

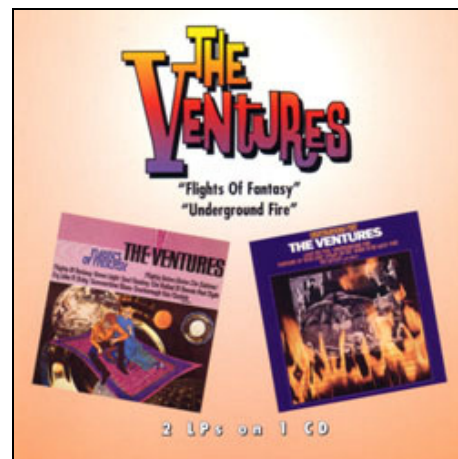
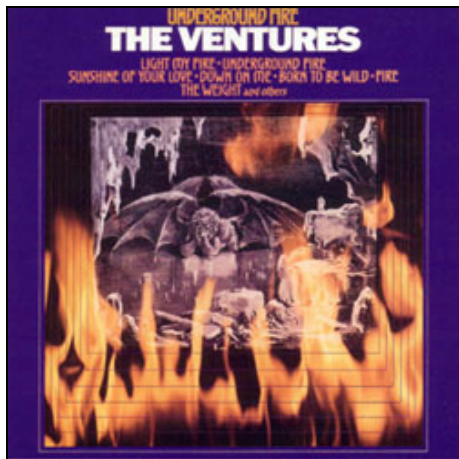
1969

ALBUM TRACKS

January 1969 LP

Underground Fire

Liberty LST 8059 Stereo



Once again, I refer the reader to Gerry Woodage's liner notes on the SfM issue for background details on the musical fashions reflected in this set, which ascended to #157 but stayed on chart for 14 weeks. Interestingly, tracks 1 through to 6 are all composed within the group, the remainder are covers — a bifurcation never before presented in this way on the group's albums. It enables the listener to assess at a glance, or at any rate (in the olden days) over the same side of an LP, The Ventures' own take on the current scene, the various influences, emphases and stylings. As the ensuing notes on the individual numbers will show, the album refreshingly majors on the kind of riff-orientated material very much in vogue at the time, with 'catchy tunes' taking a back seat. (The Ventures were busy over this same period writing melodious pieces for their Japanese releases.)

Don Wilson's name is omitted from all six credits, with Christian Wilde named instead (Wilde: see 1968 p.20). It seems that the latter took his place on rhythm guitar

— not that his presence is always apparent. This is a direct consequence of the music programme. The ‘power trio’ was a rising force over the second half of the 60s: in the absence of a rhythm guitarist (though the lead guitarist could subsume such duties for part of the time, as does Eric Clapton for example either side of his dazzling solo in Cream’s ‘Deserted Cities Of The Heart’), bass and drums played a more active, and therefore louder, part: think here of Cream (whose influence on our set is strong), The Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Who. Naturally this change of emphasis did not preclude the use of ancillary instrumentation in the studio (including an extra lead guitar part or parts), and in our set the organ forms an important part of the chain.

<<<<CHOICE CUTS>>>>

Two of the covers are exceptionally fine: BORN TO BE FREE and FIRE. Of the originals, UNDERGROUND FIRE is the one to beat.

Tracks 1-6

All titles credited to:

Bob Bogle/ Mel Taylor/ Christian Wilde/ Gerry McGee

1 [69/1] UNDERGROUND FIRE

Topped, tailed and driven along by an insistent riff resembling that of John Loudermilk’s ‘Tobacco Road’, the ringing tones of the initial blues guitar passage give way at 0:53 to a much more action-packed soundstage, with twin leads engaging in call and response or interweaving intricate patterns while an organ all the time subtly feeds in from the side; a pounding piano joins in at 1:38 as these exhilarating exchanges become even more intense. If John Beddington’s talk¹ of “a new vocabulary” in blues riffing is more than a trifle overstated, UNDERGROUND FIRE is still definitely a number to be reckoned with.

DP makes the following point in connection with a track he considers “superb”: “This ‘magic’ McGee contribution indicated to me at that time the direction in which The Ventures should have gone, that is, a slight reworking of what they’d done on all their best albums — high quality originals and rock (not MOR) covers with the newly found edge of Gerry McGee. The sound is always bluesy — he couldn’t (and it’s a good thing) sound R&R if he tried!”

2 [69/2] EMBERS IN E MINOR

A much heavier affair this, boasting hammering Cream-flavoured riffs, of the thick and clotted variety. What sets this one apart from the crowd is the electronic keyboard/harpsichord-like setting for lead guitar, providing expressive tonal contrasts with the rather forbidding-sounding accompaniment. Into the second minute the battery of riffs is locked into bracing exchanges with Mel Taylor, while the frantic pace adopted by the lead towards the fade perhaps suggests the image of embers suddenly flaring up prior to finally dying down.

3 [69/3] SEA OF GRASS

An evocative title, though there seems no point of contact with the famous Conrad Richter novel of that name or the Spencer Tracy film of it. Organ here assumes a more active role than hitherto, playing call and response games with guitar riffs of a studiously nondescript nature. Although McGee throws out some Clapton-styled licks towards the close, melody here takes a back seat to the kind of relentless repetition cultivated as an end in itself in much music of the period — a practice that went hand

in hand with the tendency to push bass and drums much further into the foreground. This is not to say that such techniques (which of course extended far beyond the 60s, into the realm of dance and related genres) have no artistic validity, and indeed RI can throw up examples of related stylings long before the mid-60s when the ‘power trio’ began to emerge in full strength.

4 [69/4] HIGHER THAN THOU

One would like to know what lies behind the title, an expression most familiar from The Book Of Job. A jaunty introduction of just over twenty seconds, featuring bass then lead guitar laced with distortion, leads into a bluesy mild stomper with a Sam & Dave groove to it, with the McGee chicken scratchin’ technique put on display in all its glory — indeed in more than all its glory, for the effect is accentuated to impressive effect when in due course there are further lead lines in the same style interlaced; concurrently, a yawping guitar riff is nagging away in the right channel along with a cutting rhythm guitar. A diverting confection.

5 [69/5] UP, UP AND DOWN

Maybe a skit on the song title ‘Up, Up And Away’. Many of Cream’s lead lines and accompanying riffs sound dour if not actually funereal, the austere and unlit outer limits of blues-rock, and here is a case in point: the rasping, droning main theme (reinforced by organ and second lead guitar) is assailed at every turn by a cacophony of slashing rhythm guitar and rowdy percussion, culminating in a riot of sitar or sitar-like notes darting to and fro across the stereo soundstage.

6 [69/6] COUNTRY FUNK AND THE CANNED HEAT

A splendid idea: take one of the stellar hits of the decade, Canned Heat’s ‘On The Road Again’, reflect its basic styling, make it boogie even more, and do something entirely novel with it. It provides an ideal frame for McGee’s modernising display of country pickin’ in the style of ultra-sophisticated rural blues, with its winning blend of conventional guitar and dobro: hot country funk as it says on the tin.

7 [69/7] BORN TO BE WILD

(Dennis Edmunton *aka* Mars Bonfire)

Steppenwolf’s 1968 US #2, a hard rock biker anthem, must have been an automatic candidate for a set of this complexion. In my view it has to be reckoned one of the very finest Ventures recordings ever, not just by virtue of the performance but because it benefits from a reproduction that places it firmly in the demonstration bracket. The ensemble playing is amongst their tightest and most exciting, far more dynamic in fact than the original. The funky lead lines are awesome, as is the scything rhythm chording and associated fills (set against an organ backdrop), fed in alternately from right and from left. And what could more rousing than the headlong charge at 1:30 (there is no fancy solo slotted in here, nor is one necessary), following upon the rallying call at 1:17? Finally, let’s not forget Bob Bogle’s bass guitar, for he excels himself throughout and positively takes flight towards the close! “Bob’s best hour ever!” according to DP, who adds: “Mel Taylor told me: ‘We built the album around Gerry’”.

