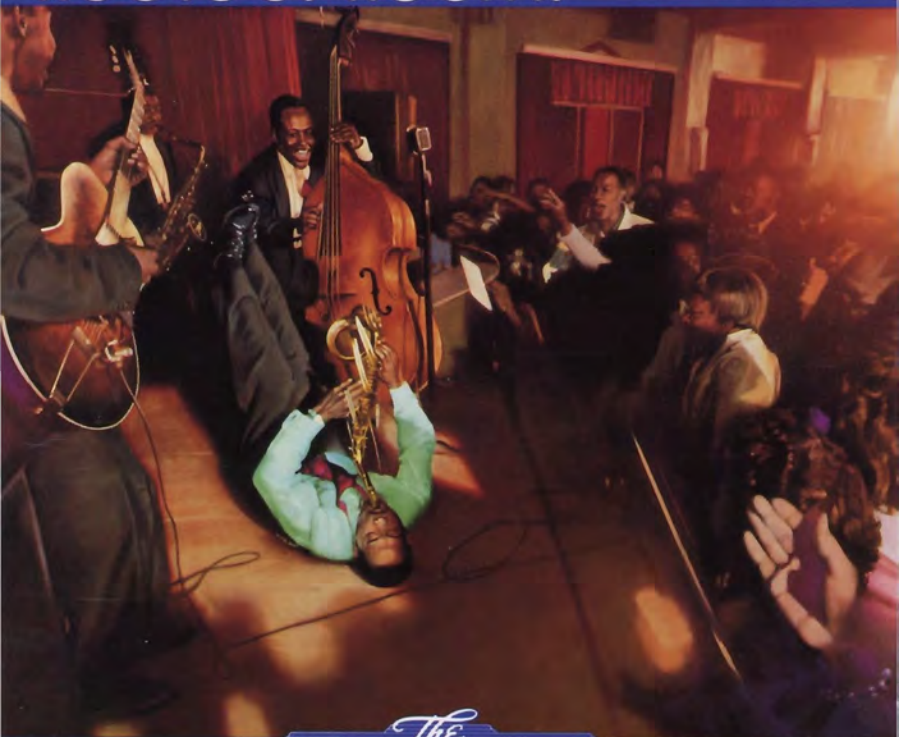


ROOTS OF ROCK II



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

The
ROCK'N'ROLL
ERA

Digital Remaster

ROOTS OF ROCK II

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 Saturday Night Fish Fry
Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five</p> <p>2 One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer
Amos Milburn and His Aladdin Chickenshackers</p> <p>3 Have Mercy Baby
Billy Ward and His Dominoes</p> <p>4 Baby Don't Do It The "5" Royales</p> <p>5 Please Send Me Someone to Love
Percy Mayfield</p> <p>6 Such a Night Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters</p> <p>7 Sexy Ways The Midnighters</p> <p>8 Please Don't Leave Me Fats Domino</p> <p>9 I'm Gone Shirley and Lee</p> <p>10 The Clock
Johnny Ace with the Beale Streeters</p> | <p>11 This Is My Story Gene and Eunice</p> <p>12 Don't Be Angry Nappy Brown</p> <p>13 Night Train Jimmy Forrest</p> <p>14 Pink Champagne
Joe Liggins and His "Honeydrippers"</p> <p>15 Flip Flop and Fly
Joe Turner and His Blues Kings</p> <p>16 Story Untold The Nutmegs</p> <p>17 The Glory of Love The Five Keys</p> <p>18 My Babe Little Walter and His Jukes</p> <p>19 Feelln' Good Little Junior's Blue Flames</p> <p>20 5-10-15 Hours Ruth Brown</p> <p>21 Ting-a-Ling The Clovers</p> <p>22 The Door Is Still Open The Cardinals</p> |
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The
ROCK'N'ROLL
•ERA•

