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MUSIC
In The Key of Florida
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**WINTER 2004**

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**Humanities Alive!**

News of the Florida Humanities Council

**Favorite Florida Places**

Wakulla Springs
By Tracy J. Revels

**A Place of Romance and Pain**

They came seeking new lives, but what they found left them singing the Florida Blues
Adaptation by Barbara O'Reilley

**Mystery of the Bluegrass 'Anthem'**

Who really wrote 'Orange Blossom Special'?
By Randy Noles

**A Colorful Enigma**

Florida folk music is as mixed as alligator stew
By Peter B. Gallagher

**Listen to the Joy of Junkanoo!**

It's the sound of freedom
By Janet L. DeCosmo

**Sacred Steel**

Steel guitars sing in fiery praise
By Robert L. Stone

**Miami - Latin Music Center**

It's the international capitol
By Maria Elena Cepeda

**Florida Rocks!**

From primal to uptown to techno to underground, we've got pop
By Jeffery M. Lemlich

**Book Briefs**

Journalists tell their own stories

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On the cover: "Diamond Teeth Mary" McClain outside Miami's Tobacco Road nightclub. Photo by Peter B. Gallagher
MUSIC AND MEMORY. They go together, as Randy Noles reminds us in his poignant story about Ervin Rouse, Chubby Wise, and the origins of the world's most famous fiddle tune, "Orange Blossom Special." This issue of FORUM focuses on Florida music and some of its many roots, styles, and traditions. The music created by Floridians and others who explore a Florida place or theme opens additional pathways into our state's heritage and culture. We learn about Florida through its music just as we do through its folk art, literature, archaeology, and architecture.

Our musical traditions are as diverse in their geneses and genres as Florida itself. These traditions both embody and shape the fantastic tales and mosaic of cultures that are integral to Florida's distinctive character and identity. "The Florida Sound is a mix that is as diverse as the state's population," Jeff Lemlich points out in his article on Florida rock music. "And both continue to grow and change."

For me, nothing evokes the real Florida better than a folk song by one of our state's troubadours. Their songs evoke a sense of place as vivid and accessible as a Clyde Butcher photograph or a Highwayman painting. They give voice to a specific time, a spirit, a mood; they spin a yarn; they let us in on the real thing.

Of course the real thing may also have a Latin beat, whether it's the rumbas or mambas of an era gone by, or the pulsating beat of the new generation of Latin music emanating from Miami. Or maybe it's the infectious "ka-link, ka-link, ka-link" of the cowbells that characterize Bahamian Junkanoo music, which has traveled from West Africa to the Bahamas—and finally to Florida.

Fortunately for Floridians, the music never stops. Even as we listen to the classics of established genres, new music is emerging. It adds to and enriches the numerous traditions that make up the sounds of Florida—so numerous, in fact, that we can highlight only some of them in this issue of FORUM. I hope this speaks to you as it does to me about the meaning of music in our lives as Floridians. Listen, and learn!
**FHC Receives Grant for Seminars on ‘Spanish St. Augustine’**

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded a $261,587 grant to FHC to develop and conduct four seminars for teachers this summer entitled, “Between Columbus and Jamestown: Spanish St. Augustine.” The four consecutive week-long seminars will be held from June 28 to July 24 on the campus of Flagler College in St. Augustine.

They will be among NEH’s “Landmarks of American History” workshops for K-12 educators from around the United States. The workshops, which will offer intensive study and discussion of important topics and issues in American history, are designed to provide teachers with direct experiences in the interpretation of significant historical sites and in the use of archival and other primary historical evidence.

For more information, see our website at StAugustine@flahum.org.

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**‘We the People’ Bookshelf Available to Libraries**

NEH is also collaborating with the American Library Association to inaugurate the “We the People” Bookshelf, a program to encourage young people to read and understand great literature while exploring themes in American history.

School and public libraries are invited to apply to receive the “We the People” Bookshelf, which consists of 15 thematically related books and supplemental materials to help with publicity and the organization of public programs. NEH will accept applications for this reading program through February 15. For details go to the NEH website at www.neh.gov.

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**FHC to Launch Family Reading Program**

Five libraries around Florida will host a new FHC program to help low-income families read and discuss books. Called “PRIME TIME,” the program will focus on humanities topics. It will also instruct parents and children in selecting books and becoming active library users.

The host libraries will be: Hardee County Public Library in Wauchula, LeRoy Collins Public Library in Tallahassee, Orange County Public Library in Orlando, Putnam County Library in Palatka, and Martin County Library in Stuart.

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**2004 Florida Center for Teacher Seminars**

Florida teachers are invited to join distinguished scholars and experts from a wide array of fields at a Florida Center for Teachers seminar this summer. These weeklong, residential seminars explore compelling humanities topics from a multidisciplinary perspective. Seminar topics include: archeology, race, art and culture, Asian religions and African-American literature.

Seminars are open to full-time Florida teachers, grades K-12 who have taught in Florida for three years. For more information visit our website at www.flahum.org.
At Wakulla Springs, in the long twilight of summer, the sultry heat begins to lift.

Swimmers pack their fins and snorkels; the last herd of khaki-clad tourists tramps down the concrete dock. Boats are moored, gates close, and soon the only human sounds are voices echoing from the stately old lodge, debating whether it will be ice cream or blueberry pie for dessert. In that slow gathering of evening, as the human presence fades with the light, Wakulla Springs is once more primeval Florida, a place of magnolia, live oak and pine, sky blue waters and rich green foliage. Gators below, birds call, fish leap from the depths. This is Florida's garden, her Eden.

Wakulla Springs is not a convenient place. It is remote, tucked some 14 miles south of Tallahassee on a lonely road, in a county known for both its excellent hunting and its grinding poverty. Officially known as the Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park, Wakulla Springs encompasses more than 4,000 acres, most of them wild and rambling, rarely seen by anyone except the occasional ranger. The park's centerpiece is the 185-foot-deep Wakulla Spring, a shimmering bowl that serves as the fountainhead of the Wakulla River. A Spanish-style hotel sits on a slight rise above the spring, and glass-bottom boats ply its smooth surface while "jungle cruise" crafts venture down the river in search of wildlife. No gaudy billboards advertise Wakulla Springs on the interstates. One learns of it through word of mouth, from the memories of weddings and reunions held there, from the boasts of daredevils who dived from its high tower, or perhaps from a faded postcard, a relic of a family vacation in the pre-amusement-park days.

History is suspended here. Native Americans hunted and performed rituals along the banks, leaving the ground rich with evidence of occupations that stretched for thousands of years. Narvaez and deSoto passed close by on their quests for gold. Just downstream, Milly Francis, Florida's Pocahontas, rescued a young American soldier from execution by ferocious braves. By the 1850s, Tallahasseeans had discovered Wakulla's "enchanted fountain" and were picnicking on its shores. Proposals were made that the spring should be the site of a sanitarium or a resort or a jazz club, yet for years the only regular guests were the politicians who came to speak at the yearly community gatherings held on the grassy knoll close to the water. In 1934, commercialization came in the form of a dumpy businessman named Ed Ball, who purchased the land, built the lodge, and launched the boats. He created a small, lazy tourist attraction, a place where he could "pick up a few nickels and dimes" while enjoying nature. His reign did not go unchallenged; many conservationists of the 1970s objected to his use of the river as his private stream. Yet Ball remained true to his promise never to turn Wakulla Springs into a "honky-tonk," and when the state of Florida purchased the property after Ball's death, it took possession of a Florida anomaly: an attraction where nature remains in control, where the mice and ducks are real.

Wakulla Springs is a fragile place, in need of protection. Park officials must be talented jugglers, balancing the public desire to enjoy the site with the intense need to keep it as natural and wild as possible.
Wakulla Springs has passed through many hands, yet has always remained open to those who will respect the rules that preserve it. This ancient legacy is one the park system is eager to preserve. For all its pristine beauty, Wakulla Springs is also a quirky place. Tarzan lived here, swinging from vines and ordering his breakfast at the lodge with his famous yell. The Creature from the Black Lagoon lurked in the weeds, visited in the 1990s by deep-diving adventurers who made fantastic voyages into the murky heart of the spring. Henry the Pole Vaulting Fish performs hourly on his underwater high bar, often with Henrietta and Henry Jr. in tow. The boatmen still sing and joke. They may be naturalists, but they haven’t forgotten how to work a crowd, especially one filled with wide-eyed children. Educational videos are stacked next to garish ashtrays in the gift shop; Sunday diners in their suits mingle with half-clad bathers. Wakulla Springs manages to be the real Florida, wild and beautiful, but just a little gaudy as well, and secretly proud of it.

Twilight, however, belongs to the past. A visitor can time-travel simply by standing still, letting a summer night descend, as thunder rumbles in the distance and mist rises from the water. Listen and you will hear the sounds the Apalachee and the Seminoles heard. The smell of the place will embrace you, a wondrous aroma, part earth, part water, part flowers, all mingled to give the air life. Watch as anhingas spread their glossy wings, and rare limpkins pluck their way through the shallows in search of apple snail eggs. Trace the swirling path of a gator prowling for his evening meal with dangerous grace. Catch the bass hopping a joyful path across the gigantic spring. To do so is to be in Eden, where Florida was born.

TRACY J. REVELS, associate professor of history at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C., is a graduate of Florida State University and the author of Watery Eden: A History of Wakulla Springs.
Ray Charles' roots are in Florida, where the blues rose mournfully from the state's citrus groves and turpentine camps.

MUSIC
In The Key of Florida
A Place of
They heard it was paradise. They came seeking new lives. But what they found left them singing the

**Florida Blues**

Adapted by Barbara O'Reilley from “Florida Bound Blues”

Florida had the same oppression of class and race that held them down as sharecroppers and tenant farmers in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Instead of prosperity and better lives, they found the same backbreaking poverty that they’d tried to escape. The work was different, but life was the same.

*Turpentine business ain't like it used to be! I can't make enough money now, to even get on a spree! ...You can work in the field, you can work in the sawmill too! But you can't make no money at nothin' you try to do...* —Tampa Red, 1932

Tampa Red, born Hudson Whittaker (and also known as Hudson Woodbridge), was one of the few Florida blues artists recorded in those early days. Jacksonville bluesman Arthur Phelps, known as Blind Blake,

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—Tampa Red, 1932

The blues tradition that developed in Florida in the 1920s and '30s is not widely known. Little of it was recorded, and so the historians who came later may have assumed it didn’t exist. Most scholars focused instead on the early songs that agents and representatives of the music industry recorded in the Mississippi Delta. The agents, who’d come down from Chicago and New York, didn’t venture to Florida. As far as they knew, Florida was just an undeveloped wilderness with a few famous coastal playgrounds for the idle rich. Who would think there were any blues to record in Florida? Besides, it was so far away.

But the blues did exist in Florida. They rose mournfully from the state’s citrus groves, phosphate mines, sawmills, turpentine camps, and railroads, where disillusioned black laborers sang about paradise not found. Their land of promise had turned out to be a land of promises not kept.

These early Florida blues combined Delta, Southeast, and Texas blues forms. Like almost every art form that bubbles up from Florida’s cultural stew, they reflected many influences from outside the state—yet this fusion germinated in Florida soil and grew into something uniquely Floridian.
Florida inspired their lyrics as an idea, a location, a myth. It was described as a place for an idyllic life, a hard refuge from a harder life, and a home-sweet-home left behind for perhaps better opportunities in the North. This blues tradition, begun more than 100 years ago, continues today.

