



SOUL OF A MAN:

Personnel:

BLUES PROJECT

Danny Kalb - guitar, and lead vocal (on *Two Trains Runnin'* only)

Al Kooper - keyboards, lead vocals & guitar

Andy Kulberg - bass & flute • Roy Blumenfeld - drums

SPECIAL GUESTS: Jerry Douglas - lap steel; Howard Emerson - slide guitar; Jimmy Vivino - guitar; Mike Henderson - harmonica; Chris Michie - bass; Bill Lloyd & Jimmy Vivino - background vocals; Sheryl Marshall & Catherine Russell - background vocals

CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

Al Kooper - keyboards & lead vocals

Jimmy Vivino - guitar, piano & background vocals • Will Lee - bass • Anton Fig - drums

Randy Brecker, Lew Soloff, Fred Lipsius & Tom "Bones" Malone - horns

Sheryl Marshall & Catherine Russell - background vocals

SPECIAL GUEST: Jim Fielder - bass

THE REKOOPERATORS

Al Kooper - keyboards, mandolin & lead vocals

Jimmy Vivino - guitar & background vocals

John Simon - keyboards • Harvey Brooks - bass • Anton Fig - drums

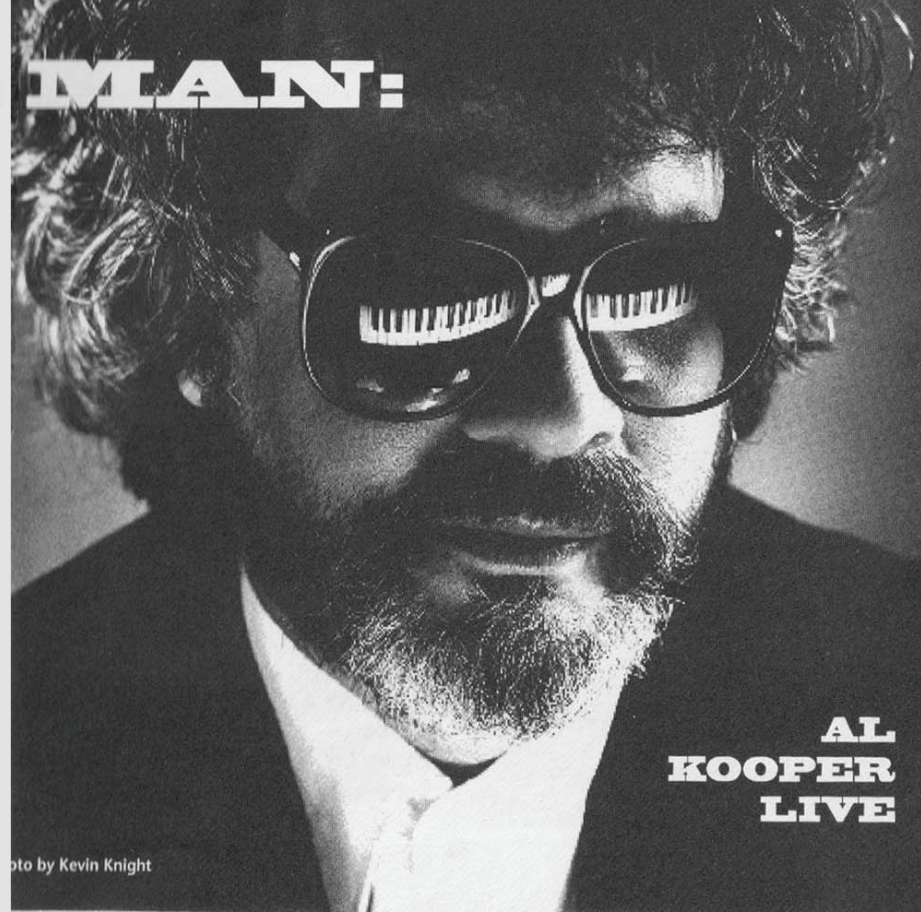
UPTOWN HORNS: Crispin Cioe, Arno Hecht, Larry Natkin, Bob Funk

Sheryl Marshall & Catherine Russell - background vocals

SPECIAL GUESTS: Johnnie Johnson - piano; John Sebastian - harmonica

Randy Brecker appears courtesy of GRP Records, Inc.; Bob Funk appears courtesy of Pipeline;

Will Lee appears courtesy of Go Jazz; John Simon appears courtesy of Vanguard Records



**AL
KOOPER
LIVE**

TRACK BY TRACK BY AL

See personnel on page 1—Only deviations plus soloists are listed below:

CD 1

1 SOMETHIN' GOIN' ON (7:34)

(Kooper)

CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

Jim Fielder - bass / SOLOS - Jimmy

Vivino - guitar; Jim Fielder - bass

Al Kooper - piano; Fred Lipsius - alto sax; Al Kooper - organ

"...Am I fifty *already* ??? Someone please help me over to the typewriter. O.K., O.K. , I'll use the walker !!! The thing that's wonderful about this track is that we were able to get Jim Fielder, the original bass player, although this is *all* we were able to get him for. I've played this song with myriad bass players and *no one can play this quite like Jim*. The song starts with a little keyboard doodling and then just *blasts off*..."

2 I CAN'T KEEP FROM CRYIN' SOMETIMES (4:31)

(Kooper) BLUES PROJECT

Jerry Douglas - lap steel guitar;

Sheryl Marshall & Catherine Russell -

backup vocals

ALL SOLOS - Jerry Douglas

"...This is a retro-nuevo arrangement. The original song was written by Blind Willie Johnson but I changed the music & word: quite a bit from his version all those years ago *because I simply lost that record*. It's much more fun to play it *this way*, because when you play a song over and over for years you get sick of it. This is why people tend to change the arrangements of their evergreens. Now I *really* enjoy playing it and it's one of my favorites on the album. Jerry Douglas, the great Nashville session musician, blessed us with his presence..."

3 I STAND ALONE MEDLEY (6:21) REKOOPERATORS

a) I STAND ALONE (Kooper)

b) I CAN LOVE A WOMAN (Kooper)

c) NEW YORK CITY

(YOU'RE A WOMAN) (Kooper)

Al Kooper - piano; John Simon -

organ; Bob Funk - trombone solos

"...Here are two songs from the I Stand

Alone album and the title track of New York City (You're A Woman). My solo albums are condensed into this medley; I wanted to do more from them, but there wasn't quite enough time allotted. These three selections are perennial fan requests and Jimmy Vivino did a great medley arrangement. Bob Funk, the trombone player from the Uptown Horns, does a sensitive job playing the little horn signatures at the beginning of each song. Sheryl Marshall & Catherine Russell are spot-on the backup vocals and an asset to the *entire* album. My piano playing is pretty funny. I don't think anybody else plays piano quite like this. I'm goin' on ten *all the time*. I don't always make it, either, but it's a very aggressive-go-for-the-throat style of pounding. In 'I Stand Alone' it *really* cracks me up. I feel it's important to be honest about your playing ability at *any* stage in your career..."