ROOTS OF ROCK II

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

2RNR-43
OPCD-2627

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

- 1 Saturday Night Fish Fry 2 One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer 3 Have Mercy Baby 4 Baby Don't Do It 5 Please Send Me Someone to Love
6 Such a Night 7 Sexy Ways 8 Please Don't Leave Me 9 I'm Gone
10 The Clock 11 This Is My Story 12 Don't Be Angry
13 Night Train 14 Pink Champagne 15 Flip Flop and Fly
16 Story Untold 17 The Glory of Love 18 My Babe
19 Feelin' Good 20 5-10-15 Hours 21 Ting-a-Ling
22 The Door Is Still Open

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Gene and Eunice



ROOTS OF ROCK II

Of the many idioms that combined to create rock 'n' roll, none were more exciting and influential than the jump blues and black vocal group forms. In fact, any number of music historians have argued that artists like Joe Liggins or Billy Ward and His Dominoes made music at the start of the 1950s that was rock 'n' roll in all but name. Where this music leaves off and true rock 'n' roll begins is the kind of question that makes fandom go round. As much as anything, the answer seems to have to do with when white teenagers started listening to these black artists. But it's worth noting that Fats Domino and Big Joe Turner, to name just two, each plied pretty much the same sound his entire career and had it called different things at different times.

Jump blues is basically a catchall term for the music that resulted when the big bands were forced to strip down to bare essentials during the Second World War. As the bands grew smaller, the sound grew punchier, the rhythms got harder, the tempos speeded up and the soloists (usually piano or sax) became more frantic. Louis Jordan, the most successful of the jump blues artists, was in some ways one of the least typical in that he had a looser, more relaxed sound. But that style also enabled him to become the biggest crossover artist of his era.

His career offers a microcosm of the evolution of jump blues. Originally from Arkansas, Jordan sang and played alto sax and clarinet in Chick Webb's prewar big band. He signed with Decca in 1938 and developed there a style based on a Southwestern boogie beat, wailing small-band arrangements, novelty lyrics and cleanly enunciated vocals. **Saturday Night Fish Fry** is a humorous hard-luck story about a guy who gets in trouble for having too much fun. Though the song deals between the lines with racism, the singer still laughs at himself enough to let whites feel like they're in on the joke. Chuck Berry later told many

similarly woeful tales with similarly comic tones.

Jump blues was usually based on the rolling, eight-to-the-bar rhythms of piano boogie, but it was broad enough to absorb other forms. Though popular throughout the country, it was centered in Los Angeles. Oklahoman Joe Liggins, whose brother Jimmy also led a jump band, was headquartered at the Samba Club in downtown L.A. He was already an established artist when he switched to the Specialty label to cut **Pink Champagne**, a torch ballad with a boogie beat that became his second million-seller.

Percy Mayfield retained deep Louisiana roots long after he moved to L.A. to become a songwriter, and his forte was the lachrymose, dirgelike blues ballad. **Please Send Me Someone to Love**, written in a ghetto motel room soon after Percy hit town (and very much a thematic by-product of the emerging cold war), was on one of the demos Mayfield submitted to Specialty owner Art Rupe. However, Rupe liked Percy's voice so much that he recorded a new, fuller version with the writer instead of finding another artist to cut his songs. It turned into a smash that helped define both the era and the blues-ballad form. Mayfield's performing career was hampered (though not stifled entirely) by injuries sustained in a 1952 car wreck, and he later became a staff writer for Ray Charles.

Boogie piano man Amos Milburn of Houston was best known for *Chicken Shack Boogie* (1948), but in 1950 he did well with *Bad, Bad Whiskey*, which led to string of boozey blues songs along the same lines. Every one of them, he insisted, was autobiographical—but none more so for this confirmed scotch drinker than **One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer**.

Joe Turner, a Kansas City boogie-woogie shouter, was commuting between the two coasts as the rock 'n' roll era began. Signed to Atlantic, he was given top material by staff writer-arranger Jesse Stone (who usually worked un-



The "5" Royales

der the name Charles Calhoun). The phrase **Flip Flop and Fly** appeared in the first draft of *Shake, Rattle and Roll*, the Turner hit that preceded it; since Stone had written nearly 40 verses for the song, the lines failed to make the final cut and were thus available for the follow-up.

