

1964

ALBUM TRACKS

January 1964 LP

(The) Ventures In Space

Dolton BST 8027 Stereo/ BLP 2027 Mono



As Dave Burke has illustrated¹, in November 1963 The Ventures assembled a number of musicians to help put together this new album, which drew upon a range of material, hits and non-hits, small group and orchestral, film and TV; there were four tunes from within the core group, and a couple from close associates (Danny Hamilton; Julius Wechter and his wife Cissy). Sessioneers we have met before included Billy Strange, David Gates and Leon Russell. There was also one Ray Lanbiny (*aka* Roy Lanham, a guitarist) together with horn player Bill Hinshaw (see p.21 below), and two others whose contribution was of especial importance. They were:

(i) Orville 'Red' Rhodes on steel guitar. This celebrated musician, who also as it happened took a keen interest in amps, fuzzboxes and other gadgetry, was one of the most distinguished sessioneers of his generation. Had he contributed to The Ventures' *Country Classics* set he might have brought the overall sound closer to the fuller,

mature form of country rock we find in recordings of The Byrds from 1968 on (as it was, Rhodes would make a stunning contribution to their glorious *The Notorious Byrds Brothers*).

(ii) Julius Wechter, percussionist and composer, was associated very closely with Herb Alpert's albums, for which he is said to have provided many of the arrangements without necessarily receiving due credit for doing so. (Wechter himself often related how he was paid 15 dollars for playing on 'The Lonely Bull'!) The part he played in this Ventures project is likely to have been very considerable: see below.



In the wide spectrum of pop, the *In Space* album is something of a non-event. People who are aware of [60/6] WALK DON'T RUN and/ or [61/5] PERFIDIA have never even heard tell of the album let alone listened to it, and standard reference works on music are capable of sketching the group's career without the merest mention. Virgin's heavyweight *Encyclopedia Of Popular Music* ignores the album in its main text. In its discographical listings, while lavishing four stars upon *Walk, Don't Run*, *The Ventures*, *Going To The Ventures Dance Party!* and *Let's Go!*, it awards a lowly two stars to *In Space* in the company of *Play Telstar* and one or two others.

In Space was, for its time, a typical, not exceptional, example of the group's capabilities in the field of selling long-players. It made #27, just as the *Let's Go!* set from a few months back had reached #30 and as *The Fabulous Ventures* a few months later would peak at #32. In the grand scheme of things then it was always going to

pass into history without causing an undue stir, a circumstance that has little or nothing to do with the fact that it was instrumental not vocal. After all, how many of the much higher performing albums of the 18-week period from the chart entry towards the end of January 1964 have stayed the course? The Beatles most certainly, The Singing Nun, Bobby Vinton, Nancy Wilson and most of the rest definitely not.

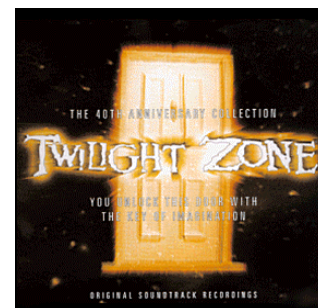
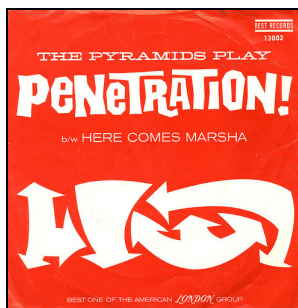
The picture is far different within The Ventures community, and to some extent among RI enthusiasts outside it. The *In Space* album, all 28 minutes of it (nearly), has come in for the most fulsome plaudits, attracting such descriptions as 'groundbreaking', 'landmark', 'cutting edge', 'a masterpiece', 'radical and pioneering', 'exciting'. One could go on, but this selection garnered at random from a single specialist magazine will get across the general idea. There have been occasional compliments too even outside the narrow circle of RI in music publications and on websites, and there is also of course the oft-repeated report of Keith Moon's unstinting admiration. In fact, so inventive and arresting is The Ventures' *In Space* that it merits detailed scrutiny, beyond the scope of these short notes, of early 1960s instrumental/ orchestral precursors in the realms of both space and horror, an exercise that would need to take into account too the seminal work of Les Baxter and Esquivel.