4 FLUTE THING (8:52)

(Kooper) BLUES PROJECT

Andy Kulberg - flute; Chris Michie -

bass / SOLOS - Andy Kulberg - flute;

Danny Kalb - guitar; Al Kooper -

Wurlitzer piano; Roy Blumenfeld - drums

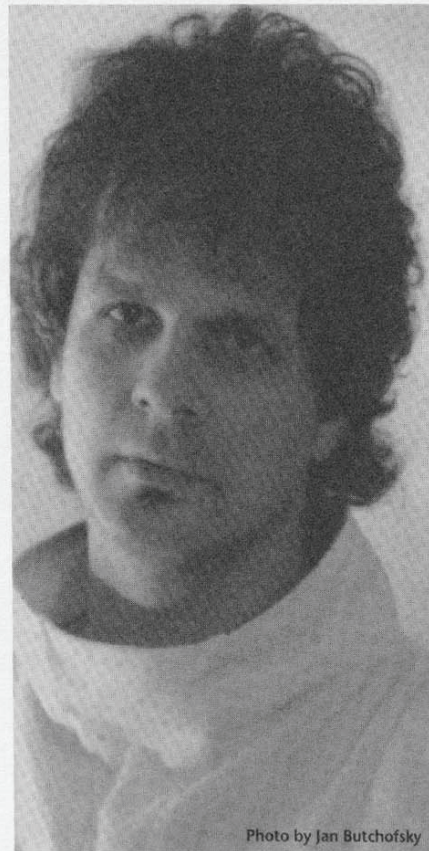


Photo by Jan Butchofsky

"...A song recently sampled by the *Beastie Boys* on their album '*Ill Communications*'. Thanks, guys!! We had to play this and it's a very nice, condensed version. Each year everyone plays a little better, and it's nice to listen to all the *Flute Things* that are floating around, since there are so many recorded versions and not two the same. The album wouldn't be complete without it. A tip of the fedora to Chris Michie for pitching in on bass at a moment's notice..."

5 DON'T TELL ME (3:46) (REPO MAN)

(McLaughlin) - REKOOPERATORS
SOLOS - Jimmy Vivino - guitar;
Al Kooper - organ

"...This song is written by Pat McLaughlin, who's my favorite songwriter at this time. He lives in Nashville, where I now reside. It's a new song for us and I would've put this on my next studio album if I hadn't recorded it live here. Usually when I do other people's material, it's because I wish I'd written the song or it sounds like the kinda thing I'd do. This is very Al Green/Memphis and the horn arrangement wasn't even written out; I just told the Uptowns what to play and they delivered on the spot. It wasn't planned for this to be in the show. It was an experimental

afterthought, but everyone in the band loved it and it became quite enjoyable to perform..."

6 TWO TRAINS RUNNIN' (11:36) (Morganfield)

BLUES PROJECT
Danny Kalb - lead vocal; Howard Emerson - slide guitar; Mike Henderson - harmonica / SOLOS - Danny Kalb - guitar; Mike Henderson - harmonica; Al Kooper - organ

"...We didn't play this till the last show on the second night. Danny Kalb was itching to play it and I purposely kept it from him. It was the second time we've played it where it was just *complete magic*. The first time was when we recorded it for the *Projections* album, and some real amazing things happened. The same kind of magic occurred here and the audience understood that they were experiencing something out of the ordinary. If you wanna show some young folks what sixties music was like, play *this* track for them!

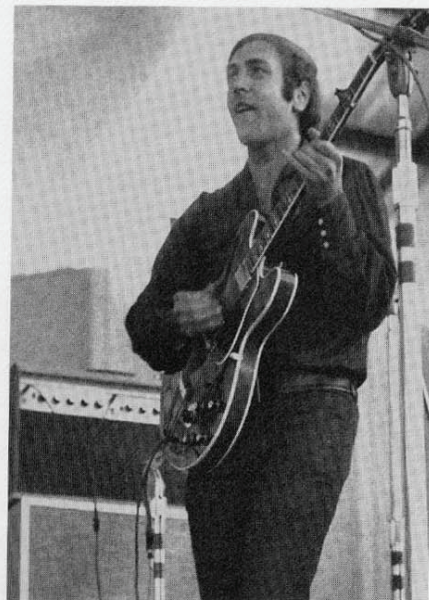
A lot of people don't understand about Danny. He is the equivalent of a John Lee Hooker, someone like that. He's really no different than John Lee Hooker. They both have had hard lives and both have been

immersed in living the blues. If you understand that about Danny, you can appreciate the various Kalb-isms that pop up in his singing and playing. The sad part is that he'll never have as sympathetic a backup band as the Blues Project. His singing gets better and better and really, the reason why we continue to reunite as a band is that we're proud to play behind him, and watch him do his thing. Each performance of a Kalb-led song is always completely unique from any version before or after it. He is totally unpredictable. There was a video shot at these shows, and I've got a big grin on my face throughout this entire song. I'm really enjoying what Danny is doing. I hope you are too.

'Two Trains' is atypical of the rest of the album in that it's very sloppy and not exactly in tune, but that's what it's about. It's from the heart, not from the ~~mind~~ cradle, if you know what I mean..."

7 HEARTBEAT (5:05) (Belew)

REKOOPERATORS
Al Kooper - guitar;
John Simon - keyboards
SOLOS: Crispin Cloe - soprano sax
"...A song written by my friend Adrian



Danny Kalb, 1966

Belew. We've been playing it for four or five years and it's become one of my regulars, but I've never recorded it till now. We do it a little differently than Adrian (who has at least *two* different arrangements recorded himself!). I changed one of the

really important chords in the song & it *bugs him to no end*, but he's *still* glad that we do it. You can do that with covers; you can do 'em *any way you want*. We only played this once at the Bottom Line shows. We were lucky to get it on tape. And when I say Adrian is nuts, I mean he's *good-nuts!*... Yo Adrian..."

8 SLEEPWALK (2:59) (Farina, Farina) REKOOPERATORS

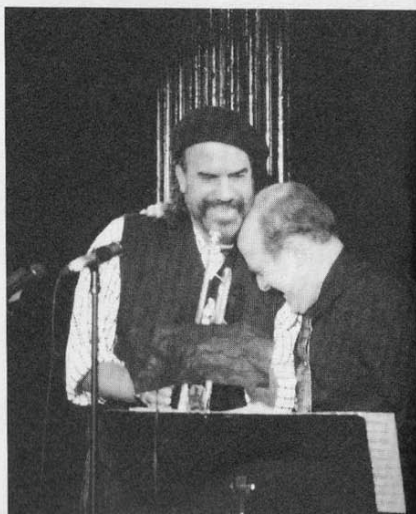
Dedicated to Stephen King

Al Kooper - synthesizer (pedal steel);
"...We started doing this, the old Santo and Johnny tune from the 50s (now performed by Slanto & Jimmy - *hint: Jimmy is Jimmy Vivino*), about a year ago when I learned how to play some semblance of a pedal steel sound on the Korg M-1 synthesizer. It's basically a joke. It goes over very well in person because it's so funny (*except in Nashville, where I fear they will lynch me for this one day*). It's also fun to listen to if you know it's a synthesizer playing the lead (*unless you're a pedal steel player from Nashville*)..."