Florida's early blues included songs about Florida sung by artists from elsewhere. Famed blueswoman Bessie Smith, who was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, sang "Florida Bound Blues" during the 1920s' Florida land boom. In it, she sings farewell to the North, which is so cold that "the words freeze in your mouth." She's going to Florida, where her father bought her some land and she can enjoy herself in "the green grass" and sun. But her parents warn her to beware of "them bell-bottomed britches" who could take advantage of her, referring to the frivolous, white upper class in the South Florida resort areas.

Bluesman Phelps Blind Blake, born and raised in Jacksonville and migrating to Chicago in 1926, also sang of Florida as a destination. His "Tampa Bound" uses themes of loneliness and longing typical of blues songs. In it, he describes a home where a man left his girl behind, a place to which he can return to "cure his worried mind." Blake, born around the turn of the century, first played and sang in Florida and along the East Coast, then joined the traveling medicine show circuit where he established his reputation as a guitarist comparable to the legendary Charlie Patton. In Chicago, he played house parties and was joined by other bluesmen like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Little Brother Montgomery, Charlie Spand, and Big Bill Broonzy. He then became a studio musician for Paramount until 1932, recording more than 80 songs.

Tampa Red, singer of "Turpentine Blues," was born in Smithville, Georgia, in 1903, raised by a grandmother in Tampa, and learned and developed his guitar skills in the Tampa and Polk County jook joints. (Sometimes spelled "juke" joints, these were establishments where people sang, played music, danced, drank alcohol sometimes distilled from sterno, gambled, socialized, and fought. The original spelling, "jook," comes from the writings of folklorist Hurston.) He toured on the Theatre Owner's Booking Association (TOBA) circuit, which offered temporary employment to black entertainers nationwide. Then, while in his 20s, he moved to Chicago and recorded with his Hokum Jug Band. For a while, Tampa Red's house was said to be the center of the Chicago blues world. He adapted his guitar picking to both the slide style of Delta blues and to the electrification of the instrument. He also absorbed boogie and early jazz, combining the traditional country blues of his Florida roots and Delta influences with the dynamic and new directions of the Chicago blues of the 1930s and 1940s.

Blueswoman Florence, born in Jacksonville, recorded only two songs, "Midnight Weeping Blues" and "Jacksonville Blues" (1928). With her rough, assertive voice, Florence was a woman singing a woman's song, an early example of the strength and confidence manifested in women's blues. She sings unashamedly about her sexuality and sexual skills. Men "call me oven/ They say that I'm red hot." Her songs show how the blues in Florida were very much a part of the mainstream-blues tradition, which has always included sexual themes and lyrics.

Tallahassee Tight was a successful commercial artist from Florida who recorded 22 sides for the American Record Corporation in 1934. His songs, including "Tallahassee Women," "Quincy Wimmens," and "East Coast Blues," describe the Tallahassee region from the point of view of itinerant black laborers. Tallahassee women are portrayed as devious and dangerous. They "put a method on you," according to the song, often resulting in a man spending all his money. They are like no other women, presumably because of the pain and love they provide. "Now that was down in Tallahassee/ where I had those Tallahassee blues/ I got these blues so bad/ don't know what in the world to do." He also sang of the availability of jobs there, but how the workingman struggled to succeed against overwhelming difficulties. Recording both blues and gospel, he composed lyrics based upon the cultural environment of Florida's black people and their lives as laborers working the Seaboard Airline Railroad, the cotton or tobacco farms, the sawmills, and the turpentine camps.

About halfway between Tallahassee and Miami, writer-folklorist Hurston gathered blues songs and folktales in the jook joints, sawmills, and turpentine camps in the central part of the state. She reported them in her book, _Mules and Men_, and included them in her novels, most notably _Their Eyes Were Watching God_. In 1935, she guided folksong archivists Lomax and Barnicle to many obscure rural black communities where they recorded...
Bluesman Tallahassee Tight wrote of "Tallahassee Women" who are portrayed as devious and dangerous. They "put a method on you," often resulting in a man spending all his money.

blues songs as part of their fieldwork for the Library of Congress Archive of the American Folksong. Sometimes wearing blackface in an effort to avoid the white police, Lomax and Barnicle joined Hurston in discovering jook joints and blues players in Polk County, Bartow, Belle Glade, Chosen, Eatonville, Lakeland, Lake Okeechobee, and Maitland.

A sampling of their recordings is preserved on two rare and difficult-to-obtain record albums. The first, entitled Boot That Thing: Library of Congress Field Recordings from Florida by Booker T. Sapps, Roger Matthews, and Willie Flowers, presents "one of the finest small jook bands ever to be documented," according to Bruce Bastin in Red River Blues: The Blues Tradition in the Southeast (1989). Recorded near Lake Okeechobee, the jook band played a number of blues songs that were well known at the time, such as "John Henry," the ballad, "Delia," later recorded by Blind Willie McTell; and "Boot that Thing," a typical instrumental jook-joint two-step.

The second album, entitled Out in the Cold Again: Library of Congress Field Recordings by Gabriel Brown, presents the impressive fingerpicking of Brown, who was likely from the Lake Okeechobee area. The album includes his renditions of "John Henry," "Po' Boy," "A Dream of Mine," and a song composed by Brown himself, "Education Blues." Brown, like blues artists Phelps (Blind Blake) and Woodbridge (Tampa Red), left Florida to perform. He played and sang in New York in cafes and in the musical comedy "Polk County." He recorded commercially for Davis records and, failing to sustain his success, became an active street singer in New York before returning to relative obscurity in rural Florida.

In 1980, nearly 40 years after these field recordings were made, the Florida Folklife Program made field recordings that provided conclusive evidence of a Florida blues tradition. These recordings, entitled Drop on Down in Florida, make up a two-record set of "Afro-American Traditional Music." Two sides of one record are devoted to blues and focus on artists from the same area researched by the Hurston-led expeditions in the 1930s (Alachua, Polk, and Lake counties). With the exception of a woman in duet performances of "Careless Love" and "Polk County Blues," all of the performers are men. The music is primitive in style and sound. The vocals are often rough sounding. Most of the songs are accompanied by a six-string acoustic guitar, although one uses an electric guitar and one, a wire.

Several of the songs refer to Florida, including "Mobile Blues: "Go down in Georgia, don't find me there! Just drop on down in Florida, and find your loving daddy somewhere." One of the album's two versions of "Polk County Blues" is the same referred to in folklorist Hurston's Mules and Men. According to album liner notes, this version is a "localized blues song native to Florida's most legendary county where Black sharecroppers, citrus workers, phosphate miners, river roustabouts and stevedores, gang workers in turpentine and sawmill camps, and railroad and prison gangs mingled with piano players, guitar players, and gamblers and bootleggers, at the rough jukes and honky-tonks."

Not surprisingly, with this kind of established legacy, there are more contemporary links to the Florida blues tradition, including Ida Goodson, Mary McClain (who became known as Diamond Teeth Mary), and Ray Charles. Goodson played piano, in a unique style she described as blues, at gatherings and in the local clubs of her hometown of Pensacola. McClain, who claimed to be Bessie Smith's half sister, sang in the "classic blues" style of the 1920s, glittering with spangles and beads, moving her hips aggressively, and adorning her teeth with Juicy Fruit foil. Before she retired in Bradenton, her early career spanned 32 years of performing on the road as "Diamond Teeth Mary" with Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Fats Waller, among others. Both Goodson and McClain died in 2000.

In contrast with Goodson and McClain, Charles has achieved widespread success. Born in Albany, Georgia, and raised in the Florida panhandle town of Greenville, Charles was blind by the age of 7 and educated at the Florida State School for Deaf and Blind Children in St. Augustine from 1937 to 1945. His roots are in the blues and in Florida, but his musical versatility and genius transcend both the blues idiom and his Florida background.

Today, the legacy of Florida blues remains alive and must be understood in terms of its own history and art, and in terms of its own link to the larger American blues tradition. Florida continues as a home to the blues and a source of the blues, a paradox reflecting the tension between myth and reality—a flawed paradise, a place of romance and pain.

This is based on and includes excerpts from "Florida Bound Blues," an article by Ruth A. Banes, David A. Bealmeir, and Kent Kaster that appeared in Popular Music and Society, Winter, 1988. FORUM Editor Barbara O'Reilley wrote this adaptation.
t the edge of the Florida Everglades, in a godfor-saken tavern made of plywood and pecky cypress, a wizened, toothless old man clutching a battered fiddle stands before a boisterous, beer-guzzling throng of day-laborers, gator poachers, and commercial fishermen. Despite the oppressive heat, he wears a multicolored Seminole Indian jacket over a stained white dress shirt; a fishing cap sits atop a tangle of wiry gray hair. His ruddy face is creased, his jowls are stubbly and his narrow, wide-set eyes appear filmy and unfocused.

"Hello, folks," he rasps in a mush-mouthed, all-but-indistinguishable Deep South brogue. "The first number we'd like to do for you is one we wrote back in 1938 about a mighty fine train that used to run between New York and Miami—and we're so proud that people all over the world still love it and play it."

Then, as he holds the fiddle to his chin and slides the bow across the strings, the unmistakable blast of a train whistle pierces the noxious haze. Abruptly, conversations cease, fights are interrupted, and drinks are set aside. The old man is Ervin T. Rouse, author of "Orange Blossom Special," and his presence commands respect—even here, even now.

* * *

At a bluegrass festival somewhere in the Midwest, a pudgy, white-bearded elf of a man stands beside a makeshift stage overlooking several thousand people—families, mostly—lounging on blankets and lawn chairs. Beyond the crowd are rows of campers and motor homes sporting license plates from Maine to Montana. The autumn evening is cool; in the distance campfires flicker and string music wafts in the breeze.

Robert Russell "Chubby" Wise, son of a railroad man from Lake City, has long been cited as the "Special's" uncredited co-author. Wise, who died in 1996 at the age of 80, always ruefully maintained that he had collaborated on the song with Rouse during a boozey, late-night jam session in Jacksonville, after which he had impulsively—but voluntarily—given his friend and colleague all rights to what would become a substantial money-maker for decades to come.

"That was my first mistake," he said in 1982. "About a $100,000 mistake."

Wise never became rich, but he did become famous. As a member of Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in the 1940s, he is today regarded as perhaps the most influential bluegrass fiddler of all time. And he spent his final years performing before large and enthusiastic audiences at bluegrass festivals, where he was adored by fans as a peerless entertainer and respected by fellow performers as a ground-breaking musical pioneer.

Still, Wise's contribution to "Orange Blossom Special"—or his lack thereof—has for years been a subject of discussion and debate among bluegrass scholars, and a source of hard feelings between family members, friends, and fans of both men. "Ervin wrote that song, and nobody else," says Hattie Rouse Miscowich, Rouse's widow. "I once
1. Look-a yon-der com-in',
2. Go-in' down to Flor-da,
3. Talk-a bout a trav-lin',
and she's the fast-

asked him, 'Ervin, did Chubby have anything to do with writing 'Orange Blossom Special?" And he said, 'Hell, no.' But Rossi Truel Wise, now living near her children in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, contends that "everyone knows Chubby contributed to 'Orange Blossom Special'; in fact, Chubby and Ervin used to get together and talk about how poor they were when they wrote that song."