8 [69/8] SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE

(Jack Bruce/ Pete Brown/ Eric Clapton)

America had taken to Cream in a big way, and The Ventures had a number of titles available to them. But on their self-made rules, a hot single was all but obligatory, and this 1968 #5 had to be it. (The follow-up, 'White Room', a #6, did not have the same magnetism, and indeed was pretty intractable for instrumental treatment.) The original is so distinctive (the oddly mild-mannered lyrics, the guitar and bass riffs, the style of drumming, the Clapton solo — all the subjects of extended essays) that one would have to fear the worst, but The Ventures emerge from the exercise creditably enough, since they successfully capture the dynamics of the heavy riffing, the McGee guitar is winningly rasping and sn-sn-sn-arling, while the solo part either side of the two minute mark is pretty rousing and incisive by any standard, and Mel Taylor does an explosive job in supporting the lead guitarist as he careers into the fade *con brio*.

9 [69/9] THE WEIGHT

(Robbie Robertson)

Although The Band made #5 in the UK in 1968, in the US this stellar number only made #68 in September of that year, but it did attract a great deal of attention, with cover versions from Jackie DeShannon, Aretha Franklin, The Supremes and The Temptations peaking higher than that. It had been featured on their album *Music From The Big Pink*, a #30 in August, and also in the film *Easy Rider*. The Ventures would thus have been naturally attracted to it and they do a magnificent job on it. True, it has lost every last vestige of the rough-hewn charm of Robbie Robertson and his men, whose spirited harmony vocals are a major attraction here, but who cares? This is ultra-sophisticated country funk from Gerry McGee, whose strikingly sonorous lead lines enjoy superb piano support.

10 [69/10] LIGHT MY FIRE

(John Densmore/ Robert Krieger/ Ray Manzarek/ Jim Morrison)

This number provoked interest from the outset for its lyrics as well as for the instrumentation, most especially Ray Manzarek's keyboards. The Doors' 1967 US singles chart topper (UK #7), trimmed down significantly from a lengthy album version, was another obvious choice for an 'underground' collection. Dave Burke² prefers The Ventures to the original: "... the rolling bass and rhythm, the wandering, searching organ [Mike Melvoin] and the dark-toned guitar are all judged to absolute perfection". Yes, it does have character and atmosphere, the organ in particular putting in a stellar performance — and there is no pretentious verbiage (with its lurid imagery) to distract the listener.

11 [69/11] DOWN ON ME

(Janis Joplin)

Here is an exception to a Ventures rule: they admit a song that had appeared in the recent past yet had never been a hit. But Janis Joplin was a force to be reckoned with by the time that 1968 was drawing to a close. Big Brother & The Holding Company, of which she was a member, caused a stir with their performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967, and they went on to release a #1 album, *Cheap Thrills*, in August 1968. 'Down On Me' had been regarded as one of the key numbers on the group's debut album issued in August 1967 (it was also put out as an A-single). It was poorly recorded, and, whereas Joplin sounded in good form, wringing the maximum of pathos from very ordinary big-chip-on-my-shoulder lyrics, the group was pretty

uninspired to put it charitably, and it got nowhere. In The Ventures' hands it's a fine example of blues-rock, a punchy rather than tuneful piece well served by sparkling lead guitar and a rhythm section providing exceptionally robust support, with the rhythm guitar very much part of the action for this session.

12 [69/12] FIRE

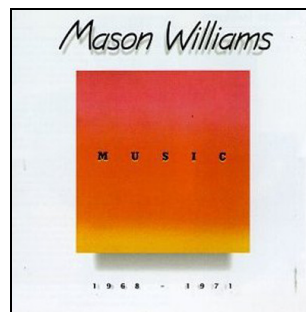
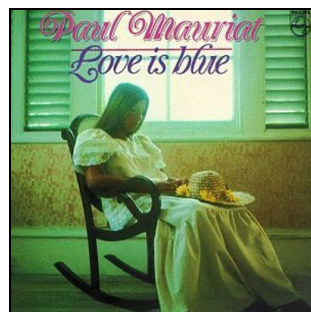
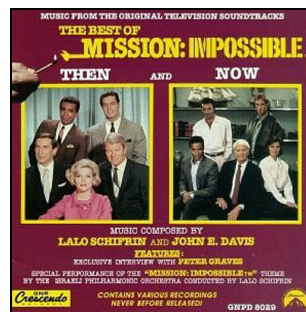
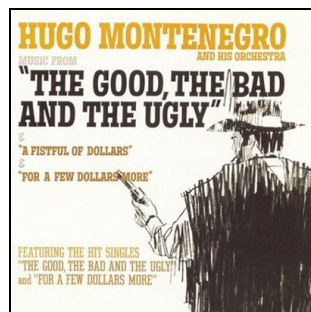
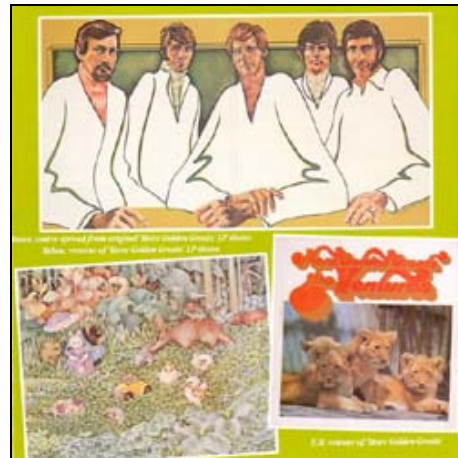
(Arthur Brown/ Vincent Crane)

A 1968 US #2/UK #1 for The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown. Brown was no fool: he exercised his amazing vocal range tellingly, and profitably, on some of the most demented lyrics ever to have occupied a pop song, while Vincent Crane's swirling Hammond organ was nothing short of a masterly tour de force. But whatever one's verdict, Ventures fans have reason to be grateful to Arthur Brown for putting this one in their heroes' path. Gerry McGee, it was soon apparent, was never going to be a mere Nokie substitute. In his initial period with The Ventures he would stamp his own distinctive style on their recordings. Outside the chicken scratchin' style of play, he appeared to steer clear of Nokie's lightning-fast fingerwork and tendency to use his dexterity to improvise like mad. But on occasion McGee did take flight in much the same way, and here is an example. The vocal posturing at the start is short-lived and not revived. From then on it is powerhouse Ventures all the way, or just about, with lead guitarist and organist vying in throwing out intricate runs, until at 2:06 McGee, extricating himself from a passage of incredible dynamism with its thunderous drums and pounding, agitated rhythms, goes into hyperdrive to take us into the eddying fade that arrives thirty breathtaking seconds later.

February 1969 LP (UK)
More Golden Greats
Liberty LBL 83175 Stereo



The quaint UK cover, which looks as if it has been suggested by a visit to Whipsnade Zoo (its lion-house was a popular attraction at the time), is shown above. This album was not released in the US (and then in slightly modified form; pictured second) until March 1970, held back in the wake of the success of *Hawaii Five-0* (it peaked at #154; weeks on chart: 5). It had the usual twelve numbers, but only six of them were new.



1 [69/13] THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY
(Ennio Morricone)

By the time that The Ventures came to record this piece, with Gerry McGee on lead guitar, Hugo Montenegro's version of Morricone's original stirring title tune from the brilliantly scored 1966 spaghetti western had hit US #1/UK #1. It was notable for its grunting vocals, an element dispensed with here, in a very clean-cut and punchy workout (agreeably exhibiting extra slam in the last quarter or so) which does not attempt, as is so often the case with RI adaptations, to compensate for the scaling down of musical resources (core group + organ) by resorting to excessive emphases and overdone flourishes.

2 [69/14] MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE
(Lalo Schifrin)

Venture Gerry McGee would prove his worth in the realm of themology, 'Mission: Impossible', recorded in January 1969, providing a splendid early example of his assured playing. Whatever might be thought of Lalo Schifrin's overall score for the

TV series that ran from 1966 (it is undeniably patchy), the main title is incontrovertibly as stylish as the series itself, richly orchestrated (it attracted a version from The Royal Philharmonic) and full of jaunty twists and turns, and The Ventures make a sterling job of reflecting the original's verve and vitality. Their basic armoury is supplemented with incisive keyboards, but the real highlight is McGee's bluesy Claptonesque solo break at 0:56 — exquisite!



