

the blues

by a factor of 40 to 1. So, as far as hundreds thousand dollar salaries and computer projections go, obviously the music industry has certain discrepancies built in.

They say, sometimes, that bands that tour sell records. One of my bands that I enjoy is The Mingwood Band. I like Matt, I like his band. I think he has a good band, and I think they make nice records. They tour even more than we do, which is hard to do. But they do it thanks to the Kirby-Charles Organization. But they don't sell a fifth of the records the Powder Blues do, so I think it has something to do with essentially the type of music that we play; the basic chemistry of the band.

Sometimes I ask myself, what is it that people love about this band? Why do they pay so much money to buy our records, or see us, or whatever and there is an essential magic to the chemistry. I think that primarily lots of bands are great musically, probably better writers, better singers, and better players than us. But we're basically into having a good time.

Gaz.: You feel that you have the right attitude?

T.L.: Yes, and the other thing is, I think that people find important, maybe only on a subconscious level, we're very sincere about what we do. When I'm on stage playing my guitar, I'm not thinking to myself, "I'll make this pose so I can impress a lot of people". And I think a lot of bands, I can almost say a majority of bands, are trying to psyche out the market and figure out how to crack the magic whatever. Basically, and I think this is as honest as I can get, we're up there trying to have fun.

Gaz.: Every show is not just another show?

T.L.: Well, there are those nights, absolutely, but not as many.

Gaz.: How do you find the elusive Ontario market?

T.L.: Ontario has just become the heaviest thing for the Powder Blues. I mean, Tony Bennet was born and raised in Toronto, and he played Ontario Place forum, and drew 4500 people. We played there the night after him and drew 11,000. Standing ovation; six encores! This is documented fact.

The people who worked at Ontario Place, and this was three weeks ago, one guy told me "I've stage managed 170 shows here and I've never seen an audience reaction like that". So, it's not anyone from our organization that's creating hype and I'm not taking credit for it. I'm simply saying that this is what's occurring and it's neat.

On the other hand, we're nobody in New York—that's why we're starting a North American-U.S. tour.

Gaz.: Where is that tour going to take you?

T.L.: It's not all firm at this

moment but we will start in New York City. There are seven different clubs that we'll be playing including **The Ritz, The Savoy, The Lone Star, The Bottom Line, My Father's Place, and Trammms.** **The Ritz** is probably the best room in town. We'll probably also do Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C.

After we do that eastern seaboard thing we'll probably do a few dates in suburban New Jersey. At that point we'll look at the situation again. If it is warranted we'll do Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Detroit. But that's hard to say at this point.

Gaz.: You're from Chicago, are you not?

T.L.: I was born and raised in Chicago as was my brother Jack who plays bass in the band.

Gaz.: Are you looking forward to going back?

T.L.: Well, yes and no. I don't need the personal vendetta of saying I'm back in Chicago and look at me now. I don't care really, and from a purely business point of view Chicago is not the smartest city to go to. Of course even if you're king of the shit heap in Chicago you're equivalent to nothing because nobody looks at Chicago to break groups. Unless you are of the ilk of REO Speedwagon which we're not.

We made the decision at the inception of the group to play music that we wanted to play and if people liked it, fine.

Gaz.: Are you considering going into the Southern U.S. at all?

T.L.: Oh yeah. "Doin it right" was a big hit in Houston, Dallas and Austin, Texas.

Gaz.: Without a release of the LP?

T.L.: No, it was released on **EMI Liberty.** It wasn't distributed but it was released. We got a lot of airplay. We received fan letters from every state in the union.

Gaz.: How did it do sales wise in the U.S.?

T.L.: Like I said it wasn't distributed so it didn't do very well. But it wasn't a lack of airplay, it was simply a lack of availability of copies. The new one is doing much better. I imagine the third one will do even better. I think that this is the type of group that is going to do the long slow build in the states.

For example, **Tattoo You** by the Rolling Stones. It is probably the twenty-something album and it is selling better than any of their previous ones. In fact, the earlier ones didn't sell that well at all.

They originally started out like us. They were doing blues copies and then they started writing their own material. I think the development is similar. If you saw the reaction in Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton, I haven't seen that since I saw the Beatles live in '67. We literally had to go offstage

holding our bodies so people would not rip off pieces of them.

I don't know if I like it that much but it does give us the impetus to continue doing what we're doing.

Gaz.: What are you trying to do?

T.L.: To keep this band together and financially its a real bitch because there are seven guys in the band and they're all grown men and they need a lot of money to stay together. We've got a real big road crew, and a semi trailer, and lights, and P.A., and amplifiers, and managers, and road managers, and publicity, and all this garbage. It takes a whole lot of money to keep the thing on the road.

Everybody in the band has been playing a long time individually and I'm starting to see an evolution musically. On this new album there are more people writing and contributing and I'm starting to feel as though we're developing a sound that is unique to the Powder Blues. A sound that is identifiable as much as the Stones or even the Band. They played together for so long they started to develop a sound that no one else really sounded like.

I'm not saying that it's the best band in the world. I'm saying that for what it does in its own cubby hole, it's as good as good as anything on the planet as far as I can tell, and better than a lot. Aside from quantitative and qualitative analysis it's unique. It's its own thing.

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