January 1964: the time for experimentalism in the pop mainstream had not arrived either in America or (even more importantly, with the focus switching radically in that direction) in the UK. The set is certainly adventurous and imaginative in the 'spacey' effects it achieves without resort to electronic apparatus specially designed for the job of the kind deployed strikingly in the work of Attilio Mineo in 1962 (see comment on track 12). The Ventures rely primarily on guitar, organ and percussion, this last perhaps most tellingly. We know that Julius Wechter was involved here, and it seems a fair assumption that many of the weird and wonderful effects across the board, not just in the area of percussion, are of his devising. Don Wilson in an interview once remarked colourfully of him: "Wechter came up with the damndest things".

Space effects from a relatively small-scale beat instrumental group were not new in 1964. What was striking here was the fact that such effects were consistently and artfully *integrated into a composition*: they were part of the overall fabric of a piece and not (as could be the case with your average guitar/surf outfit or whatever) token gestures in the form of frills, embellishments and so on, bleeps, blips, splutterings and stutterings often sounding wholly inept if not risible.

A further aspect of the collection calls for comment. The LP, with its title *In Space*, is commonly referred to airily as a 'concept' album. The description is warranted provided its parameters are properly defined. In reality a strong element of 'horror' is strongly present too. The two have some attributes in common of course, and they can converge in the 'Twilight Zone' type where dimension(s) can be involved and where spatial/ temporal phenomena are intertwined. Four titles are explicitly space-related: MOON CHILD, WAR OF THE SATELLITES, LOVE GODDESS OF VENUS and SOLAR RACE; the group presumably thought of PENETRATION in space terms too, as AT suggests (The Pyramids reportedly conceived of it differently). A further four lean towards horror though the first three could, in principle at any rate, be related to the terrors of space: HE NEVER CAME BACK, FEAR, EXPLORATION IN TERROR and THE BAT. OUT OF LIMITS and THE TWILIGHT ZONE represent the different levels of existence and related concepts, which brings us finally

to a number where interchangeability is there for all to see, THE FOURTH DIMENSION. Originally a horror instrumental, it is here retitled, divested of the gruesome preternatural animal noises and given a different complexion.



<<<<CHOICE CUTS>>>>

OUT OF LIMITS is a splendid example of knocking the opposition sideways. A number of the remainder are unusually difficult to rank: **EXPLORATION IN TERROR** and **THE BAT** are extraordinarily adventurous.

1 [64/1] OUT OF LIMITS

(Michael Z Gordon)

An opener presenting a familiar title, from the pen of the talented Michael Gordon (see the profile in *Pipeline* 66²). Dolton would re-title our LP *Out Of Limits* (pic above) in the wake of The Marketts' single of this name released at the end of 1963 (originally bearing the title 'Outer Limits') and making #3. The eponymous album that followed on in 1964 sought to capitalise on the single's popularity by providing variations on the theme, but despite the calibre of the Los Angeles sessioneers involved under Joe Saraceno (Tommy Tedesco and Hal Blaine among others), the material ranged from lacklustre to dire ('Saturn' for example is just plain desperate), with even worse to follow from the comprehensively pitiful *Batman* set (see entry [66/13]).

As with The Routers (see entry [63/39]), so with The Marketts, a spirited defence has been mounted on a number of occasions by Dave Burke, but I agree entirely with Vic Hines' poor opinion of them³. Drummer Hal Blaine could shine as much as he liked, or one of the guitarists could throw off the odd admirable touch, but that does nothing to alter the fact that the material ("getting the most out of one idea", as Dave Burke himself acknowledges) displayed a breathtaking lack of imagination surely engendered in large part by the 'cash-in' mentality — the need to get something out fairly smartly before memories of the high performing single waned. It will not do to deflect attention from the main area of contention by suggesting that people are out to rubbish the work of "sessioneers" *per se*. It is the particulars that matter. Even a

cursory listen to what these Saraceno-directed individuals came up with in the tracks under scrutiny can surely only make the heart sink. In the 60s there was no shortage of gifted sessioners turning out top flight material in various musical styles, surely more than enough to be going on with. Why bother with dross like this? Certainly the assertion⁴ that three of the Marketts' numbers "sound like they should be tracks 13, 14 and 15 of The Ventures *In Space*" beggars belief.