9 JUST ONE SMILE (6:08) (Newman) CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

SOLOS: Al Kooper-organ; Jimmy Vivino-piano; Randy Brecker - trumpet cadenza (at end)

"...Randy Newman wrote this song and I changed the arrangement a little bit from when I first heard it on a Gene Pitney session. It was always fun to play when I was with the band [Blood, Sweat and Tears] and I still love doing it. It's also a great side-closer, mostly because of the *simpatico* horn section performance at the very end - Nice one, guys!!..."



Randy Brecker & Lew Soloff / Photo by Steve Eichner

CD 2

1 I CAN'T QUIT HER (3:54) (Kooper, Levine) CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

Al Kooper - piano

SOLOS: Jimmy Vivino - guitar

"...This is one of the two songs I *always* have to play. I hate it because since 1968 I've had to play it *every time* I play. It came out really nice here, so now I'll *still* have to keep playing it. I'm really sick of it though, and I haven't figured out how to change the arrangement yet. Phil Collins once told me he really wanted to record it, so c'mon, Phil, come up with a great new arrangement!..."

2 I WANNA LITTLE GIRL (5:11) (Moll, Mencher) REKOOPERATORS

SOLOS: John Simon - piano; Al Kooper - organ

"...The closing track from my last album, *Rekooperation*. I love doing this song live 'cause it's really fun to sing. On the album, Dick Hyman did a fantastic piano intro. John Simon has done one here that is equally fabulous. A lot of people know him for his productions but don't realize what a great keyboard player he is. He

isn't used as much as he should be, but I've always enjoyed his playing immensely. The song is a '40s tune that's been recorded by everyone: Joe Turner, T-Bone Walker, Ray Charles etc..."

3 MY DAYS ARE NUMBERED (5:52) (Kooper) CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN

SOLOS: Oniviv Ymmij - guitar; Randy Brecker & Lew Soloff - trumpets

"...Since we had Randy Brecker and Lew Soloff together in one band, I incorporated a little trumpet duel into the end of the arrangement. It brings the house down when we play it live, and I hope it translates to the album. And they really *adore* each other (*see photo page 7*), so it really isn't a duel, it's a *mutual admiration duet*..."

4 I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW (7:13) (Kooper) CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN SOLOS: Jimmy Vivino - guitar; Fred Lipsius - alto sax; Al Kooper - organ

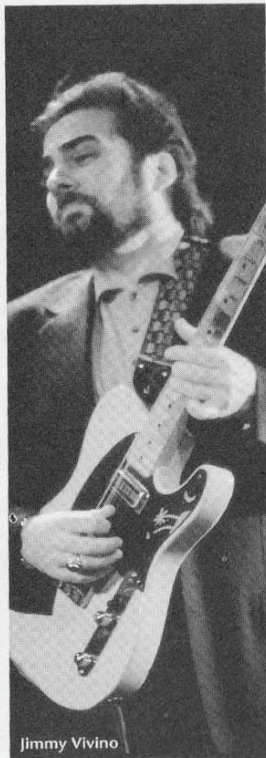
"...This is the *other* song I *always* have to play. Amazingly, I'm very happy with the way it came out here. Performing it with the original musicians was inspirational to me, thank heaven..."

5 VOCAL INTRO
(1:15)

6 MADE IN THE SHADE (5:06)

(Van Zant)
REKOOOPERATORS
Al Kooper - mandolin;
Jimmy Vivino - background vocal / SOLOS: Johnnie Johnson - piano; John Sebastian - harmonica

"...I produced the original version by Lynyrd Skynyrd on their third album *Nuthin' Fancy*. I played piano on their version, but I play mandolin here. I learned to play the mandolin for the song 'Mississippi Kid,' on Skynyrd's first album. I've always loved 'Made In The Shade.' It's another one that I enjoy singing. It's like an old jug band tune with ample room for the occasional blue yodel. And speaking of jug bands, we were certainly lucky to get John Sebastian to play harmonica and Johnnie Johnson to play piano; both of them also played



Jimmy Vivino

on *Rekoooperation*. Having them play on it didn't hurt any. *This one's for you, Ronnie...*"

7 DOWNTIME
(4:38) (Kooper, Vivino) **REKOOOPERATORS**

SOLOS: Al Kooper - organ; Jimmy Vivino - guitar; Harvey Brooks - bass

"...Written with Jimmy Vivino, this was the leadoff track on *Rekoooperation*. Again, we just played it *once* on the gig. It's kind of like a Meters tune. Check out Jimmy's solo on this. Jimmy originally played with me as a *second keyboardist* because somebody got sick. Eventually, he became my guitar player and we've been together for ten years. He's helped me tremendously with my music and putting my various live shows together. He's a great guitar player, keyboard player, singer and a gifted arranger..."

8 VIOLETS OF DAWN (3:41)
(Andersen) - **BLUES PROJECT**

Al Kooper - guitar; Jimmy Vivino - guitar; Bill Lloyd & Jimmy Vivino - background vocals

"...Here is the very first Blues Project single and we just started playing it again four years ago; we hadn't played it since we recorded it *thirty* years ago. On this version we added background vocals, which we'd never done before. I always thought of it as a Byrds-type of arrangement except it took our *three* guitars to sound like McGuinn's *one*. I take no liberties or responsibility with Eric Andersen's lyrics..."

9 ALBERT'S SHUFFLE (7:15)
(Kooper, Bloomfield)

REKOOOPERATORS

Dedicated to the memory of Mike Bloomfield & Albert King

SOLOS: Jimmy Vivino - guitar; Johnnie Johnson - piano; Arno Hecht - tenor sax; Al Kooper - organ

"... Jimmy is a real Bloomfield disciple so it's a big thrill for him to play this song. Harvey Brooks and I played on the original record - *Super Session*. Johnnie Johnson and Arno Hecht add their usual magnificent contributions..."