There are basically two stories purporting to explain how and where "Orange Blossom Special" was composed. Although the real story behind the world's most famous fiddle tune has, until now, remained elusive, both narratives hold that the song was written in a burst of creative energy and inspiration after the legendary train, on the final leg of a 1938 east coast exhibition tour, stopped at one of two cities: Jacksonville (Wise's version) or Miami (Rouse's version).

The luxurious Orange Blossom Special, which ran between New York City and Miami, had hauled wealthy northeasterners to Florida's resort cities since 1925. But when dazzling diesel locomotives, considered to be marvels of modern engineering, replaced sooty steam engines, the popular run gained both speed and panache. Indeed, public interest in the diesels was so intense that Seaboard Air Lines arranged an exhibition to show them off. The much-ballyhooed tour originated in Washington, D.C., on Monday, October 31, 1938, and drew huge crowds as it rolled through Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The diesel and its seven luxuriously appointed Pullman cars were slated to roll into Jacksonville from Savannah on Monday evening, November 7, and to depart the River City on Wednesday morning, November 9, en route to Lake City, Live Oak, Madison, Tallahassee, Gainesville, Leesburg, Tavares, Orlando, Wildwood, Bushnell, Dade City, Plant City, Tampa, Clearwater, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Bradenton, Manatee, Bartow, Lake Wales, West Palm Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Hollywood, and Miami; then north to Sebring, Avon Park, Winter Haven, Ocala, and Starke before leaving the state on Thursday, November 17.

Despite the late hour, when the train arrived at Union Station (now the Prime Osborn Convention Center), hundreds of citizens were on hand to see what progress had wrought. But on Tuesday morning, when official welcoming ceremonies were scheduled, a throng of perhaps 10,000—including schoolchildren, who had been excused from their lessons to watch history in the making—braved chilly weather to cheer the spectacle.

Later, during the 12-hour span that the train was open and accessible, ecstatic railroad officials declared that some 33,526 people had come aboard—a record for the tour—while hundreds more were unable to gain admission because of time constraints.

Jacksonville was now home to the Wise family, which included Chubby, his wife Geneva, and their infant daughter, Marvelene. They lived a small apartment at 324 West Union Street, located in a seedy neighborhood consisting of pawnshops, bars, and boarding houses. Wise drove a jitney cab by day—the fare was 10 cents to any destination within the city limits—and entertained in beer joints by night.

Eventually, he assembled a ragtag combo that included a banjo, a guitar, and a washboard for rhythm—in addition to his fiddle. "Our salary was free lunch the next day," Wise said. "We'd play in a bar until it closed, and we had a kitty for people who wanted a special request to throw a nickel or dime in."

According to Wise—who told essentially the same "Orange Blossom Special" story for five decades—on the night the song was written, Rouse and his older brother Gordon strolled into a bar where Wise and his trio were performing. The brothers, natives of North Carolina who now lived in Miami, frequently visited Jacksonville to perform in nightclubs.

"At intermission, Ervin wanted to know if he could play the fiddle and pass the hat," Wise said. "So, he played for about 15 minutes, he and his brother, just a fiddle and guitar. He was a great fiddle player—a trick fiddler—one of the finest. He'd just tear an audience all to pieces. If there was three dollars [in the audience], he'd come out with a buck-and-a-half of it."

Following the barroom revelry, the most commonly accepted "Special" story places Ervin
Rouse and Wise—both well lubricated from a busy evening of fiddle playing and drinking—were wandering in the wee hours around Union Station, where the train was still parked although no longer open for tours.

“We were at Union Station, and we were down there, drinking beer,” said Wise, who, like Rouse, obviously knew how to spice up a yarn. “We had done closed up all the beer joints, and we were sittin’ there drinkin’ and got to talkin’ about that cotton-pickin’ Orange Blossom Special train. On the way home, I said, ‘Ervin, go home and eat breakfast with me.’ So, we went home at about 3 a.m., and he said, ‘Chubby, let’s write a fiddle tune and call it Orange Blossom Special.’ I said, ‘All right, we’ll do it.’ We got our fiddles out, and wrote that melody in about 45 minutes while my wife was cookin’ breakfast.”

As Wise told it, after enjoying breakfast Rouse suggested that the pair have their musical creation copyrighted as soon as possible. Wise, however, demurred: “I said, ‘Ervin, I haven’t got time to fool with a fiddle tune. I’ve got to check on my cab in a few minutes, and try to go make some beans to feed my young’un. If you can do anything with that fiddle tune, buddy, then it’s all yours.’”

A lively story—but is it true? Were the Rouse brothers even in Jacksonville on or around November 7, 1938?

No advertisements specifically touting a Rouse Brothers nightclub appearance could be found in a search of the Jacksonville Times-Union archives. In fact, several of their favorite haunts, most notably the Temple Theater and the Mayflower Tavern, were specifically promoting other entertainers. However, the Roosevelt Patio (“Where Novelies Are Originated!”) was heralding a new “all-star revue,” which was to feature seven unnamed attractions. Since the brothers had played the downtown hotel’s showroom before—once accepting second billing to a trained-dog act—they could well have been included in the Roosevelt’s package.

Other aspects of Wise’s story ring true. The brothers enjoyed nothing more than “busking” (playing for tips). They routinely showed up unannounced at promising-looking nightspots, even after completing paid engagements elsewhere. And it certainly does not stretch credibility to suggest that these two hard-drinking night owls, who had struck up a friendship years before in Miami, would have stayed up all night swapping tunes.

Ervin and Gordon Rouse, however, told an entirely different story on the relatively rare occasions when they were asked by interviewers to expound upon the song’s origin. They never specifically denied being in Jacksonville—and visiting Wise—around the time of the storied exhibition tour. But they insisted that they had first viewed the train not in Jacksonville but in Miami, and had added lyrics to a previously composed tune during a subsequent automobile trip between South Florida and Kissimmee, where their manager’s family lived.

In 1993, Gordon Rouse addressed the contentious subject more directly than usual during a poignant, videotaped interview conducted by his cousin, Preston Rouse, at Preston’s home. At age 77, Gordon appears frail; his face marked by malignant tumors and his breathing labored. But his raspy voice rises and he accentuates his words with hand gestures when asked by Preston to address Wise’s claims.

“Chubby Wise had never heard ‘Orange Blossom Special’ until we played it for him,” he says. “It’s very easy to say that you done somethin’ when you didn’t do it. You keep on sayin’ it, and folks don’t know whether it’s true or not. Chubby made our life just because he met us in Jacksonville, that he had something to do with the song. It’s all untrue.”

In fact, the Orange Blossom Special did arrive in Miami on Wednesday, November 16, for the southernmost stop on its exhibition tour. That same day, the brothers said, manager Lloyd Smith had planned to drive them to Kissimmee, where they would visit the Smith family—Lloyd’s sister Elon was Ervin Rouse’s girlfriend—and perhaps arrange some Orlando-area bookings.

“Our manager took us downtown to watch the christening of the Orange Blossom Special,” Gordon Rouse said in 1992. “We saw the ceremony, and our manager said to Ervin, ‘You know, that’s going to be another famous train like the Old ‘97; that is, if somebody does something about it.’ That very afternoon, we decided to give it a try.”

Certainly, the ceremonies would not have been out of the way; the Seaboard Air Line passenger station,
then located at Northwest 7th Avenue near 20th Street, was perhaps a five-minute drive from a trailer park where Gordon and his wife Carrie had set up housekeeping. (The train station has long since been demolished, although a massive, Mediterranean-style stucco archway was spared the wrecking ball, and has been preserved at the entrance to what is now a modern office park.)

Official welcoming ceremonies the following day were comparable to those held in Jacksonville—large crowds, soaring speeches, considerable pomp—and the festivities clearly dazzled the Rouses. En route to Kissimmee, Gordon Rouse recalled, Smith stopped at a drug store, where he bought a pencil and a legal pad. Then he offered to sit in the back seat and transcribe lyrics if Gordon would take the wheel.

“My brother and I, we were up in the front of the car just driving along,” Gordon Rouse said in 1985. “Lloyd would keep tearing the sheets of paper off and throwing them out the window. No

“CHUBBY WISE HAD NEVER HEARD ‘ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL’ UNTIL WE PLAYED IT FOR HIM,” GORDON ROUSE SAID. “IT’S VERY EASY TO SAY THAT YOU DONE SOMETHIN’ WHEN YOU DIDN’T DO IT.”

telling how many sheets of paper we threw out.” However, he claimed, by the time the exhausted trio arrived at the Smith home, “Orange Blossom Special” was essentially complete.

Again, a good story. But unlike Wise’s yarn this one can, in part, be confirmed by objective evidence. “Orange Blossom Special”—the music, not the lyrics—had been copyrighted on October 20, 1938—three days before the legendary train’s exhibition tour got under way. It was then that Gordon Rouse, traveling with his wife and brother on a busking excursion up the Eastern Seaboard, delivered the lead sheet for a “fiddle tune” called “Orange Blossom Special” to the Library of Congress copyright offices in Washington, D.C.

The original, handwritten music still sits in a file folder at a Library of Congress storage facility in Virginia. The author is listed as Ervin T. Rouse; a bureaucrat lost to history has stamped the delivery date in the upper right-hand corner.

The song copyrighted by the Rouses was likely a supercharged version of an earlier Rouse composition, unpublished and unrecorded, called “South Florida Blues.” Confirmation of the existence of the “Special’s” musical precursor comes from a series of 1982 Country Music Foundation oral history interviews with respected musician and former radio personality Claude Casey, who died of complications from Alzheimer’s disease in 1999.

In the mid-1930s, Casey had been a faux Rouse Brother, playing informally with the group in Miami before officially signing on in 1938. Casey recalled that Ervin had been performing “South Florida Blues” well before “Orange Blossom Special” was copyrighted, and that the tunes were basically identical: “Back before words were put to ‘Orange Blossom Special,’ it was called ‘South Florida Blues,’” said Casey. “(Ervin) was playing it in the 1930s… and nobody knew it then but him, and those of us playing with him.”

Could Wise have helped to write “South Florida Blues”? Perhaps, at some point, he had contributed to the “Special’s” musical precursor, and later concocted a simplified, semi-factual story that linked him more directly to the song that would become known worldwide as the “Bluegrass National Anthem.” This much, however, we do know: Whatever tune Rouse and Wise composed that fateful night in Jacksonville, it was not the tune that would later eventually become one of the most-played fiddle compositions in musical history.

Dubious authorship claims aside, there is no disputing the fact that Wise was, at the very least, a great popularizer of “Orange Blossom Special.” With Bill Monroe, then with country superstar Hank Snow, and, finally, as a solo attraction on the bluegrass festival circuit, “Fiddlin’ Chubby” took the “Special” around the world.