All this said, 'Out Of Limits' is incontrovertibly a formidable composition, boasting an attractive blend of guitar, French horns, castanets and organ. The Ventures though, while availing themselves of much of the basic arrangement, have no problem whatever in seeing off the opposition. To these ears The Marketts' version sounded on first hearing — and still sounds now — as if it has been cobbled together in haste, with the organ and castanets too prominent, the percussion too determined; the lead guitar is weedy-sounding in places and most definitely nothing special. The Ventures' rendition is simply more authoritative and characterful. It boasts an awesomely full-bodied sound, projecting tremendous clout from the very outset, the piercing, eerily tremulous reverb-drenched intro set off by hammer blows from guitar and percussion before Nokie's magisterial Mosrite blasts forth, to be picked up by a stirring organ passage, itself set off by a concentration of horns, driving percussion and guitars. In due course, there is a reversion to the unsettling atmosphere generated by the opening bars by way of a preface to a raunchy solo break from lead guitar at 1:43; a short fade forms a ring with this preface.

2 [64/2] HE NEVER CAME BACK

(Bob Bogle/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)

The ratchety noise at the start leaves the nature of the horror unclear. Whatever it is, it provokes a blood-curdling scream; then a metallic, rasping guitar which itself cries out menacingly (0:44/ 0:52/ 1:31/ 1:40), supported by a booming and at times thundering bass, marches steadily and inexorably on (does the accelerated thrusting middle section at 1:11 hint at impending doom?); the weird noise and screams emerge again, and again (0:32/ 1:03/ 1:51). No fade, just resounding crashes ...

3 [64/3] MOON CHILD

(Julius & Cissy Wechter)

This particular vibrato-swathed child, date of birth September 1963, was fathered by 'Telstar': the same jerky rhythm of cowboy-riding-smartly-along-on-horse transferred to the extra-terrestrial sphere, similar routine of human vocal reinforcement (here female) to proclaim in loud and joyous strains the wonders of the subject in hand, organ substituted for clavoline as per The Ventures' own version. All a bit over the top, MOON CHILD builds towards the close like some sort of National Anthem for Planet Zed.

4 [64/4]

FEAR (MAIN TITLE FROM 'ONE STEP BEYOND')

(Harry Lubin)

One Step Beyond was an American TV occult series of close on a hundred episodes screened between 1958 and 1960 in (the slightly later starting) *Twilight Zone* vein. (Lubin would later be associated also with the related *The Outer Limits*, though not from its inception.) The soaring voice of a fraught-sounding female soprano was an early, and a dominant, vehicle for instilling the requisite emotion in this title track. Our version is much more versatile than that, indeed it is framed like a four-part

miniature suite (Lubin's in contrast is an expansive piece, lasting over five minutes), the first three parts of which contrive to conjure up a progressively forbidding atmosphere in preparation for the densely textured denouement.

A piping organ sets the tone, the clunk of the keys adding a startling immediacy to the spooky sound. Twenty seconds in, an insistent, monotonous bass comes into play, matched by hollow-sounding percussion from the opposite channel. At 0:44 the lead guitar emerges centrally, tracked by an eerie-sounding slide guitar further back in the soundstage and complemented by fills from a second guitar on the one side and tinkling cymbals on the other. It is only well into the track (1:30) that fear makes itself felt fully when our female soprano comes on the scene, in much more muted — and more sinister — tones than the model, and the ensemble joins forces to bring the piece to a close. Here too The Ventures' approach is low-key but as effective as Lubin in its own way: he had a seventy-five piece symphony orchestra at his fingertips, which he put to work with a powerful intensity in the final stages of his much lengthier version.