10 CLOSING MEDLEY
(12:39) **REKOOOPERATORS**

a) **YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT** (Jagger-Richards)
b) **SEASON OF THE WITCH** (Donovan)
c) **AL'S WITCH HUNT** (Kooper)

SOLOS: Bob Funk - trombone, Jimmy Vivino - guitar; John Simon - piano; Harvey Brooks - bass; Al Kooper - organ

"...I played piano, organ & French horn on the original Stones' version of 'You Can't Always Get What You Want,' so this is kind of a postcard from me to Mick & Keith. We're all really camping it up here. We then do a verse from Donovan's 'Season Of The Witch,' which is, again, from *Super Session*. And then everyone takes liberties in 'Al's Witch Hunt.' John Simon plays a wonderful piano solo, Harvey plays a great bass solo, and the Uptown Horns kick butt. Bob Funk plays my French horn solo on trombone at the beginning. The Uptowns are a great horn section. To have the BS&T section *and* them on the same bill is amazing. *It doesn't get any more fulfilling than this for me...*"

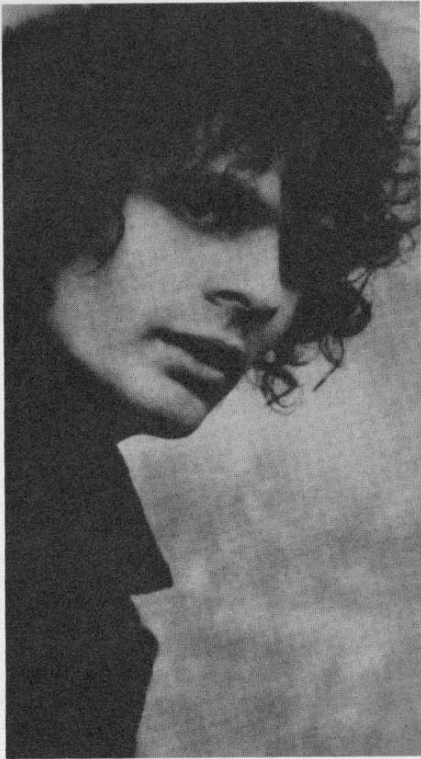


Photo by Mike Sullivan

Welcome to Al Kooper's first live album! Yeah, I know what you're thinkin': What about those three live albums with his '60s group the Blues Project and what about that classic concert set he cut with the late, great guitar god Mike Bloomfield? *Well, what about 'em?* Classic slabs of vinyl all, no denying, but those were, just like the record jackets said, Blues Project and Bloomfield-Kooper albums. This one's a regular *Al-a-pa-looza*. It may have taken him thirty years to get around to it, *but there's no time like the right time, and baby, the right time is now!*

What we have here on this Al-bum is *Kondensed Kream of Kooper*, the recorded evidence of a marathon concert series that rivals the best of those mind-melting bills that Bill Graham used to assemble at his Fillmores, when a given night's entertainment might find Miles Davis, B.B. King and Led Zeppelin sharing a stage in succession. Only this time, for three nights running, two shows a night, all three bands on the bill just happened to contain *Al Kooper*. That adds up to *18 sets in*

just three nights and a whole lot of fine music. And they call James Brown the hardest working man in show biz????!!!

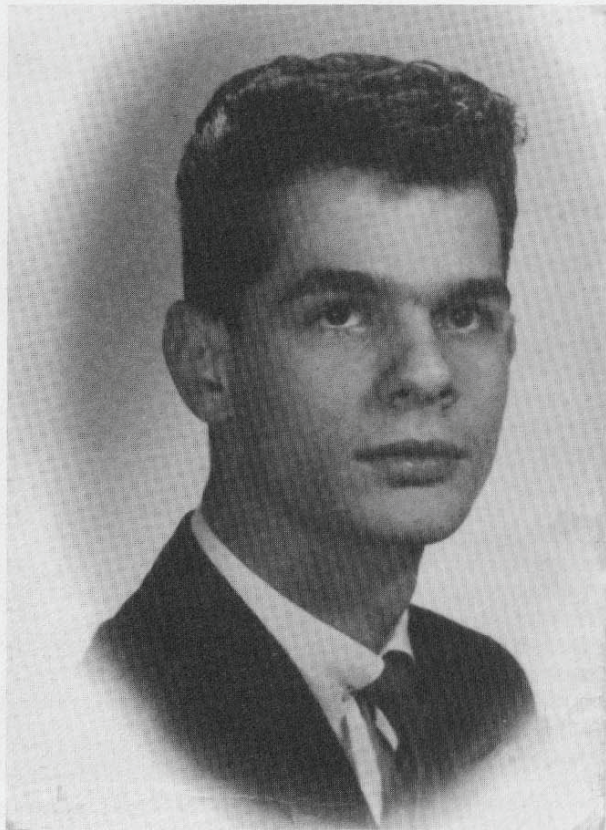
The reason behind this Kooperfest, of which you now have in your possession an abbreviated souvenir, is simple: February 5th, 1994 marked Al's fiftieth birthday. Like most sensible people, he hates surprise parties. Even more sensibly, he hates spending his birthday sitting at home in Nashville staring at Daisy the dog. *The solution?* Kooper calls up some of his favorite musicians, asks them to meet him in Manhattan, and proceeds to invite a few thousand of his closest friends to help him blow out the candles.

By showtime, what had begun in concept as your basic Al Kooper club gig had somehow mushroomed into a veritable This Is Your Life career retrospective. Opening each show would be the Blues Project, the quintet that was instrumental in broadening the base of America's own cultural heritage nearly three decades ago. Next onstage: Child Is Father To The Man. Originally known

as Blood, Sweat and Tears in its formative, short-lived, Kooper-led, pre-"Spinning Wheel" incarnation in the late '60s, BS&T had been one of the first bands to successfully bridge the gap between pop and jazz. Finally, closing out each show would be the Rekooperators, a band of highly skilled, criminally-tight players who would perform the music from the balance of Al's career, including the then-brand-new Rekooperation album—not only his first new release in a dozen years but his first-ever instrumental album.

Like the planets lining up behind one another in some once-in-a-lifetime cosmic queue, the elements were all in place in an astrological-like positioning—*this was one gig that cried out: Live Album!*

"It all came together very well," Kooper agreed. "It took Alan Pepper and Danny Kapilian about four or five months of planning and coordinating everyone's schedules. We rehearsed for three days and then—*whoomp!*—there it was." For Kooper,



Graduating
High School—
June 1961
Photo: Al Kooper Collec

the toil and trouble were worth it. His studio solo recording hiatus behind him, he felt primed to cut a live album that would both sum up where he'd been and where he was headed.

Al Kooper had already accomplished just about everything else a musician could hope for. His overflowing résumé is the stuff of legend: *Pop hit songwriter, Dylan's riffmeister, member of the two legendary '60s bands heard once again here, virtual inventor of the rock jam session, discoverer/producer of the band that defined Southern Rock.* We ain't talking footnote here: this guy's been around the proverbial block.