3 [69/15] TORQUAY

Updated Version

(George Tomsco)

The group put out a version of this Fireballs number early on, on the LP *The Ventures* (entry [61/10], see comment). The sound is chunkier on this outing, presumed by DB (see under 1967, p.27) and by Del Halterman (p.177) to be the version laid down in 1967 with Nokie on lead and John Gallie on piano. One wonders though whether this is not a more recent tryout. The emphasis at any rate is decidedly on powerful riffs and more riffs, aided and abetted by wah-wah effects, a pounding piano and a tympani tattoo, and it has to be said that if there was any way of breathing fresh air into a rather cobweb-covered specimen of the genre this was it.

4 [69/16] LOVE IS BLUE

(André Popp/ Pierre Cour)

Paul Mauriat's brilliant version had been a five-week US #1 (ditto for the parent album, *Blooming Hits*) in 1968 (only making #12 in the UK, despite blanket radio exposure), the first instrumental single to make the top spot there since 'Telstar' back in 1962. It is easy to see why unnumbered thousands found it an irresistible purchase, for it is a skilful marriage of gentle rock and powerful percussive touches with the

orchestral armoury of horns, strings and harpsichord to convey a killer melody. In The Ventures' hands it is too brash by half, indeed a model of unsubtlety (as Jeff Beck *meant* his rendition to be). The jangly lead lines plod along to uneasily-coordinated and even jangler keyboards and guitar accompaniment, inflated with snatches of (synthesised) wind later on.

5 [69/17] CLASSICAL GAS

(Mason Williams)

A blend of elegance and dynamism. 'Classical Gas' has deservedly become a classic of the genre, and Mason Williams' imposing opus has attracted a number of fine imitations, among which this from The Ventures deserves a place, capturing as it does much of the variegated texture and bouyancy of the original and indeed enriching it. It was a stage favourite with the group from the 70s on, a showpiece of variable length and differing degrees of elaboration primarily for Gerry McGee, whose admiration for the piece is unbounded.



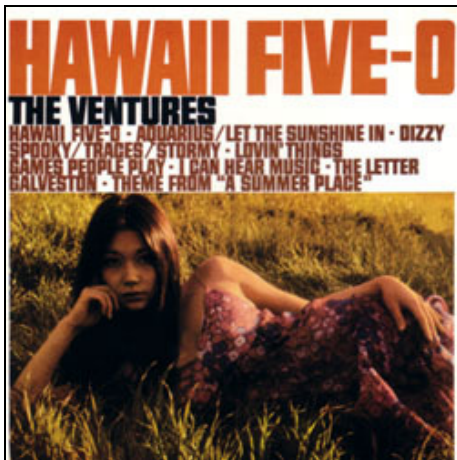
6 [69/18] RAUNCHY

Updated Version

(Sidney Manker/ Bill Justis)

The second revisit of the set, the first Ventures version going back to their debut album: see entry [60/2]. With an arrangement partially based on The Beatles' 'She's A Woman' (DB), there are plenty of crashing chords, lashings of twang and a feeble organ solo, the one saving grace a brief blues-tinged snatch from Gerry McGee at 1:29: would that he had allowed himself to open up a bit more here!

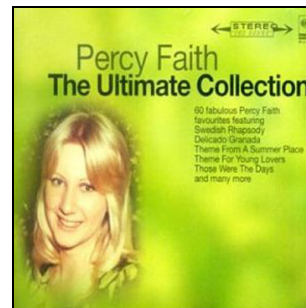
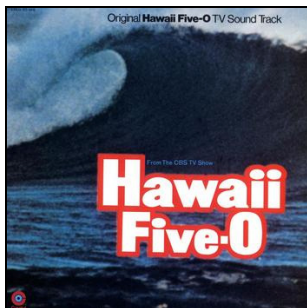
May 1969 LP
Hawaii Five-0
 Liberty LST 8061 Stereo



HAWAII FIVE-0 was recorded in April 1968, released the following September, charted in March 1969 and peaked at #4 on 10 May, giving the group their highest placing after WALK, DON'T RUN among their half dozen Top 40 singles. The eponymous album followed on quickly, climbing to #11 in June (it was 24 weeks on chart), with a single sourced from it, THEME FROM 'A SUMMER PLACE', making #83 on 19 July. Gerry Woodage in the liner notes to the SfM CD and Steve Kolanjian in those to the 1996 CD *TeleVentures* provide further background to these releases.

There were no group originals this time. Nine of the eleven numbers were recent hits (one from 1968, the remainder bang up to the minute, from 1969); there was also The Box Tops' chart-topper from 1967, together with the oldie ...SUMMER PLACE. All were recordings by North American artists.

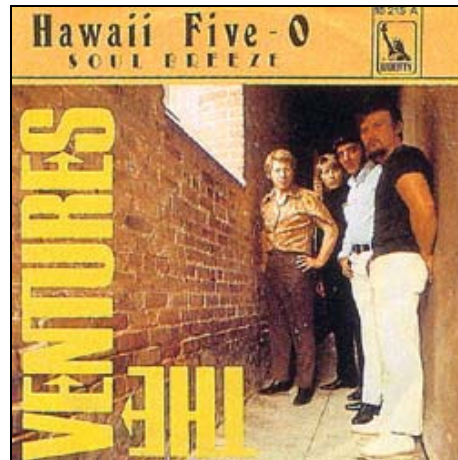
The orchestration in this set, brass and woodwind primarily (arranged it appears by George Tipton), has come in for a fair amount of adverse criticism, with some justice. However, as will be seen from the analyses below, some discrimination needs to be exercised here, since not every number by any means is ruined by a problem that could and surely should have been rectified at the mixing-desk.



<<<<CHOICE CUTS>>>>

HAWAII 5-0 is one of the essential Ventures tracks. Two of the covers deserve honourable mention: LOVIN' THINGS and I CAN HEAR MUSIC.

1 [69/19] HAWAII FIVE-0
(Morton Stevens)