5 [64/5] EXPLORATION IN TERROR

(Bob Bogle/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards)

Henry Mancini's 'Experiment In Terror' from 1962 provides an obvious precedent for the title. In the fifties and sixties the Orient seemed a natural place to look for the ultimate in terror (think of the various fearsome characters and situations dreamt up for the Charlie Chan TV series, or Hammer's 1960 *The Terror Of The Tongs* with James Bernard's score). The overall oriental flavour of the piece is set off by the sustained use of a Chinese gong, familiar from western classical orchestral works as a vehicle for evoking a frightening or sinister atmosphere. By way of a taster, the gong is struck repeatedly and instantly muted. Then, once the surf guitar, sombre, stabbing, heavily riff-laden, starts up, there is an unnerving metallic swathe of sound in the right channel which I would guess is gong reverberation taped independently and treated to variable level adjustment, this supplementing the eerily recessed percussion. There are intermittent clangs towards the left of the soundscape as well, as the whole harrowing concentration of noise moves inexorably forward to a sudden, short-lived but ear-piercing closure.

6 [64/6] WAR OF THE SATELLITES

(Danny Hamilton)

Simulations of the bleeps, pings and other outlandish noises picked up from satellites in orbit were one of the integral elements of space-themed music from the moment they came on the scene, and the mannerism is put to work here by ricochet effects to suggest the idea of bodies colliding and glancing off one another. It's all a bit arcade game-like, though, savouring of somebody trying out a new toy. On a more general level, and by way of compensation, this guitar-led instrumental by Danny Hamilton (composer of [64/26] DIAMOND HEAD, q.v.) has plenty of slam, with dynamic percussive effects and heavily struck chords constantly assailing the ears. The female vocalist comes on the scene late on to lend atmosphere and weight as the ensemble careers into the fade in a rapid succession of frantic hammer blows.

7 [64/7] THE BAT
(Louis Forbes)



This draws on Forbes' music for a relatively recent film, the spooky old house thriller of this name from 1959 starring Vincent Price and Agnes Moorehead. A tumultuous and packed soundstage features prominent siren wails from slide guitar, which turns into something of a fixture as the number progresses. This leads amongst other things into Nokie's deep-toned, rasping fuzz guitar. However, none of this sounds remotely like a conventional small group workout. Rather, there is a cold almost brassy sound with clattering percussion echoing the dense, bleak aura one finds in the recordings of Elmer Bernstein or Henry Mancini in their starkest moments. Nokie's solo too, though it is typically dexterous and even showy, is darkly textured, and the number closes as clangorously as it began. The Ventures have treated this piece of film music to a radical makeover at every level. The original is not spine-tingling in the slightest: played by Alvino Rey with an untypical lack of élan at a slightly faster tempo in swinging big band style, the 'bat' effects are wan in the extreme and the overall tone is altogether too chirpy given the piling up of bodies as the storyline progresses.

8 [64/8] PENETRATION
(Steve Leonard)

Surf band The Pyramids, as well as sporting shaved heads (America's answer to The Beatles, their manager professed) and turning up for a gig on an elephant (as they do in California), also did some pretty ineffable things to music, but one or two of their tunes are not too bad, and 'Penetration' in its bouncy, basic kind of way is certainly a number to be reckoned with. It had been released in 1963 but eventually broke into the charts in February 1964, making #18. The Ventures provide the professional touch: they tighten up the whole structure (drums and bass in particular), apply a high surface polish while generating an atmosphere of tension (Alan Taylor⁵ finds the number "silky exciting"), pull in Red Rhodes on slide for extra pep with the squealing space-element (otherwise not exactly blindingly obvious), and produce one of their trademark belters.

9 [64/9] LOVE GODDESS OF VENUS

(Don Wilson)

Well, if this isn't a take on Paula torn from Paul's clutches and teleported some 26 million miles into the celestial sphere I don't know what is. Not sounding anything like 100% comfortable in present company, this is a slowie adapted from a Don Wilson vocal composition titled 'Sally', and nicely arranged it is too. The melody, it is said, was traced out by the composer himself, decked out with a vaguely extra-terrestrial ambience and a very down-to-earth but alluring piano (which gives the piece a real lift), and graced by the dulcet tones of Paula's stand-in Ms Moon Stone.

