

PROFESSOR LONGHAIR
Crawfish Fiesta (*Alligator*)

Professor Longhair, who died of a heart attack earlier this year, was one of those underappreciated pioneers whose rumba/boogie piano style heavily influenced New Orleans keyboard tinklers from Fats Domino and Huey Smith to Allen Toussaint and Dr. John. Though posthumous collections (particularly those by unjustly obscure legends) tend to be eulogized regardless of quality, *Crawfish Fiesta* is an excellent collection of rollicking New Orleans rhythm & blues that shows Longhair's talents were undiminished.

The production may be a bit odd to those with ears accustomed to rock records. The Professor's vocals and piano, John Vidacovich's drums and the horns are emphasized but

that's perfectly appropriate for the syncopated second-line rhythmic thrust of his music (Dr. John's *Gumbo* album is in the same vein). The material is divided equally between Longhair classics like "Big Chief" and "Bald Head" and r&b covers. The band, featuring Dr. John on guitar, cooks up a tasty, danceable groove throughout.

Don Snowden

BOB SEGER
Against the Wind (*Capitol*)

It is quite possible that Mr. Seger has temporarily lost the ability to top himself. *Against the Wind* doesn't have the strength of *Stranger in Town*, but it's still a worthy addition to the Seger opus.

Opening cut "Horizontal Bop" celebrates a favorite physical pas-

time with Seger's distinctive raspy voice and a thundering back-up from the Silver Bullet Band and sessionman Dr. John, an all-stops-out entrance that leads to "You'll Accompany Me," a medium-tempo piano/acoustic guitar thing about Seger's desire for an unobtainable woman.

Like the Eagles' "The Long Run," with which comparisons are unavoidable, "Against the Wind," which opens side two, sounds destined to be a classic. From an easy piano intro it slides gently into the lilting piano/guitar melody, accompanied by Seger's tough-but-tender vocals and into the long harmony fade-out by Seger and Glenn Frey. Unfortunately, it's followed by "Good for Me," an ersatz praise-my-woman song that hovers unconvincingly on the edge of gospel with quavery

female backup vocals. After the energetic "Betty Lou's Getting' out Tonight" and "Fire Lake," the current single, the album ends on another piano-oriented, quavering backup number called "Shining Brightly," in which Seger assures us that it's been a long, hard road, but things are looking better—another filler cut.

Against the Wind is somewhat of a risk, though it has enough good tunes to make it worth half of what it costs and, God knows, inflation isn't Bob Seger's fault. He's still the same.

Sally Stevens

"GLORY BOYS"
Secret Affair (*I-Spy*)

"Glory Boys," available in America only as an import, owes plenty to the Sixties and Seventies but has a finely

sculpted face of its own. Featuring a self-production every bit as majestic and varied as *Who's Next*, the LP ranges from the anthemic pop of "Shake and Shout" through the utterly modern r&b/rock of "Don't Look Down" to the slashing aggression of "New Dance," which is as musically epic as the Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again." Underlying Secret Affair's mod battle cries are trumpets, saxes and tympani.

The Affair is fronted by 19-year-old Ian Paige and David Cairns. Their endlessly catchy melodies, along with Paige's rich, smooth vocals, distract from the general arrogance of the lyrics in a manner that is totally disarming and witty.

Considering it may never be released here, immediately search out "Glory Boys" in the import bins.

Mitchell Schneider
(Continued on page 21)

Ondisc

In Brief

INTENSIFIED! Original SKA 1962-66 (*Mango*) A potpourri of pre-reggae island hotstuff, much of it with ultra-familiar mainland roots but worked thru a Caribbean filter than makes it all sound downright otherworldly. So there's alternate R & B ("Housewife's Choice"), alternate soundtrack ("James Bond"), even alternate nutso novelty ("Duck Soup")—all of it hopped up, raucous and extremely alive.

JAMES BROWN, People (*Polydor*). Unlike Ray Charles, whose most recent LP represented somewhat of a comeback for him, James just sinks further into the muck. There're moments of passable intensity here, unattractively draped in neo-disco cloth that isn't even authentic enough to get James the belated attention of that waning crowd. (Tragic).

