

DYNAMIC **THE NEW ORIGINAL SOUND** STEREO

# WOO-HOO

## THE ROCK-A-TEENS

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# Doran

## RECORDS

A Division of  
MART RECORDS  
SALEM  
VIRGINIA

RECORD # 3315

RS0V-7873

### WOO-HOO

(Rock-A-Teens)

### ROCK-A-TEENS

In the closing months of 1959, six cool Richmond, Virginia swingers called the Rock-A-Teens hot-wired the collective hooves of teenage America with just two words: WOO-HOO! You know, as in WOO-HOO, WOO-HOO HOO!! The infectious holler was to launch these Dixie delinquents directly into the national Top 20 and into the annals of pop history - without so much as a nod to the social significance of lyrical content!

Boo Walke (one of the greatest rock & roll names ever!) and Vic Mizelle started strummin' guitars together in 1956 and after gettin' a nasty chomp by the big beat bug, they threw together a loosely knit combo called Boo Walke & the Rockets. According to Vic, there was nothin' too special separating the Rockets from a million other 50's racket squads ("cept maybe that we were worse!") and they spent a good three years working local Richmond teen hops and parties until fate happily kicked 'em in the butt in early 1959.

"One day we went up to this radio station WEZL," recalls Vic, "Where Jess Duboy was the local DJ. We were up there practicing and it was just the kinda thing where we were just fiddlin' around with a boogie which at the time we called The Rock-A-Teen Boogie and it was like Elvis in the Sam Phillips days where things just happened. So we're puttin' it down on tape and Jess Duboy starts goin' WOO HOO, WOO HOO HOO' while we're playin' and we're like

'WHAT?!' But we really didn't think nothin' of it. We had a few of my songs goin' down on tape, too and that's what we were really concentratin' on." The Rock-A-Teens (the sportier name the Rockets rechristened themselves with) had settled into a lineup of Mizelle, Walke and Billy Cook on guitars (though Vic ditched his for a vocalist role after the success of Woo-Hoo), Paul Dixon on bass, Eddie Robertson on sax, and drum smasher Billy Smith (who eventually sold a set of drums to a then unknown Hasil Adkins!) and it was mutually agreed that outta the Mizelle toons on the tape, there was definitely something wax worthy there. "Me and Billy Cook, we heard through the grapevine that there was a label in Roanoke, Virginia, that was looking for original material like our stuff. So me and Billy grabbed our tape and hitch hiked down Route 16 to Roanoke. Well, we get there and come to find out this label Cavalier Records was goin' outta business. So the guy who owned the label turned us on to George Donald McGraw who had a record store in Salem, Virginia, and said he might be interested in our tape. We hitched to Salem and Billy & I played McGraw the tape. Nothin' really knocked him out but when he gets to this Rock-A-Teen Boogie, his ears perked right up! He sez, 'Look, you boys go and get your band and bring 'em down here. We're gonna cut this Woo-Hoo thing!'"

The Mart label, as well as a small studio, was run from the back of McGraw's Music Mart and it was in this modest setting that the Woo-Hoo we know and dig came to life. Jess Duboy, now acting as the Rock-A-Teens manager, set it up with McGraw for the session down in Salem. Two sides that comprised the first Rock-A-Teens single were recorded over an old tape of somebody's wedding! And for all its spontaneous unruly slopiness, Woo-Hoo was actually cut a number of times before a final take was chosen.

"Since I hadda be out front leadin' the band, I did not do the Woo-Hoo part on the record even though I've been given credit for it. To be candid with you, some of the guys in the band didn't have a lotta musical talent and Woo-Hoo had those breaks in it so I hadda keep directin' the guys what parts were comin' up. Jess ended up doin' the WOO-HOO's on the record. We cut it a buncha times actually. Now it comes time for the other side, Untrue, and McGraw sez 'MAKE SURE YOU DO THE OTHER SIDE BAD!'"

