New York City - The Blues Yesterday Vol.2



01. Catfish 02. Going back home New York City, 1 July 1955 *03. Stringbeans n°1 04. Stringbeans n°2 05. Matchbox 06. Woke up with the blues 07. I'm lonesome 08. Highway 41 09. Voodoo 10. Waitin' at the station n°1 11. Waitin' at the station n°2 12. Sail on 13. Crossroads n°1 14. Crossroads n°2 15. Up the river*

Cousin Leroy (Leroy Rozier), vocals, guitar Sonny Terry, harmonica Champion Jack Dupree, piano Larry Dale, guitar Sid Wallace, bass Gene Brooks, drums.

New York City, August 1957 *16. Bad hangover 17. Fishtail blues 18. Gimme your bank roll 19. Pepper headed woman* Square Walton, vocals Sonny Terry, harmonica Mickey Baker, guitar Fletcher Smith, piano Johnny Williams, bass Marty Wilson, drums. New York City, 27 August 1953

20. Baby please don't go 21. Move it on over 22. Summertime 23. The sound of blues 24. Growing my own

LeGrand Mellon, vocals Sam The Man Taylor, tenor-sax Ernie hayes, piano + band. New York City, 1966

This second opus of our "New York City/ The Blues Yesterday" series gathers the "complete" recordings of three very obscure but quite good or excellent artists. Cousin Leroy has for a very long time been the subject of questionings, many thinking he was a bluesman from Mississippi (some even suggesting he was a kinfolk to Robert Johnson!). Thanks to Gene Tomko who found him through a concert Leroy gave to a Lion's Club evening (!) in Georgia, we now know he was born Leroy Rozier in Chester (Ga) on September, 30th 1925. He played the guitar and sang, lived in Atlanta, New York City, Eastman, Miami and again New York City where he died on February, 26th, 2008. He recorded a handful of superb 45s in 1955 and 1957, backed by such luminaries as Larry Dale, Jack Dupree and most probably Sonny Terry.

Square Walton (is it really his name?) is still an enigma. A singer (maybe a guitar player) he was born in Georgia around 1920 and maybe died in 1995 in Auburn (Cayuga County in the State of New York). Anyway he has recorded one first rate session in 1953 and another (unfortunately still unissued the year after). Sonny Terry who is, this time for sure, playing behind him didn't remember the man at all (He said: "You know... I've played on so many sessions with so many people).

LeGrand Mellon has also been an enigma for years. Even the photo of a young white girl that illustrated one of her three 45's was said to be suspicious by critics who thought she was in fact a black singer or even only a nickname for a renowned band who took it for contractual reasons. In fact, LeGrand Mellon is the real name of a New Yorker from the famous Mellon family. Born in 1939, she wanted very much to make a career as a singer and paid a session at Columbia's in 1966, backed by a R&B band with probably Sam "The Man" Taylor and keyboardist Ernie Hayes. LeGrand starred also in several TV movies, playing "Miranda" in the famous Wild Wild West series. After that, she devoted herself to a medical career, even becoming a respected figure of Humanitarian programmes, particularly helping to re-establish Haïti's health system. She is still living on Park Avenue and an interview (if she agreed) about her musical short career could prove to be interesting. ---Gérard Herzhaft, jukegh.blogspot.com

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