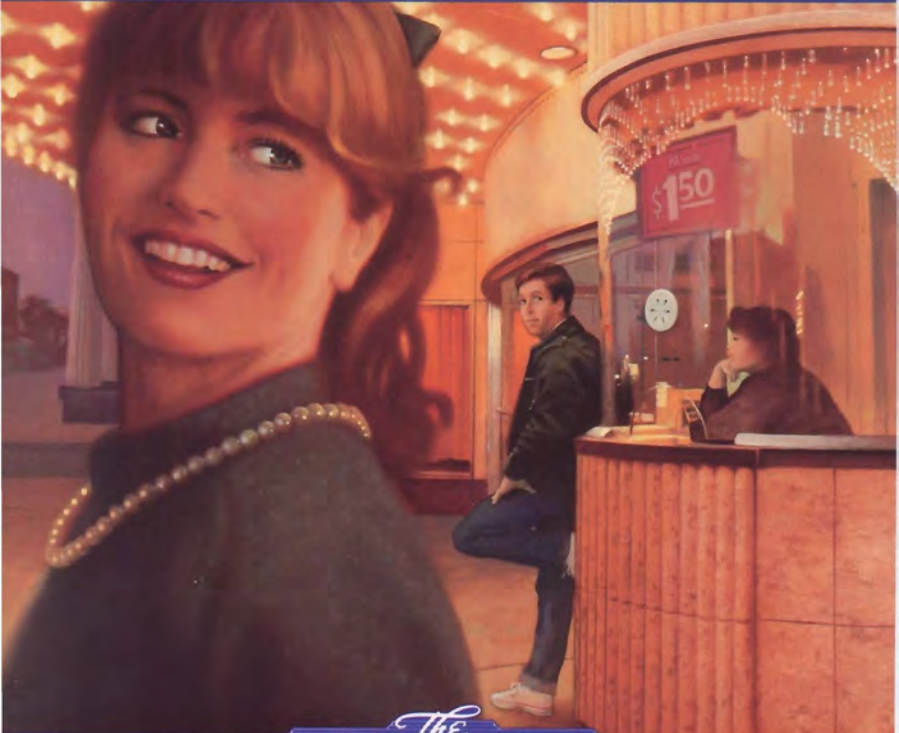


LOST TREASURES II



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

The
ROCK 'N' ROLL
ERA

Digital Remaster

LOST TREASURES II

- 1 **Seventeen** Boyd Bennett and His Rockets
- 2 **Later Alligator** Bobby Charles
- 3 **Nothin' Shakin'** Eddie Fontaine
- 4 **Sugaree** Rusty York
- 5 **You Can Make It If You Try** Gene Allison
- 6 **Teardrops on Your Letter**
Hank Ballard and the Midnighters
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The Shepherd Sisters
- 22 **Dark Moon** Bonnie Guitar

SEE PROGRAM NOTES INSIDE

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The
ROCK'N'ROLL
»ERA»

LOST TREASURES II

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO



2RNR-49
OPCD-2642

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

- 1 Seventeen 2 Later Alligator 3 Nothin' Shakin' 4 Sugaree 5 You Can Make It if You Try 6 Teardrops on Your Letter 7 Buzz Buzz a-Diddle-It 8 Clap Your Hands 9 Talk That Talk 10 There is Something on Your Mind 11 Darling Lorraine 12 Sugar Bee 13 Henrietta 14 Poor Boy 15 You Can Have Her 16 Here I Stand 17 What's a Matter Baby 18 Dance by the Light of the Moon 19 The Ballad of Thunder Road 20 Life's Too Short 21 Alone 22 Dark Moon

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Bobby Charles

LOST TREASURES II

Although Bill Haley and the Comets were the first white act to record rock 'n' roll—their 1951 cover of Jackie Brenston's *Rocket 88* and their 1952 version of *Rock the Joint* are both landmarks—the group was quickly eclipsed in fame and influence by Elvis Presley. Presley's Sun rockabilly records spawned a legion of frantic imitators, but surprisingly few artists cared to pay homage to Haley's groundbreaking fusion of jump blues and Western swing.

