

ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

Recommended
RecordsTHE SON SEALS BLUES
BAND

Alligator 4703

MIDNIGHT SON

Alligator 4703

Frank "Son" Seals is one of a new breed of young black artists who are not only keeping the blues tradition alive, but taking the music in new directions without compromising its essential truth. While revivalist folk buffs are unearthing old blues classics and playing them note for note, and teen rock groups are ripping off elements of the blues and dressing them up with heavy amplification and studio tricks, Son Seals is making music that is basically an expression of personal feeling.

As he puts it in *Blues* (an excellent book of photographs and commentary by Robert Neff and Anthony Connor), "I enjoy listening to a lot of musicians, but I'm not into this thing where I run home, grab my guitar, and try to do what I just heard. I want to create my own stuff, my own version of the blues."

Son is not, strictly speaking, a politically-oriented musician, but there is a political side to his music. When a blues artist makes a political statement, it is not an intellectualized protest, but rather a feeling projected in the form of a personal experience. Son doesn't generalize about unemployment and low wages. He wants it from the gut. In "Cotton Pickin' Blues" (*The Son Seals Blues Band*), he puts it like this:

*Little bee suck the blossom,
Great bee make the honey,
I do all the hard work,
But my boss, he
Take all the money.
That's why I got to leave this
country, boy,
And go to some big town.*

The lyrics come from Son's life. He left his own in Osceola, Ala., and came to Chicago for the reason stated in the song. Like most blues musicians, he has often had to take a "day job" to survive. When he sings about the hardships endured by the working class black, his music speaks with the voice of experience because he's been there.

In Chicago, like many of his peers, Son faced another job-related problem—the run-away shop. In what seems the most deeply felt number on his new album, *Midnight Son*, he lays it all out with simple eloquence in the slow blues, "Feel Like Going Home."

*I used to have a job
Doing spot labor every day,
But when I got to work this
morning,
Lord, they packed up and
moved away.
I called my boss:
I want to know
Can I come back home?
He said, Ah, you know, sorry,
Son,
Boy, you job is gone.*

There is a significant double bond operating here: not only has the temporary job in Chicago vanished, the old job "back home" is no longer available. And there is the ironic possibility that the *Midnight Son* worked at briefly in Chicago has had "back home"—i.e. down South—to avoid the

benefits of unionization, which is what lured Son up north in the first place.

This rooting of his music in his own life experience is what makes Son, in the true sense of the word, a folk artist. Despite some opinion to the contrary, the line between folk and other popular music is not a matter of amplification. The "electrification" of blues is simply a result of the urbanization of what was originally country music.

Like country musicians, past and present, Son Seals is a man of the people.

Alligator Records are available by mail: Box 11741, Chicago, Ill. 60611.

—Ron Sakolsky

Ron Sakolsky regularly reviews blues and jazz for *In These Times*.

THE WAYS A WOMAN CAN
BETeresa Trull
Olivia Records

The phenomenon of the independent feminist musician is starting to surface across the country in a number of exciting ways. (See *IN THESE TIMES*, May 25, and picture of women's music festival on this page.)

Teresa Trull plays for Olivia Records, and her album *The Ways a Woman Can Be* is the expression of powerful political beliefs, rendered with dynamic artistry. Because Trull's stand is so uncompromising, this release will not get the airplay it deserves. But it is one of the best discs released so far this year, rivaling major labels at the levels of production values, arrangement, lyrics, and the presentation of a personal vision.

Trull is saying that love be-



tween women is both a personal expression and a political act. A song like "Woman-Loving Women" lays out personal feelings with great perception. "Don't Say Sister Until You Mean It" is a manifesto of Trull's (and her fellow musicians') anger and determination:

*Well don't say sister until you
mean it,
Don't say change until you can
scream it,
Cause we got a strength that
ain't no joke.
Women everywhere, throw off
the yoke!
You say fighting is wrong, I say
'did we choose it?'
When they stab us in the back,*

*Give me a knife and watch me
use it.*

These potent lyrics are only part of Trull's power. She also has a voice of significant range, covering areas like the blues, country, rock or jazz with equal intensity. She is well integrated with her back-up musicians and their precise accompaniments. Jerene O'Brien, for example, plays tight, punchy guitar, laying out rhythmic and melodic lines with cool skill. The total band functions as a unit (musically and vocally). They sound like they've been playing together for a long time.