SMOKEY ROBINSON, Warm Thoughts (*Tamla*). "Let Me Be the Clock" is a standard lower-echelon Smokey—cutesy wordplay with an emotional compass still more accurate than Mick Jagger's. Otherwise, black MOR *per se*, a genre he's always seemed better suited for than conspicuously commercial overreachers like Stevie Wonder or Marvin Gaye.

J.J. JOHNSON, Pinnacles (*Milestone*). The goddam inventor of bebop trombone, J.J. sure doesn't have much to say—er—blow anymore. Title cut features some of the most nondescript ascending-riff clichés of the past humpteen years, and his backup team (incl. Tommy Flanagan, Ron Carter and Billy Higgins) seems bored beyond tears. Z-z-z-z... Go for *The Eminent J.J. Johnson* on Blue Note instead.

DAVID SANBORN, Hideaway (*Warner Bros.*). With "mood pieces" ranging from tepid to jive-hot to

funky-cool, this outing by the saxophone voice of *Saturday Night Live* is no more of a fiasco than Gato Barbieri w/strings, which is to say some terminal cocaine users may find it simply cosmic.

BUZZCOCKS, A Different Kind of Tension (*I.R.S.*). Pouches under the eyes have called for hazing out Pete Shelley's features two LPs in a row now, but the music itself is totally pouchless (fresh stuff). Better tho is their debut LP on British UA, which if you're rich y'might pick up.

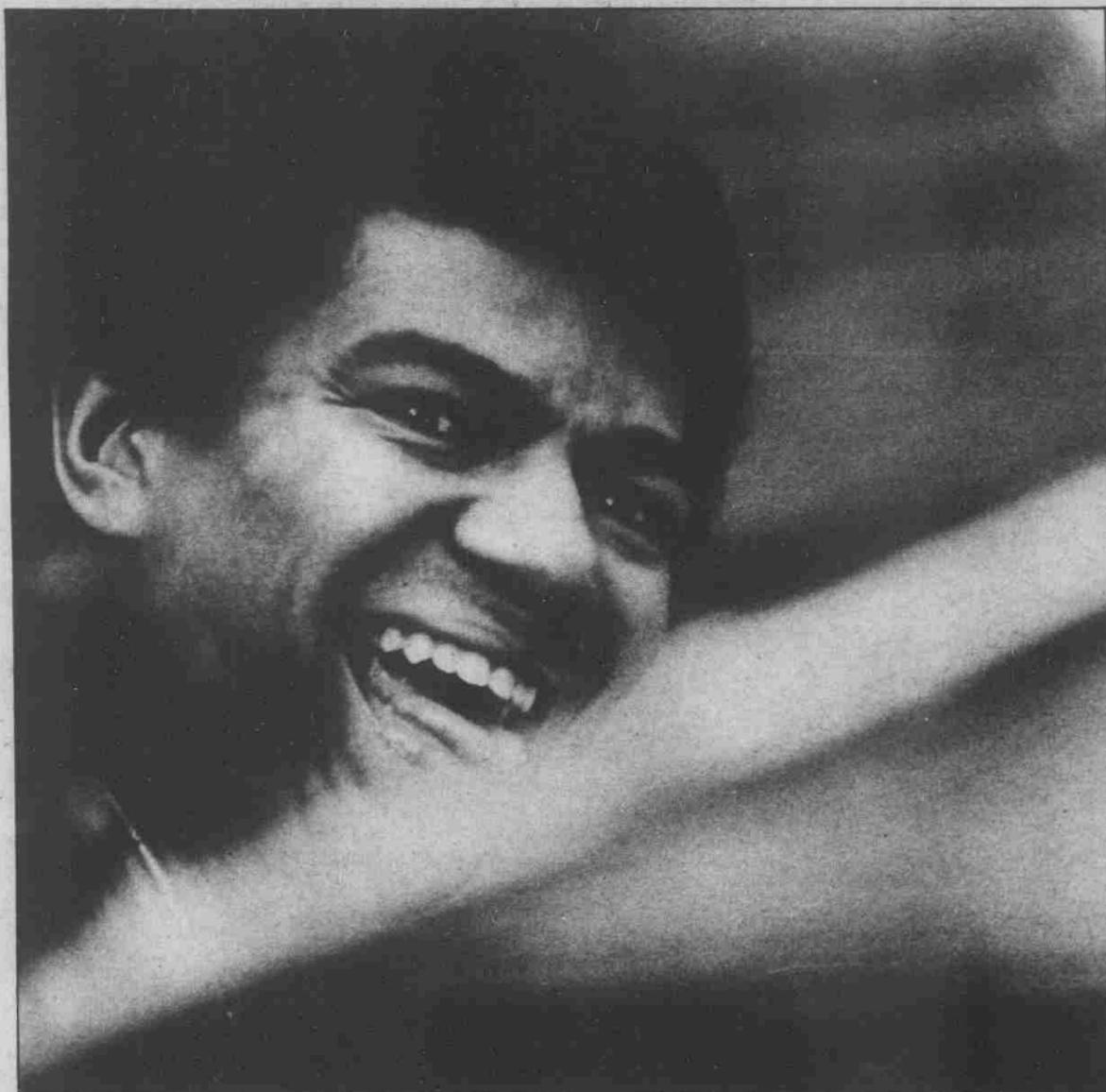
CRETONES, Thin Red Line (*Plante*). A shameless coverup for the record industry's fear of the Real Thing (i.e., punxperimental), the term "new wave" has been stretched so thin it no longer means dogdoo. Out of an utterly conventional lot with not one collective ounce of musical courage between them, the Cretones are (so far) the lamest, most reactionary n. wavers of all, with vocals that think they're Elvis Costello but're really Paul Simon by way of Roger McGuinn.