One act that did capitalize on the Haley sound was Boyd Bennett and the Rockets. Bennett was hosting a weekly television show in Louisville, Kentucky, when King Records signed his five-piece band in 1952. Like Haley, Bennett made his first recordings in the Western swing style. With the success of Haley's *Rock around the Clock*, however, Bennett's group quickly adopted a space-age name (the Rockets), picked up the beat and wrote some teen-oriented lyrics. The result was *Seventeen* (1955), a major hit sung by the group's 250-pound lead vocalist, Big Moe.

Another early white rocker was Eddie Fontaine, whose first release, a cover of the Fontane Sisters' 1955 hit *Rock Love*, also aped Haley's swing-based style. Fontaine recorded both pop and rock 'n' roll for more than 10 labels without making much of an impression. Turning to an acting career, he landed roles in numerous television dramas and was a regular in the early-'60s series *The Gallant Men*. Fontaine's hottest number and only chart entry, *Nothin' Shakin'* (1958), was actually cut as a demo and accidentally leased to Argo Records by Eddie's publisher.

Nothin' Shakin' was one of many unpolished rockabilly records that enjoyed limited popularity at the time of their release but later became highly valued by collectors of '50s rock 'n' roll. Two others that fall into this category are Jimmy Dee's nearly hysterical *Heartletta* (1958) and Rusty York's *Sugaree* (1959).

Sugaree was a Marty Robbins tune that York admits he

barely mastered, instead making up his own lyrics in the studio as he recorded. Nonetheless, Chess Records managed to secure air play for the disc, which earned York an appearance on *American Bandstand*. Like rockabilly itself, *Sugaree*'s popularity was brief and limited, and York later reflected: "I always wanted to keep rockabilly pure. I believe rockabilly faded because people thought it was too country. Then the string sections took over and that was about the end of it."

Thanks to his *Later Alligator*, Robert Guidry (also known as Bobby Charles) became the first Cajun rock 'n' roller to gain a measure of national attention. Charles wrote the song in 1955 after a high-school dance, drawing his inspiration from a young lady who answered his "see you later, alligator" with "after while, crocodile." He recorded it in New Orleans in 1956 and was signed to the Chicago blues label Chess (the folks at Chess assumed he was a black artist). Charles' version made it to the R & B disc jockey charts but was surpassed in popularity by Bill Haley's cover (titled *See You Later, Alligator*). Charles later wrote for Fats Domino (*Walking to New Orleans*) and Clarence Henry (*But I Do*).

While Cajun artists did record a few hit ballads (e.g., Rod Bernard's *This Should Go On Forever* and Joe Barry's *I'm a Fool to Care*), they had little success with up-tempo rock 'n' roll. One raucous exception was Cleveland Crochet's *Sugar Bee*, a minor national hit and an authentic fusion of Cajun and rock 'n' roll styles. What energized the song was not bandleader Crochet's fiddle playing but the harsh vocals of pedal steel guitarist Jay Stutes and Shorty Leblanc's accordion playing.

Another one-hit group of French heritage was the Beau-Marks, a quartet of French Canadians from Montreal who first recorded as the Del-Tones (no relation to Dick Dale's group). Their one stateside success, *Clap Your Hands*,

led to an excellent rockabilly-style album, *The High Flying Beau-Marks*, but no more hits. Their American label, Shad, lared little better. The company produced only a few minor hits, including **Darling Lorraine**, a plaintive ballad by the Knockouts, an Italian-American group from New Jersey.

Although Freddie Cannon is not associated with rock 'n' roll's early days, he did make a contribution at the age of 16, playing guitar on the G-Clefs' 1956 hit, *Ka-Ding Dong*. Cannon's career began in earnest three years later with *Tallahassee Lassie*, the first in a string of hits produced for him by Frank Slay (at times in collaboration with Four Seasons producer Bob Crewe). Of his many charting songs, Cannon's personal favorite is **Buzz Buzz a-Diddle-It**, probably his finest rocker, thanks, in part, to the superb backing of a Connecticut group called the Saturday Knights.