10 [64/10] SOLAR RACE

(Bob Bogle/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards)

Back to the real universe with a cracker, an adaptation of the November 1963 single [63/54S] THE CHASE (see the entry) achieved by tinkering with the stereo soundstage and eradicating the ornamentation of spluttering engines and screeching tyres kicking up an inordinate racket in the best tradition of biker tunes. The throbbing vibrato of the rhythm guitar shepherds along dazzling reverbed lead lines capped by Red Rhodes' increasingly emphatic slide guitar, interrupted by a brief but punchy drum solo before scudding along to a resounding climax, an organ cutting in very late on to give that extra bit of clout before everything dissolves away.

11 [64/11] THE FOURTH DIMENSION

(Terry Wadsworth/ Gary Hodge)

The Frantics (more background from Alan Taylor in *Pipeline* 73⁶; see further p.21 below) were a Seattle band (guitars + sax) produced by Bob Reisdorff for Dolton. (They recorded an extremely interesting number, 'Ventura Blvd', released only in 2004, built around the chord structures of [60/6] WALK, DON'T RUN.) As well as backing Bobby Darin on a demo of 'Dream Lover', they released a fair number of instrumentals in their own right, entering the Hot 100 at #83 in 1960 with their distinctly off the wall 'Werewolf'. It is this number, pulled out of the hat by Reisdorff himself, that was retitled THE FOURTH DIMENSION for The Ventures. They do it proud. The werewolf with its snarls and growls vanishes along with other weird effects, as indeed it had already done with The Frantics. Richie Unterberger explains in the liner notes to the EMI Frantics CD from 2004: "... concerns over Satanic implications were strong enough to merit a re-release of the 45 with the original 'Werewolf' intact on one side, and a 'No Werewolf' sans growling and screaming (replacing the original B-side ...) on the other, giving DJs the choice of which one to play lest they be afraid of running into problems". How's that for hedging one's bets? The Ventures for their part rejig the number into a thunderous, noble space opus. Prefaced by pounding tom-toms and an eddying, gurgling organ sound, the guitar rings out commandingly, displaying orientalising touches accentuated by Red Rhodes' surging slide guitar punctuations. The series of crashing blows from Nokie at 1:20 provide a spectacular centrepiece for one of the most potent tracks in this remarkable set.

12 [64/12] THE TWILIGHT ZONE

(Marty Manning)

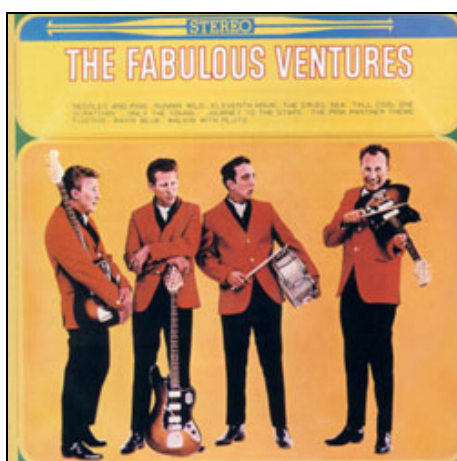
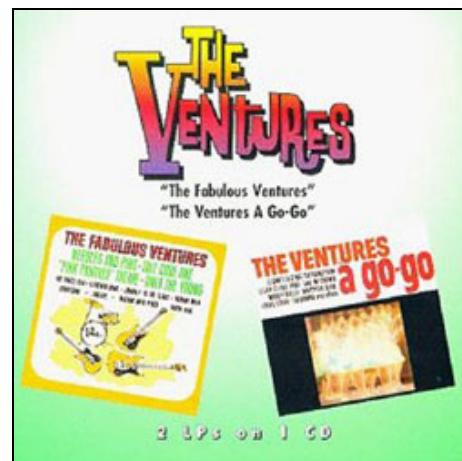
Marty Manning's collection of numbers from this famous series, made with his own orchestra, came out in 1961, and it is the version on his album that provides the best point of comparison for us and indeed must have been the working model for The

Ventures. Manning himself was no slouch when it came to devising ways to spice up the music with weird and wonderful effects (he deployed electronic gadgetry with the help of Attilio Mineo famous for his seminal *Man In Space With Sounds* album of 1962) and unusual instruments (the ondioline for one), with Lois Hunt providing the ethereal wordless vocals. The opening notes alone are so characterful and evocative. In Steve Kolanjian's words, liner notes to CD *TeleVentures*: "... a landmark riff that can be inserted whenever something weird happens and it consistently appears wherever the unexplained occurs"! It comes as no surprise that the group pulls out all the stops for this crowning track of the collection with a veritable plethora of unusual sounds. We had best avoid the term special effects, since the group have consistently stated that everything is musically sourced. In any event, the characteristically energetic performance and the startlingly vivid textures, not to mention what sounds like some form of transporter to who knows where beyond our earth or in a parallel dimension to it, provide a wholly fitting culmination.

