



BIG JOE TURNER

Born May 18th, 1911
 Kansas City, Missouri
 Died November 24th, 1985
 Los Angeles, California



CHUCK WILLIS

BEN E. KING



"Rock and roll would never have happened without him," songwriter Doc Pomus remarked in Rolling Stone magazine on the occasion of Big Joe Turner's death in 1985 at the age of seventy-four. Turner, a Kansas City-born-and-bred blues shouter, had already more than earned the appellation the Boss of the Blues when he found himself the harbinger of a new sound and style. The version of "Shake, Rattle and Roll" he recorded for Atlantic in 1954 was the sort of forthright rhythm and blues side that generally never made it to the pop charts — as he sang it, the tune wasn't exactly about dancing. But later that year, when Bill Haley and His Comets sanitized the lyrics and simplified the beat, they really started something.

That put Turner in a curious position as both a star from the old world of the blues and a seminal figure in the new world of rock and roll. He was suddenly in demand with an emerging young audience. Turner was on the bill, for example, with Fats Domino and the Drifters during DJ Alan Freed's Rock and Roll Ball at Harlem's Saint Nicholas Arena in January 1955; that same month, he joined Domino, the Moonglows, the Clovers and others in the traveling Top Ten R&B Show, which kicked off in New York City for a tour made up of 42 one-night stands. He shared the stage at Harlem's Apollo Theatre with Bo Diddley, participated in one of impresario Irvin Feld's touring R&B extravaganzas and, in 1957, even went to Australia with Atlantic label mate LaVern Baker to support, ironically enough, Bill Haley on a two-week tour. He courted the new market overtly with his singles "Flip, Flop and Fly," "Lipstick, Powder and Paint" (which was written by rock and roll's premier songwriting duo, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller) and "Corrine Corrina" (his biggest hit, later covered in 1960 by Ray Peterson).

But Turner never left the blues behind. He had begun performing while tending bar at clubs in Kansas City. Eschewing the big-band format popular among many blues singers, Turner chose to collaborate with pianist Pete Johnson. In December 1938, he and Johnson went to New York City at the behest of John Hammond to perform in Hammond's first From Spirituals to Swing show, at Carnegie Hall on Christmas Eve, along with Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday and Hazel Scott. With boogie-woogie in vogue, Turner and Johnson became a regular featured act at the fashionable Cafe Society; in 1941, they were asked to join Duke Ellington's Jump for Joy Revue in Hollywood.

In 1956, Atlantic released The Boss of the Blues: Joe Turner Sings Kansas City Jazz, in which Turner essayed genre classics like "St. Louis Blues" and pop standards like "You're Driving Me Crazy." In his long career, Turner worked with many of the finest jazz performers, including Basie, Art Tatum and Dizzy Gillespie. Although in later years he was forced by infirmity to remain seated when he sang, Turner never gave up recording or performing, showing how a man and a sound can survive, change and grow, outlasting trends until they become timeless.

CASH BOX AND THE BIRTH OF ROCK AND ROLL

BY MARTY OSTROW

SEYMOUR STEIN CALLED me one morning last month. "Marty," he said, "you were at *Cash Box* when the whole rock and roll era began to develop. At the time, *Cash Box* captured the essence of what was happening in our industry. Could you do a feature for our Hall of Fame program on the role *Cash Box* played in the early development of rock and roll?"

Seymour was right. *Cash Box* did play an important role in the growth of rock and roll. To understand how, let's step back a third of a century to the early Fifties and see what the record business was like then, in the period when R&B, country and indie-label pop were all beginning to rub shoulders with one another.

At the time, pop stations aimed their programming at a white audience, playing such artists as Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Rosemary Clooney and Doris Day. But each city with a significant black population had at least one station that featured another type of pop music, playing Jimmy Reed, Ruth Brown, Big Joe Turner, Fats Domino, Muddy Waters, James Brown and Chuck Berry.

Billboard was the leading music trade paper. And since the major labels were making most of the big noise in the industry, they were getting most of *Billboard's* editorial space.

Cash Box was known at the time as the jukebox operator's publication. We had a big section dealing with trade news about jukeboxes and coin machines. We got involved in music when our subscribers began requesting a chart of the records that were getting heavy play on the nation's jukeboxes.