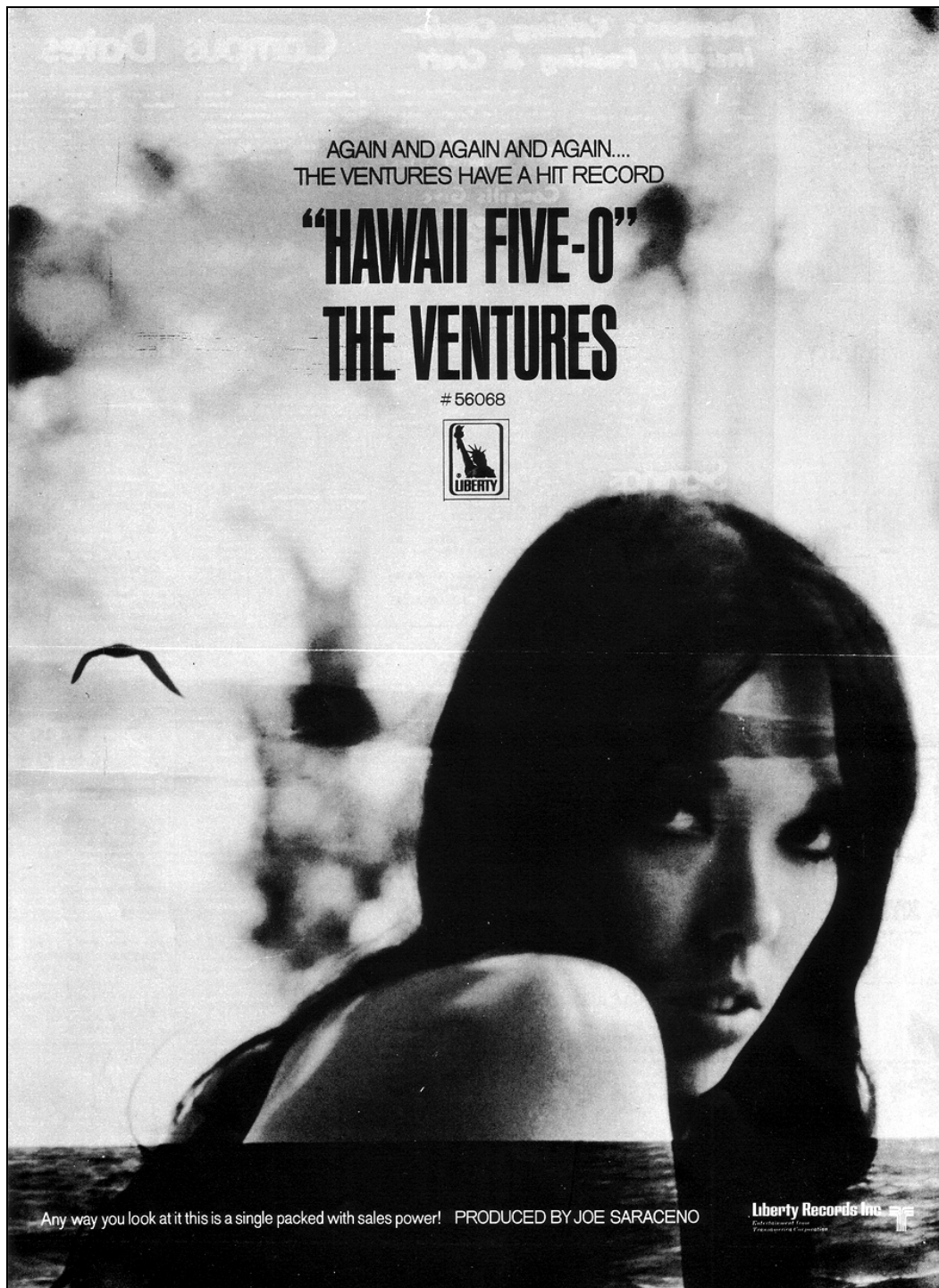


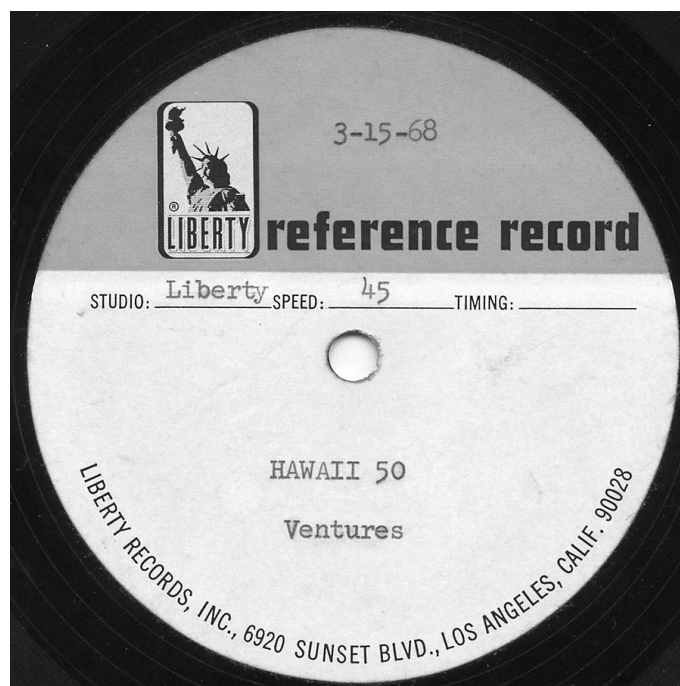
For background see the Introduction to this LP. The arrangement is very close indeed to that of the originator, distinguished New Jersey conductor and composer Mort Stevens who worked with Sammy Davis Jr and other luminaries: refer to Mort Stevens & His Orchestra, soundtrack LP *Hawaii Five-O*, 12 titles on a Capitol LP, no CD issue at the time of writing; it was produced by Mel Taylor (more details in Halterman 176). The theme is conveniently available on the CD *Favourite TV Theme Songs* pictured above.

The issue of personnel has given rise to much speculation over the years, with very different views fielded: that The Ventures with Nokie on lead were involved but not to any great degree, or that they were not involved at all, or that “the basic track had been put down by sessioneers including Tommy Tedesco and Carole Kaye, but ... The Ventures had been dubbed on afterwards” (Joe Saraceno in an interview conducted by Dave Burke³). DP considers that The Ventures’ role was “very limited”, acutely observing that Mel Taylor, when playing the number live, never replicated the bass drum pattern and drum fills heard on the record. If Josie Wilson’s recollection reported by Del Halterman⁴ is accurate, then Nokie was responsible for the lead (with Tommy Tedesco doing further, unspecified work in a session four months further on).

Whatever the precise line-up was, it is in perfect accord with the Mort Stevens original that the orchestration is afforded a very prominent role indeed beside lead guitar, percussion, bass and extremely recessed rhythm guitar.

The nub of the matter though is this: popular as the TV series was, the record would never have risen to such dizzy heights in America's singles chart had it been below par. It is very far from that: a punchy, thrusting rendition with particularly incisive brass/woodwind and percussion, a sonorous lead guitar and a beautifully crafted outro, it ends aptly enough with a bang (or series of bangs) rather than a fade.





2 [69/20] LOVIN' THINGS

(Jet Loring/ Artie Schroeck)

Marmalade, one of the UK's foremost proponents of catchy well-crafted pop songs, had a #6 with this in 1968. Somebody on a visit to England prompted America's own The Grass Roots, themselves pop maestros though they meant nothing in the UK, to record it, which they did with the help of crack LA sessioneers some of whom bathed it in horns, so that in comparison with the English model it had a rather harder sound as well as notably dynamic percussion (an element not as far forward in the mix in our version: a pity). Despite its quality — superior I would say to every one of the eight Top 40 singles attained in the last four years of the decade — they only made #49 with the single (March 1969) though they had an eponymous album which got to #73 the following month.

It is indeed a fine pop song, and I cannot for the life of me see why The Ventures' version has been dragged down (by default: nobody mentions it) to the level of certain other tracks in the present collection. The group play with real verve, there is a great fruity lead guitar sound which gets better and better as the track progresses, and Don Wilson is in there alive and well, the brass (with an admixture of piano) on this occasion competing on equal terms, not as a deadly adversary, with pleasing results.

3 [69/21] GALVESTON

(Jim Webb)

Glen Campbell's single peaked at US #4 (it only made UK #14) the month before our album entered the shops, and in May itself the eponymous album just missed the top spot. It is generally regarded as one of Jim Webb's most accomplished compositions, boasting a gorgeous melody whose striking lyrics expressed, against a backdrop of war and without the slightest trace of mawkishness, yearning for a loved one through the medium of graphic visualisation of the soldier's home town. It was a majestic recording, with lush strings, forceful brass and a sonorous guitar solo, not cutting into the lyrics but moving with quiet dignity into the fade. As with the previous track, it is hard to see how The Ventures' cover can be faulted. The scaling down is compensated

for with that beautifully ringing guitar and, yes, by the brass accompaniment, which on this track too seems well integrated, full-bodied and strident to a degree, as brass commonly is. But listen for comparison to the sounds that fill the carefully crafted original's right channel!

4 [69/22] THE LETTER

(Wayne Thompson)

Another high profile number, a cover of a Box Tops hit (US #1/UK #5 in 1967). The strident duelling between Gerry's lead guitar and the concentration of strenuously deployed brass instruments has certainly been taken to extremes in this particular instance, the closing twenty seconds or so being especially ear-piercing: one of the truly great songs of the glorious 60s vandalised. The overwhelming impact of these sessioneers is so obvious, and so ludicrous, that it is a matter for some wonderment that the track was cleared for public consumption, with bedlam breaking loose as early as 0:33. It is not a question of performance as such, but simply one of relative volume levels, for a little judicious pulling-back at the mixing desk could have made a world of difference. Just contrast the recordings of The Box Tops across the board, with those glorious Memphis horns (arrangements by Wayne Jackson) fine tuned for maximum effect. It's a great pity: in the brief clear spells with Don Wilson discernible in the mix, it is possible to detect an underlying cover version of some splendour, in the group's trademark punchy style. See on *Swamp Rock* below for further thoughts on brass deployment Ventures-style.