Only a few white female rockers made it in the '50s, though a number of pop harmony "girl groups" recorded teen-oriented hits. The Fontaine Sisters and the Chordettes were particularly successful, while others, such as Ohio's Shepherd Sisters, barely earned a footnote in the rock history books. The Shepherd Sisters were appearing regularly on television and at USO shows and hotels when they signed a contract with New York City record entrepreneur Morty Craft. Craft's upbeat arrangement and the sisters' bouncy harmonies turned **Alone (Why Must I Be Alone)** (1957) into their only appreciable hit.

Though a somewhat unlikely candidate for rock star, movie legend Robert Mitchum achieved brief status as a singer in 1958 with **The Ballad of Thunder Road**, the theme from the movie *Thunder Road*. Mitchum not only starred in the film (in which a bunch of Kentucky moonshiners led by Mitchum race around the backwoods, smuggling hooch and outwitting the feds), he also wrote the story and co-wrote the theme song.

Rock 'n' roll styles were constantly evolving throughout the '50s and '60s, and with these changes came changes in the music's instrumentation. By the '60s, sax-based

instrumentals such as the Royaltones' noisy **Poor Boy** (1958) were rare. This Detroit quartet was later heard backing Del Shannon on his hits for the Amy label. One sax pioneer, Big Jay McNeely, was a wild, honking stylist whose flamboyant stage acrobatics during the early '50s conveyed the new music's sense of abandon. In 1957, McNeely recorded **There Is Something on Your Mind** with Little Sonny Warner on vocals. Two years later, Los Angeles disc jockey Hunter Hancock made the song the initial release on his new Swingin' label and it became a huge R & B hit (it became an even bigger hit for Bobby Marchan in 1960).

Warner's pleading vocal was symptomatic of the increasing presence of gospel-trained singers in R & B as the '50s progressed. Gene Allison had sung for two Nashville gospel groups, the Skylarks and the Fairfield Four, before turning to secular music. All three of Allison's R & B hits—**You Can Make It If You Try**, *Have Faith* and *Everything Will Be All Right*—feared gospel themes and Allison's churchy delivery. The biggest of the three, *You Can Make It*, was covered by the Rolling Stones on their debut album.

The Stones' Mick Jagger was just one in a long line of white singers drawing on black vocal styles for inspiration. One of the most convincingly soulful of these singers in the early '60s was Timi Yuro, a Chicago artist whose hit ballads, *Hurt* and **What's a Matter Baby (Is It Hurting You)**, achieved a deep intensity worthy of Esther Phillips or Etta James. At another extreme was Bonnie Guitar, a country-raised singer whose stage name derived from her prowess on that instrument. Guitar's rendition of Ned Miller's **Dark Moon** (1957) was pure folk balladry, presented with a detached resignation that underscored the song's haunting simplicity.

Perhaps no double-sided hit mirrored the change of decades better than King 5171, released in 1959. The A side, a beautiful doo-wop ballad called **Teardrops on Your Letter**, was a major R & B hit, the first in over three years

*The Olympics; Robert Mitchum talks
to Detroit DJ Robin Seymour (inset).*



for Hank Ballard and the Midnighters. While *Teardrops on Your Letter* was a perfect reflection of the romantic glory of the vocal-group era of the '50s, the B side heralded the '60s. It was *The Twist*, and it captured the need of a new generation of teenagers to go "round and round and up and down."