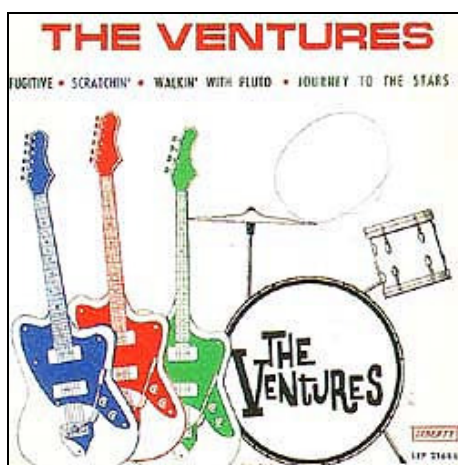
August 1964 LP

The Fabulous Ventures

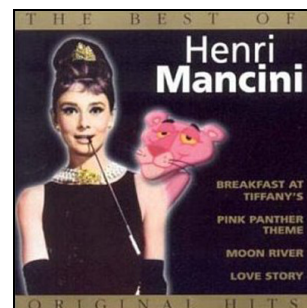
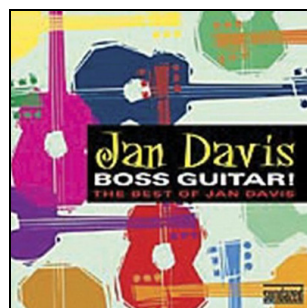
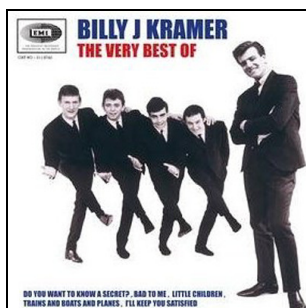
Dolton BST 8029 Stereo/ BLP 2029 Mono



Dave Peckett⁷ suggested that The Ventures were in the habit of recording two or three extra numbers each time they worked on an album, and that there could be a residue from *In Space* here. There is certainly a radical stylistic divide on this new album, which would peak at #32 and ride the charts for close on four months, with three group-penned tracks displaying clear affinities with the earlier set: ELEVENTH HOUR in the 'Twilight Zone' mould; JOURNEY TO THE STARS in space mode (recorded January 1964 clear of the *In Space* sessions), and ditto for the rather off-the-wall WALKIN' WITH PLUTO. There is a sharp difference however. Whereas the *In Space* material was the work of a much expanded group, the numbers under scrutiny here are much sparer. Although the last two involve another player in the shape of saxophonist Steve Douglas, they both lack the dense and concentrated textures in evidence on the previous set. Evelyn Freeman on keys was the only other 'outside' contributor to the set: see Dave Burke in *Pipeline* 44⁸, and also p.23 below.



As for the rest, clearly a firm eye was kept on current or recent favourites: NEEDLES AND PINS revived by The Searchers, TALL COOL ONE re-released by The Wailers, THE PINK PANTHER THEME from Henry Mancini. It was not all high-performing hit parade material though. Three cuts from recent guitar-led instrumentals also came into the picture: THE CRUEL SEA (The Dakotas), ONLY THE YOUNG (The Champs), FUGITIVE (Jan Davis). The set was strong on self-made numbers: add to the three above RUNNIN' WILD, SCRATCHIN' and RAVIN' BLUE.



<<<<CHOICE CUTS>>>>

SCRATCHIN' and **TALL COOL ONE** are both exhilarating workouts; **FUGITIVE** is an ingeniously constructed piece and The Ventures' version marks a clear advance on the Jan Davis model.