5 [69/23] DON'T GIVE IN TO HIM

(Gary Usher)

Gary Puckett & The Union Gap charted with this one in March 1969, peaking at #15, their first single not to make the Top 10, not surprisingly. Distinguished as the composer is (primarily for his work with The Beach Boys and more importantly The Byrds), it is an utterly dreary song, brought to life, with a bit of a struggle, by Puckett's rich baritone voice, rather deliberate sounding on this occasion, and by ingenious orchestration. The Ventures make nothing of it at all: turgid, laboured (the brass section itself sounds detached), with a notably plodding bass, the players go gamely on for over two minutes when one and a half at the outside would have done the job.

6 [69/24] THEME FROM 'A SUMMER PLACE'

(Max Steiner)

Even detractors of this set (i.e. just about everybody) bestow compliments on this piece. Quite why is hard to fathom, even if it is exempted from the attentions of the brass section. Though *Billboard* declared it "hot material" as a single, in which guise it proved to be a modest chart contender (entered June 1969, peaked at #83, five weeks on chart), it sounds horribly dated in present company, to the tune of almost a decade (even if The Lettermen did successfully revive in 1965, as a vocal).

Percy Faith, who had a 9-week US #1 and a UK #2 with it in 1960, surely cannot have believed his luck, because he promptly re-recorded it, with a female chorus, in the wake of this outing. It remains to add that in comparison with the 1960 big production original, which won the Grammy Award for Record Of The Year, with its bright textures, cascading strings and sweeping soundscape, our version sounds positively shrunken and anaemic — an innocuous-sounding album-filler at best. DB takes a contrary view: "The reason everyone likes it is not only because of its great

melody, but also because The Ventures are unburdened with the accessories that you describe — in other words it sounds like a far earlier *group* recording”.

DP notes that The Ventures had had an original in mind for the follow-up to HAWAII FIVE-0, but were overruled by the label.

“Theme From A Summer Place”
56115

THE VENTURES

Produced by Joe Saraceno

The biggest selling instrumental group in the world!



Hit song No.2 from their giant LP
“Hawaii Five-0” LST 8061



Liberty Records
Entertainment Division
Transamerica Corporation

7 [69/25] Medley

SPOOKY : TRACES : STORMY

(Harry Middlebrooks/ Mike Shapiro/ Buddy Buie/ James Cobb:

Buddie Buie/ James Cobb/ Emory Gordy:

Buddie Buie/ James Cobb)

This medley pulls together three notable US hit singles from Atlanta based quintet Classics IV: ‘Spooky’ (#3 [UK #46], 1968), ‘Traces’ (#2, 1969) and ‘Stormy’ (#5, 1968), all of them much admired for their expert arrangements as well as for Dennis Yost’s vocal delivery. Gerry McGee’s jazz/blues-tinged stylings are attractive but it’s the extra personnel, our by now familiar sessioneers, who let the side down, especially in parts 2/3. On SPOOKY there is a nice sinuous bass-line (as with Classics IV), but

the woodwind and brass are no match for the original's nagging organ riffs and atmospheric sax solo. In the brisker passages of TRACES, where all the model's mellowness has melted away together with the lush and variegated orchestration, the brass is a mite too assertive and the sax solo, drawn away from centre-stage, falls rather flat. We expect STORMY to be more boisterous, and Classics IV pile on the emotional intensity in an artfully controlled way, whereas in our instrumental version some nifty guitar work is utterly demolished by man-made storm force winds, more ineptly ferocious than anything on either side of this LP.

8 [69/26] Medley

AQUARIUS : LET THE SUNSHINE IN (THE FLESH FAILURES)

(James Rado/ Gerome Ragni/ Galt MacDermot)

This anthemic piece, run together from two show-stopping numbers from the Broadway rock musical *Hair* by the hit-making machine The 5th Dimension at the suggestion of producer Bones Howe, entered the US singles chart half way through March 1969 and by 12 April was installed at #1 for the first of six weeks. (These American superstars made very little impression on UK record-buyers, though this single, with the 'Aquarius' element in an abridged form, was one of their two chart entries, climbing to #11: Hank Marvin picked up on this with a turbo-charged version on his first solo LP in October.) Bouncy and exuberant, it attracts a pleasing cover from The Ventures, with tasteful orchestration setting off a pacey, beat-laden workout, Mel Taylor's drumming coming through as particularly energetic and telling in the second part.

9 [69/27] GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

(Joe South)

On his 1968 album *Introspect* Joe South, an accomplished session guitarist and multi-instrumentalist, used extensive multi-tracking techniques to lay down most of the parts himself, vocals included. 'Games People Play' was a single from the album which made US #12/ UK #6 in 1969, and it was an impressive tour de force, both vocally (South injected tremendous feeling into the song and his delivery was as varicoloured as it was powerful) and instrumentally (superbly resonant guitar sound, big build-up bringing in brass and strings). Our version uses considerably greater manpower, though the soundscape is not nearly as expansive. Compensation comes in the shape of super-twangy twin leads from Gerry McGee which interface attractively — in fact the exchanges between the two (one a banjo, or at least a simulation of a banjo) clearly constitute the number's main thrust, an extended exercise in country funk. It also emerges not too seriously mauled by the brass battalion, though there are one or two alarming moments.

10 [69/28] I CAN HEAR MUSIC

(Jeff Barry/ Ellie Greenwich/ Phil Spector)

Prompted by the 1969 Beach Boys cover (US #10/ UK #24) of a Ronettes song from 1966, here is an instrumental with style: a beautifully mordant lead guitar, sharp rhythm accompaniment, jaunty bass, incisive percussion — in sum a tight and cohesive ensemble performance from the core group. Then there is the brass, punchy but not too obtrusive, with a rousing bridge passage at 1:50.

11 [69/29] DIZZY

(Tommy Roe/ Freddy Weller)

This one, coming along as it did towards the end of the decade, has naturally been drawn into scathing profiles of ‘bubblegum’, but the fact is that it is a cracking good pop song (“...it’s a beautiful pop record — but I wouldn’t buy it” Stevie Wonder intimated in *Melody Maker* for July 1969!). Written in partnership with a former member of Paul Revere & The Raiders, it is elegant yet punchy in Roe’s best manner, supported by a fine accompaniment (Sid King played guitar) and laced with excellent female backing vocals. It topped both the US and the UK charts in 1969. Once again though our brash brass contingent leaves an indelible impression on proceedings as the set draws to a close. It’s just too clangorous for such a bubbly piece. More’s the pity, because McGee’s mighty twang is a delight, at 1:31 especially, just before the next bout of braying sets in.

December 1969 LP

Swamp Rock

Liberty LST 8062 Stereo



The May *Hawaii Five–0* album, which possessed its fair share of covers of recent hits, had only just missed the Top 10. It is no wonder then that in this follow-up set the group adopted a similar approach, for fifty per cent of the programme at least, targeting recent high profile pop songs, with only CCR falling squarely into the ‘swamp’ territory indicated by the album title: The Rascals, The Rolling Stones, Creedence Clearwater Revival (twice) and Elvis Presley, together with P.J. Proby’s hit from 1967.

In the event, the album did only moderately well, peaking at #81 and surviving on chart for twelve weeks. Arguably The Ventures did not take the principle of trawling the charts nearly far enough, for where was the audience for a guitar-based instrumental outfit purveying songs like CATFISH MUD DANCE and GUMBO, which have an air of authentic Louisiana about them? It is true that the employment in certain numbers of harmonica (Tommy Morgan), accordion (Don Randi), fiddle (Byron Berline) and dobro is well managed (see Halterman 182–183 for a thoroughgoing profile of the sessioners involved, including John Durrill on organ/piano and James Burton on sitar, and for close analysis of the programme). The group also turns to good account the wonderfully churning, riff-based styling perfected by Creedence Clearwater Revival. It is doubtful however that an entire album in this vein

would have sold like hotcakes in that particular state, let alone in the States at large or indeed anywhere else — it would certainly have been far too specialised for devotees of the blues which had emerged in the later years of the 60s as a powerful if not all-conquering musical force.