RANDY NOLES, group publisher for Gulfshore Media, is author of the book, Orange Blossom Boys: The Untold Story of Ervin T. Rouse, Chubby Wise and the World’s Most Famous Fiddle Tune.
Jim Ballew
Roll On Manatee
OS-9044

1. ROLL ON MANATEE 3:33
2. DON'T TELL MAMA 2:18
3. TRUTLE MOUND JUBILEE 3:18
4. CHANCE MEETING 3:37
5. FUDGIN' & NUDGIN' 3:40
6. HERE I AM AGAIN 5:10
7. DON'T PET THE DOG 3:33
8. WHEN I DE 2:50
9. ORANGE GROVE BLUES 4:08
10. PIECE OF MY MIND 2:29
11. BIG RIVER BLUES 4:08
12. STRAY DOG 3:52

All songs written, arranged and recorded by Jim Ballew, except where noted.
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PHOTOS BY PETER E. GALLAGHER; JIMMY BUFFETT BY THE TAMPA TRIBUNE.
A Colorful Enigma

FOLK MUSIC IN FLORIDA:
As mixed as alligator stew,
as real as rain, as easy as
boiled-peanut pie, as plain
to see as butterfly dreams

By Peter B. Gallagher

Stephen Foster never set foot in Florida,
yet he composed the most famous
Florida folk song of all time. Jimmy
Buffett, the state’s most famous
folksinger, is a native Mississippian
who doesn’t even live in Key West
anymore. Beloved Florida songwriter
Don Grooms was a Cherokee Indian,
born and buried in western North
Carolina. And modern-day troubadour Raiford Starke
is a native Virginian who combined state prison
names to create a Florida outlaw image.

All are part of the colorful enigma that is both
contemporary Florida folk music and the alligator stew
of folks who compose and perform original Florida
songs. Unlike Texas, which promotes a sound immedi-
ately marketable as Texas music, Florida’s own folk
sound is a changeling flitting all over the musical map.

“Our musical atmosphere has been influenced by
more transplants than any other area of the country,
by every culture whose people have established com-

munities on our shores,” says Ken Crawford, a state department staffer and former Florida Folk Festival director.

“In Texas, most everybody is a Texan. But in Florida, people are from all over the world. There are Chicago-style blues bands playing Florida folk songs. There are reggae bands playing it. And everybody has their own idea what Florida folk music is or isn’t.”

Bona fide Florida rock stars like Manatee County’s Dickey Betts, Gainesville’s Tom Petty, and Tarpon Springs’ Bertie Higgins, unplugged, could actually qualify as Florida folk musicians. “Everything I write is folk music,” says country-music icon John Anderson, a Lutz native whose acoustic guitar and fiddle-driven “Seminole Wind” first told a world audience about the destruction of the Florida Everglades. “They all start out as folk songs. Just a man and his guitar.”

Most people would agree that Florida folk music must be acoustic—or it becomes something else. Then again, when you hear Tampa songsmith Ronny Elliott’s recordings of “Jack’s St. Pete Blues” and “Elvis Presley Didn’t Like Tampa,” or Scotty Clark’s renditions of “Largo,” or Rock Bottom’s performance of “Gator Tail,” or the Liz Pennock/Dr. Blue recording of “Sting Ray Shuffle,” they all sound pretty darned Florida folk, even with the splash of drums and hint of electricity.

“I never ever thought of myself as a folk song writer,” says Elliott. “Then they started playing my records on the folk show. I thought to myself, ‘Hmmm. I guess I am a folksinger.”

Defining Florida folk music presents a challenge to Bobby Hicks and me every Thursday (9:00 to 10:00 a.m.) when we co-host the “Florida Folk Show” on Tampa Bay community radio station WMNF (88.5 FM). In the show, which premiered last spring as the only one of its kind in the state, we take an iconoclastic view of Florida music, reaching beyond the various musical cliques. We pay serious homage to the old guard, without hesitating to put new artists and new styles of folk music on the air.

“I know it when I hear it,” Hicks says of folk music. “I know it when I see it.” Hicks is one of the state’s most skillful songwriters and folk-music advocates, and as far as he is concerned, a Florida birth certificate plays a major role, as does continued Florida residency. A true Florida folkie would have to match Hicks’ own dedication to the musical craft itself, though he reserves an honored place for latecomers who put down honest-to-goodness roots:

“Take a guy like Dale Crider,” Hicks says about the singing game biologist (now retired) who lives on Lake Pithlachocco near Gainesville. “When Dale got here from Kentucky, the first thing he did was dedicate his life to saving Florida. He wrote songs about Florida wildlife and the environment, and traveled around this state singing them to school kids and their parents.

“He didn’t just come in here and gratuitously put the word Okeechobee in a tune and declare himself a Florida songwriter. Those are the people I take offense to,” Hicks says. “Some of the most well known so-called Florida folk singers in this state put out entire albums, and you can’t find a single Florida folk song on there. You don’t hear it in their live shows. We have a hard time finding a song to play from some performers.”

But using those criteria to define Florida folk music has its limits. For example, we can’t assume that Florida folk songs are sung in English. Franco
Silva (host of WMNF’s Latino 54 Show) points to Latin performers who write and sing about Florida in their own language: “Don’t forget, Spanish was once the dominant culture here,” Silva says.

Then there are Chief Jim Billie and Paul Buster—famed Seminole Indian singers/songwriters who have written Florida lyrics in their native languages. Billie remembers his grandmother singing to him “the same song, over and over again. Years later I came to find out she was teaching me to count.” The deep-voiced Vietnam vet used his grandma’s Indian words when he wrote and recorded “The Counting Song,” which now is used to teach Seminole children to count to 10:

Thah me hen, towik le hen, tou che chen, shee tee tah, chah key paun, e pah pah, ny younsh, kow lee younsh, e yah wounsh, hah pook.

Can the process of creating folk music get any more authentic than that?

But what about the case of Stephen Collins Foster? The prolific Foster was the first name associated with Florida music. In 1851, the Pittsburgh bookkeeper edited his original lyrics about North Carolina’s PeeDee River into the international classic, “Old Folks At Home,” which describes a fictional Florida “way down upon the Swanee [sic] River.” In 1935, this became Florida’s official state song. The original lyrics, penned in an odd, condescending black dialect, were eventually politically corrected. Some years ago, singer Don Grooms recorded a version of the song in Foster’s original dialect; when we broadcast it last year, the phone lines lit up with indignant complaints.

“We were surprised,” Hicks says.

“Some caller accused us of celebrating plantation life. Man, that was a low blow. Nothing was further from the truth. I came on the air later and told people that when Don recorded the song that way, he did it to show us all how far we’ve come.”

Grooms, who died in 1998, was a University of Florida professor and lynchpin of the Florida folk-music renaissance period of the 1970s and ’80s. He left behind a catalogue of excellent Florida folk songs, including the classic Florida anti-tourist rant, “Winnebagos.”

Grooms joined fellow troubadours Will McLean, James Gamble Rogers, and Jim Ballew as the primary progenitors of today’s contemporary Florida sound. From the mid-1960s until the end of each of their lives, their versions of Florida folk music became the first standard.

The Chipley-born McLean came first, calling himself “The Black Hat Troubadour” and roaming from town to town (and once even as far away as the stage at Carnegie Hall). McLean’s songs borrowed from the familiar northeastern folk idiom, but were expertly toughed up with honest Florida grit.

Times at night I gits to thinking.
And the shivers colds my spine,
He sings in his classic “Wild Hog,” a precious string of words that Hicks declares “the finest single line ever written in a Florida folk song.”

Often having nowhere to live but in an old van, and fighting the typical tragic-artists’ demons, McLean nevertheless left a Florida folk-songs catalogue more akin to a bible than a list of tunes. Numerous artists all over the world, including the famous Pete Seeger, have performed McLean’s Florida songs.

Considering the lifestyle McLean favored, it is an irony of considerable hilarity that the Dade City spring festival named after him strongly disallows alcohol or raucous carrying-on.

“Will wouldn’t be allowed to attend his own festival,” guitarist Raiford Starke says, laughing. “I can just see him and Don Grooms and Jim Billie sipping jasmine tea and whispering around the campfire.”
The work of these troubadours and that of many others is celebrated annually at the Florida Folk Festival, the nation's oldest continuous folk-music event.

Among true Florida troubadours, Gamble Rogers and his protégé Jimmy Buffett toured the farthest. From St. Augustine, Rogers roamed the country, carrying his expert Travis-style licks and his crafted tales of mythical "Oklawaha County, Florida" to audiences across the fruited plain. A former member of the nationally-known Serendipity Singers, Rogers died tragically in 1991 while attempting to save a man from drowning off Flagler Beach. In 1998, Rogers was named to the state's prestigious Artist's Hall of Fame, becoming the third folksinger (after McLean and Buffett) to receive this honor.

In a letter read at the ceremony, Buffett paid homage to Rogers: "One of the untold but essential qualities of a life as a troubadour is that you teach your trade to those you feel deserve and can handle the knowledge of performing. Gamble was my teacher. Our classroom was his fastback Mustang, or a barstool at The Trade Winds, or a bench in Peacock Park in Coconut Grove. It was in these spots that Gamble offered up his wisdom to an up-and-coming folksinger from the Gulf Coast."

Buffett, who marketed his laid-back Key West sound into a gigantic cult following of "parrot head" fans, has far surpassed anything that could be categorized as Florida folk music. He is an international star with over 30 albums and more than 20 million records sold—still one of the highest-grossing touring acts in commercial music. His archetypical songs, such as "A Pirate Looks at 40" and "Margaritaville," are modern Florida folk classics. Performed with an island feel, Buffett's tunes sail the coast just as McLean's music trampled the inland swamps.

Despite Buffet's sizeable catalogue of Florida music, his superstardom quickly removed him from the existing Florida folk scene. His commercial success seemed to sour the old guard. Similarly, as Gamble Rogers' national stature increased and he began commanding a fee to perform in the annual Florida Folk Festival, many in the folk community cried foul. A splinter group of angry folkies organized to protest Rogers' payday and other harbingers of festival progress.

"I remember when I was very young, we were told not to like Gamble," says Bettina Makely, of North Florida's yodeling Makely family. "I had no idea why. He was such a nice person...I really regret that now."

Had Buffett remained a scruffy tip-jar star, he might have had a chance with Florida folkies. As it is now, though, it is not uncommon to hear them say: "We have an arrangement with Jimmy Buffett: We don't play any of his music, and he doesn't play any of ours."
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FLORIDA FOLK MUSIC  A Colorful Enigma

Ballew, who with Rogers, McLean, and Grooms, set the standard for Florida's current folk-music scene, was a master guitarist and songwriter from Central Florida. He recorded only one LP, but it was a classic. It contained his signature song, "Roll On Manatee," one of the first notable Florida environmental songs. Ballew died in 1987 at the age of 44.

The work of these troubadours and that of many others is celebrated annually at the Florida Folk Festival, the nation's oldest continuous folk-music event. The festival began in 1953 and has morphed into a mecca for Florida folk songsmiths. Each Memorial Day weekend, they make their pilgrimage to tiny White Springs to commune among their own kind on the hallowed grounds of Stephen Foster State Folk Culture Park.

Begun by area socialites, the festival came to hold the only real "certification process" for state folksingers. "You just weren't considered Florida folk unless you paid your dues at White Springs," explains Dale Crider. "Far as we knew, those of us at the festival were the main Florida folksingers and songwriters in the state."

Buffett and hundreds of other songwriters around Florida might have disagreed, had they even known about the festival or been willing to lose a weekend of pay to attend. The "credentials" were held in the tight grip of "Cousin" Thelma Boltin, an iron-fisted local folklorist who controlled the festival for two decades, deciding who was "Florida folk" and who was not permitted on stage.

During the festival, she was always on the main stage, watching, critiquing, and protecting an event she defined according to her own traditional values and God-fearing North Florida culture. The talent lineup, until the mid-1970s, was almost exclusively from that region.