If you've heard the record, it's horrible! His reasoning was if we make the B-side bad,

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MART RECORDS  
SALEM  
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RECORD # 3315

RS0V-7873

McGraw Music Co.  
ASCAP  
Times 3:00

### UNTRUE

(Victor Myatt)

### ROCK-A-TEENS

it'll cause the A-side to sell. Well, we sure did it bad - boy, did we do it bad!! We tried three part harmony and sounded like a buncha drunks! It was a terrible song to begin with and we actually made it worse!" (KICKSTERS in the Richmond area will certainly have newfound respect for Jess Duboy - he's the very same hombre who's done sleazy late night car ads on local TV for years! WOO-HOO, INDEED!)

McGraw issued Woo-Hoo/Untrue on his new Mart subsidiary label. Doran. For a shoestring independent company, Mart had fairly strong distribution especially locally in Virginia and the surrounding states. In both airplay and sales, Woo-Hoo took right off. "Now here's where the kicker comes in. McGraw shows up in Richmond and calls us up and sez he wants to have a meeting with the band. So we go up to this hotel room and he sez, 'look, you guys are in trouble. On this song Woo-Hoo, y'all used somebody else's music'. He told us Arthur 'Guitar Boogie' Smith was gonna sue us for stealin' his song! We were too young - Boo was only fourteen and couldn't even sign papers! We didn't even think about how on earth somebody could sue over a boogie, so he sez, 'I'll buy the song off you guys and that way they can't sue you.' Boo was flat out against it, I was sorta against it and some of the other guys mighta been scared of gettin' sued, so they wanted to do it. So McGraw gives us a cotton pickin' hundred bucks for five guys to split up, but we figured, 'hey, now we're safe!' Without us knowin', McGraw takes our master tape to New York City and makes a deal with Roulette Records and if you look, his name is listed as the writer of both sides. Roulette issued Woo-Hoo nationwide and I have to admit that payola got it to a certain point on the charts. All our friends were excited and we thought, 'Oh, boy, we really got it made!' It took payola I think to get it into the Top 100 but it made it to the Top 40 on its own."

It did even better than that. In the fall of 1959, Woo-Hoo peaked at #16 in BILLBOARD and suddenly the Rock-A-Teens were a mighty hot concert ticket. The band squeezed themselves, their instruments and a pile of wrinkled band uniforms into a single car and drove nonstop to Chicago to sign with the General Artists Booking Company. "They put us right on the road on a Dick Clark Caravan and made us the back up band for all the groups - the Passions, Tommy Facenda from Gene Vincent's group and Johnny London. Then we worked with Jerry Lee Lewis and boy, every story on him is true - the drinkin', the wildness. He got so excited when we played with him he tore a bolted-in microphone right outta the floor! We worked shows with Crash Craddock, back when he was callin' himself Boom Boom Craddock, Bobby Lewis, the Crests, Ray Peterson, the Crickets, Santo & Johnny. Funny thing with Santo and Johnny. We did a show in North Carolina and all the girls were goin' crazy of course 'cause Woo-Hoo was hot as a pistol. These kids before the show wanted some autographs. Now Santo & Johnny at the time had with 'em some hornin' pigeons. This is real weird, I stepped up on this box they kept the pigeons in so I could sign autographs and suddenly - BAM! I crashed right through and the next thing you know, there's droppings all over everyone, pigeons flyin' around the auditorium - just total chaos! Boy, Santo & Johnny were MAD!! I don't think they ever forgave me for that, but I haven't the faintest idea why they brought hornin' pigeons to their shows!"

