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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1992

UPBEAT

'I've loved to play and sing from the moment I knew what it was.'

UPDATE

HOT TICKETS

Hot Tickets covers the period from Friday through the following Thursday. Our opinionated selections put an emphasis on acts you might otherwise overlook.

DON'T MISS

Von Freeman Quartet, Just Jazz, Wednesday, Dec. 9, through Saturday, Dec. 12
This tenor saxophone has spent most of his life and career in Chicago, making just enough recordings and enough touring forays into other jazz towns to establish a reputation as one of the great tenor saxophones in the country. He's 70 years old, which means he's observed firsthand the lesson of jazz styles all the way back to the big-band years.
Freeman will be backed by a very talented local group, the Steve Kirby Trio, which features Reggie Thomas on piano, Kirby on bass and the incorporeable Gary Stokes on drums. With musicians of this caliber backing him, Freeman ought to be challenged enough to play some terrific jazz.

—Steve Pick

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Treat Fishing in America, off Broadway, Friday, Dec. 4
These wacky posters have been in our town quite a few times now, and they've received glowing accolades from all who have seen them.

Phish, Mississippi Nights, Friday, Dec. 4
Phish just might be the next Grateful Dead. If they last long enough, they certainly have the chops to play just any kind of music that comes into their heads, and that's just about any kind of music you can name.

Soup Dragons, Mississippi Nights, Saturday, Dec. 5
Riding high on the alternative-rock circuit, the Soup Dragons mix catchy pop hooks with downbeat beats to make for a pleasantly inviting sound.

Dr. Hector & the Groove Injectors, off Broadway, Saturday, Dec. 5
This Florida-based blues outfit has wowed audiences every time they've toured through town, and they're undoubtedly ready to do it again.

Townes Van Zandt, Cicero's, Wednesday, Dec. 9
Steve Earle says Townes Van Zandt is the best songwriter in the world today, and Van Zandt has certainly put together enough Texas folk-country gems to make such a statement altogether laughable. Local singer/songwriter Bob Reuter opens.

TOP ALBUMS

The best-selling albums of the week, based on sales at **Streisand Records** outlets:

1. "The Bodyguard," soundtrack
2. "Love Deluxe," Sade
3. "Predator," Ice Cube
4. "Unplugged," Eric Clapton
5. "One Breath," Kenny G
6. "25," Harry Connors Jr.
7. "Automatic for the People," R.E.M.
8. "Christmas," Mannheim Steamroller
9. "A Very Special Christmas II," various artists
10. "Harvest Moon," Neil Young
11. "A Very Special Christmas III," Mannheim Steamroller
12. "Hard or Smooth," Weezer-N-Effect
13. "Boomerang," soundtrack
14. "Our Time in Eden," 10,000 Maniacs

TOP SINGLES

The top contemporary singles of the week nationally, as listed by **Radio & Records**:

1. "I Will Always Love You," Whitney Houston
2. "Good Enough," Bobby Brown
3. "How Do You Talk to an Angel," Heights
4. "Do You Believe in Us?," Jon Secada
5. "Heal Love," Mary J. Blige
6. "In the Still of the Night," Boyz II Men
7. "To Love Somebody," Michael Bolton
8. "What About Your Friends," TLC
9. "I Die Without You," PM Dawn
10. "I'll Ever Fall in Love," Shai

POP QUIZ

- "BOOM BOOM"**
John Lee Hooker (Point Blank/Virgin)
"The Healer" and "Mr. Lucky" reintroduced Hooker to a large record-buying audience, but "Boom Boom" tops three recent celebrity-studded albums by presenting the 75-year-old blues hero at his most elemental. The feel is raw and headlined, which lets the still-powerful Hooker cut deep to the core of nervous desperation or brightens his constant swagger in those singing, boogie and slow, tortured blues.
- Mike Boehm, Los Angeles Times
- glareview: Just after 'THE BODYGUARD' Soundtrack (Arista)**
Whether or not she makes a credible actress, Whitney Houston really is a beautiful singer, so it's no surprise that the soundtrack to "The Bodyguard" comes packed with pop pointers. "I Will Always Love You" is a perfect (and predictable) bit of romantic trifle, and the slick, new-jack sound of "Run to You" makes it her most believable R&B effort yet. But her "Jesus Loves Me" seems calculated when compared to Aaron Neville's angelic "Eyes If My Heart Would Yours," and Houston's w-

ANSWERS

1. Billy Preston; 2. Poco; 3. Topper Headon; 4. "King Tut"; 5. The Church.

By Jon Edwards
Of the Associated Press

DAN SEALS says country music has phenomenons and fuses. The phenomenons strike swiftly. The fuses sustain. And although he maintains that he fits into neither category, he's had 16 years as one of country music's most enduring, steady singers.

Along the way, his 1988 song "Bug" crossed over into pop and was one of Nashville's top hits of the decade. Before his country career, Seals was the England Dan of England Dan and John Ford Coley, who had the pop hit "I'd Really Love to See You Laugh." It sold 2 million copies in 1976.