The women of the Olivia collective exhibit a professionalism

not compromised by the concerns of mainstream accessibility. Linda Tillery's production realizes the aspirations of the artist without gimmickry. The sound comes off clear, uncluttered and natural.

An audience exists for this music. It's essential that it get the chance to hear *The Ways a Woman Can Be*. Since you won't see this record at your local record outlet unless you tell them you want it, here is Olivia Records' address: P.O. Box 70237, Los Angeles, CA, 90070.

—Joe Heumann

Joe Heumann reviews regularly for *In These Times*.

Performers at
fourth annual
women's fest

For five straight days over the July 4th weekend more than 1,000 women and a handful of men came together at Champaign-Urbana, Ill., for the Fourth Annual National Women's Music Festival. Among the performers were Joan Balter, Fiddler, at left, who accompanied Hazel Dickens, right, of the group "Hazel and Alice" (Rounder Records), four of whose songs were on the soundtrack of *Harlan County, U.S.A.*

Other performers included Maxine Feldman, Willie Tyson, Kay Gananer, Margie Adam, Malvina Reynolds, and the groups Sweet Honey and the Rock, and Jazz Alive.

Photos/ Jane Melnick

Why is cancer killing us?

Today's exposures represent the tumors of 12 to 15 years hence.

THE GREATEST BATTLE

By Ronald J. Glasser, M.D.
Random House, 180 pp., \$6.95

THE CANCER CONNECTION

By Larry Agran
Houghton Mifflin, 220 pp., \$8.95

Modern medicine is most awesome when it allows the quick reversal of otherwise fatal disease processes like meningitis or appendicitis. Cancer is another story. Doctors more often than not are still unable to interfere with its natural course. Frustrated and helpless, they are reduced to charting the downhill course of events beyond their control.

Ronald J. Glasser, a young pediatrician and author from Minneapolis, has experienced this frustration and helplessness. His eloquent little book suffers at times from rhetorical overkill but correctly identifies cancer as "our modern scourge." It is a fine primer for anyone wishing to assemble the pieces of the cancer puzzle.

The situations Glasser identifies are evident to anyone who reads a newspaper or watches TV news, but they are too often minimized or forgotten. For example:

- 70,000 children in the Chicago area alone received x-rays of the head and neck in the early '50s and now are at great risk of developing thyroid cancer;
- close to 100,000 nationwide get lung cancer each year, and about 80 percent of them have less than a year to live;
- one out of 12 women alive today stands to lose a breast before her death.
- And the list of confirmed carcinogens—vinyl chloride, asbestos, Red Dye #2, nitrosamines—continues to grow.

Cancer is to modern society what meningitis, polio or cholera were to society 100 years ago. But unlike these bacterial and viral diseases, tumors cannot be treated with vaccinations or antibiotics. The only effective treatment is "simple elementary prevention." Prevention is more the responsibility of government, industry, unions and consumers than of individual physicians.

Larry Agran, a Los Angeles attorney who has studied America's cancer control policies since graduating from Harvard Law School outlines sensible prevention programs in a little book that serves as a compliment to Glasser's. *The Cancer Connection* is a loose, sometimes rambling blend of interviews with cancer victims and pioneer scientists in environmental medicine, interspersed with statements of fact and suggestions for action. For example:

- treating as a felony any corporate failure to disclose information about an industrial tumor or hazard;
- eliminating the tax deduction a tobacco company can now take for its advertising;
- requiring companies to be li-



Dr. Ronald Glasser, author of *The Greatest Battle*.

censed before they can use carcinogens.