It must have been a matter of common observation that the record buying public was still very much attracted by mainstream pop. The US Top 5 for the latter half of 1969 throws up artistes such as Zager & Evans, The Archies, Henri Mancini, Johnny Cash, Neil Diamond, Elvis Presley, The Fifth Dimension and Peter, Paul & Mary, while the Top 10 album listings for this same period take in the likes of Tom Jones, Henry Mancini, Johnny Cash and The Who together with various soundtracks. The next major album release from the group, the October 1970 2-LP *10th Anniversary Album*, offered courtesy of CCR the gritty medley ‘Who’ll Stop The Rain’/ ‘Bad Moon Rising’ and another drawing on the genius of Bob Dylan, ‘Blowin’ In The Wind’/ ‘Don’t Think Twice...’, amid a welter of rather lighter fare such as ‘Delilah’, ‘Sweet Caroline’, ‘Good Morning Starshine’ — and ‘Sugar, Sugar’.

A more vexing issue is raised by the presence of a brass section. It is true that use of brass accompaniment in pop at large, especially American pop, was now rampant, but we are talking here rather of overuse — overuse not in a universal sense (though arguably we would be well rid of it at times) but at the level of the individual track. As with the previous album, the results are variable, ranging from perfectly satisfying to downright ruinous. The musical integrity of both HONKY TONK WOMEN and PLAQUEMINES PARISH, for example, is comprehensively and inexcusably undermined, not by the standard of playing, but by the relative volume levels assigned to brass and other instruments.

DP on the other hand, while conceding that “the brass volume track by track is a bit variable”, commends the numbers just mentioned and appeals to vocal groups like Chicago and Ides Of March, groups “with great guitarists” and “swamped by brass”, their production values being imitated by The Ventures here. I very much doubt that this was the intention, and in any case, as DB points out, “Tipton was never anything other than workman-like and pedestrian in his arrangements, whereas bands like Chicago were far more adventurous”. It seems to me incontrovertible that there is a degree of inconsistency, as the volume levels are *excessively* variable, at times so strident and over the top that the crucial *lead lines* are obscured to the point where we might wonder: can these really be taken seriously as guitar instrumentals in The Ventures mould?

<<<<CHOICE CUTS>>>>

CARRY ME BACK is a terrific opener, PROUD MARY does CCR proud, and GUMBO, its brilliant ‘local’ colour aside, is nothing short of a tremendous tour de force.

1 [69/30] CARRY ME BACK

(Felix Cavaliere)

The Ventures had already covered two chart-topping hits from The Young Rascals, [66/57] GOOD LOVIN’ and [67/57] GROOVIN’. This latest (from The Rascals as they were called by then) was not a high performer in chart terms (#26, in 1969), but it is an imposing piece, an earnest expression of disillusionment, a desire to return

from the city to “my old Kentucky home”. The unrestrainedly boisterous backdrop, especially the overwrought vocal support and the agitated piano-playing, is not far removed from nervous breakdown territory. As an instrumental, it is moulded to fit the bill perfectly as a rousing opener to *Swamp Rock*. There is piano here too, which, as well as indulging in a flourish at the close, swells the left channel with a sizzingly animated accompaniment to Gerry McGee’s twangy lead lines, until brass joins in from the opposite side in 1:04: tentatively at first, but soon in full concentration, vying with but not swamping the guitar, and imparting considerable propulsive force.

2 [69/31] HONKY TONK WOMEN

(Mick Jagger/ Keith Richard)

This 1969 US/UK #1 starts off promisingly enough, in fact very promisingly indeed, with some fine McGee finger-picking, but after a minute and a half or so of relative peace and quiet, the brass and harmonica rasp out competitively and, in the end, oppressively. Not a patch on PROUD MARY. Sending the brass boys home for the duration of this session and leaving the harmonica part intact would have made a world of difference. It is natural to marvel once more at how anybody listening to a playback could have let all this cacophony escape instead of sending it back to the mixing-desk for some easily applied tweaks.

3 [69/32] MUDDY MISSISSIPPI LINE

(Bobby Goldsboro)

Bobby Goldsboro had a run of US singles hits from 1964 through to 1973, but this song, released mid-1969, was not among them. Country pop decked out with fairly restrained brass, but more likely to appeal to country fans than the pop mainstream (Goldsboro was by then catering increasingly for country audiences and he was more of a country singer than anything else in the 70s), it paints an affectionate picture of a simple live-for-today worker on a Mississippi barge (‘The Big Muddy’ is one of the river’s many nicknames). Our version is one of the least remarkable numbers in this collection. The guitar lines are funky, and a piping organ fleetingly provides variety, but yet again it is the brass that really ought to have been encouraged to back off, because it all soon becomes very rowdy and in the end downright indecorous.

4 [69/33] JAMBALAYA

(Hank Williams)

Hank Williams’s song from 1952 was a breezy piece with very distinctive lyrics and a memorable melody. The pace of The Ventures’ arrangement, which enlists the aid of an accordion and a hard-worked washboard, is somewhat more leisurely and the tone laid-back, while the lead guitar lines, densely textured and ornate in places, are interleaved with a sinuous bass-line. Throughout all this the contours of the original melody are somewhat blurred, for this is surely designed to be a display of country funk with urban aspirations, so stylishly is it delivered! DP sees it as “an amazing arrangement of a mundane swamp song”.

5 [69/34] SWAMP ROCK

(Bob Bogle/ Don Wilson)

Well summed up by Gerry Woodage, SfM liner notes: “... a slow chomping riff given a swamp feel, ... its appeal was extended with harmonica, and yahoo fiddles on the middle section”. Indeed, it is this section that gives the piece a distinctive country stamp, the rest sounding very much like a doctoring to suit the occasion of one of

those mild Ventures stompers, this fitted out with some emphatic riffs reminiscent of those in 'Batman Theme'. There are borrowings as well, as DB notes, from 'Land Of 1,000 Dances' and 'I Feel Fine'.

6 [69/35] NIKI HOEKY

(Pat & Lolly Vegas/ Jim Ford)

A down-to-earth Cajun-styled song ("Down in Louisiana,/ Down in Cajun land ...") universalised into a jolly rocker by P.J. Proby who recorded it in England under Bob Reisdorff's direction and was rewarded for his efforts with his only US Top 40 hit (#23 in 1967; a non-starter for the UK, whose record-buyers would have been wholly perplexed by the uncompromisingly parochial lyrics). It was recorded by, amongst others, Ellie Greenwich, who made #1 with it in The Ventures' second home Japan in 1968, while Duane Eddy put a version out as an A-single on Reprise in April of this same year. It makes a decent instrumental, largely one suspects because of the way it has been refined. Very cool, and more bluesy than country at nearly every turn, it would have been quite at home in a club in downtown New York. There is a well regulated brass accompaniment, strident but not overpoweringly so, interfacing effectively with the tart-sounding lead guitar.

7 [69/36] GREEN RIVER

(John Fogerty)

This one falls a bit flat: perhaps a respectably long improvising solo at around the 1:20 mark would have lifted it. The force of Creedence Clearwater Revival's 1969 US #2 (UK #19) lies not in the strength of the tune (there is not much of a tune at all), but in Fogerty's powerful echoey vocals and the naggingly repetitive guitar riff, with a second guitar cutting in for the solo to give extra slam —it is to all intents and purposes an old-fashioned rock 'n' roll holler in a countrified environment. The relatively muted lead guitar in our cover version does not strike the right note, any more than does the decidedly unsubdued brass contingent.

8 [69/37] SUSPICIOUS MINDS

(Mark James)

A US #1 for Elvis Presley in 1969 (by the beginning of the following year it had made #2 in the UK), this superb song, put Elvis' way by Chips Moman, must have been an obvious one for The Ventures to take on board somewhere along the line. It makes a pleasing enough instrumental, with an effective build-up, attractive embellishment from a piping organ, and a mellow lead guitar tone. It also carries the by now expected brass accompaniment, which doesn't kill off the killer melody, though it comes within a whisker of doing so after the two and a half minute mark.