On a rare day off the road earlier this year, the soft-spoken Seals reviewed his consistent career.

This year, he released his seventh country album, "Walking the Wire," and the 44-year-old Seals says the title is appropriate for a singer. He's rarely been a performer who plays it safe.

His 1988 music video "Rage On" depicted an interracial relationship — an unusual sight in country music. On the latest album, the song "We Are One" pleads for harmony in the world, mentioning Selma, Ala., Jerusalem and Pakistan. "We are flowers of one garden... leaves of one tree," Seals sings. "You see people crying in the audience when you sing it," said Seals, the younger brother of Jim Seals of Seals and Croft. He's plugged along since his first country album in 1982, staying popular despite the waves of new singers. "You have to be what you are and hope to keep going on and working," Seals said. Warner Bros. Records advertised the

latest album this way: "He's not the new anybody. We kinda like that."
"I don't write old copy, but I'm proud that Warner Bros. is allowing my success over a long period of time," said Seals. "I think there's respect that goes along with that."
Some of his hits: "Everything That Glitters (Is Not Gold)," "Big Wheels in the Moonlight," "Love on Arrival," "Addicted," "Meet Me in Montana" (a duet with Marie Osmond).
"Bug" was voted single of the year by the Country Music Association, and he and Osmond were chosen duo of the year in 1986. And of a string of 10 singles he released through 1986 was made it to No. 1 on the country charts.

Seals, the son of a pipe fitter, was born in McCann, Texas, and grew up in Frisco, Texas, and in Dallas. "I've loved to play and sing from the moment I knew what it was," he said.

At a younger, he was in a band that played at roller-skating rinks where people would remove their skates and dance to the music.

He and Coley broke up amicably in 1979 to pursue separate careers. Seals decided on country music and Coley turned to acting. "It was his love of college and he always loved it," Seals said. A year after they dissolved their act, Seals went bankrupt, but he came back from that setback to establish himself as one of Nashville's most durable performers.

He's especially popular in Europe. "I've been blessed with having the Voice of America play my stuff worldwide," he said. Seals says he gets invigorated with each



Dan Seals

new record, but he always doubts whether they will be well received.
"It's a new day every time we get a new single or album out. But every single that comes out, I think, they won't play it one."
The audience moves left and right constantly. I've watched country music evolve since I was a kid."

Dan Seals
Where: Hickman Auditorium, 745 Joffe Boulevard
When: Shows at 6 and 8 p.m.
Saturdays
How much: \$13.50
Information: 296-8000

STEVE PICK

An 'Essential' Blues Collection That Is... Well, Essential



WHEN American music historians of the future examine our century, I expect that they will label it the Age of the Blues, for no other form has commanded so much of our attention.
As a form, it has not only been flexible enough to adapt to countless regional variations and frequent changes in instrumentation, but it has also been the basis for the birth of at least two other notable genres, jazz and rock 'n' roll, and has played an enormously influential role in the development of country music.
I also expect that when this music is taught in schools, something roughly akin to the series of CDs set out in *Urban Blues*, "Blues Masters: The Essential Blues Collection" will be used as a basic oral text.
Blues masters have been plentiful in recent decades, but prototypes haven't had a single source to build an appreciation of the music. Though the first two decades of 20th-century blues were not documented, the white businessmen who owned recording companies at the time had absolutely no desire to look into music as alien to their own experience, so now we have more than 70 years of blues history at our disposal, and "Blues Masters" is as fine a place to start

learning about that history as I have found. It includes enough rare material that only fanatical blues collectors will find nothing new in any given volume.
The plan is to release 15 CDs over the next few months; the first five are in stores now. Each volume is meant to provide an introduction to one specific aspect of the blues, and, considering the limitation of only 18 cuts per disc, each does a reasonable job.
Vol. 1 is titled "Urban Blues," and it tells the tale of the ways in which the music was adapted as black farm workers migrated into big cities during the years immediately following World War I. The music here is relatively slick, with smooth, sensuous singing dominating most cuts. Because the urban experience was somewhat different in different areas of the country, this volume has a lot of a solid identity than the others in the series, but it serves up a lot of great hit records, including "The Things That I Used to Do," by Guitar Slim; "Farther Up the Road," by Bobby Bland; and "Part Time Love," by Little Johnny Taylor.
"Postwar Chicago Blues" is the subject of Vol. 2. As Chicago was home to both Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, as well as a host of

other brilliant blues artists, this volume is, of necessity, the one offering the most bare-bones sketch of its subject. There's plenty of great blues stuff here — from Waters, Wolf, Little Walter, Big Daddy and Jimmy Rogers — but even more exciting is the inclusion of brilliant yet obscure cuts such as "You May," by Jody Williams, and "Blue Guitar," by Earl Hooker. That loose-but, funky rhythmic drive of Chicago blues propelled a lot of great music.
The variety of "Texas Blues," covered in Vol. 3, seems at first fairly immense, but almost every cut here shows off the influence of either Blind Lemon Jefferson, who invented the single-note monophonic blues guitar, or the electric blues of T-Bone Walker, who smoothed out and electrified them. The compilers chose lots of atmospheric instrumentalists to show off these guitar styles, as well as the shuffling, swinging rhythms of the state. Collectors, please note that Sonny Ray Vaughan's finest recording of "Flood Waters in Texas," originally on a rare compilation album called "Blues Explosion," is included here.
The humble blues harp is the focus of Vol. 4, "Harmonica Classics." All the cuts date from after World War II, when the harmoni-