Cash Box started a weekly Top Ten jukebox chart, based on weekly phone calls to leading jukebox operators. While compiling this, we were often told that the most profitable locations were the taverns in black neighborhoods.

Occasionally, we asked the white operators how they chose records for the jukeboxes in the black areas. They often said something like this: "One of the Negro kids in my stockroom and one of my drivers tell me what to get. They listen to this R&B stuff day and night. I don't know good from bad when it comes to R&B. You guys at *Cash Box* oughta compile a list of the best R&B records on the jukeboxes like you do for the pop records."

In our desire to cover some aspect of music in greater depth than *Billboard* – and in the hope that it would result in increased advertising revenue – we decided to cover the R&B area more thoroughly and develop a Top Ten R&B chart.

We went to the independent distributors who handled the R&B labels and got a list of key retail shops in black areas. These distributors also gave us a rundown of one-stops (subdistributors who sold records to jukebox operators, candy stores, shoeshine parlors and so forth).

When we started surveying these outlets, we found that the hits varied greatly from city to city. What was Top Ten in New Orleans often never made it onto the Top Ten in L.A. This was because these small R&B labels were seldom in control of their own destinies. They may have had just one national promotion man (if they had one at all). They shipped their records to some thirty different independent distributors and had to hope that these indie distributors would get excited about a new release.

Promotion in the early days of R&B was very crude. The late Leonard Chess related his *modus operandi* in the early years of Chess Records:

"When I had six or seven new records, I would press up as many 78s as I could fit in the trunk, front seat and back seat of my car and would head out from Chicago to my distributor in Shreveport, Stan Lewis. I would head through the back roads and drive through every black area, looking for transmitting towers. I would walk into these little R&B stations (most of which never saw record-company people), give them a free copy of each of the

six or seven new titles, tell them that they were getting an exclusive and beg for regular play. Then I would drive over to the record shop in town, tell them this was getting heavy play and sell them a box right out of the car.

"The rest of the country was blanketed by sending a box or two of the new singles to my indie distributors and then getting on the phone and threatening the distributor that he's gonna lose the line if he doesn't break all seven singles in his area."

Because the hits in each area were so varied, *Cash Box* developed a series of regional R&B charts known as the Hot Charts, reporting weekly on the Top Ten R&B singles in the twelve cities that had the heaviest R&B sales.

It was this feature that eventually made *Cash Box* important. In the early years, songs like "Shake a Hand," by Faye Adams, and "Sixty Minute Man," by Billy Ward and the Dominoes, would rise to the top of these charts – in every city – and never be heard by any white people other than those music junkies who tuned into R&B stations. This material was never even considered for a pop cover at that time. Then, over a short span of a year or two, Bill Haley covered Joe Turner's "Shake, Rattle and Roll," Perry Como covered Gene and Eunice's "Ko Ko Mo," Pat Boone covered Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame," the McGuire Sisters covered the Moonglows' "Sincerely," the Crew Cuts covered the Chords' "Sh-Boom," and the Fontane Sisters covered Otis Williams and the Charms' "Hearts of Stone."

And since nothing awakens interest among record-industry people like a new, steady source of hit material, the major labels, music publishers, radio stations and songwriters all developed a keen interest in the *Cash Box* Hot Charts.

At this point, radio was still totally divided, with pop covers being played only on white radio and the original R&B versions being played only on black radio. Then along came Alan Freed, who, more than any other single individual, changed the face of radio. He would play a pop version of a hit, followed immediately by the original R&B version of the same song. The R&B sound became more acceptable to the white ear. Soon the white market began to prefer the original versions. It wasn't long before little independent record manufacturers were coming up with one big pop or rock and roll hit after another.

During this series of events, the *Cash Box* staff was called into a meeting to resolve a dilemma. A record called "Gee," by the Crows, on George Goldner's Rama label, had been riding high on the R&B charts. Then it began to get heavy reports out of the white record shops. Although the word was not yet in the record-industry lexicon, we were experiencing the first "crossover" record.