Both Glaser's and Agran's accounts bring out, as much by what they omit as by what they say, sobering reasons why any "victory" over cancer can never be as complete as triumphs over infectious disease.

The first is that environmental exposures today represent the tumors of 12 to 25 years hence—so even if cancer-causing agents disappeared from the face of the earth tomorrow, it would take a generation or two to see the beneficial effects.

The second is the legacy in America of inaction, deceit and callous disregard of hard medical facts and tough legislation when it comes to environmental cancer. For example the serious occupational hazard posed by asbestos dust was recognized in the public health literature in 1935, yet not really addressed by industry until the 1970s. An estimated five to ten thousand asbestos-related deaths a year right now is the result, according to Dr. William Nicholson of Mount Sinai Medical School in New York.

Another profound reason we can not expect miracles from the anti-cancer fight is the dramatic improvements in life expectancy that have already occurred. Eliminate all cancer deaths, and life expectancy for those under 35 increases only 2.5 years, for those who reach the age of 65, only 1.4 years.

What would the two million people who are no longer fated to be cancer victims have to look forward to? About 193,000 each year would die of cardiovascular disease, 45,000 of strokes, 20,000 of accidents and 26,000 of respiratory ills.

To put things in perspective is not to be callous or to condone complacency. But the challenge for modern society is more than just cancer. It is chronic disease. And as we do battle, we must maintain a sense of balance, realizing, as Ivan Illich so persuasive-

ly argues, that pain, sickness and ultimately death are integral parts of life.

—Robert Steinbrook

Robert Steinbrook is a student at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Bridesburg

Continued from page 24.

not until an independent medical researcher pinpointed the killer chemical in 1971 was any action taken to "button up the process." Even then, responsible executives refused to accept the results of tests made on rats and insisted on waiting for their own study to be completed. That took another three years, during which roadblocks were thrown in the path of independent investigators.

One of the most emotionally moving sections of *Building 6* chronicles the collaboration between an unpaid researcher and a dying R&H worker to supply background information—refused at the company—that would firm up the identification of BCME as "the most potent carcinogen known to man."

Meanwhile in Washington the guardians of the public good were shuffling the text of a Toxic Substances Control bill with the skill of a conman hiding a pea under one of three walnut shells. They kept it up for six years, during each of which something close to 115,000 workers died of occupation-related injuries and diseases.

One begins to understand why as the authors report battles in committee and subcommittee, in cabinet meetings and executive offices. Nixon's campaign fundraiser, Maurice Stans, as Secretary of Commerce, has to consider the "incentive program" for keeping the corporate contributors happy. A member of the

Commerce Committee of the House is John Y. McCollister of Omaha, whose family owns a petrochemical distribution business. And he is aided by a freshman colleague from Illinois, Samuel Young, whose campaign chest—modest in comparison to most—is indebted to a number of chemical companies.

The Chief Executive's feelings on the subject break cover in a cabinet meeting, recalled by one of the participants, in which Nixon says to his Secretary of the Interior, "If you want to play to the environment people, paint your tail white and go run with the rabbits."

And Gerald Ford is seen dragging his heels down to the final minutes of the last quarter, waiting to sign the completed bill until a few hours before it would have fallen victim to a pocket veto.

Conclusions, if any.

IN THESE TIMES asked the authors what evidence they found that things are going to be different at Bridesburg as a result of the public exposure. The answer is: none.

"The creek that runs alongside the plant is still a stinking industrial sewer. When there are spills inside the compound, fire hoses wash the chemicals down the company streets and into the creek, which flows into the Delaware. When the tide is rising, the pollution is pushed upstream, sometimes as far as the filtration plants where some of Philadelphia's drinking water is processed."

—Janet Stevenson

CLASSIFIED

"God bless the people who fight the power plants," RIGHT TO PASS—a new book by Paul Williams (founder of CRAWDADDY, author of DAS ENERGI). A Windhover paperback, \$3.95 at your local bookstore.