The show really began on Feb. 5, 1944, when Sam and Natalie Kooper took that little bundle of Alan back to their Brooklyn home and heard him wail for the first time. This kept up, even after the Koopers moved to Queens four years later. Sam would play his Bessie Smith records—the Koopers may have been the only Jewish family in Queens that owned Bessie Smith records—and Alan would sing along. One time the family visited friends and Al gravitated toward their piano. “I just sat down and played the number one record at the time,” he remembered later. “It was ‘The Tennessee Waltz.’ I could just play it, without ever having sat at the instrument before. It was *eerie*, definitely God’s gift.” Young Alan finally convinced his parents to buy a piano, a purchase they could ill-afford at the time. “So then I immediately started playing the *guitar*,” he said. “It was amazing, but they were *not amused*.” Kooper tried formal piano lessons, but to no avail. He began developing his own style and method of playing by ear. Which was just as well, because all of the rules went out the window once rock ‘n’ roll came to town.

Kooper formed a streetcorner doo-wop group. “I was into gospel music,” he

recalled. "We lived bordering a black neighborhood so I went to school with some black people who turned me on to gospel groups like the Swan Silvertones and the Harmonizing Four. I was more into *that* than R&B at first. Then I became transfixed by the heavy East Coast doo-wop records."

By the early '60s, Kooper had begun to write songs and he managed to have a few early efforts placed with artists both memorable (Gene Pitney had a hit with Kooper's "I Must Be Seeing Things") and not (does the name Phil Anastasia ring any chimes?).

The real ticket to the major leagues came when Kooper teamed up with fellow songwriters Bob Brass and Irwin Levine. The trio began churning out songs that were recorded by the likes of Keely Smith and teen idol Tommy Sands. But it wasn't until one of their compositions made its way to the son of a famous nebbishy comedian that rock 'n' roll immortality—of a sort—came their way.

"This Diamond Ring" was, according

to Al, originally a soulful groove intended for the Drifters. Somehow it found its way to West Coast producer Snuff Garrett and a new group called the Playboys, led by Jerry Lewis' kid Gary, who recorded it as a chirpy pop confection and rode it directly to the number one position in early 1965. It remains the best-selling Al Kooper composition ever, much to his bemusement—even in hindsight, *Al can't stand to listen to that record.*

Kooper might easily have found himself confined to a life of Tin Pan Alley songsmithing had not the world of rock 'n' roll—and his own world—been turned inside out with the arrival of the British and, closer to home, Bob Dylan.

The story of how Al came to invent the classic organ riff on Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone" is one that he's told so many times he simply refuses to tell it again. Still, it's worth rehashing one more time, whether he likes it or not, because it's the kind of thing that just doesn't happen in real life.

Al had been invited to a Dylan record-



Recording Highway 61, 1965: (L to R: Tom Wilson, Albert Grossman, unknown, Bob Dylan, Sandy Speiser, Al Kooper) Photo: Al Kooper Collection

ing session as an observer by Dylan's producer, the late Tom Wilson. (Trivia buffs may want to jot down that Wilson's the guy who laughs maniacally at the start of "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream.") There was no way Kooper was going to just sit around wide-eyed at a 1965 Dylan session so he took his guitar along, fully intending to add his licks.

What Al hadn't counted on was one

Michael Bloomfield, a pudgy kid from Chicago, who shuffled in with his guitar over his shoulder before plugging it in and blowing away everyone in the room. "I was in over my head," Al later recalled in his book *Backstage Passes*. He packed up his guitar and retreated to the control room.

When the hired keyboardist, Paul Griffin, was asked to move from the



organ to the piano, Al saw an opportunity and went for it. Never mind that he hadn't been invited to play the organ—or that he'd barely played the instrument before in his life! Al made his move and *nobody stopped him!* He was *in*.

Sitting at the organ as if he'd done it a thousand times before—and *being mighty glad that someone had turned the thing on 'cause he didn't know how*—Kooper messed around a bit. He couldn't even hear himself play over the din so he was mighty shocked when, during the playback, he heard Dylan say, "Turn the organ up." At that moment—the "Like A Rolling Stone" session—Al Kooper's career was truly born. So, in a way, was Dylan's.

Al continued to work with Dylan during the next couple of years, adding his parts to both the Highway 61 Revisited and Blonde On Blonde albums, as well as accompanying His Electric Bobness in concert at the legendary Newport and Forest Hills concerts during the summer of '65. He's played with Dylan many times since, as recently as the 1990



Photo: Al Kooper Collection

Session Sausages '65
(L to R: Al, Buddy Saltzman, Vinnie Bell)

Under The Red Sky album and the 1993 Madison Square Garden Dylan Tribute Concert.

Once word got out that it was the upstart from Queens who'd supplied "Like A Rolling Stone" with its signature riff, Kooper became everyone's official organ donor. A few months earlier, he'd barely played an organ; now, it seemed, he was the only person in New York who *could* play one. Kooper's weapon of chance and then choice, was the Hammond B-3 model, and he used it to put his stamp on a slew of albums and singles by the folkie likes of Judy Collins, Phil Ochs, Joan Baez, Eric Andersen, Tom Rush, Peter, Paul and Mary and others.



Blues Project '65
Al, Danny, Steve, Roy, Andy

Late in 1965, Tom Wilson asked Kooper to play on a session for Columbia Records of a new group Tom was auditioning calling itself the Blues Project. The band took its name from a sampler album that included a contribution by, among others, Danny Kalb, the new group's leader and lead guitarist. Kalb was a young blues enthusiast with a sound all his own. It incorporated not only the entire gamut of blues stylings, but everything from Chuck Berry riffs to outre jazz to Indian tunings.

The other band members were: Andy Kulberg, a classically trained flautist who was going to be playing bass for the group; Roy Blumenfeld, a drummer with jazz influences; Steve Katz, a guitarist with folk leanings who'd put in time with the Even Dozen Jug band (which had also given John Sebastian and Maria Muldaur their starts); and Tommy Flanders, a rock 'n' roll vocalist. Perhaps no other band had less in common, but they were determined to make it work, and, to Kooper's ears, they were well on their way.

Al's job was simply to add his distinctive keyboard sound to the group's audition choice, a cover of Eric Andersen's "Violets Of Dawn." He did his thing, went home and, when the group called him the next day to ask if he'd like to join permanently, he said yes immediately. That he knew little about the blues didn't bother the newest member of the Blues Project.

"It's true," Al admitted recently. "that Danny taught me everything. But once I was in the band I borrowed all his records and went out and bought the rest. I was a quick study."

The Blues Project auditioned initially for Columbia Records, but ultimately signed with Verve-Folkways, an offshoot of the MGM label. The Project was then booked into Greenwich Village's trendy nightspot the Cafe Au Go Go for a four-night stand, sharing the bill with some of their heroes: Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker and Otis Spann. The Project reveled in mingling with their idols. The then-21-year-old Kooper even charmed

Spann into giving him a few piano lessons in the afternoons!