McLean was Boltin's nemesis. His stature as the living "Father of Florida Folk" forced her to overlook his constant bending of rules. In direct defiance of the festival's stuffy atmosphere, McLean continually brought his new "discoveries" onto the festival stage, unannounced.

Cousin Thelma could only look on disappointingly. When she stepped down, the ailing, money-losing festival received a shot of modernization, which continues today. Lake Wales folksingers Frank and Ann Thomas, who return weeks later with their mentors to a wide variety of folk music, serve as veritable lifelines, before he's swept away.

Boomslang's eating road kill at the Florida Folk Festival. There's buzzards dancin' in Chief Jim Billie's mind. Sorry to hear the Ashley Gang's still doin' time. Kelly Green's been down with the Frank Thomas blues. J. Robert's steppin' out with his walkin' shoes. Del Suggs' wooden boat's travellin' far off shore. The hard times for Southwind will come again no more.

The roadside preacher in Roy Book Binder's blues, the moss under Mark Smith's lighthouse moon, Paul Gerard's butterfly dreams, Long John Higginbotham and his dastardly schemes, Jerry Mincey's planted Yankees, the singin' biscuits of Carrie Hamby, Lee Paulet, the deep-voiced horse, and Barbara Schaffer is something special, of course. Carl Wade's wagon is stuck in a rut, down the street from Mindy Simmons' mustard butt.

There's a swamp goat tearin' up Pat Barnmore's yard, he's callin' for Joe, the Okofookee bardo. Sunset Beach Pete and his dog pete gnat are all over Bettina Makely's big fat cat. Grant Livingston's Florida rain is gonna pour when Bobby Hicks husbands, "Need I say More?"

I'm Spaniard and I'm Frenchman, and I'm British and I'm Indian! I'm forest, I'm swampland, opportunities for all men! Proud as can be when I roar! I'm Florida need I say more! I'm Florida, need I say more?

PETER B. GALLAGHER is a free-lance writer and Florida folk songwriter who lives in St. Petersburg. He co-hosts The Florida Folk Show with songwriter Bobby Hicks, every Thursday (9-10 a.m.) on WMNF (88.5 FM Tampa Bay).
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You hear them coming before you see them. There's the ka-link, ka-link of cowbells and the rhythmic beating on goatskin drums, the honking of bicycle horns, the shrill shrieks of whistles, and the joyful tunes blaring from trumpets and trombones.

This music of celebration heralds the Junkanoo revelers who come dancing down the street dressed in their riotous colors and winking rhinestones, swirling feathers and flying fringes, towering headpieces, swishing skirts, glorious glitter and glittering glory.

In Key West, Coconut Grove, Tampa, and Tallahassee, they carry on the tradition that symbolizes the heart and soul of the Bahamian people—their pride and strength, their spiritual African roots.

Bahamian immigrants, who came to Florida primarily for economic reasons in the 19th and early 20th century, have made the beauty of their culture known by continuing their Junkanoo traditions. Scholars have yet to agree upon the origins and meaning of the term.

Junkanoo; it has been variously written as John Canoe, John Konnu, John Konny, and Johnkankus. We do know, however, that Junkanoo (as it is commonly spelled) began in the Bahamas more than 200 years ago as a celebration by slaves after their British masters granted three days of freedom at Christmas time. The slaves, most of them from West Africa and the Congo and comprising about three-fourths of the Bahamian population in the late 18th century, celebrated these free days by drumming, singing, and masquerading.

From its origins in West African religious ritual and European folklore, Junkanoo has evolved in the Bahamas over the centuries into a magnificent state-sanctioned and corporate-sponsored display of national identity. Each Boxing Day (December 26th) and New Year's Day, thousands of Junkanooers wear stunning costumes made by hand from cardboard shaped with wire
and covered with finely fringed, hand-cut strips of colorful crepe paper. These colorful assemblages are then accented with rhinestones, feathers, and other decorations.

Junkanoo musicians play a variety of instruments: hand-made goat- or sheep-skin (Goombay) drums that are tuned by the heat of open fires, tom-toms (from trap drum sets), hand-welded cowbells, bicycle horns and fog horns, and whistles. Beginning in 1976 in Nassau, the Music Makers added a brass section that supplanted the earlier use of conch shells and bugles. Today Junkanoo brass sections play popular Bahamian hits, hymns, children's tunes, or music from television shows like the theme song from Sesame Street.

Competition is intense in Nassau as the large groups of several hundred to a thousand or more Junkanooers (in teams named the Saxons, One Family, Valley Boys, Roots, Fancy Dancers, and Music Makers) parade down Bay Street, vying for awards for best banner, costume, music, dancers, and overall presentation.

After a large, wheeled banner announcing the name of the group and its theme, the first thing one sees in a modern Junkanoo parade is the “front line.” This consists of free dancers (both male and female) in costumes consisting of skirts, shoulder pieces that extend upward and outward from the dancers’ backs, and headpieces. Next come female dancers in straight lines wearing smaller, identically constructed, costumes that are decorated differently by each individual. Revelers in large “lead” costumes (restricted to no more than 11 feet high) and bandleaders also parade in this section.

The “back line” consists of the musicians. First comes the brass section, followed by the bell players in very tall, elaborate shoulder pieces. The drummers are next. Their costumes consist of headpieces and skirts, no shoulder pieces, as they would get in the way of the drums that are held by shoulder straps along one side of the body. Drummers are followed by revelers, playing foghorns and bicycle horns and blowing whistles.

Individual Bahamians bear the responsibility for their own costumes. Even though decorating them can mean hundreds of dollars and countless hours of labor, they gladly do so for reasons having to do with personal pride and fulfillment. Funds must be raised to produce the banners and lead pieces, which can cost from $75,000 to $100,000 for the large groups. After the banners and lead pieces appear on Bay Street, most are destroyed (once the reusable decorations are removed).

Today, the large number of Bahamians who reside in Florida (most of them in Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami) see or participate in Junkanoo parades in several areas around the state during different times of the year: in the Bahama Village area of Key West in October, in Coconut Grove in June, at the Orange Bowl Parade in Miami, and at the Martin Luther King Day parade in West Perriee. The fact that Junkanoo in the Bahamas and in Florida takes place during different times of the year enables musicians to attend festivities in both locations.

Bahamian Junkanoo groups have traveled to Florida in recent years to perform at two football events: the Super Bowl XXXV in Tampa in 2001 and a Miami Dolphins game (against the Baltimore Ravens) in November 2003. At the Super Bowl event, Nassau’s Roots Junkanoo group was joined by members of Tallahassee’s Rhythm Rushers. For the Dolphins game, Quentin “Barabas” Woodside, leader of Barabas and the Tribe, brought 260 Junkanooers to Miami.

The first Junkanoo band formed in Florida was the Sunshine Junkanoo Band established by Bruce Beneby in Overtown in 1957. A second group, the Bahamas Junkanoo Revue (1993), made up of Langston Longley, David Dean, Eddie Clark, and three members of the Saxons who resided in Nassau, came together in 1993. Both groups continue to bring costumes to Florida from Nassau and also to build their own in Junkanoo “shacks.”

During the “disco” era in the '70s, a young Miami musician named Harry Casey attempted to fuse American rhythm-and-blues with Bahamian Junkanoo. Initially called The Sunshine Junkanoo Band, the group’s name was later changed to K.C. and the Sunshine Band. They went on to have several hit singles. Junkanoo has also influenced the music and album-cover designs of Jimmy Buffett’s “Don’t Stop the Carnival” and Kenny Loggins’ “Junkanoo Holiday.”

Because Bahamian-Americans are operating in a different cultural context, there are obstacles to performing Junkanoo in Florida that sometimes make it difficult to adhere to tradition. For example, in the Bahamas, fires are lit in parking lots alongside parade routes so that the goatskin heads on the Goombay drums can be warmed and tightened and thus tuned. In Florida, it is not always possible to build an open fire in an urban location; so manufactured tom-toms with plastic heads (and a different sound) are sometimes used in place of skin drums. As an alternative, sometimes electric heaters and small grills are substituted for open fires—or small cans of Sterno are placed inside skin drums to keep them warm (even though they sometimes cause drum heads to burn up).

Making animal-skin drums in Florida can also cause complications. First, although cow skins are plentiful, Junkanooers prefer the sound of goat and sheep skins, which are harder to come by. But no matter what type of
animal skin is used, it must be soaked in lime and dried, and this can cause quite an odor. In Tallahassee a health inspector came around to the Rhythm Rushers' shack one day in response to complaints that dogs were being slaughtered on the property. Not satisfied with group members' denials and explanations of their drum-making techniques, the inspector insisted on touring the entire shack. Finally he accepted their explanation, but a television station aired a story about the cultural misunderstanding, and the shack owner sent a letter asking the group to leave the donated space.

Occasionally Junkanoo group members find it necessary to use materials from fabric or craft stores in place of traditional, time-consuming techniques. For example, silver rickrack and trim are sometimes deemed acceptable in place of homemade glittered strips, called "streaks." Although large areas of cardboard must be pasted with fringed crepe-paper strips, even when time is short paint will never be used. Rather than be caught using paint, Junkanooers will stay up all night for as many nights as it takes to have costumes finished on time. Occasionally they will apply large areas of glitter or colored felt to unfinished areas, usually to the backs of the costumes.

Those Junkanooers who wait until the last minute and scramble to finish their costumes are accused of "slunkin,'" When it is obvious costumes have been made too hastily, they are denigrated as looking "picky." Signs, messages, and costumes hung in effigy in the shacks are humiliating reminders of what happens if an individual slunks. By contrast, nicely pasted, completed costumes are always described as "pretty," whether for a male or female.

Junkanoo groups outside of the Bahamas sometimes find it necessary to re-use costumes, something that is not done in Nassau (apart from hotel shows). While spectators may not know the difference, Junkanooers from Nassau recognize a "picky" or used costume in an instant. When costumes are on the verge of looking shabby, the decorations are removed, and garments are burned.

Specific traditions extend to the pants and shoes worn by men in Junkanoo parades as well. Junkanooers cover pants and tennis shoes with masking tape and then paste them with fringed strips of paper. When time is short, they may use felt. When pants have not been pasted, loose-fitting satin pants with elastic waists are desirable. A pair of beautifully pasted and decorated tennis shoes is quite often a work of art.

Besides their skirts, shoulder pieces and headpieces, female Junkanoo dancers wear tights and t-shirts or shorts. They like to emphasize their hand movements by wearing short, white gloves. Delightful and humorous moments are provided by "free dancers" (both male and female) who run up to men, women, and children standing alongside the parade route to coax them into joining the dance, if only for a moment.

Ideas about what is appropriate in terms of gender may also influence the performance of Junkanoo groups in Florida. When young African-American men express an interest in performing as musicians, many of them refuse to wear skirts as the Bahamian members do. They are unaware that skirts are commonly worn not only by male Junkanooers in Nassau, but also by African men in traditional ceremonies. In addition, sometimes new male recruits object to wearing certain colors that male Bahamians have no problem wearing (baby blue and pink are good examples).

