Watson wrote or co-wrote all of the material. He only relies on two samples to craft his tunes: the Floaters' "Float On" in the single "Bring It On" and Teddy Pendergrass' "Close The Door" in "Got Me Open." He never breaks loose with a jam, but he sets feet shuffling with "Game Recognize Game." Most of the songs are low-key ballads.

There are no bad songs, but Watson will tax your patience with "It's Time," a nearly tuneless song that seems to drag on forever.

The rest of the songs are fine. "I'm The Man (Your Mama Been Warr' You About)" is the nicest thing here, combining machismo with manners. A nice touch.

Rating: ☆☆☆☆ Classic; ☆☆☆ Excellent; ☆☆☆ Good; ☆☆☆ Fair; ☆☆☆ Why?; No stars given — A mess.



By Winfred B. Cross



MC LYTE