VENCEREMOS BRIGADE BENEFIT to celebrate 18th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. Three Cuban Films will be shown: "The Moncada Program," "With the Cuban Women," and "Por la Primera Vez." July 26, 1977—7:30 and 9:30 p.m. at the Roxie Cinema, 3117 16th St. (at Valencia St.), San Francisco, Calif.

2ND ANNUAL KEEP STRONG Banquet. Sat., July 23, at Midland Hotel, West Adams at LaSalle, Chicago. 6 p.m. Speakers will be Elaine Brown, Jose "Pepe" Medina, Jose Alberto Alvarez and Slim Coleman. For ticket information call (312) 769-2085.

Making a Big Move?

Then make a small one, too. Send us your new address with your old address label. And we'll make sure that your subscription to IN THESE TIMES is uninterrupted.

New Address

Address _____
City _____
State _____
Zip _____

NEW AMERICAN MOVEMENT—CONVENTION 77—"Mass Organizing and Socialist Strategy" Aug. 11-14, Cedar Rapids, IA. More info: NAM, 1643 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647. (312) 252-7151.

BLACK AND WHITE WORK BETTER TOGETHER. Become interracially involved: For information write INTERRACIAL CLUBS OF AMERICA, P.O. Box 1180—T.T., Middletown, CT 06457.

THE IWW: ITS FIRST 70 YEARS Just out—Paper, \$4.95; Cloth \$15; also Workers Guide to Direct Action—25 cents; IWW Song Book, 75 cents, from IWW, 752 W. Webster, Chicago, IL 60614.

ATTENTION CHICAGO READERS—Volunteers wanted to help with circulation/office work at IN THESE TIMES. One hour or one day, your time will help us get out from under a pile of work we can't keep up with. No experience necessary. Call Torie, 489-4444.

BUMPER STICKERS-50¢ each. "Our Politicians Are the Best That Money Can Buy": "Beware the Generals—Gen. Food, Gen. Elec., Gen. Motors": "Help Cure America's Military/Indusrio Complex": "Will Pollution Eliminate All Customers?": "Inflation—The Golden Fleece": "Join the Human Race to the Grave". J. Lang, Box 341164, Coral Gables, FL 33134. Agents invited.

WORLD FELLOWSHIP CENTER, Conway, NH (03818) offers vacation and dialogue on current events, June 24-Sept. 6, with Sidney Lens, Martin Sostre, Sid Resnick, Annette Rubinstein and others. Write for brochure and reservation. (603) 477-2280.

A JEWISH ALTERNATIVE. Tired of being told what you have to think to be Jewish? Try interChange, the monthly publication of Breira. Provocative, insightful coverage of Israeli, American and world Jewry; reporting and essays by Bernard Avishai, Abba Eban, Boaz Evron, Vivian Gornick, Nathan Glazer, Irving Howe, Matti-yahu Peled, Don Peretz, Stephen S. Rosenfeld, Trudy Rubin, Milton Viorst. SUBSCRIPTION: \$10, or send \$1 for sample issue devoted to recent Israeli elections to: BREIRA, Box T, 200 Park Ave. South, Room 1603, New York, NY 10003.

CIRCULATION MANAGER—Staff position available at IN THESE TIMES for Circulation Manager qualified to develop circulation with trade unions and on university campuses. Call (312) 489-4444 or write 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622 to arrange interview.

PROMOTION DIRECTOR—IN THESE TIMES needs an experienced Promotion Director to organize fund-raising and promotion activities, set up support groups, and solicit funds from individuals. Salary plus commission. Call (312) 489-4444, or write 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622 to arrange an interview.

IN THESE TIMES T-SHIRTS have arrived! Order one today for yourself—order one tomorrow for a friend. Yellow with blue lettering. S,M,L,XL. \$5. 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622.

CLASSIFIED RATES:
\$.15 per word.
10% Prepaid Discount