Another obstacle to a full appreciation of Junkanoo in Florida is that many parade organizers do not realize Junkanoo music is not amplified. Thus, various organiz-
ers have placed groups next to loud marching bands, trucks carrying amplified music blasting from large speakers, and even fire engines with their sirens wailing. In addition to unwanted noise, lack of good lighting during nighttime parades may also present a problem. In Nassau there are large spotlights along parade routes so that the brilliant colors of the costumes may be seen. In some events in Florida, such as Tallahassee’s Festival of Lights holiday parade, streetlights are intentionally left off, making it difficult to appreciate the beautiful colors.

In addition, most parades in Florida progress at a much faster pace than a Junkanoo rush in Nassau. Inevitably, parade marshals warn Junkanoo groups to catch up and “close the gap.” Since it takes tremendous energy to continue to play drums, blow horns, and shake bells on a long parade route without stopping the music, a request to speed up is frustrating. On one occasion, members of the Rhythm Rushers who were already the last group in a parade, were not able to speed up. Motorcycle police simply sped in front of them, cutting them off from the end of the parade. The group continued to rush at their own pace, and remnants of the dispersing crowds, thinking the parade was over, were surprised to see yet another group coming.

Despite the obstacles to performing at the level of quality they demand, the inevitable irritants that emerge, and the not inconsiderable courage it takes to perform in front of huge crowds of people who know nothing about the tradition, Florida’s Junkanooers persist in expressing themselves in their unique fashion because of their love for their cultural tradition.

The same passion and commitment found in Nassau can be seen here. DeVaughan Woodside, leader of Tallahassee’s Rhythm Rushers, stated at the end of a recent television interview: “I must let everyone know that Junkanoo represents the creativity of my people. It shows the dedication of my people. And that’s the one and only thing that we really and truly have, and that’s what we really and truly love. And that’s the one and only thing that no one can take away from us as Bahamians, and that’s Junkanoo.”

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Mention "steel guitar" and most people will think of the weeping sound of the instrument played in country music. Some might think of pedal steel guitars that are routinely found in white country gospel groups and church "praise" bands. Relatively few would know the electric steel guitar has been the dominant musical instrument for more than 50 years in certain African-American Pentecostal churches.

The electric steel guitar was introduced into the House of God in the late 1930s and eventually became the dominant musical instrument in its worship services. Over the years, House of God steel guitarists developed distinctive playing styles and repertoire. The unique musical tradition remained little known outside this denomination for more than 50 years, until 1995, when the Florida Folklife Program produced a cassette album titled Sacred Steel: Traditional Sacred African-American Steel Guitar Music in Florida. The album was licensed by Arhoolie Records, one of the oldest roots-music labels in the country, and distributed internationally. Critics and fans hailed the music as a major discovery, and eight more Arhoolie albums followed. Today this compelling music is commonly known as Sacred Steel. Several groups who play this music are touring internationally, and one has garnered a rock-star-magnitude recording contract and two Grammy nominations.

Florida, home to 53 House of God churches (far more than any other state), has produced many of the denomination's most influential steel guitarists. But it was in Philadelphia where the steel guitar was first used in a religious service. Steel guitar music was first brought to the United States in the early 20th century by Hawaiian musicians, and its popularity continued into the 1940s.

The steel guitar takes its name from the metal bar, or "steel," the player holds in the left hand and presses lightly on the strings to make notes that often have
singing, voice-like quality. In contrast, players of standard guitars make notes by using their fingers to press strings onto thin metal frets embedded in the instrument's neck.

The other instruments in House of God musical ensembles are typical of configurations found in many African-American churches: drums, bass, a keyboard instrument, and rhythm guitar. Congregants often bring percussion instruments such as tambourines, maracas, washboards, and cymbals to "make a joyful noise" from the pews. The steel guitarist leads the musical ensemble to play driving praise music that moves the congregation to shout and dance ecstatically, provide dramatic emphasis as ministers preach, furnish a musical backdrop during periods of meditation, and play swinging march music for jaunty offertory processions.

The steel guitar was introduced to the church by Troman Eason who learned to play it in the 1930s by taking lessons from a Hawaiian artist he heard over the radio at home in Philadelphia. Eason's music making inspired his teenaged brother, Willie, to play the steel guitar in the late 1930s. Rather than play in the sweet Hawaiian manner like Troman, Willie developed technique that closely approximated the singing he heard in church. Willie Eason found his approach to the electric steel guitar well suited for the celebratory, cathartic worship services of the House of God attended by his family. He could play it rhythmically; it had a strong, penetrating tone; and, because notes made on the instrument were unrestricted by frets, he could imitate the expressive, highly ornamented African-American gospel vocal style.

After graduating from high school, Willie Eason began to travel throughout the eastern United States to play for church services, revivals, and street-corner music ministries. He was a powerful, moving singer with a magnetic personality. He often made his steel guitar echo the words he sang, or finish his incomplete sentences. A Macon, Georgia, deejay dubbed him "Little Willie and His Talking Guitar," and the moniker stuck.

Willie Eason first came to Florida in 1940 with the Gospel Feast Party, a troupe of musicians and ministers that traveled from New York to southern Florida to hold revivals and worship services under tents in churches. Soon he struck out on his own to play street-corner music ministries for tips and donations. For many years he spent the fall and winter months in Florida. Eason knew how to work a crowd and made a good living performing on the streets. One of his most productive spots in the 1940s and '50s was in front of Buddy B's juke joint on Broadway—today Silver Springs Boulevard—in west Ocala. When Eason plugged in his powerful amplifier and began to perform, the local African-American community was drawn to his soulful music. Today, Eason's memory is impaired by Alzheimer's disease, but his wife, Jeannette, vividly recalls his play-
ing in front of Buddy B's. "So Willie would go down to Buddy B's, and he'd hook up. That loudspeaker, when it went out, people out in the clubs and the bars and even Dr. Hampton, he would open his windows. He was a dentist. He would open his windows to let the patients hear Willie playin'."

Eason's renown increased as he made seven 78-rpm records for popular black gospel labels in the 1940s and 1950s. He became somewhat of a living legend among House of God congregations and was a major influence in establishing the steel guitar as the dominant instrument in the church. In 1987, Willie and Jeannette Eason moved to St. Petersburg and opened the Fat Willie From Philly barbecue restaurant at 1371 16th Street S. The business folded quickly, and they retired.

Willie Eason's first wife was Alyce (pronounced Alice) Nelson of Ocala. Her father, Bishop W.L. Nelson, worked tirelessly to establish dozens of House of God churches along Florida's east coast from Key West to Jacksonville. Most of the House of God churches active in Florida today grew from congregations and edifices established by Bishop Nelson.

Elsewhere in the country, there are more than 8,000 members of the denomination in 26 states, most of the churches east of the Mississippi. This denomination, one of the oldest Pentecostal churches in the country, celebrated its centennial in 2003. Pentecostal churches such as the House of God interpret the Book of Psalms literally—and give praise to God through "loud, joyful music." The churches place strong importance on shouting, ecstatic dancing, and speaking in tongues—believing such behavioral patterns to be manifestations of the Holy Ghost. Music—especially in combination with dramatic preaching—helps infuse believers with the Spirit.

Willie Eason influenced Alyce Nelson's younger brother, Henry, who went on to become one of the most influential steel guitarists in the House of God. Henry Nelson, who idolized the dapper, charismatic, and free-wheeling Eason, took up the steel guitar in 1940 at age 11. Over the years, Henry Nelson defined what would become the classic form of driving praise music for the church. (He died in 2002.)

Henry Nelson's son, Fort Pierce native Aubrey Ghent, is recognized as one of the finest six-string lap steel guitarists playing in the House of God today. In addition to his fiery praise music, he is known for his masterfully rendered hymns and powerful baritone voice. His stunning performance at the 1994 National Folk Festival in Chattanooga marked the first appearance of a House of God steel guitarist before a national audience in recent decades.

Ghent influenced a host of younger steel guitarists in Florida, including Darryl Blue of Fort Lauderdale; his cousin, Antuan Edwards of Ocala; his 17-year-old son, A.J. Ghent of Fort Pierce; and Elton Noble, also of Fort Pierce.

Noble recently reflected on the power of the instrument as he recalled an experience in Lake City. "I played and I let it moan, and a woman jumped up and screamed and fell out (fainted)—just because the guitar was moanin'," Noble said. "...I want it to touch you. That's what I want. If it touch you, I played. If it didn't touch you, I didn't play."

Another musician who influenced many younger Florida steel guitarists was Glenn Lee of Perrine. While he respected the music of Henry Nelson, he was determined to establish his own, more contemporary musical style. He was one of the first in Florida House of God churches to play the modern pedal steel guitar, an instrument usually heard in country music. (Lee died of cancer at the age of 32 in 2000.) A number of young pedal steel guitarists and his family band, the Lee Boys, carry on his musical legacy.

Members of the Lee family provide the music that drives the spirited worship services at the church built by patriarch Elder Robert F. Lee in west Perrine—the most heavily attended of all House of God churches. In addition to playing for worship services, the Lee Boys enjoy success performing at festivals and concerts throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe.

House of God clergy and congregants take a variety of viewpoints on musicians playing outside the church. The most conservative believe the music should be performed only within the church. The most liberal view...
the presentation of the music at secular venues as a means of evangelizing. Each musician has to negotiate these issues with fellow band members, family, and local clergy.

"Right now, our ministry may not be within the four walls of our church," said Alvin Lee. "But it's spreading the music that came from the four walls abroad, and it's touching a lot of people. And that's what the Lee Boys are all about. To me, that's a part of the ministry."

In March 2000, Crescent City House of God steel guitarist Marcus Hardy and a handful of volunteers produced the first Sacred Steel Convention at Rollins College in Winter Park. The event was open to the public and held in a secular venue, but its energy

House of God clergy and congregants take a variety of viewpoints on musicians playing outside the church. The most conservative believe the music should be performed only within the church.

approached that of an inspired worship service. However, unlike worship services where the ministers are in control, the steel guitarists were in charge; it was their show.

Among those who showcased their talents was 22-year-old New Jersey pedal steel guitarist Robert Randolph. His pyrotechnic performance resulted in an alliance with Jim Markel, a local man who had been looking for a Sacred Steel act to manage. Randolph and his Family Band soon began to perform at secular venues including nightclubs, concert halls, and large "jam band" festivals. By the spring of 2002, he signed a major recording contract with Warner Brothers. In December 2003, his debut CD for the label, Unclassified, received two Grammy nominations: Best Rock Instrumental and Best Rock Gospel Album. Randolph's commercial success in the secular world is a controversial topic among House of God clergy and congregations, but most wish him well and are proud of his achievements. Much as neighborhood kids shooting hoops aspire to become the next Shaquille O'Neal, dozens of youngsters from the House of God hone their steel-guitar licks in hopes of being the next Robert Randolph.

Others choose to keep their music within the church. Fort Lauderdale high school student Eddie Harmon serves as a minister and steel guitarist in the House of God. "I want God to be glorified out of it, not me," said Harmon. "I don't want to get any personal wealth or gain off what I do, because I know it was God that gave me this gift. And so, what better way to show my gratitude than to stay in the House and play the music how God wanted me to play it?"

Even though women are in the House of God clergy and comprise the overwhelming majority of congregants at most worship services, few females have ever played steel guitar in church. The only woman doing this in Florida is Lisa Lang, who calls herself "Lady of Steel." Lang, who is the steel guitarist at the Brownsville church in Miami, perceives differences in how the genders approach the instrument.