Verve recorded the shows, on Nov. 24-27, 1965, and took the unusual step of releasing the best of the Blues Project's live tapes as the band's first album. Before the album, The Blues Project Live At The Cafe Au Go Go, was even released, however, Tommy Flanders had quit the group, leaving the quintet—Kooper, Kalb, Kulberg, Katz and Blumenfeld—as the official and historically correct Blues Project lineup.

(This is as good a place as any to mention that, although all five of the official BP members appeared at the Bottom Line concerts which comprise this album, Steve Katz elected, for reasons of his own, not to have his performances with the Blues Project or Child Is Father To The Man included in this release. Thus, through the miracle of modern electronics, his guitar, harmonica and vocal contributions have been deleted from the recordings as per his request, and replaced by special guests. Please see Track By Track By Al for personnel details and other manly insights.)

With Flanders gone, Kooper, who hadn't really fancied himself a vocalist at that point, inherited half of the lead singing in the Blues Project, with Kalb and Katz contributing the other half.

Their debut album still feels good to Al. "I call it the pinball approach to the blues," he explained. "Every song sounds like you shoot the ball up, it gets bounced around the bumpers for a few solos, flipped up with the flippers for the last verse, and then the ball falls down the hole and the song is over. That album was a mixture of brash, young people discovering something and *mutating it their way.*"

The Eric Andersen tune "Violets Of Dawn," that brought them all together in

the first place, makes an encore appearance on Soul Of A Man. Amazingly, the group waited almost *thirty years* before performing it live again!

When their second body of work (and their only studio album), Projections, was released in late 1966, it was immediately hailed as one of the most progressive albums of its time. It opened with a psychedelized version of "I Can't Keep From Cryin' (Sometimes)," an old Blind Willie Johnson gospel number that Kooper had originally cut (with a couple of Blues Project members backing him) for an Elektra sampler album called What's Shakin'. He then reworked it with the entire Project until it barely resembled the original.

(Ironically, for this set, the song goes through yet another metamorphosis, coming nearly full circle, somewhere in between the original Johnson arrangement and that of the Staple Singers' version, while still somehow retaining Kooper's indelible stamp.)

Kalb pulled out all the stops on "Two Trains Running," a blues lament by Muddy Waters from which the guitarist was able to wring every drop of emotion. That tour de force makes a reprise appearance here, in a version that proves that both the song and Kalb have not only survived three decades of musical challenges, but have grown even more intense with the years. After listening to the 1994 "Two Trains



Blues Project '73—L to R: Steve, Al, Roy, Andy, Danny
Photo by David Gahr

Running," one can only wonder why Danny Kalb, a truly innovative musician, has never received the massive recognition and adulation enjoyed by other blues guitarists who are his contemporaries.

The third Projections classic to show up on this new set is "Flute Thing," a song which took the Blues Project as far from the blues as they ever ventured. Written by Kooper on acoustic guitar for Andy Kulberg, it was inspired by a riff he'd heard played by jazz guitarist Kenny Burrell. Kulberg easily adapted it to flute, which he electrified by drilling a hole into the instrument and adding a pickup. "Flute Thing" was one of the group's most popular performance pieces. It was so popular, in fact, that it also appeared on the group's third album, in a live rendition. By the time that album, The Blues Project Live At Town Hall, was released, Al had decided to move on.

The Blues Project carried on with various lineup changes for a little while, but the original quintet reunited in June

1973 for a triumphant concert at New York's Central Park, resulting in the excellent Reunion In Central Park double-album. They've regrouped a number of times since, mostly for New York and San Francisco audiences. But the tracks on Soul Of A Man mark *the first new Blues Project recordings since that reunion album more than twenty years ago!*

After departing the group in 1967, Kooper set about fulfilling his musical vision of starting a rock band with a killer horn section. He brought in Steve Katz from the Project, recruited bassist Jim Fielder, who'd worked with the Buffalo Springfield and Frank Zappa, and took on a drummer that Katz knew, Bobby Colomby.

The quartet played a few test gigs and then began adding horns. Alto saxophonist Fred Lipsius (a childhood chum of Colomby's) was enlisted first, then Jerry Weiss and Randy Brecker (the not-yet-famous Brecker Brother), both of whom played trumpet and flugelhorn, and finally, trombonist Dick



Original BS&T '67—Clockwise from upper left: Steve Katz, Jerry Weiss, Bobby Colomby, Randy Brecker, Jim Fielder, Al, Fred Lipsius, Dick Halligan,

Halligan. Jerry Wexler of Atlantic Records and Mo Ostin of Warners both turned the band down. Clive Davis of Columbia Records, however, eagerly signed them. Al named the band Blood, Sweat and Tears and they made their live debut on November 17, 1967, opening for Moby Grape at the Cafe Au Go Go—the former stomping grounds of the Blues Project. Prior to starting recording their first album, they cut a handful of demos, some of which can now be heard for the first time on Sony/Legacy's gold-CD reissue of the sole album released by this lineup.

The band entered the studio in December of '67 with producer John Simon, and recorded an eclectic mix of covers by such writers as Randy

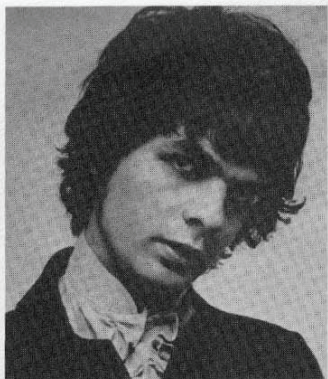
Newman ("Just One Smile"), Tim Buckley ("Morning Glory"), Harry Nilsson ("Without Her") and Carole King and Gerry Goffin ("So Much Love"). Steve Katz contributed one song, "Meagan's Gypsy Eyes," and all the rest were new Al Kooper compositions, thoroughly unlike anything he'd ever written for his previous band. No less than *four* of those durable tunes (as well as the Randy Newman selection) make their second-ever (and first live) appearance on this set: "I Can't Quit Her," "I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know" (written as a tribute to Otis Redding and James Brown), "My Days Are Numbered" and the blazing album opener "Somethin' Goin' On."

The first Blood, Sweat and Tears album, which was called Child Is Father To The Man, was released in early 1968. It was certainly aided by Simon and Kooper's ample use of strings and female choruses (provided by Valerie Simpson and Melba Moore), chaotic sound effects, lush orchestration, various borrowed Beatles gimmickry and all-around gorgeous arrangements that tied the pieces together into a veritable suite. Child Is Father To The Man stayed on the charts nearly a year and influenced a wave of horn-heavy rock bands that lasted well into the next decade.