ca was amplified and a whole new world of possibilities opened up to its players. Almost every cut here is great, but the album becomes indispensable with the inclusion of Charlie Manohela's stunning jazz masterpiece "Christo Redemptor," which is absolutely guaranteed to stop you dead in your tracks the moment you first hear it — and keep you there until you've heard it several times.
Finally, for sheer dancing fun, Vol. 5, "Jump Blues Classics," cannot be beat. These records generally featured wickedly wailing saxophone and wildly pumping drums, distilling the essence of swing enthusiasm down into a raunchier, and frankly sexier, sound.
With "Shake, Rattle, and Roll," by Jay Turner; "Good Rockin' Tonight," by Ray Charles; "The Train Kept A-Rollin'," by Tiny Turner; and "Hound Dog," by Big Mama Thornton (also on the Texas volume, a duplication that should have been caught), you get to hear the far more exciting source records, for four of rock 'n' roll's seminal hits.
But mostly, you get the treatable pleasure of moving your feet. And, come to think of it, pleasure is really what most of these blues recordings have to offer.

RATING THE RECORDS

"THE PREDATOR"

Ice Cube (Priority)

A recent survey says that 39 percent of the people in Los Angeles believe that race relations have gotten worse since the riots earlier this year. That doesn't come as news to Ice Cube. In fact, the bulk of his new album, "The Predator," is devoted to addressing how race has changed since the verdict in the Rodney King trial. (Check the caught-by-the-cops scenario in "We Got the Camera.")

But rather than simply spew venom as he did on "Death Certificate," Cube keeps his rage focused on the social system that keeps racism in place. Besides, no matter how tough his rhymes are, the beats behind them like "Wicked," "Check Yo Self" and "Dirty Mack" hit even harder. And that, in the end, is what makes "The Predator" a true killer.

—J.D. Considine, Baltimore Sun

"BOOM BOOM"

John Lee Hooker (Point Blank/Virgin)

"The Healer" and "Mr. Lucky" reintroduced Hooker to a large record-buying audience, but "Boom Boom" tops three recent celebrity-studded albums by presenting the 75-year-old blues hero at his most elemental. The feel is raw and headlined, which lets the still-powerful Hooker cut deep to the core of nervous desperation or brightens his constant swagger in those singing, boogie and slow, tortured blues.

—Mike Boehm, Los Angeles Times

"I'm Every Woman"

Janet Jackson (A&M)

Janet Jackson's "I'm Every Woman" hardly compares to the funk renaissance of "I'm Gonna Be a Lonely Day" by the S.O.U.L. SYSTEM.

"WEST OF HOME"

Vic Chesnut (Texas Heat)

The Georgia oddball's idiosyncrasies have been slightly refined in his second album, but even with tasteful small-band settings (R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe produced again) and a sharper songwriting focus, Chesnut is an acerbic talent.

"THE WAY WE WALK"

Genesis (Atlantic)

Concept albums aren't exactly a new phenomenon, but Genesis' latest is a new twist. This time, the concept has less to do with what the music says than with the way it's packaged.

With "The Way We Walk," Genesis offers the listener a portion of its slow (referred to as "The Shards"). In January, a second volume arrives, returning the arty extended numbers ("The Longs").

It's a nice way to service both the pop and art-rock sectors of the Genesis fan base. It's a listening experience, apart from an impassioned "I Can Dance" and a funky "That's All," the concert versions of the shorter songs add little to the originals.

—J.D. Considine, Baltimore Sun

"WALLS CAN FALL"

George Jones (MCA)

Few things in life feel as right as George Jones singing about doing wrong. He's got his strongest batch of songs in years, mostly tales about screwing up in one way or another, and he sings 'em with a gripping immediacy.

"MALCOLM X"

Movie score (Quest-Repertoire) and movie soundtrack (40 Acres and a Mule-Columbia)

There may have been only one "Malcolm X," but there are two soundtrack albums — and that might seem like a bad thing, since "The Original Motion Picture Score" is old-fashioned movie music, and perfectly suited to the epic sweep of the film, thanks to Terence Blanchard's lush orchestral writing. But it's the "Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack" that pop fans will most want to hear: it balances well-chosen period pieces such as Louis Jordan's "Beans and Cornbread" or John Coltrane's "Alabama" with Arrested Development's soulful, savvy "Revolution."

"ROUGH SIDE"

Whylicite (MCA)

This debut album suggests that English kids show American soul music more than we do. Whylicite sings his heart out on 12 original songs that re-visit the history of soul from Jackie Wilson, Sammie Robinson and Marvin Gaye through Isaac Hayes to Prince.

—Dana O'Connell, Los Angeles Times