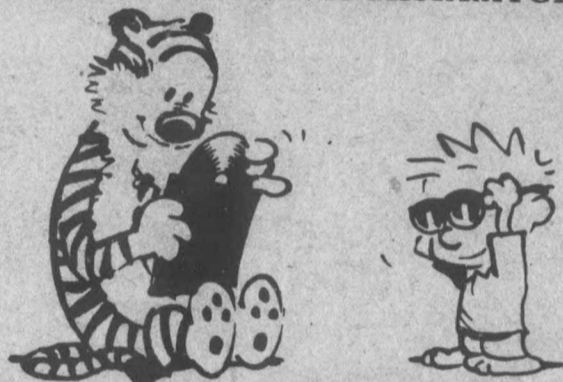




Another broken dawn filled my stinking motel room with an unenthusiastic light.....it was Thursday and today the Meat would hit the pavement.

SKRATCHSKRATCHSKRATCHSKRATCHSKRAT



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**BILLY BRAGG:**  
**Worker's Playtime**  
(Polygram)

Unique is one of those words over-used to the point of being redundant and misunderstood. Rarely does the application merit the word's true meaning. Billy Bragg is however the exception. In his relatively small but impressive collection of albums, this punk-folk crossover artist has maintained the irony and self confidence of his lyrical style, mixing politics and passion. His influences range from ragtime to English folk, and the opening track of 'Worker's Playtime', 'She's got a New Spell', is even reminiscent of country western.

Bragg's raw, nasal, cockney voice immediately commands your attention. This album benefits from the same minimalist arrangements of his earlier work, but he has now added keyboards, bass and backing vocals to his usual "me and my guitar" style.

The strong lyrical feeling is also continued, most notably on 'The One and Only' and 'The Short Answer' (two personal favorites). These tracks display enough of a melodic touch to warrant play without compromising their raison d'être. Billy Bragg is unique because he is brave and persistent enough to pursue a direction deemed too quirky and non-commercial to survive. The focus of 'Worker's Playtime' is more immediate and radio-accessible than his previous LPs, but none of his musical originality is sacrificed.

It is not unreasonable to expect something a little different than 'Talking With the Taxman About Poetry' with this album. This one flows gently over you, yet leaves a profound effect.

ANDREA NOLAN

**Scott Dunham's BLUE LINE**

**MAURICE JOHN VAUGHN**  
**Generic Blues Album**  
(Alligator Records)

In 1984, Maurice John Vaughn made a record on the Reecy label, which he had just formed. After production costs, he couldn't afford a fancy jacket, and decided to use the no-name look. Naturally he called it the Generic Blues Album. It was not easy to get, but it was also called the best Chicago blues of the eighties.

A few years later he supplied a cut on the superb Chicago Bluebloods Lp for Alligator. Bruce Iglaver then con-

vinced Vaughn to lease his album to Alligator for reissue, and now Vaughn has a chance to get the audience he deserves.

As the first cut starts up you know things are going to move. Vaughn's guitar sounds as good as any on the chi town scene, and he uses it effectively on the whole record, particularly 'I done told ya' and 'Wolf Bite'. 'Wolf Bite' is the last song on side one, as well as a tribute to Vaughn's hero:

# MEAT

**LETS ACTIVE**  
**Every Dog Has His**  
**Day**  
(IRS Records)

Howling Wolf. It employs Wolf's tune 300 Pounds of Heavenly Joy, plus Vaughn's sax dubbed into the mix (a throwback on his soul days). One can feel this song creeping up on the whole first side with Vaughn's gritty vocals and 'wolf call' dominating

Also found on side one are two slow blues: 'Garbage Man Blues' and 'Girl Don't Live Here'. These deal with the common blues dilemma of cheating women and their partners in crime (usually with mailmen, milkmen, garbage men, paperboys, or general backdoor men). The keyboards provide good accompaniment on these tracks (not to mention the whole album).

'Generic Blues' was the closing song on side one of the original issue. He still holds the premiere position of best song on the album. Vaughn is joined by young Chicago vocalist Zora Young, whose debut album was released on his Reecy Label ('Stumbling Blocks and Stepping Stones'). Together, with the band, they have a rockin' good time. Vaughn is also able to tell people the truth:

*Oh I might come from the wilderness, but I might be the one who loves you best, woo ooo, generic blues. Don't you play the name game, Baby, because the quality is just the same.*

Side two starts out with a well known song, 'I Got Money', which Vaughn recorded with saxman A.C. Reed three years ago. Running at over seven minutes, the whole band is able to take a solo with extended time for the guitar.

'Computer Took My Job' and 'Without That Bread' are both topical songs which address the problems of finding work in the computerized world, and lack of money.

'Keep on Sleeping' is where Vaughn laments about having to wake up from a dream where he had the enjoyment of five ladies and their various methods of pleasure gratification. The sax also is given a good solo.

Overall, the record is fun, as well as serious. It is musically strong on all counts, and is thoroughly enjoyable. It is modern, funky blues with more soul than any artist on the AM stations.

Don't forget to tune into my show 'I Think I Got the Blues' on CHSR-FM 6.6 (stereo!) on Wednesday evenings 7:30-9:00 (live) and Tuesday afternoons 1:30-3:00 (taped). Special thanks to Beckstreet Records for their help.

Here's a curious little beast. Ever get your sticky little paws on an album that is tantamount to a hip game show? "whoa! - hang on now! - doesn't this remind you of the Clash?" "Hey wait a minute now...the Bangles? REM? Is it me or does that sound just like something off the Beatles White Album?"

Gordon Bennett!! Its true! There I am scooting up some ham and eggs in the skillet, when all of a sudden my little shell-like ears will pick up some half remembered phrase or nuance that leaves me trance-like for enough time for the breakfast in question to be reduced to a smoldering heap of napalm meat.

Lets Active/Ghetto Blaster 1, Uncle Stevie nil (retired injured). What we have here is a big bag of stuff that Burbank's finest have filled with all kinds of magazine clippings, bits of Dick Clark's 'can You Dance Like A Bastard, Mutha?' (channel 7 12:30 pm Saturdays right after 'Brain-dead Smurf Monsters vs. Cereal People From Hell' according to my advertiser) and a healthy glob of that paste you get when you put a transistor radio and two cans of boneless chicken in the microwave. Phew! Rock n Roll eh readers?

Each side kicks off with a little thumper but sadly by the end of each set the listener is resigned to sigh "whats for dinner Mum?"

One exquisite diamond does thrust itself up your right nostril though, and this is the

beautifully crafted 'Horizon'. It starts out all gentle and serene-like, but before you can figure out just what it is that has rolled out of your arm pit, a massive hookline pads down the hallway, I mean like out of NOWHERE (man), and schlaps itself into your face like that tune when the biggest spit bubble you ever blew in your life suddenly got caught in a cross wind. It is just fantastic! Enough so that I have continually been the source of derision whilst tearing off my clothes along University Avenue this week. When one rarely notices what is happening to oneself though, it is obvious that something important is happening.

As an impressionable child, how many times have I bought an entire long playing record just because I wanted to name all my terrapins after members of the band because ONE song was so bloody brilliant. Erm....well, quite a few times actually. This is just such a song, but as usual such is its icon status that it is rather difficult to give any of the other pieces enough credibility if they don't come within winking distance of the former. These things happen I suppose. Besides which the male singer sounds like his adenoids are stridulating all over the place. In future leave it to Angle (Carlson), Mitch (Easter) baby.

Steve Griffiths