

## The Tony Valence story

WHILE BBC local radio continues to be ridiculed and laughed at by commercial people who should know better certain jocks are working away in their local radio station to bring Soul fans at least some very nice value for (licence) money.

One such is **Terry Lenaine**, whose show in Liverpool is highly regarded, and another is **Tony Valence**, presenter of the Soul Show on BBC Radio Medway. A show that is so highly regarded amongst the Soul music lovers who can pick it up that when I met Tony at the Contempo office for our little chat I felt that I had known him for ages.

A personable geezer and a right chatterbox — I thought I was a talker till I met our Mr. Valence — Tony looks older than I expected although he's only 30 (and as everybody knows there's nothing wrong with that age, is there?) married with three kids. "One of each?", I enquired mirthfully, "Yes" was the reply!

His show/programme is called "Shades Of Soul" followed immediately by "Shades Of Reggae" when he can get the product. Starts at 8pm and ends at 10pm with the "Shades Of Reggae" thing taking up the last half-an-hour (so you know when to switch off! — joke reggae fans, honest!).

Radio Medway beams out on 290 metres medium wave and 96.7 mega-things VHF. For those of you who want to know everything and who will believe me when I say I didn't nearly forget the day, the day is Thursday.

Tony's been doing the show for about 18 months. He describes reaction at first as "slow" but it has built up steadily over that period. Postal answers to competition being the best way of gauging reaction (when were YOU ever asked which programmes you watch or listen to by a market researcher?) it appears that the regular listeners to the show come from areas as far apart as London, Essex, Suffolk, even Peterborough and France! That's as well as the local Medway area of course.

The show is mainly a showcase for new releases, albums and singles, British and import (Tony's own supplier is a direct importer from the States which is a nice help in speed) the idea being to let the listeners know what is in the shops and what they sound like.

He includes an interview spot wherever possible and was in fact the first radio jock to do an interview with Heatwave which is a tickler in the titter for him. There's a phone-in dedication spot, competition, either phone-in or postal, and charts from local shops and jocks. Seems a real earful for a Thursday night.

Tony's main living comes from operating a mobile unit — not just Soul of course but heavily weighted in the direction of Soul because that is his own personal favourite music. His show features male go-go dancers (topless?) and he tells

# CHECKIN' IT OUT



**This issue's Epistle from Elson (our Frank, that is), in which the likely lad spotlights people and places of note on the U.K. Souls scene. Off ya go, son . . .**

me that he could work every night if he didn't need a rest now and again. If you want to check out Tony's show he has two residencies — Tudor House, Maidstone on Monday nights, 8-11pm; and The Kings Arms, Enfield, on Tuesdays and alternate Sundays 7.30-10.30pm.

Surprisingly for someone with such a good name in the business Tony has only been jocking for six years, fully professional for 4 and has only been into soul music for three!

Before starting jocking he was a vocalist with a succession of groups and then he had rather a good daytime job which held him back for a couple of years. As for Soul, well people (sic) with less years of being a fan behind them and as Tony said, "Once Soul music gets a hold of you it becomes a part of you." Tony's favourite artist is **James Brown**, and his all time favourite single comes from that gentleman, "Sex Machine". His most disliked record ever is something by the **Majorca town Band** which he describes as sounding "like an out-of-tune scout group" (with apologies to the Scout movement!).

A nice guy, Tony Valence, and highly rated. Such professional people — fans but with their feet planted on the ground instead of in the clouds — can only do our music good.

## Easter Bunny choked to death

IF THERE were any Easter Bunnies running around this year they probably choked to death on Carbon Monoxide from the cars. It took me 4½ hours to drive from Oldham to Matlock to the Matlock Pavilion All-Dayer and I'm still trembling from the effort!

thought I'd go over for a look.

**Phil Claydon**, one of the promoters of these all-dayers in the Pavilion, which has all the facilities needed incidentally, told me that attendance was down slightly on the previous promotions but I honestly couldn't have imagined many other people getting into the place. Not being at my best after a few hours of traffic jams I failed to note all the jocks although I did notice that **Richard Searling** and **Soul Sam** were there, (both hot foot from Halesowen where they had a good crowd as well). No record titles from Sam cos they're all cover-ups and none from Richard as it was only two days since I'd seen him at Wigan. That bit comes later. (Serious students of chronology may now leave the room).

As I've said before I've never been a great lover of All Dayers but I have to say that it seemed to me that everyone was enjoying themselves — and the best measure of that has to be the dance floor.....no matter how much people like myself spout on about music and "the scene" the one criterion must be the strength of the music in relation to the dancers and at Matlock the floor was full all the time I was there. Well worth a visit whenever they hold the next one but set off early remembering those traffic jams.

From Matlock I whipped up to Wakefield to the Unity Hall where **John Green** and **Malc Burton** were

*Continued over page*



## Checkin' It Out:

Continued from page 15

holding their first All-Dayer. Again, like Matlock, those people who were there were enjoying themselves although in commercial terms I doubt if any All-Dayer could have made much money as there were at least five 'Dayers that day. As with the Wakefield All-Nighters the All-Dayer was a typical day in the crazy life of John and Malc which helps me to enjoy myself as most of you have guessed by now that I consider a sense of humour as being one of the most important facets of a human being's make-up.