We resolved the problem by keeping the record on the R&B chart and by placing the same record on the pop chart. Needless to say, this opened a Pandora's box of discussions and arguments on the proper way to compile the total volume from both charts. Similar problems of categorization developed out of the country-music area when Elvis Presley and, later, the Everly Brothers – both originally regarded as country acts – got heavier acceptance in the pop area than they did in country.

I remember a series of meetings during the late Fifties at which we discussed whether a record should be reviewed in pop, R&B or country, or in all three, or in two of the three. We even discussed doing away with the R&B section altogether, because we didn't want to limit a record to only one audience when we couldn't tell from the sound who it would appeal to.

Of course, our confusion at *Cash Box* reflected the changes that were taking place in music and in society. It was a privilege to be able to cover from its inception – and to contribute to – one of the most creative music periods in our history.

COUNTRY WINNERS OF "THE CASH BOX" DISK JOCKEY POLL



MOST PROGRAMMED RECORD
"I DON'T HURT ANYMORE"
★ HANK SNOW
★ RCA VICTOR
★ RUMBALEO MUSIC

MOST PROGRAMMED FEMALE VOCALIST
KITTY WELLS
★ DECCA

MOST PROGRAMMED MALE VOCALIST
WEBB PIERCE
★ DECCA

MOST PROGRAMMED INSTRUMENTAL ARTIST
CHET ATKINS
★ RCA VICTOR

MOST PROGRAMMED VOCAL GROUP
JOHNNIE & JACK
★ RCA VICTOR

MOST PROGRAMMED DANCE BAND
HANK THOMPSON'S BRAZOS VALLEY BOYS
★ CAPITOL

MOST PROGRAMMED SACRED SINGER
MARTHA

UP AND COMING FEMALE VOCALIST
ELVIS PRESLEY

UP AND COMING MALE VOCALIST
ELVIS PRESLEY

- HEARTBREAK HOTEL
Ella Fitzgerald
RCA Victor 20 6420
(4-500)
- YES, I KNOW WHY
Webb Pierce
Decca 2780, 9 2780
- I WANT YOU
Ella Fitzgerald
RCA Victor 20 6420
(4-500)
- BLUE SUED SHOES
Columbia 2730, 9 2730
- YOU AND ME
Ella Fitzgerald & Duke Ellington
Columbia 2730, 9 2730
- I'VE GOT FIVE DOLLARS
Fats Domino
Capitol 336, 1336
- CRAZY ARMS
Columbia 2730, 9 2730
- FOR RENT
Columbia 2730, 9 2730
- BUDDY
Columbia 2730, 9 2730

R & B WINNERS OF "THE CASH BOX" DISK JOCKEY POLL

MOST PROGRAMMED RECORD
"PLEDGING MY LOVE"
★ JOHNNY ACE
★ DUKE RECORDS
★ LION PUBLISHING

"EARTH ANGEL"
★ PENGUINS
★ DOOTONE RECORDS
★ DOOTIE WILLIAMS PUBLICATIONS

MOST PROGRAMMED FEMALE VOCALIST
RUTH BROWN
★ ATLANTIC

MOST PROGRAMMED MALE VOCALIST
JOE TURNER
★ ATLANTIC

MOST PROGRAMMED VOCAL GROUP
DRIFTERS
★ ATLANTIC

MOST PROGRAMMED ORCHESTRA
SMALL INSTRUMENTAL GROUP

LOOKOUT 1955!
ATLANTIC IS ROLLING WITH 3 NEW HITS!!!

MISS RHYTHM RIDES AGAIN!
Ruth Brown
"EYE YOUNG MEN"
"EVER SINCE MY BABY'S BEEN GONE"
ATLANTIC-1951

TWO TERRIFIC SIDES BY THE GREAT RAY CHARLES!
Ray Charles
"I'VE GOT A WOMAN"
"COME BACK"
ATLANTIC-1950

A GREAT DEBUT ON ATLANTIC FOR A GREAT ARTIST!
Ivory Joe Hunter
"IT MAY SOUND SILLY"
"I GOT TO LEARN TO DO THE WAMBO"
ATLANTIC-1949

ATLANTIC RECORDING CORP.
135 WEST 57th ST. NEW YORK 19, N.Y.