That album, however, was to be Al's swan song with the band he founded. They played only a handful of live gigs before the bad blood seeped in. Kooper said that it was mutiny on the BS&T ship that found him cast out of the group and Canadian vocalist David Clayton-Thomas called in to replace him. In a nutshell, the problem seemed to be that once the band was underway, factions formed and Kooper's faction lost its bid for power. "Basically," Al recalled, "I was being resented for what I was doing by certain band members and it didn't make sense for me to remain on board. *Bad chemistry*," he mused.



Al & Paul Butterfield, mid '80's
Photo: Ken Regan / Camera 5



Mr. Artichoke Head / 1969

Older and wiser now, both Al and some of the musicians from the original group recognized the importance and beauty of the one album they created together. When Kooper asked them to reassemble to perform the music again, they were excited by the prospect. "I didn't really appreciate it until we got back together in March of '93 and played that music again," said Al, referring to the first BS&T reunion show. "When we re-formed to do that

show, some of the guys told me that the first BS&T album was the *only one they really liked*. To have everyone's support now, is really ironic, yet enjoyable. That reunion was one of the highlights of my life. Everyone was wonderful; it was the antithesis of what it used to be. We kind of plucked out the bad apples and everybody that remained was supportive and devoid of any other agendas."

That reunion gig, also at the Bottom Line in New York, marked the first time since 1967 that the key players on the Child Is Father To The Man album performed those songs together. Some of the tunes, in fact, had *never been performed live at all, even in the band's original incarnation*. For the reunion, they brought in not only producer John Simon, who played piano, but a string quartet(!) and a female chorus. Along with the applied use of synthesizer/ MIDI technology, the group was able to accurately recreate *the entire album—in sequence—live for the first time!*

For the 1994 birthday shows captured on this set, several of the original musi-

cians returned. Now calling themselves Child Is Father To The Man (for legal reasons—the name Blood, Sweat and Tears was trademarked by one of the former members who does not appear on this album), the new ensemble was able to match the power and creativity of the original band while adding its own voice to the music. The event was a dream come true for most of the audience because they had long ago given up hope of ever hearing this music performed live by this mostly original lineup.

Filling in for some of the missing originals were drummer Anton Fig and bassist Will Lee, best known for their roles in David Letterman's studio band, and guitarist

Kooper and Vivino
Photo by Steve EichnerPartial BS&T '93: Al, Randy, Jim,
John S., Freddie
Photo by Chuck Pulin

Jimmy Vivino, a brilliant musician and arranger who performs in Conan O'Brien's studio band nightly. Lew Soloff, the trumpeter who replaced Randy Brecker in the original band, and Tom "Bones" Malone, who'd worked with another post-Al BS&T lineup (as well as the Blues Brothers' band), filled out the horn section with Brecker and Lipsius. (*With the exception of Al, only Vivino and singers Sheryl Marshall and Catherine Russell appear with all three bands on this album.*)

In 1968, having been booted out of his own band, Kooper returned to session work, picking up where he'd left off before joining the Blues Project. But this time he



Divas Sheryl Marshall & Catherine Russell

wasn't adding Dylan riffs to folkie records. He lent his expertise to such classics as Jimi Hendrix's "Long Hot Summer Nights," from Electric Ladyland, the Who's "Rael" (The Who Sell Out) and the Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want," which explains that song's inclusion at the conclusion of this album.

But what kept Al busy most of the time was his job as producer and A&R man for Columbia Records. After leaving BS&T, Kooper was awarded the

position at the label for which BS&T had recorded. He'd never actually produced a record, but he had an office and a free hand, so produce he did.

Al called his old friend Mike Bloomfield who, coincidentally, had just left the horn band *he* had formed. Kooper suggested that the two of them go into the studio with a handful of musicians and just jam and see what transpired. Bloomfield liked that idea just fine, and before long was born yet another '60s milestone, Super Session.

"Super Session was really a fated thing," says Al. "Michael and I had so much in common that we *had* to do something together. There was a genuine affection for each other."

The album included Harvey Brooks, the bassist who'd worked with Kooper and Bloomfield in the Dylan days and then went on to join Bloomfield in the Electric Flag, and drummer "Fast" Eddie Hoh, who'd backed the Mamas and the Papas. They recorded both original tunes and covers and shut down at 3 A.M. the first night, convinced that they had completed at least half the album.

The next day, Kooper awoke to find that Bloomfield had left a note complaining that he couldn't sleep, and had gone AWOL. Al got on the phone and frantically called all his West Coast guitarist friends until one Stephen Stills agreed to finish the album with them. Stills played on Super Session's second half, including the extended take on Donovan's "Season Of The Witch" (reprised during this album's closing medley). Considering the slapdash

manner in which it was conceived and executed, it's remarkable that Super Session remains the best-selling album bearing Al Kooper's name to date. "It was a groundbreaking record in that it had nothing at stake," Kooper said. "We just went in and jammed and didn't think about record sales or hit singles."

Having proven himself as a producer, Kooper gambled that lightning might have a chance of striking twice. He and Bloomfield were booked into Bill Graham's Fillmore West, with the intention of recording a live follow-up to Super Session. The album that resulted was The Live Adventures Of Mike Bloomfield And Al Kooper, despite the former's disappearance (once again) the last night from his own gig. For the cover, the legendary artist Norman Rockwell photographed Kooper and Bloomfield at the CBS Records photo studios. He then put brush to canvas and sent back the finished work with a note: "Here are 'The Blues Singers.' These boys were the most interesting looking people I've ever painted. Thank you, Norman."



Alan & Michael 1969
Photo: Al Kooper Collection

In the summer of 1968, Kooper began work on his first *true* solo album, the appropriately titled I Stand Alone. It was released late in the year, a little before Live Adventures, and demonstrated a cross-section of all that Al Kooper's music had come to represent: blues and pop, originals and covers, melody and experimentation. If it had a problem, it was that Kooper tried to do too much with it.

"I don't like the I Stand Alone album very much," he admitted 25 years after its release. "I over did it on that one, but over the years many veterans of Viet Nam have thanked me because that album was their particular soundtrack for their experiences overseas."

He *does* like some of the songs from it, though, and the "I Stand Alone Medley" that appears on the first disc here includes the title track and "I Can Love A Woman," arguably the two best tracks from that solo debut. "New York City (You're A Woman)," the third part of the medley, is the title track of a later solo album, and another fan favorite.

In all, there were seven solo albums during the '70s and one more in the early 80s. There was also the Kooper Session album with 15-year-old guitar prodigy Shuggie Otis in 1969 and a little known soundtrack (The Landlord) in 1970. In 1982, Kooper began a 12-year recording hiatus that was only recently broken with last year's Rekooperation. But mostly, Kooper spent the '70s and '80s producing records for others, not the least of which was a Southern Rock band named Lynyrd Skynyrd, discovered by Al in Atlanta in the early '70s.