BLASTERS, American Music (*Rollin' Rock*). Nice to see some kids under 40 finally get it right—the Blasters are easily the most unaffected rockabilly unit on wax. Great covers, great originals, solid rhythms.

BEACH BOYS, Keepin' the Summer Alive (*Caribou*). These dinosaurs (meanwhile) have been together longer than the Who, with whom they share a common goal of just tryin' to keep their musical asses alive. As always, the product is listenable, bearable—if all you wanna do is listen, bear. At least Jan & Dean have a credible alibi—a doctor's note.

KITTYHAWK, (E.M.I.). Fusion music for 1967 (April), featuring the sitar of the Eighties, the Chapman Stick. When the instruments exceed the tunes in interest, it's time to look elsewhere.

R. Meltzer



JACK DEJOHNETTE
Special Edition (*ECM*)

Jack DeJohnette, drummer, composer and pianist, has come up with an album that might jazz radio stations play jazz again, an incredibly welcome, somewhat surprising record.

Over a decade ago, that same surprise and welcome greeted two other records—Tony Williams' *Emergency!* and Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew*—that are oddly linked to DeJohnette's new work. What happened then was a confrontation of jazz and rock. It was a logical step. Where else would jazz go after Coltrane's "Ascension" and Davis's own travels to the edge of listenability? How else would jazz

and its musicians respond to the chaos around them and to the new electronic instruments that spoke so well for the noisy, acrimonious late Sixties?

We didn't get the answers right away. The authority of *Bitches Brew* and its few brilliant companions splintered into a decade with fusion's aimless banalities on one side against a confounded mainstream and bleep-blopping avant-garde on the other. The latter music was lousy with integrity and challenge but it was damned hard to get next to.

With *Special Edition* DeJohnette has made moot both the commercial antagonisms and the artistic malaise of jazz in the Seventies. *Special Edition* swings, with kudos and affection

to the mainstream (see "Zoot Suite"). Its two renditions of Coltrane ("Central Park West" and "India") give us a kind of Coltrane without tears—taking care of dead leaders and the shadows of giants.

Saxophonists Arthur Blythe and David Murray summarize tradition and sketch a new one. DeJohnette and bassist/cellist Peter Warren rewrite the literature on rhythm sections. DeJohnette's composition knits his own and jazz's history into a new compatibility.

Special Edition is about confidence and authority. It even swaggers a little with heady self-assurance. It answers more than a few of *Bitches Brew*'s questions.

Linda M. Eklund