Happy Holidays... and Thanks For Another Wonderful Year

The Cash Box

THE QUESTION OF ELVIS PRESLEY!

Probably the hottest artist in the entire entertainment business today is Elvis Presley. He's certainly creating the greatest excitement, getting the widest press coverage, drawing the largest audiences, and definitely setting lots of records.

Yet, it's become almost a national pastime to knock Presley. Even people who've never seen him are knocking him — on general principles, it seems. But what's worst of all is that there are people in the record business who are knocking him, when he himself should be boasting about him.

Here's an artist who's as big as any artist can be at the moment—and he was created by the record business. Instead of being proud of the fact that the record industry has the ability and power to create the hottest artist in the entire entertainment field, some people in our business are going along with the general knocking trend because it appears to be the fashionable thing to do. This seems like a first rate case of self-defestation to me.

As a matter of fact, what the record industry needs is a change of attitude to coincide with the change in stature. Records are no longer a minor fad of the entertainment picture. Our industry has grown up and now can take its place equally among all the other entertainment fields. Records are being enjoyed in millions of homes every day and the prospects are bright for even greater growth in the immediate future. Record

dealers and distributors have progressed from the almost marginal businesses they used to be to very substantial enterprises in many cases. And as far as influence goes, records today create stars faster than almost any other medium.

Moreover, the record industry should take pride in the great star it has created, stars who have gone on to become top box office draws in other fields. Just off-hand, here are a few. "What industry wouldn't be proud, for instance, of having created a Perry Como, who's come to represent everything that's good and nice to millions of people all over the country? Or a Doris Day, who has gone on to be the top female attraction in the motion picture industry? Or an Andy Griffith, who, as the result of one record, received the recognition which enabled him to exploit his acting ability first on Broadway and currently in a motion picture? The record industry has also produced an Eddie Fisher, one of the top names in the entertainment world, and a Johnny Ray, whose appeal has been worldwide, and many others that we could go on listing.

The point is, let's stop being unfair to ourselves. Let's stop knocking the products we create. An Elvis Presley, whether you like his style or don't, is a great thing for the record industry. Let's devote the energy we would spend in hating the guy to trying to develop several more who will sell records at the pace that he does.

The Clovers
Going Strong
LOVEY DOVEY
- YOUR CASH AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT TRASH

"LIFE PROBLEM"
By GUITAR GABLE and The Musical Girls

"CONGO MOMBO"
By LIGHTNING SLIM

"WONDERIN' AND GOIN'"
By JERRY McCAIN and The Mavericks

"RUN UNCLE JOHN! RUN!"
By JERRY McCAIN and The Mavericks

WRITE WIRE PHONE
NASHBORN RECORD CO., INC.
177 3rd Ave., New York 1, N.Y.
Phone: CH 2-2151
PLASTIC PRODUCTS
Mighty Tone

ATLANTIC RECORDING CORP.
135 West 57 St. N.Y.C.

"I'LL REMEMBER"
By The Five Satins

REACHING THE TOP
WILLIE MABON
"KNOCK ON WOOD"
"GOT TO LET YOU GO"

RECORD CO.

"PLEASE LOVE A FOOL"
By The Medallions

HOT HITS

in ARLENE
1. HEARTS OF STONE (DeLuxe 6062)
2. YOU USSET ME, BABY (RPM 416)
3. EARTH ANGEL (Penguins 348)
4. RECONSIDER BABY (Lowell Fulson (Checker 804)
5. TEACH ME TONIGHT (Dinah Washington (Mercury 70497)
6. SINCERELY (Moon/Lows (Chess 7581)
7. WHITE CHRISTMAS (Clyde McPhatter & Drifters (Atlantic 1048)
8. POISON IVY (Willie Mabon (Chess 1580)
9. MAMBO BABY (Ruth Brown (Atlantic 1044)
10. HURT (Ray Hamilton (Epic 9086)
11. I'M READY (Muddy Waters (Chess 1579)
12. HURTS ME TO MY HEART (Faye Adams (Herald 434)
13. TWEEDELE DEE (Lavern Baker (Atlantic 1047)
14. LAST NIGHT (Little Walter (Checker 805)

