by inimitable Clell Sumney with Roy Acuff's band played on an electrified instrument. Those who never saw "Cousin Jody" attempt to swallow his chin while dashing about his lap guitar, missed a moment in country music entertainment that is not likely to recur.

While the record seems to be more a fortuitous issue of sides that Old Timey had on hand rather than a purposeful attempt to chart the course of the steel guitar, it nonetheless succeeds in doing nearly just that.

Two years ago, shortly before he died Jesse Jones of Bloomington, Indiana, guitarist with the "Radio Rangers" told me about the impact of the slide guitar on his music. The "Rangers" were a country-and-popular band that played all over Indiana in the thirties and as their name implies had a successful radio following.

Mr. Jones talked about the band's excitement at hearing the slide, "steel" sound and of stopping at each music store in each town the band played in until they could buy an instrument that would give them the same sound. He talked with a remembered sadness of losing the instrument one rainy night in Northern Indiana when it bounced off the top of the car.

A well done and much needed record. Buy it.


Reviewed by Patty Hall.

Bessie Jackson & Walter Roland (1927-1935) is a good combination of two excellent, but oft overlooked, blues artists from the Depression Era. Jackson, a vocalist, and Roland, a pianist, vocalist and guitarist, perform together on most of the cuts on this reissue album. Roland performs himself on six of the album's selections, and with Sonny Scott on two selections, calling themselves "The Jolly Two."

The album is a fine anthology of six and twelve bar blues and the selections are arranged on the record with a sensitivity for displaying the many faceted talents of each artist involved, as well as showing the vocal and instrumental development of each. For instance, Jackson's developing vocal style can be traced by the cuts, selected from different years (dated on the album cover) between 1927, when her voice was devoted to soft, and more country-style blues, to 1935, when she had adapted a much fuller, more dominant blues style.

Not only are there such cuts as "Jookit, Jookit," which show Roland as the fine, flowing blues pianist that he was, but there are other cuts, like "Fenniless Blues," which demonstrate his vocal talents, and "T-Model Blues," in which he plays a simple sounding, yet rhythmically impeccable guitar. Special note should be
made of the two songs on the album by the "Jolly Two." "Guitar Stomp" and "Railroad Stomp" are both incredibly subtle guitar duets, the former being an excellent ragtime-styled number, and the latter, a rhythmically intricate stomp. And, as most cuts on this disc, the two stomps are placed in excellent spots in the album's chronology, each being the first song on either side, good instrumental lead-ins to the vocals which follow.

Bessie Jackson's performances range from lower-key, softer blues vocals (as in "Sweet Patunia" and "Levee Blues") to later, more forceful tunes, like "Jump Steady Daddy." Her prize performance on the album, however, is "They Ain't Walkin' No More," which deals with the raised consciousness of a prostitute. Without knowing who was responsible for the euphemistic title, it is audibly obvious that the key line to the song is not, as the title indicates, "...they ain't walkin' no more..." but "...tricks ain't walkin' no more...." "Barbecue Bess" is another truly fine cut, utilizing the sexual imagery of "...wild about my barbecue..." to bring it across.

Along with having a sensitive selection and arrangement of material, this reissue album boasts excellent liner notes; rather than running on in journalistic superlatives, the notes devote themselves to stylistic considerations of artists and individual songs, describing meters, keys, and formats, within the blues context.

If there were some possible way to increase the fidelity of a reissue of this sort, which gets lost in the attempt to filter out surface noise, the recording industry would have discovered a major breakthrough. Unfortunately, this particular recording suffers in a few places from this filtering process (case in point, "Jim Tampa Blues"). Some other cuts are half-inaudible due to wear on the original 78 recording.

This technological problem notwithstanding, the people at Yazoo did an admirable job in the compilation, notation, and the entire reissuing of the performances of these two important blues artists, who, in these times of nostalgic attention being paid to the "stars" of the Depression Blues Era (such as Bessie Smith), might otherwise have been overlooked.

Ritual Music of Ethiopia.

Reviewed by Ruth M. Stone.

Since there have been, until recently, only a few commercial recordings of Ethiopian music available, this new recording increases the availability of recorded sound from the region. Ritual Music of Ethiopia, collected in the summer of 1973, offers sound samples from various Ethiopian peoples: Wallamo,