Kooper was in Atlanta producing a band and after work each night, the musicians would check out the action at the local clubs. Kooper became enamored with the vital Atlanta scene and, he said, "I never went home. I made a deal with MCA Records to start my own record label. I sent for my stuff, rented a house and ran the company out of the house." He called the label Sounds of the South.

It was at one club, called Funnochio's, that Al heard Skynyrd for

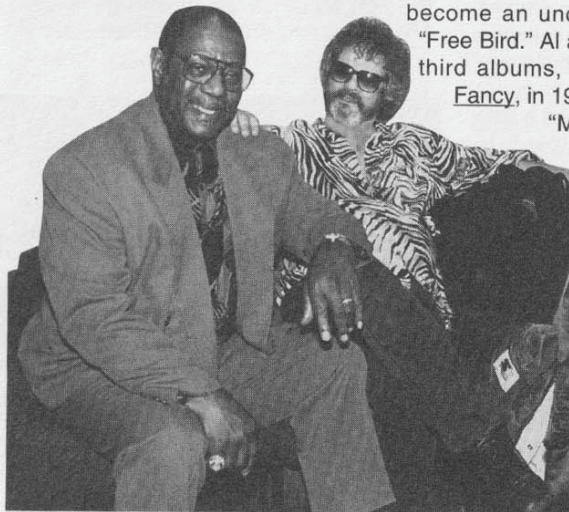
the first time. He sat in with the band one night, and afterwards offered them a record deal. The band was under-



Photo by Gary Nichamin

standably cautious, and negotiations took a few months. But ultimately, Skynyrd did sign with Kooper's label, and proceeded to lay down the tracks for their first album, with Al producing.

The first album hit the chart in September 1973, and stayed on it for 79 weeks. It included a song that has



Johnnie Johnson and Al backstage / Photo by Ebet Roberts

become an uncontested rock radio classic, "Free Bird." Al also produced their second and third albums, Second Helping and Nuthin' Fancy, in 1974 and '75, respectively.

"Made In The Shade," a song that appeared on that third album, is reworked on Soul Of A Man in a country-ish arrangement that finds Kooper on mandolin, which he taught himself to play while producing Skynyrd's first album.

Kooper's production credits run to more than forty albums now, and also include the Tubes' debut—the production of which Al is proudest—and projects by artists as diverse as Nils Lofgren, B.B. King, David

Essex, country artist Joe Ely, jazz drummer Lenny White and an unreleased album by the late Rick Nelson.

Kooper kept a relatively low profile throughout the '80s. While he wasn't *completely* inactive—he toured with Joe Walsh, sat in on some live dates with Dylan and Tom Petty, even distributed some of his own pre-Jerky Boys phony-phone-call comedy albums—he definitely was *not* a visible presence on the music scene. Al



went behind the scenes, scoring the music for the short-lived, critically-acclaimed TV drama Crime Story, working on the score for the Emmy Award-winning mini-series The Drug Wars, and serving as musical director for a Ray Charles television special, among other pursuits.

In 1992, Kooper found himself involved with one of the more, let's say, *unusual* bands with which he's ever been involved. Formed to perform at the American Booksellers Association convention in Anaheim, California, the Rock Bottom Remainers were an off-the-cuff, good-time rock 'n' roll band comprised of best-selling authors such as Dave Barry, Stephen King, Amy Tan and Barbara Kingsolver, cartoonist Matt Groening, rock critic Dave Marsh, and others. Their musical director, the guy whose job it was to make them sound like a real band: *Al Kooper*.

Thus far the Rock Bottom Remainers, whose repertoire consists primarily of rock 'n' roll chestnuts like "Louie Louie," have not released an album, but they do have, of course, a book, to which Al contributed a chapter. (This is not as strange as it may seem: Al has previously authored an autobiography, and has written music criticism



Totally secure Remainder heterosexuals:
Stephen King, Dave Barry & Al

for such magazines as Rolling Stone, Goldmine and CD Review.)

It was in early 1994 that Al finally returned to the wonderful world of solo albums. Having settled down in Nashville in 1990, he was eager to start performing and recording again on a

regular basis. When the offer came to cut an instrumental album (there's only one vocal track, "I Wanna Little Girl," which is mightily reprised on Soul Of A Man), Al readily agreed. Rekooperation, the result, was released on MusicMasters, and in many ways fulfilled a longtime dream of Kooper's.

"They don't make records like that one anymore," Al said about his "comeback" album. "It's like the instrumental albums from the '50s and '60s, but it's also a screamin' Hammond B-3

organ album, as well. It was a project I'd wanted to do for a long time, but it never felt like the right moment in my career to do it, until last year."

For the album, Al was able to hand-pick musicians he'd always

admired as a fan, some of whom he'd never worked with before. Kooper brought in former Lovin' Spoonful leader John Sebastian on harmonica, Johnnie Johnson, who'd played piano on all of the cornerstone Chuck Berry hits, (the two Johns, incidentally, pay a return visit on Soul Of A Man) alto sax master Hank Crawford, and pianist Dick Hyman, whose mile-long résumé includes the haunting fills on the early Johnny Mathis singles. Once again, Harvey Brooks, Al's childhood bud, returned on bass, Anton Fig, the Letterman show drummer, provided sticksmanship, and Jimmy Vivino, with whose band Kooper often sits in while in New York, laid down stellar guitar licks. On Soul Of A Man, this quartet reprises a blistering version of Rekooperation's opening track *Down Time*.

Vivino, Brooks and Fig, along with John Simon on piano, the incredible Uptown Horns (Crispin Cioe, Arno Hecht, Larry Natkin and Bob Funk) and singers Marshall and Russell, round out the Rekooperators. They had the pleasurable task of closing the Bottom

Line birthday concerts that became this album. While the group hasn't had two or three decades to build a reputation equal to the other two bands featured on this set, they sure 'nuff have the chops to compete in and win *any* battle of the bands. Perhaps to prove that point, Al chose to intertwine the music of the three bands on this record.

"Originally, when I was first putting the album together," said Al, "I wanted it to play in sequence, like the shows. But it didn't make as good a listen that way, so I programmed it based on the songs, not the lineups. I'm glad I did that because the at-home listening experience is different. It works better as an album this way."

There's a sense of continuity in the way that the '60s meets the '90s here, a perception that the circle is not yet closed, that there are many more super sessions and live adventures left in future itineraries. A sense that, in fact, for Al Kooper, the best is still to come.

—JEFF TAMARKIN
Goldmine Magazine

L to R: Unidentified, Mike Bloomfield , Jerome Arnold, Bob Dylan, young Al—Newport 1965 Photo by David Gahr



Big Sur Folk Festival, 1966 Photo by John Cooke



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ROAD WORK: DAVID RULE

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REKOOPERATORS CHARTS BY AL KOOPER & JIMMY VIVINO
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Photo by Steve Eichner



Photo by Ebet Roberts

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Bye, Bye—Thanx for listening!



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