"We're not as aggressive as the males are in our playing. We bring more of a sophistication to it than the males because, you know, they just drive on that aggression, where it's not really in our nature to be aggressive like that." Lang's example has inspired others to break the gender barrier. One of her goals is to assemble a band composed entirely of women to play in church. "It'll happen," she says with conviction.

As Sacred Steel musicians usher their musical tradition into the new millennium, there seems to be something for everyone. Touring groups have audiences from Miami to New York and from Berlin to Paris, dancing in the aisles and calling for more. And every Sunday from Pensacola to Florida City, venerated masters and dedicated younger steel guitarists make Florida congregations jump for joy as they drive their instruments to swoop, moan, and cry.

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Miami dances at Center of today’s Latin music scene

By Maria Elena Cepeda

Most Floridians are aware of Miami’s evolution over the past half-century from a mere tourist destination into a pan-Latin, pan-American business capital. It may not be as well known, however, that the “Magic City” has also emerged in the past few decades as the epicenter of the international Latin-music industry. Indeed, by the late ’90s, Miami became recognized as the undisputed “Latin Hollywood” for two continents.

How did this happen? The answer lies in global politics, starting with the Cuban Revolution; Cuban-American cultural influences on business practices; and shifts in the Latin-music industries in the United States and across Latin America.

Unlike other music-industry epicenters (Nashville for country music, and Detroit during the heyday of the Motown sound) the current Miami Latin-music industry does not strictly depend upon the geographical proximity of its performers, producers, and technicians for its success. In this sense, the Miami industry’s pan-Latin, pan-American character reflects the trend towards increased international migration, travel, and communication in the current age of globalization.

Particularly in the era following the Cuban Revolution, Miami began to move beyond its reputation as primarily a tourist destination, emerging as a city vital to U.S. national security interests in the fight against communism and drug trafficking in the western hemisphere. As scholar George Yudice notes in his recent study of Miami industry ties to Latin America, for many, Miami’s corporate successes have come to symbolize the triumph of U.S.-sponsored capitalism over communist Cuba.

Global politics, however, is not the sole force facilitating the centralization of the Latin-music industry in Miami: The industry’s success has also simultaneously depended on the prosperity of locals. The strength of South Florida’s Cuban-American business community—and its long-standing practice of conducting its business largely within the Cuban-American community itself—has played a key role in the Latin-music industry’s move to Miami. This business acumen is perhaps best embodied in the example of Emilio Estefan, Jr., currently the industry’s preeminent producer. Estefan and his wife, famed Cuban-American singer Gloria Estefan, are the individuals perhaps best associated with the original “Miami Sound.” (See accompanying story.)

Moreover, Miami’s status as the center of the contemporary Latin-music scene, particularly during the Latin-music “boom” that began in the late 1990s, is also the result of numerous broader music-industry shifts that took place during the ’80s through the mid ’90s. According to sociologist Keith Negus, beginning in the 1980s, the predominant record companies (or “majors”) underwent a key transformation from straightforward producers and distributors of music to global conglomerates in the business of “integrated entertainment” and cross-marketing. Their expanded business included stakes in marketing, record chains, television, cable, and satellite services, among other ventures.

During this period, in anticipation of the predicted growth and increased buying power of the Latino population in the United States, many of the majors began to devise separate departments dedicated to Latin music, and made efforts to expand their Latin recording catalogs. Moreover, since the late ’80s the majors have all simultaneously operated as both national and global corporations. By means of consolidation with, affiliation to, or acquisition of companies that had previously limited their dealings to the United States, the U.S.-based majors have gained various national footholds in Latin America and elsewhere. In part due to the considerable growth of the Latino population in the United States (more than 35 million individuals as of 2000) and to its increased spending power, the U.S. Latino market has emerged as a focus of both U.S. and Latin American industry
marketing efforts. Industry data now often incorporates Latinos in the United States as part of the greater Latin American music market (though they are also tabulated as part of the North American market), illustrating the links between the two markets. More than ever, Latin music has developed into a joint production between U.S. and Latin American corporations.

In addition, in recent years major transnational corporations like BMG, EMI Latin, Sony Discos, Universal/Polygram, NARAS, WEA, and Warner-Chappell have opened offices in Miami. The Box Music Network, MTV Latin America, and Galaxy Latin America have established themselves in the city as well. And while Miami is still not considered an ideal market for music sales, the rapidly increasing number of production and recording facilities in the area offers proof of its reputation as a prime production site.

The concentration of businesses and corporations tied to the Latin-American music industry has in turn fostered an increase in the number of domestic and especially international musicians migrating to the region. Lower overhead costs, geographic proximity to Latin America and the Caribbean, ready access to production facilities, and the presence of an ever-increasing, low-wage (and largely non-unionized) immigrant work force have also contributed to Miami's attractiveness to the music industry. In addition, the abundance of U.S. and Latin American television stations, radio outlets, and print media has facilitated cross-marketing of music-industry products within the Miami area. As a result, the entertainment industry developed into the region's most rapidly growing business sector by the late '90s, and Miami materialized as the undisputed "Latin Hollywood" for two continents.

According to Billboard Latin music editor Leila Cobo, despite a general downturn in music-industry sales, Latin-music sales hit 27.5 million units in 2003, up from 23.7 million the previous year. However, while the Miami cultural and business environment offers many advantages to the major Latin record labels, the Miami industry has also suffered its share of controversy. In particular, the recent conflicts over the Latin Grammy awards involving Emilio Estefan, Jr. and several New York- and California-based artists illustrate the growing influence of non-Cuban musical genres and business forces within the Miami music industry.

Significantly, the first Latin Grammy awards, held on September 13, 2000, were televised live on CBS from the Staples Center in Los Angeles, not Miami. (This was due to a now-defunct law baning Miami-Dade County from dealing with those who conduct business with Cuba, in this case the Latin Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.) The event was hailed as the first multilingual broadcast on a major U.S. network, as well as the first opportunity for recordings produced in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking nations outside the United States to receive Grammy nominations. Despite the impossibility of staging the ceremonies in Miami, however, Emilio Estefan's presence was felt as he led the field with six nominations in addition to receiving a pre-ceremony award as the Latin Academy's person of the year. Wife Gloria received three nominations.

Both before and following the inaugural ceremonies, complaints arose regarding the Estefans' perceived control over the Latin music industry in general and the Latin Grammy awards in particular (dubbed the "Gramilios" by its detractors). Prominent industry figures asserted that as a result of the industry's gradual move to Miami—and the subsequent restrictions imposed by more conservative, anti-Castro members of the Cuban-American community—a virtual boycott of musicians with conflicting political views had ensued.

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The 'Miami Sound'

The original "Miami Sound" of the 1970s and '80s—as performed by groups such as the now-defunct Miami Sound Machine, in which Gloria Estefan acted as lead singer and her husband Emilio as percussionist—embodied the particular hyphenated (Cuban-American) cultural identity common to the South Florida region. This sound was "a form of Latin pop, a mellow version of salsa mixed with elements of American rock and jazz," wrote James R. Curtis and Richard F. Rose in one of the earliest academic articles on the Miami Sound published in the early 1980s.

Unlike more traditional Latin music forms, the original Miami Sound disregarded a montuno section in favor of two or three large musical passages that were repeated several times and that normally consisted of a verse and a bridge, as in most pop song arrangements. The early Miami Sound employed heavy Latin percussion and horn lines; while usually sung in Spanish, songs were at times performed in English as well.

The Estefans' self-proclaimed role as the first musicians to combine Anglo and Latin musical styles in order to produce a musical blend of "hamburger with rice and beans" remains an obvious point of contention for many music historians, artists, and industry insiders, given the rich previous history of musical exchange between the United States and Latin America. Curtis and Rose maintain that the roots of the original Miami Sound can most likely be traced back to Carlos Oliva, a Cuban-American musician and recording executive who lived in Miami during the same period.
Estefan and the Academy were also charged with marginalizing Mexican regional music, despite its status as the industry's highest-selling genre, as few Mexican regional artists received nominations or were invited to perform. In response, Estefan maintained that the Latin Grammy awards had a positive impact on the industry as a whole by boosting record sales worldwide; he also reiterated his belief that politics and music should not mix, and expressed his hope that the next Latin Grammy ceremony be held in Miami.

The September 2001 Latin Grammy ceremony was scheduled to be held in Miami, but it was moved to Los Angeles a few weeks prior to the scheduled date, amid protests from Cuban-Americans angered by the inclusion of Cuban musicians. The 2001 ceremony was ultimately cancelled in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Los Angeles again became the site of the Latin Grammy ceremony in 2002, though Miami was eventually allowed to host the 2003 ceremony.

Notably, Emilio Estefan's rise to prominence within the Latin-music industry has occurred alongside Miami's development into the center for the Latin entertainment industry in the United States and Latin America. The ongoing influx of many of Latin America's most renowned recording artists, musicians, and producers to the South Florida region is but one reflection of the Miami industry's power.

Economic turmoil and political instability aside, it has become increasingly difficult for most Latin artists hoping to "make it big" to do so solely within the confines of their native countries. As a result of changing demographics and market demands, several years into Miami's reign as the center for the Latin entertainment industry in the United States and Latin America, the Miami Sound has gradually shifted its focus away from the original Miami Sound, with its exclusively Cuban-American influence, onto the diverse range of musical styles. The result, what we might call an expanded notion of the original Miami Sound, emerges as a vivid reflection of the lived realities of today's global musicians, composers, producers, and consumers.

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Which of the following best defines the Florida Sound?

- Rhythmic guitars, punchy horns, and soulful vocals;
- Latin-flavored pop with a tinge of jazz;
- Fresh-faced young singers mixing catchy tunes with light touches of hip hop;
- Bass-heavy rap styles;
- An all-out rock 'n' roll sonic assault;
- Caribbean-flavored funk;
- Primal rockabilly.

The answer is—all of these and more. The Florida Sound is a mix that is as diverse as the state's population. And both continue to grow and change.

An overview of Florida's pop music over the last half-century starts with the early rock 'n' roll in the '50s and moves through an assortment of styles that both reflected and influenced the national music scene.

As rock 'n' roll was shaking, rattling, rolling and changing the course of history, there were artists across the state picking up guitars and aspiring to be the next Elvis Presley. While Benny Joy, Tracy Pendarvis and Wesley Hardin might not be household names, they were important in spreading the gospel as told by Elvis, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bo Diddley, and Little Richard. Two Florida artists managed top-ten hits in the '50s with a slightly tamer approach, The Dream Weavers (with "It's Almost Tomorrow") and the Kalin Twins ("When").

About that same time, Henry Stone was setting up a record-distribution network in Miami that would give him contact with just about every independent label in America. Stone's contacts resulted in a national recording contract for Miamian Steve Alaimo, a singer who also had an ear for production. It was Alaimo who produced the first recordings of Miami's Sam and Dave, before they packed their bags for Memphis and the big time.

Stone's Tone Recording Studio gave local artists a place to record when national hot shots such as Hank Ballard or James Brown weren't using the facility. As local records began to create a buzz in juke joints or on local radio stations, Stone would call on his contacts at Atlantic Records to forge national distribution deals, which in turn resulted in national airplay—and some terrific exposure for many artists among them, Alaimo, who'd wind up as a cast member on ABC-TV's "Where the Action Is").