Jimmy Forrest was a veteran of Jay McShann's Blue Devils, another K.C. jazz band. He took the riff that ended Duke Ellington's 1946 *Happy Go Lucky Local* (and was the basis for Ellington tenorman Johnny Hodges' 1940 *That's the Blues Old Man*) and stretched it out into **Night Train**, one of R & B's most enduring instrumentals.

The new vocal groups injected gospel dynamics into the smooth old harmony sound to suggest the holy and the carnal simultaneously. One of the first, best and most sadly underrecognized vocal groups was the "5" Royales, hailing from around the Winston-Salem, North Carolina, area; their **Baby Don't Do It** represents the form at its bluesiest. The Cardinals (**The Door Is Still Open**) and the Five Keys were among the most conventional groups. The latter included two sets of brothers from Newport News, Virginia, and their revival of **The Glory of Love**, a 1936 pop tune, was one of the demos they submitted to Aladdin, their L.A. label.

King-Federal (in Cincinnati) and Atlantic (in New York) had many of the hottest vocal groups. The former took in Hank Ballard's Midnighters, native Detroiters whose **Sexy Ways** came out in the midst of 1954's infamous "Annie trilogy" of openly erotic songs. Another Federal group, the Dominoes, was formed when Billy Ward, a Juilliard grad and Carnegie Hall vocal coach, auditioned Clyde McPhatter for one of the groups he worked with. After hearing McPhatter's screaming tenor, Ward instead built a whole new group around the singer, and the Dominoes' subsequent **Have Mercy Baby** became one of the most raucous singles of the genre.

McPhatter soon rebelled against Ward's severe regimen and quit the group. Atlantic quickly signed him and formed

the Drifters around him. Thanks to records like **Ting-a-Ling**, Atlantic was already thriving with the Clovers, a Washington, D.C., unit boasting two lead tenors in Buddy Bailey and Billy Mitchell. **Such a Night** was initially earmarked for the Clovers, but both leads were judged "too mellow," so the song went instead to McPhatter and the Drifters.

Ruth Brown (**5-10-15 Hours**) was a sophisticated blues singer able to make the transition to rhythm and blues and then rock 'n' roll, thanks to the savvy personnel at Atlantic.

The Clovers



The doo-wop group the Nutmegs from New Haven, Connecticut, took their name from their home state's nickname. The song **Story Untold** was on a demo tape they submitted to a music publisher. North Carolina gospel singer Nappy Brown went secular upon moving to New Jersey in 1953; his **Don't Be Angry** looked like a crossover hit until a Crew-Cuts cover blocked it from the pop charts.

As a member of Muddy Waters' band, Little Walter wrote the book on modern blues harp; **My Babe**, an obvious secularization of the gospel standard *This Train*, was the first Willie Dixon song to go to the top of the R & B charts. Little Junior Parker's **Feelin' Good**, his first and biggest record for Sun, represented Southern boogie blues at its most infectious.

The Clock was a No. 1 hit for heartbreak balladeer Johnny Ace. The Memphis native achieved his greatest fame after accidentally killing himself while playing with a

gun backstage in Houston on Christmas Day in 1954. The date is usually given as Christmas Eve, thanks to Duke Records owner Don Robey, who felt that made the death sound more dramatic.

Songwriter-producer-bandleader Dave Bartholomew helped make Fats Domino (**Please Don't Leave Me**) and Shirley and Lee (**I'm Gone**) the New Orleans connection to early rock 'n' roll. And the latter paved the way for Gene and Eunice. Forest Gene Wilson (from San Antonio, Texas) and Eunice Russ (from Texarkana, Arkansas) met at the Alimony Club in L.A.; unlike Shirley and Lee, they did become real-life husband and wife. Writing and singing songs like **This Is My Story**, they earned their billing as "the Nation's Sweethearts" (Shirley and Lee had already claimed the title "Sweethearts of the Blues"). And by 1955 nobody wondered anymore what to call what all these artists were doing: Rock 'n' roll was here to stay.