9 [69/38] CATFISH MUD DANCE

(Mike Melvoin/ Mel Taylor)

Gerry McGee on dobro is well supported by piano; there is a wailing harmonica too; and no brass. Together with [69/40] GUMBO (track 11), this is about as 'rootsy' as it gets in this set, in line with the graphic title (catfish like muddy conditions; bullhead catfish are also known as mud catfish; the catfish is a type of country line dance, cf. the Mississippi mud dance).

10 [69/39] PROUD MARY

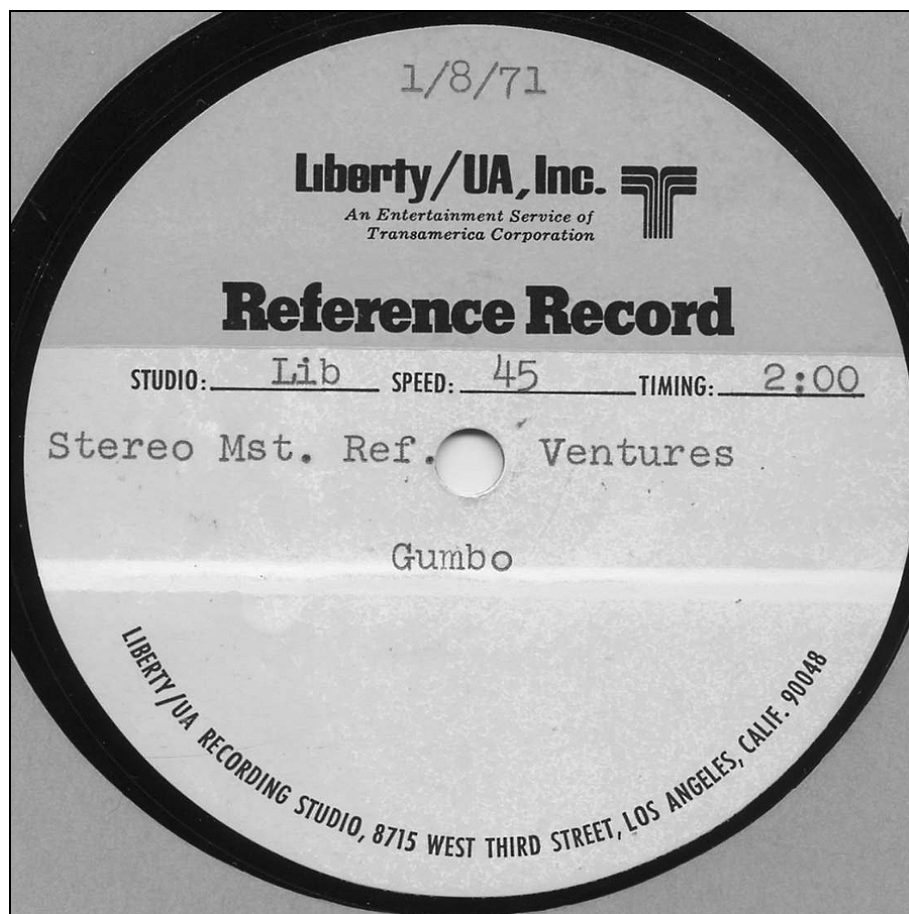
(John Fogerty)

A US #2 (UK #8) for Creedence Clearwater Revival in 1969, one of the great songs of the 60s. Gerry McGee is very much in his element here (compare the dazzling Fogerty double 'Who'll Stop The Rain'/ 'Bad Moon Rising' which lights up the 1970 *10th Anniversary Album*). Robust rather than turbo-charged – true to the spirit of the original with its imagery of the boat “rollin’, rollin’, rollin’ on the river” – it is embellished with effective harmonica and piano. There is no brass, the input of which would, on the track record to date, almost certainly have butchered what has turned out an absolutely red-hot instrumental; great bass-line too, great everything in fact.

11 [69/40] GUMBO

(Gerry McGee)

Gumbo is a Louisiana stew or soup, mentioned together with jambalaya in the Hank Williams song above. It's good to see an example in this collection of something approximating to a real hoe-down, ultra-polished as it is, and cut down the middle by what Gerry Woodage has termed “a vicious lead riff”. And what a rich soundstage! Terry Delaney reported⁵: “Gerry McGee tells us that GUMBO ... had Joe Osborne on bass and Big Jim Sullivan no less on rhythm guitar. They happened to walk in at the end of session when Bob and Don had left the studio for the day”. Are the crashing chords heard from time to time the work of Big Jim? In any event, it's an imposing confection: there's a fiddle in there too, as well as robust brass, though there is no whooping or yelling. Wonderful.



12 [69/41] PLAQUEMINES PARISH

(John Durrill)

Plaquemines Parish is in Louisiana, home of Cajun music, swamp pop and many other styles (and birthplace of Gerry McGee), so this is presumably a piece written in homage. It was reported long after the recording that James Burton had taken part, playing sitar according to Gerry McGee (see p.24 below). It's not an especially riveting piece, but despite that it is a crying shame that the brass brigade have homed in with a vengeance to leave a nasty taste as the set is brought to a close. The end result, by whoever's decision, is frightful, pure bedlam.

1969

FURTHER TRACK

July 1969 B-Single, Liberty 56115

[69/42S] A SUMMER LOVE

(Bob Bogle/ Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson)

Recorded with Nokie Edwards in 1967 but held back till 1969, when it served as the flipside of the charting [69/24] THEME FROM A SUMMER PLACE, this is a wistful ballad whose robust lead guitar lines are effectively embellished by swirling strings and sharply etched keyboards. DP adds: "One of Nokie's most expressive ballad performances, this group original is an often over-looked little gem". The track is conveniently available on the 1997 CD *In The Vaults*.

1969

POST-60s RELEASES

[69/43U] BEAUTIFUL OBSESSION

(Ernie Freeman/ Joe Saraceno)

Rel.2007: CD *In The Vaults* 4/17

'Beautiful Obsession' was a modest hit in 1960 (peaking at #89) for Ernie Freeman in the unlikely-sounding guise of Sir Chauncey & His Exciting Strings. This romantic and tuneful piece was lushly orchestrated, and graced by delicate piano accompaniment from Freeman himself, an element reflected here. The Ventures turn it into something much more dramatic, with a stirring brass fanfare at the start and with prominent brass accompaniment throughout, beautifully complementing Gerry McGee's bold and resonant lead lines. Deservedly rescued from oblivion.

[69/44U] BLACK TARANTELLA

(Trad., arr. Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle)

Rel.2007: CD *In The Vaults* 4/14

See TARANTELLA, entry [63/56S]. With this engaging recasting ("I suspect that the brass etc. has been dubbed on to the original version of TARANTELLA", DB) we have a more robust approach, and also a more authentic one, in that a suitably convivial atmosphere is whipped up with the incorporation of hearty vocal interjections and hand-claps. The soundstage is further enriched by wind and brass, no doubt orchestrated by George Tipton as the *Vaults* annotators surmise. The title

harbours an allusion to the black tarantella, a species of hairy spider, 'tarantella' itself being a diminutive form of 'tarantula' with which the dance was associated.

[69/45U] DELTA LADY

(Leon Russell)

Rel.2007: CD *In The Vaults* 4/9

A UK Top 10 hit for Joe Cocker in the later part of 1969, it peaked at #69 in the US. It is surprising that this cover was set aside, as Cocker was very big that year in the US (extensive tours, in the course of which he met Leon Russell; appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and at Woodstock; two hit albums). Gerry McGee's funky and awesomely resonant lead lines are set off by punchy brass and rhythm guitar effectively reinforced by piano.