Two of the world's most important icons of the 20th century made indelible impressions on Florida's
music scene. When Elvis Presley came to our state in 1961 to shoot the movie "Follow That Dream," many felt that royalty had hit our shores. Among them was a boy from Gainesville, whose uncle worked as an assistant prop man on the film. After young Tom Petty made the trip to Ocala to see Presley in action, his attention turned to music. He followed a dream of his own into eventual superstardom.

And then there's the Beatles' historic stay in the Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach in February 1964, an event witnessed from coast to coast on CBS-TV's "Ed Sullivan Show." The emergence of the Beatles brought a new optimism to young people, an affirmation of life, music, and youth culture. Suddenly Florida was the home to thousands of garage bands; from three-chord wonders to those who really, truly aspired to make a name in the world of music. Radio stations throughout Florida rode this wave, sponsoring show-dances that helped promote both the bands and the stations.

While many of these bands came and went in a matter of weeks, others persevered, garnering local hits and getting the chance to open for national acts that came into town. Among them: The

Call it primal, uptown, techno, or underground, it just means

FLORIDA Rocks!
Nightcrawlers ("The Little Black Egg"), Birdwatchers ("Girl I Got News for You"), Clefs of Lavender Hill ("Stop! Get a Ticket"), Montells (the controversial, censored "Don’t Bring Me Down"), Legends, Tropics, We The People, and Roemans all enjoyed local hits and a smattering of national airplay as well. Two Florida bands, Ocala’s Royal Guardsmen and Jacksonville’s Classic IV, achieved worldwide success with their recordings, paving the way for others that would follow as the decade wore on.

Few of Florida’s ’60s garage bands are household names, but they were vitally important in nurturing the talent that would result in greater success for many of our state’s musicians. You might not know The Epics, but you know Tom Petty. You might not know The Second Coming or The Bitter Ind, but members of those bands would play an important part in the Allman Brothers Band. These ’60s bands were the pied pipers and pioneers. They were the ones fighting to wear their hair long and to play their music loud. They were the ones spearheading the revolution that many others would later take advantage of. There would be no Creed without the Clefs of Lavender Hill, no Sister Hazel without The Shaggs or the Squiremen IV.

The British Invasion of the ’60s might have spurred on the garage-band phenomenon, but that wasn’t the only musical revolution. As primal rhythm & blues gave way to uptown soul music, this fusion of gospel and R&B, aided by changing production values, made for some tremendously joyful, uplifting, soul-stirring music. Henry Stone was amassing an impressive roster of performers in Miami, but he wasn’t alone. Willie Clarke and Johnny Pearsall formed Florida’s first independent, black-operated record labels, Deep City and Lloyd, in 1965, exploding on the scene first with Clarence Reid, Paul Kelly, and Helene Smith—and later with a 13-year-old girl with a woman’s voice, an instrument so rich and majestic as to cause astonishment to anyone coming in contact with this precocious youngster. Clarke first discovered Betty Wright in a Miami record store, singing along to Billy Stewart’s note-bending rendition of "Summertime" (no easy feat). Wright’s first recordings for Clarke and Pearsall’s Deep City label didn’t sell, but by 1968 she was on her way to stardom with her anthem "Girls Can’t Do What The Guys Do." Three years later Wright would strike gold with "Clean Up Woman," a record that not only made her a worldwide star, but would also encourage Henry Stone to break free from Atlantic Records and establish his own TK record empire.

Florida also had a good share of “girl groups” in the ’60s, inspired by Motown’s success with the Supremes, Marvelettes and Martha & The Vandellas. The known as the Fabulettes, Coeds, Lovells (any early version of ’70s hit-makers Faith Hope & Charity), Quivettes, Twans, and others paved the way for the more successful female-led acts of the disco and freestyle dance eras. In Pensacola, James & Bobby Purify were reaching the national charts with hits such as “I’m Your Puppet,” while in DeLand, Noble “Thin Man” Watts was blowing up a storm with his magic saxophone. And let’s not forget Ray Charles, who began his career right here in the sunshine state, or Wayne Cochran, the flamboyant, blue-eyed soul singer who made a huge impression on television...
in “The Jackie Gleason Show” and inspired the Blues Brothers, who recorded his signature tune, “Goin’ Back to Miami.”

The late ’60s brought turbulent times for our nation, and a lot of the naivete in the music was lost. The draft broke up many a band, and in an era of drugs, political action, and defiance of authority, musical constraints were being broken. No longer tied down to radio-friendly, under three-minute tunes, bands such as the Allman Brothers, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and Blackfoot were fusing rock, blues, and country together into a new form of Southern rock. These are bands that could have a message one moment, and then ask you to party with them the next. After the national traumas of Kent State, an escalating war, and presidential scandals, divisions were forming in rock music ranks. At one time rock and roll was the undisputed music of youth, but as musicians were getting older and moving into authority roles, new revolutions had to take place. And they did.

The punk-rock bands of the late ’70s and early ’80s didn’t top the charts, but they sure provided inspiration to many of the bands that followed (and found great success). A couple of years ago, The Eat, The Reactions, The Cichlids, Critical Mass, and Charlie Pickett & The Eggs started to gain the recognition that eluded them in the early punk-rock days, when they were forced to play dingy clubs on specially designated “new wave nights” (usually a Tuesday night). There would be no Marilyn Manson, no Matchbox Twenty, without the sacrifices these bands made, sometimes playing before five to 10 people, and rarely getting paid.

As the ’70s wore on, there were milestones that would change our state’s musical landscape: Tom Petty and his band Mudcrutch (later known as The Heartbreakers) left Gainesville for L.A.; a plane crash would kill key members of the band Lynyrd Skynyrd (including its guiding light Ronnie Van Zant); anti-disco sentiments would contribute to TK Records’ ultimate bankruptcy.

Things kept changing, but Florida’s local musicians never gave up. Dance music evolved through high-energy, track-based music (thinkExpose), and through the Miami-led freestyle movement, into house and techno-driven sounds. Hip hop would move out of New York City to become a worldwide phenomenon, which in Florida meant bass-heavy, party-intensive rap music (think the bootie rap of Two Live Crew). Hip hop would move from the underground to the mainstream, and would fuse itself with both metal and hardcore rock styles. Punk and ska would come together to form a poppy, accessible hybrid that Florida’s punk-rock pioneers never could have envisioned. A country music band that started in Miami (The Mavericks) would go on to win a Grammy Award. A Latin music empire would spring up that would bring salsa, merengue, Latin jazz, and sophisticated Latin pop to a worldwide audience. And then there are Orlando’s “boy bands,” including ‘N Sync and the Backstreet Boys. Like them or hate them, they’re certainly popular, and have been for many years now.

An overview of Florida music is not complete without mentioning Criteria studios in North Miami, at one time a single room that recorded primarily local acts. Criteria would become “Atlantic Records South” in the late ’60s and ’70s, with Eric Clapton and The Bee Gees leading the way for a procession of musical superstars. And extremely influential in the state’s music scene were radio disc jockeys Rick Saw, Roby Yonge, Mike E. Harvey, Nickie Lee, Wildman Steve, and many more. For a music scene to thrive, there must be artists, producers, venues, studios, and support. Florida has been fortunate to have it all.

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Orange Journalism: Voices from Florida Newspapers
Edited by Julian M. Pleasants
339 pages. University Press of Florida. $27.95

Reviewed by Robert W. Dardenne

Orange Journalism: Voices from Florida Newspapers is an edited selection of interviews with Florida journalists and, for that reason, has immediate appeal for anyone interested in the press. But even those who don't like journalists, or even journalism, will find something interesting in this odd collection of personal histories and experiences.

The book's oral-history approach allows the journalists to tell their own stories in their own words. In so doing, they reveal themselves as people with passions. No, not the kind of political passions that writers of letters to the editor claim to see between the lines, but passions about truth, about information, about the news, and about people.

The interview with Al Neuharth, for example, provides some insight into the man who started Florida Today, the successful Brevard County newspaper and precursor to his later, more famous start-up, USA Today. When he became boss of Gannett, which owned almost 100 newspapers around the country, his decision to launch the national newspaper, USA Today, was based largely on his successes on Florida's east coast. This book doesn't break any new ground on that, but because of its Q&A format, it gives you the details in Neuharth's own words. He says, for example, that the idea to put the "Today" in USA Today came to one of his colleagues in the middle of the night, maybe as he was closing down some local tavern. A point the book makes is that these journalists, Neuharth included, rarely stop thinking about their craft, whether at home, on vacation, or at some local watering hole.

Neuharth was driven by a force not uncommon to many of the other journalists. This becomes apparent as they use their own words to describe their commitments to something they love.

Look at Garth Reeves, African-American publisher of the Miami Times, who said that, despite coming from a journalism family, he wasn't initially drawn to journalism. But his experiences during World War II changed his outlook: "Then, having come out of the army and having been treated like I was, made me take a different look at the newspaper part of [journalism]." Reeves's power of the press...They were waving that flag at me, but they treated me like a damn dog, because I am black. It was a terrible thing to accept; you are laying your life on the line; you are overseas; and you see them treating the German prisoners better than they treat you. It just does something to you. It takes your manhood away."

You get some of the same type of insight into Rick Bragg, an award-winning writer recently in the news himself for a parting of the ways with the New York Times and for writing Jessica Lynch's book (I Am a Soldier, Too: The Jessica Lynch Story) on her Iraqi capture and rescue. Before all that, he worked for the St. Petersburg Times, often covering Miami. "I rented a house in Coconut Grove," he said in the interview conducted by Kelly Benham, now a St. Petersburg Times feature writer, "and the first night someone stole my stereo, but that was OK. I think for the first time in my life, I had found a home. I loved Miami the way some men love women. I wrote about Haitian refugees, anti-Castro guerrillas, brutal cops, pitiful crack whores, riots—I still don't hear real good out of one ear because I got hit with a chunk of concrete during a riot in Liberty City..."

Of the 15 interviews, two are with women: Diane McFarlin of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune and Lucy Morgan of the St. Petersburg Times. Morgan, in talking about being a single mother and journalist, said of her children: "Sometimes I took them with me to news stories. They have probably seen more fires and traffic accidents and things like that than most anybody's children. I was a single parent trying to juggle these two jobs and three children..."

Among those interviewed was reporter and novelist Carl Hiaasen of the Miami Herald, who said that as long as "there's a tiny little spark of outrage out there" waiting "to be kindled into something bigger, then you got to keep writing." Also included are political cartoonist Don Wright of the Palm Beach Post; founding editor Horacio Aguirre of Diario las Americas; the irrepressible Tommy Green, founder of the Madison County Courier ("...people told me, as bad as I spelled, I probably meant to say Courier and did not know how to spell it"); and others from large and medium-sized dailies and small weekly newspapers.

Many interviewers asked common questions, but a strength and perhaps weakness of the book is that it covers considerable ground without
a great deal of focus. The result is a good, but scattered, read.

Readers may also draw the conclusion that a good, comprehensive history of Florida journalism needs to be written. Julian Pleasants, director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida, opens the book with a brief history. Even his bibliography shows that the state's remarkable journalistic contributions and history appear to be chronicled through only about mid-20th century, and then ever so sparsely. But, as subsequent chapters in this book reveal, Florida's journalistic endeavors are rich and varied—with local, national, and international impact—and certainly deserving of a comprehensive history.

This book whets the appetite to learn more about how Florida came to be one of the best newspaper states in the country.

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Our lives are marked by singular moments. Experiences that reverberate through our lives like the dropping of a stone in a pond. The circle of life.
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