"In the midst of all this we did American-Bandstand. It was insane there! We had to be escorted outta the theatre surrounded by policemen. The girls were just NUTS! Eddie, our sax player barely had a stitch on when those gals jumped him! We did the Saturday night show with Jack Scott, the Royal Teens, Jan & Dean and Jessie Belvin. I remember a lotta people gettin' us mixed up with the Royal Teens. The stage for some reason was made up to look like it was underwater and the girls were dressed like mermaids. Dick Clark came out with a hook on his back like he was swimmin'! He told me, 'Helluva way to make a living, huh?' So I'm out there doin' WOO HOO-WOO HOO HOO and when the drums or guitar do their breaks I'm supposed to point at 'em and the camera'd spotlight 'em. Well, I pointed and they ran a closeup on my hand during the whole break! In front of 25 million people, I'm standin' there with my finger hangin' out waitin' to go WOO-HOO! We did the Alan Freed TV show with Jackie Wilson and believe it or not, the Nutty Squirrels! Up in Baltimore we played the Buddy Deane Show and we did the Milt Grant Show in DC. We worked with a lotta 50's personalities I can't remember - of course they don't remember me either! Onstage we did Tossin' & Turnin', Chuck Berry and Jack Scott songs, mostly records we could adapt to. We didn't do any harmony 'cause we weren't the greatest singers. In fact one night I had a sore throat and one of the Passions had to come out and do the Woo-Hoo's for me! I'm not tryin' to cut the other Rock-A-Teens, but we weren't a good musical group - we were a lucky group. Me and Boo showed Paul and Billy what to play. They only knew the chords we'd show 'em for each song. There's no bass guitar on a lotta our album 'cause our bass player couldn't play those songs!" There were thrills aplenty on tap on WOO-HOO, the combo's sole fun player to more than what the whistles of those salvation' hordes peered in the exploitive sleeve label: "THE INSA-

TABLE MUSICAL APPETITES OF TODAY'S RECORD BUYERS WERE NOT CONTENT WITH JUST "WOO-HOO," THEY HUNGRED FOR MORE. 'Startin' with the hundred yard kick of Woo-Hoo and its magnif' whammy of a followup, Doggone It Baby, the cool dozen R-A-T toons (all originals save for a sharp cover of Gene Vincents Dance To The Bop) shone like a diamond in a field of Avalonian shit. The bulk of the WOO-HOO elpee was cut in November of '59, makin' it probably the last great album recorded in the 50's, tho a January 1960 session wrapped things up for it.

Vic Mizelle inked seven of the toons (Untrne was thankfully omitted from the LP) and lent his holy hollerin' to rockers like I Was Born To Rock ("When it comes to music/I'm not gonna be no flop!") and Story Of A Woman, with a vocal sock not unlike Dale Hawkins at his urgent best. Mizelle's wares range from the frantic overdriven wail of Lotta Boppin' (Vic has a boss tendency of yellin' POW! before guitar breaks) to the stroll tempo instro Pagan sprinkled with vocal bop-bops that make it kinda like the opening bars of a Jack Scott ballad sills putted out to a two minute stretch. Boo Walke tossed in some instrumental twangers and drummer Billy Smith came up with a torrid rocker called That's My Mama. But certainly the cut that has most intrigued go-dads through the ages is Janis Will Rock, Vic's tribute to femine rockabilly warbler Janis Martin. "None of us had ever met Janis Martin, but she was sort of an idol of mine. I got a kick outta her on the Old Dominion Barn Dance; so we strung all her song titles like My Boy Elvis into our own number and called it Janis Will Rock. She definitely inspired us. Woo-Hoo was the big number. Doggone It Baby was a flop. Our album was a total flop. I wrote nearly every song and find out later that I own 1 % of the songs! We had no idea Roulette was run by mobsters, guys with funny names goin' 'Whatever you want, kid, you got it. We're your buddies!'"

For a while Vic and the boys worked locally but then found it difficult to maintain the high flyin' momentum their hit had earned 'ein,

and by the summer of 1960, the Rock-A-Teens had hollered their last Woo-Hoo. "The Rock-A-Teens were on the road less than a year. We really didn't come into our own until nearly the end of the 50's rock & roll era and our style of music was losin' out to the teen idols. There were great times, but there were hard times, too - the sardine and bean can nights! Our last big job was in Utica, NY. We weren't keepin' the crowds and the owner of this place gave us \$300 to end our engagement. Groups like Johnny & the Hurricanes were comin' up with more hits and when Woo-Hoo died down we kinda died down with it."

Vic Mizelle went on to form Vic & the Versatiles, a band that worked steadily in the Richmond area for close to ten years. In 1970, he left town for Nashville ("with sixty bucks and either madly in love or in heat!") and landed a variety of bass playing jobs that eventually took him all over the country. Nowadays, Vic and Boo are twangin' again around Richmond (a few months back Vic decided to finally meet Janis Martin at a nearby dub date and he ended up subbin' the entire show for her ailing bass play-



# WOO-HOO



## THE ROCK-A-TEENS