## Oldham got Soul

YES IT HAS! Settle down in the back row and stop laughing. **Duke Ozzie**, former Pennine Radio Soul Jock and current host of the BBC World Service Soul Radio show "The Beat Is Black", is launching his own record company and as he lives in Oldham the label is to be based there.

First product is to feature Ozzie himself singing a track he's co-written entitled "You're The One". At the time of going to print I've only heard the backing track (recorded in Oldham as well) and its a disco-beat type-thing with a very hypnotic phrasing. At the moment Ozzie is searching for a licensing deal in this country and finalising plans for a trip to the States to tie up a deal for American release.

Apart from recording himself, Ozzie's main idea for the label is to build up a roster of homegrown Soul talent through the whole circle of writing, producing, and recording. The strength of British Soul talent is something the two of us have discussed frequently and this is Ozzie's way of trying to give the unknown British acts an outlet. In fact any British Soul acts based mainly in the North of England who feel that they have something

constructive to offer may contact me and I'll be happy to pass their letters on to Ozzie.

While on the subject of British recordings, Look records, a Huddersfield based outfit have their first release through President soon entitled "Starsky and Hutch" (no prizes for guessing who it's about) by John O'Hara and The Playboys and although it's not Soul as a funky-type disco record I reckon it's hard to beat. Those of you who jock at commercial discos should look out for it (number Pt. 465). I'll go as far as to say that if the Playboys were Black and American they'd have a major Soul disco hit with it.

## Wigan Casino

WHILE THE knockers are at it in force these days and pleased to see a drop in figures at the Casino All-Nighters, those of us who still trip over there regularly know that a good time is still had by all. It's weird really but rather like an artist who's early work sells millions — the follow-ups are always that bit harder.

Well no-one can deny that Wigan's figures through the door are not as high as they were, although like those follow up records this does not mean that quality is suffering.

I've had some good nights at Wigan recently and have noted the fact that there appears to be a drift back to the Casino by some of the "old" faces from the past — not the least notable being "**Booper**" the one and only who was spied doing his very energetic thing recently — personally I don't know how an old man of his age manages it! (only joking **Frank!**)

Handful of records that **Richard Searling** is having some success with include:- "Ice Man", **H.B. Barnum (Shapiro)**; **Freddie Jones**, "Get Back Together", (*Super sound*); **Mike Finnigan**, "Bread And Water" (*Parkway*); **Inverts**, "I'm Lost", (*Tower*); **Dynamites**, "Don't Leave Me This Way" (*Pay*); **Little Beaver**, "Listen To My

Heartbeat" (*Car*).

In addition to these it's nice to see that the **Eddie Holman** side, "This Could Be A Night To Remember" is going down a storm as I predicted — even though it was released on Salsoul almost as soon as my column saying it was not due for a quick release came out.....

## Elson gems

**TAVARES, "LOVE STORM" (Capitol)**:- Is there no end to the product of absolute genius from this group? Give it ten stars, Mr. Abbey, sir!

**TED TAYLOR, "TED TAYLOR 1976" (Contempo)**:- Perhaps it sounds silly but I'm always shy about writing about Contempo releases. However, the truth will out of course and I've got to go into print if only to say that I truly believe this album to be one of the greatest we've ever put out and on a personal level it gives me as much, or more, pleasure to listen to as anything I've heard this year....and for a few years past.

JA reviewed it in B&S 221 and I mustn't use up valuable space but I have to say that if I've ever put you onto an album that you've liked then this is one I have to recommend for your own sakes.

## Sherman Bros. and Heatwave-live!

IT HAS been my pleasure within two weeks to witness two live acts at Bailey's, Oldham, the already popular Heatwave and the soon-to-be (if there is any justice) popular Sherman Brothers.....

The **Sherman Brothers** are a gang of affable young men from Dutch Guyana and the Caribbean who's current record "I'm Stoned In Love With You" on Magnet while pleasant does little to show the true potential and style which their stage acts shows fully. They've been together for 1½ years although one brother, Tony had his

first record in Holland (where they all live) at the age of 7 and has had a string of hits ever since.

On stage they include "The Love I Lost", "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel" and "I Love Music". They are professional without being too slick but vocally they are on a level with any act I've ever seen. They have power, verve and a feeling for singing that must surely win them fans throughout Britain.

I really don't see the current single as a hit but one day they're going to get the right song — a "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel" type thing would be favourite I feel — and then there will be no stopping them.

**Heatwave** are established already of course. It is so nice to see "Boogie Nights" selling so well and for me it was a pleasure to be able to see them after so long in the trying.

Ever since the days of Johnny and Melaine Wilders' Chicago Heatwave, the stories have been circulating about this group that work on stage as if there is no tomorrow. The present line-up has been getting the same reviews and comments and I've had letters from all over the country at one time or another bringing them to my attention. I even spoke to Johnny Wilder briefly on the telephone some 12 months ago and we were going to arrange an interview which never materialised.

With all this build-up I went along to Bailey's towards the end of their week there (having heard glowing reports from locals all the week) with just a little cynicism growing in my mind. Surely no one could be as good as I'd heard this group were? Guess what? They were even better!

Professional, friendly, hard-working (they carry their own heatwave around with them) musically polished and vocally beyond reproach. Once seen never forgotten — if you haven't seen Heatwave on Stage yet then do yourself a favour.

The current tour of Tavares and Heatwave will surely go down as one of the best value-for-money tours of the decade.