—Joe Sasy

The Shepherd Sisters



DISCOGRAPHY

**Indicates highest Billboard chart position*

1. **Seventeen** Boyd Bennett and His Rockets • Music and lyrics by John Young Jr., Chuck Gorman and Boyd Bennett. King 1470 (1955). Courtesy of Highland Music, Inc. No. 28*
2. **Later Alligator** Bobby Charles • Music and lyrics by Robert Guiry. Chess 1609 (1955). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. Did not chart.
3. **Nothin' Shakin'** Eddie Fontaine • Music and lyrics by Kenneth Zanchi, Cirino Colacrai, Diane Lumpert and Eddie Fontaine. Argo 5309 (1958). Courtesy of Chess/MCA Records, Inc. No. 64*
4. **Sugaree** Rusty York • Music and lyrics by Rusty York. Chess 1730 (1959). Courtesy of Chess/MCA Records, Inc. No. 77*
5. **You Can Make It If You Try** Gene Allison • Music and lyrics by Ted Jarrett. Vee-Jay 256 (1957). Courtesy of Chameleon/Vee-Jay Records. No. 37*
6. **Teardrop on Your Letter** Hank Ballard and the Midnighters • Music and lyrics by Henry Glover. King 5171 (1959). Courtesy of Highland Music, Inc. No. 93*
7. **Buzz Buzz a-Diddle-It** Freddy Cannon • Music and lyrics by Frank Slay and Bob Crewe. Swan 4071 (1961). Courtesy of Freddy Cannon. No. 51*
8. **Clap Your Hands** The Beau-Marks • Music and lyrics by Joey Frenchie, Ray Hutchinson, Mike Robitaille and Gilles Tailleux. Shad 5017 (1960). Courtesy of Mainstream Records, Inc. No. 45*
9. **Talk That Talk** Jackie Wilson • Music and lyrics by Sid Wyche. Brunswick 55163 (1959). Courtesy of Brunswick Records, Inc. No. 34*
10. **There Is Something on Your Mind** Big Jay McNeely • Music and lyrics by Cecil "Big Jay" McNeely. Swingin' 614 (1959). Vocal by Little Sonny Warner. Courtesy of Big J Records. No. 44*
11. **Darling Lorraine** The Knockouts • Music and lyrics by Edward Parenti. Shad 5013 (1960). Courtesy of Mainstream Records, Inc. No. 46*
12. **Sugar Bee** Cleveland Crochet • Music and lyrics by Eddie Shuler. Goldband 1106 (1961). Courtesy of Goldband Records. No. 80*
13. **Henrietta** Jimmy Dee and the Offbeats • Music and lyrics by Jimi Fore and Larry Hitzfeld. Dot 15664 (1958). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 53*
14. **Poor Boy** The Royaltones • Music by David R. Sanderson. Jubilee 5338 (1958). Under license from Rhino Records, Inc., by arrangement with Butterfly Entertainment Corp. No. 17*
15. **You Can Have Her** Roy Hamilton • Music and lyrics by Bill Cook. Epic 9434 (1961). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. No. 12*
16. **Here I Stand** Wade Flemons • Music and lyrics by Wade Flemons. Vee-Jay 295 (1959). Courtesy of Chameleon/Vee-Jay Records. No. 80*
17. **What's a Matter Baby (Is It Hurting You)** Timi Yuro • Music and lyrics by Clyde Otis and Joy Byers. Liberty 55469 (1962). Courtesy of EMI USA Records, a Division of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 12*
18. **Dance by the Light of the Moon** The Olympics • Music and lyrics by Fred Smith, Clifford Goldsmith, Jimmy Esoro, Mickey Leader and Terry Shand. Arcee 5020 (1961). Courtesy of Janus Records, Inc. No. 47*
19. **The Ballad of Thunder Road** Robert Mitchum • Music and lyrics by Don Raye and Robert Mitchum. Capitol 3986 (1958). Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets. No. 62*
20. **Life's Too Short** The Lafayettes • Music and lyrics by Lee Bonner and Phil Huth. RCA Victor 8044 (1962). Courtesy of BMG Music/The RCA Records Label, under license from BMG Direct Marketing, Inc. No. 87*
21. **Alone (Why Must I Be Alone)** The Shepherd Sisters • Music by Morton Craft, lyrics by Selma Craft. Lance 125 (1957). Courtesy of MC Productions. No. 20*
22. **Dark Moon** Bonnie Guitar • Music and lyrics by Ned Miller. Dot 15550 (1957). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 8*

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NOTES INSIDE

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