—John Morthland



DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard R & B chart position

1. **Saturday Night Fish Fry** Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five • Music and lyrics by Ellis Walsh and Louis Jordan. Decca 24725 (1949). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 1*
2. **One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer** Amos Milburn and His Aladdin Chickenshackers • Music and lyrics by Rudolph Toombs. Aladdin 3197 (1953). Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 2*
3. **Have Mercy Baby** Billy Ward and His Dominoes • Music and lyrics by Billy Ward. Federal 12068 (1952). Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 1*
4. **Baby Don't Do It** The "5" Royales • Music and lyrics by Louman Pauling. Apollo 443 (1953). Courtesy of Apollo Records/Malaco Records, Inc. No. 1*
5. **Please Send Me Someone to Love** Percy Mayfield • Music and lyrics by Percy Mayfield. Specialty 375 (1950). Courtesy of Specialty Records, Inc. No. 1*
6. **Such a Night** Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters • Music and lyrics by Lincoln Chase. Atlantic 1019 (1954). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 5*
7. **Sexy Ways** The Midnighters • Music and lyrics by Henry Ballard. Federal 12185 (1954). Courtesy of Gusto Records. No. 3*
8. **Please Don't Leave Me** Fats Domino • Music and lyrics by Antoine "Fats" Domino. Imperial 5240 (1953). Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 5*
9. **I'm Gone** Shirley and Lee • Music and lyrics by Leonard Lee and Dave Bartholomew. Aladdin 3153 (1953). Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 2*
10. **The Clock** Johnny Ace with the Beale Streeters • Music and lyrics by David J. Mattis. Duke 112 (1953). Courtesy of MCA Records Inc. No. 1*
11. **This Is My Story** Gene and Eunice • Music and lyrics by Gene Forrest and Eunice Levy. Aladdin 3282 (1955). Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 13*
12. **Don't Be Angry** Nappy Brown • Music and lyrics by Napoleon Brown. Fred Madison and Rose Marie McCoy. Savoy 1155 (1955). Courtesy of SJ Records Inc. (Savoy Jazz). No. 2*
13. **Night Train** Jimmy Forrest • Music by Jimmy Forrest. United 110 (1952). Courtesy of Delmark Records. No. 1*
14. **Pink Champagne** Joe Liggins and His "Honeydrippers" • Music and lyrics by Joe Liggins. Specialty 355 (1950). Courtesy of Specialty Records, Inc. No. 1*
15. **Flip Flop and Fly** Joe Turner and His Blues Kings • Music and lyrics by Charles Calhoun and Lou Willie Turner. Atlantic 1053 (1955). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 3*
16. **Story Untold** The Nutmegs • Music and lyrics by LeRoy Griffin and Marty Wilson. Herald 452 (1955). Produced under license from Arista Records, Inc. No. 2*
17. **The Glory of Love** The Five Keys • Music and lyrics by Billy Hill. Aladdin 3099 (1951). Courtesy of EMI, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 1*
18. **My Babe** Little Walter and His Jukes • Music and lyrics by Willie Dixon. Checker 811 (1955). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 1*
19. **Feelin' Good** Little Junior's Blue Flames • Music and lyrics by Herman Parker. Sun 187 (1953). Courtesy of Sun Entertainment Corp. No. 5*
20. **5-10-15 Hours** Ruth Brown • Music and lyrics by Rudolph Toombs. Atlantic 962 (1952). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 1*
21. **Ting-a-Ling** The Clovers • Music and lyrics by Ahmet Ertegun. Atlantic 969 (1952). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 1*
22. **The Door Is Still Open** The Cardinals • Music and lyrics by Chuck Willis. Atlantic 1054 (1955). Produced under license from Atlantic Recording Corp. No. 10*

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- 22 **The Door is Still Open** The Cardinals

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NOTES INSIDE

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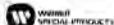
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