in CHICAGO'S South Side
1. HEARTS OF STONE (DeLuxe 6062)
2. YOU USSET ME, BABY (RPM 416)
3. EARTH ANGEL (Penguins 348)
4. RECONSIDER BABY (Lowell Fulson (Checker 804)
5. TEACH ME TONIGHT (Dinah Washington (Mercury 70497)
6. SINCERELY (Moon/Lows (Chess 7581)
7. WHITE CHRISTMAS (Clyde McPhatter & Drifters (Atlantic 1048)
8. POISON IVY (Willie Mabon (Chess 1580)
9. MAMBO BABY (Ruth Brown (Atlantic 1044)
10. HURT (Ray Hamilton (Epic 9086)
11. I'M READY (Muddy Waters (Chess 1579)
12. HURTS ME TO MY HEART (Faye Adams (Herald 434)
13. TWEEDELE DEE (Lavern Baker (Atlantic 1047)
14. LAST NIGHT (Little Walter (Checker 805)

in NEW ORLEANS
1. HEARTS OF STONE (DeLuxe 6062)
2. YOU USSET ME, BABY (RPM 416)
3. EARTH ANGEL (Penguins 348)
4. RECONSIDER BABY (Lowell Fulson (Checker 804)
5. TEACH ME TONIGHT (Dinah Washington (Mercury 70497)
6. SINCERELY (Moon/Lows (Chess 7581)
7. WHITE CHRISTMAS (Clyde McPhatter & Drifters (Atlantic 1048)
8. POISON IVY (Willie Mabon (Chess 1580)
9. MAMBO BABY (Ruth Brown (Atlantic 1044)
10. HURT (Ray Hamilton (Epic 9086)
11. I'M READY (Muddy Waters (Chess 1579)
12. HURTS ME TO MY HEART (Faye Adams (Herald 434)
13. TWEEDELE DEE (Lavern Baker (Atlantic 1047)
14. LAST NIGHT (Little Walter (Checker 805)

in DALLAS
1. HEARTS OF STONE (DeLuxe 6062)
2. YOU USSET ME, BABY (RPM 416)
3. EARTH ANGEL (Penguins 348)
4. RECONSIDER BABY (Lowell Fulson (Checker 804)
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12. HURTS ME TO MY HEART (Faye Adams (Herald 434)
13. TWEEDELE DEE (Lavern Baker (Atlantic 1047)
14. LAST NIGHT (Little Walter (Checker 805)

in LOS ANGELES
1. HEARTS OF STONE (DeLuxe 6062)
2. YOU USSET ME, BABY (RPM 416)
3. EARTH ANGEL (Penguins 348)
4. RECONSIDER BABY (Lowell Fulson (Checker 804)
5. TEACH ME TONIGHT (Dinah Washington (Mercury 70497)
6. SINCERELY (Moon/Lows (Chess 7581)
7. WHITE CHRISTMAS (Clyde McPhatter & Drifters (Atlantic 1048)
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13. TWEEDELE DEE (Lavern Baker (Atlantic 1047)
14. LAST NIGHT (Little Walter (Checker 805)

ONCE IN A LIFETIME...
95 RATING
BILLBOARD SPOTLIGHT
DISK OF THE WEEK

Johnny ACE'S
"PLEDGING MY LOVE"
DUKE-136

Also Available 6 Consecutive Hits
January 1, 1953

THANKS... from
THE MIDWINTERS
FOR SELECTING US AS THE No. 1
RHYTHM AND BLUES GROUP OF THE YEAR

HEARTS OF STONE
DeLuxe 6062

YOU USSET ME, BABY
RPM 416

EARTH ANGEL
Penguins 348

RECONSIDER BABY
Lowell Fulson (Checker 804)

TEACH ME TONIGHT
Dinah Washington (Mercury 70497)

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HURTS ME TO MY HEART
Faye Adams (Herald 434)

TWEEDELE DEE
Lavern Baker (Atlantic 1047)

LAST NIGHT
Little Walter (Checker 805)

THE NATIONS
Rhythm & Blues
TOP 15

HEARTS OF STONE
DeLuxe 6062

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RPM 416

EARTH ANGEL
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