[69/46U] DOWNTOWN

(Tony Hatch)

Rel.2007: CD *In The Vaults* 4/21

Petula Clark was still very much in the public gaze in 1969 when The Ventures recorded her mid-sixties hit (UK #2, US #1), intending it for the *Tenth Anniversary Album* released in October of the following year. Tony Hatch made a big production number of his stellar composition with lavish orchestration and powerful backing vocals. The Ventures supplement their own line-up with piano, and within these narrowed parameters it is heady stuff, tight and beat-laden, with the guitars meshing beautifully and Mel Taylor in incandescent form: just listen to that outro! But the track cannot be finished as it stands. Things go uncomfortably quiet with the piano passages at 1:02 and 1:38. They amount to little more than a backing track. Surely brass would have been drafted in to fill out the sound had the number found its way on to an album.

[I had already written this entry when DB confirmed that a version with brass, presumably arranged by George Tipton, does exist. However, the accompaniment is intrusive and the unfinished version was judged more worthy of inclusion in the *Vaults* 4 programme. See p.23 below for further details.]

[69/47U] SON-OF-A PREACHER MAN

(John Hurley/ Ronnie Wilkins)

Rel.2007: CD *In The Vaults* 4/19

As this accomplished composition made UK #9 and US #10 in 1969, The Ventures' September recording must place it among the earliest in a very long line of cover versions, including one by Chet Atkins this same year. This is another production with Ventures and brass competing strenuously. The latter is concentrated noisily in the right channel which makes it just that little bit less intrusive, Gerry McGee's blues-tinged guitar-picking coming through with great power and clarity.

[69/48U] THE JAM

(Bobby Gregg)

Rel.2007: CD *In The Vaults* 4/25

A snatch of studio noise with count-in ushers in a stormer of a number, a showcase for master guitarist Gerry McGee, tracked by pretty raucous but effective brass with Mel Taylor hammering away powerfully throughout. Drummer Bobby Gregg & His Friends' original, with Roy Buchanan on guitar, was a US #29 back in 1962. It was

built around an infectious riff developed by Buchanan, but to his lasting chagrin Gregg claimed the composing credit for himself.

1969

DAVE'S VIEW FROM THE VAULTS

1

One of the most eagerly awaited tracks included on *In The Vaults Volume 4* was The Ventures interpretation of Tony Hatch's classic sixties hit 'Downtown'. The title was available to us in two forms: the basic track featuring Ventures keyboard player Johnny Durrill with Don, Bob, Gerry and Mel along with guitarist Lou Morrell, and another with an added horn arrangement by George Tipton. The brass version features a full complement of other musicians, namely: Cappy Lewis and Chuck Findley (trumpets), Dave Wells (trombone), Bill Hinshaw and George Price (French horns), Jackie Kelso and Allan Beuler (saxes), Arnold Belnick, Marvin Limonick, David Burk and Bonnie Douglas (violins), Doug Davis and Jerry Kessler (cellos). However, the core recording we included on *In The Vaults Volume 4* was more close and intimate and shows off the outstanding piano work of Johnny Durrill to far greater effect. Durrill had started out in the early sixties playing Ventures and Duane Eddy instrumentals in a band called The Mutineers based in Durant, Oklahoma. By 1966 the band had changed their name to The Five Americans and were in the US Top 100 with 'I See The Light'. Another five hits followed during 1967 and 1968, mostly produced by Dale Hawkins of 'Susie Q' fame. Their biggest hit was 'Western Union', which The Ventures also covered. Durrill left the band in late 1968 and moved to Los Angeles to work as a songwriter, but unfortunately he was unable to raise any interest in his material. He confided his plight to singer Vic Dana who suggested that he should contact Bobby Vee. Durrill had previously toured with Vee when in The Five Americans, and the singer recommended him to The Ventures whom he knew to be looking for a keyboard player. He joined the band at \$150 per week just before they hit it big with 'Hawaii Five-O' in August 1969. He recorded eight albums with The Ventures and later went on to write big hits for Cher as well as soundtrack numbers for Clint Eastwood movies, also working with The Everly Brothers in the eighties. 'Downtown', like 'Honey' which featured on *In The Vaults Volume 3*, was originally intended for the band's *Tenth Anniversary* album. It remains a puzzle as to why two of the best tracks recorded for the project were omitted from the issued LP.

2

There is also a small pile of demos gathering dust in Don Wilson's garage which sadly are not within EMI's vaults and so are unlikely to ever officially see the light of day. One of the best of these is 'Mr Blue', a fine version of The Fleetwoods' big hit given a 'Blue Moon' styling which dates all the way back to 1961. It was released in 2007 as a bonus track on Magic's re-issue of *The Colorful Ventures*, but regrettably it is of very poor sound quality and appears to have been sourced from the fan club cassette tape where it made its first appearance. There is also an exciting unfinished track titled 'Swim' which is unfortunately minus any lead instrument, and an early version of 'Wild And Woolly' from the *Wild Things!* LP which is strangely titled 'Murfreeboro'. Norman Petty's composition for The Fireballs, 'The Spur', is covered, and also of Hispanic character is 'Sabrosa' which had been recorded by Chet Atkins back in 1961. Another excellent track is 'Run Don't Walk', an infectious tune

composed by Danny Hamilton. The Hamilton brothers, Judd and Danny, had quite a long association with The Ventures. They were raised in Wenatchee in the Pacific Northwest in Ventures territory, and they first met the hitmakers when Judd's band (Judd Hamilton & The Furies) played support for them at a local gig. When Judd upped sticks and moved to Hollywood in 1961 he looked up Don and Bob and ended up as The Ventures' roadie for a few years. The friendship resulted in Judd recording a 45 for Bogle's Unity label under the name of Shane titled 'On A Night Like This', which was arranged by Hank Levine. The Ventures also backed Judd up on a doo-wop version of Johnny Mercer's 'Dream' which Bob Bogle co-produced at Imperial's studios. The single was released on Dolton and The Ventures are clearly recognisable — it sounds as if they had walked straight in from the sessions that produced their *Surfing* album. Danny played on some recordings for The Ventures and, of course, also wrote some great tunes for the band including the marvellous 'Diamond Head'. Later the brothers would both be involved in the Joe Saraceno produced version of The T-Bones and, even later still, Danny was in the early seventies hit band Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds while Judd pursued a career in films.

3

Unfortunately I have no inside information on the band's final two albums of the sixties, *Hawaii Five-O* and *Swamp Rock*. To be truthful I've never felt passionate enough about the *Hawaii Five-O* LP to be all that curious. Actually that may have been an error of judgement on my part, and reading Malcolm's appraisal of the album he is probably fairer and certainly more generous than I've ever been about it. My problem with the LP was always that George Tipton's brass arrangements seem to drown the band. However, once you get over that prejudice it actually proves to be a pretty solid album and, of course, it was great seeing The Ventures return to chart prominence with the single making number four and the album eleven. From what we now know about the way that Ventures sessions operated I think we can safely say that, judging by the credits on the album sleeves, Mike Melvoyn played on the *Hawaii Five-O* LP and that both he and Mike Rubini played on the *Swamp Rock* album — James Burton also guested on sitar for 'Plaquemines Parish' according to Gerry McGee. *Swamp Rock* is another fine album and over the years it has helped me appreciate Gerry's excellent playing all the more.

4

It seems fitting that in closing I should mention the part that the *In The Vaults* series has played in unearthing so many sixties tracks that were previously completely unknown. I am eternally thankful to Ace Records who supported me when I proposed the idea and who have since persevered with me despite my ever increasing demands for more searches and audition tapes, bringing their legendary quality and care to the series in the process. We have now enjoyed the equivalent of over three new sixties LPs and have heard wonderful tracks like 'Harlem Nocturne', 'The Jam' and 'Delicado' in top notch sound because Ace were willing to make that leap of faith. Cheers, Ace — and thanks to The Ventures for a decade of absolutely fabulous music!

DB February 2008

REFERENCES IN TEXT

H *Del Halterman's Ventures book*

NGD *New Gandy Dancer*

P *Pipeline*

1 P 29 [1995/96] 20.

2 P 31 [1996] 41.

3 P 55 [2002] 17.

4 H162–163.

5 NGD 53 [1998] 13.