1 [64/13] NEEDLES AND PINS

(Jack Nitzsche/ Sonny Bono)

This fine song, crafted by two very talented composers, had been a modest (#84) US hit for Jackie DeShannon in May 1963. The Searchers astutely picked it up and scooped a UK #1 on 1 February 1964, staying at the top for three weeks; in April they appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the single making US #13 that same month, the album featuring it climbing to #22 in May. All this provides one of the two indications (cf. on track 4) of The Ventures/ the management/ their producer's recognition that the British had arrived on their shores in a big way.

This Ventures cover has attracted notoreity for being something of a curiosity, as the DeShannon backing track (she was on Liberty) was used — or rather misused. Particularly in the opening part of the song, there is right channel compression and some muddiness in the sound, while the left channel suddenly comes to life at 0:41 (with a female voice breaking in only to vanish), incredibly messily; in this same channel the volume levels of vocals/brass and just about everything else in the mix are all over the place from then on. Quite apart from all this, it is hard to credit the admiration this track has attracted in some quarters. While **NEEDLES AND PINS** is by no means a jolly song, it is not exactly funereal either, and to my ears the thick-sounding fuzz guitar part sounds too lugubrious and deliberate by far, the whole thing dragging horribly. Is this Nokie in fact? "Definitely" was Bob Spalding's response to that question⁹. Whoever was at work, this is a terrible opener.

2 [64/14] RUNNIN' WILD

(Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Bob Bogle)

Neat and fiendishly clever, here is something worthy of The Ventures and their beautifully crafted ensemble playing. A sprightly number, majoring on bounce rather than melody, the tricky intro resolves itself into a jogging, twangy lead line wafted along by crisp drumming and rapid-pattering rhythm on muted strings, these in opposite channels. Another attractive feature is the dual tracking, a mandolin-flavoured lead sequence overlaid in unison at 0:24 and again at 1:30.

3 [64/15] ELEVENTH HOUR

(Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Bob Bogle)

See Introduction to this album. There was a US TV series of this name, screened between 1962 and 1964 (in the *Dr Kildare* mould, but about a psychiatrist), which may have suggested the title but hardly the styling. It is a slow, sinister piece, full of foreboding. In the left channel we hear initially a eerie deep-echoing succession of notes from Don Wilson, followed up with arpeggiated chords coloured by an unsteady vibrato, matched in the right in due course by receded tom-toms giving off a hollow percussive effect full of unearthly menace. These and the brooding lead lines, their sharply etched tones occasionally sent all a-quiver with the tremolo arm, evoke an image of something wallowing in the primeval swamp — a cross between *The Creature From The Blue Lagoon* and *The Twilight Zone*.

4 [64/16] THE CRUEL SEA

(Mike Maxfield)

Hailed as “an exciting discovery” in the sleeve notes to the *Fabulous* LP, it would serve as the B-side of the charting US single WALK, DON'T RUN '64, see entry [64/31]. The Dakotas had secured a UK #18 back in August 1963 with this punchy clean-cut instrumental penned by their lead guitarist. But they enjoyed greater success in their more familiar role as Billy J Kramer & The Dakotas, one of the many acts who shot to stardom in the US in 1964, making #7 with ‘Little Children’ and appearing on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in June, then taking ‘Bad To Me’ to #9 in July. In the meantime ‘The Cruel Sea’ had seen US release on Liberty under the very unsubtly rejigged title ‘The Cruel Surf’. The Ventures come up with a pretty faithful but by no means slavish imitation, matching The Dakotas in drive while taking it only very slightly faster. The melody line is double-tracked in both versions, pretty exactly replicated in The Dakotas’ case, but with some slight tonal variations from the second guitar in The Ventures’ case. Nokie Edwards sounds that bit more assured, or not quite as taxed, in the fast and furious runs at 0:46 and 1:25. The making of this Dakotas hit and related issues are treated in detail in *Pipeline* 58¹⁰.

5 [64/17] SCRATCHIN’

(Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Bob Bogle)

It has often been remarked of the Ventures’ 1960s stage performances that no single group member was inclined to melt into the background. Each one was very much to the fore stamping his own authority on proceedings, without undermining the impact of the ensemble. Of course the same can be said of many of their studio recordings, and this is one of the most splendid examples. Most commonly in the stereo soundstage, as here, the lead guitar lines are flanked by Don Wilson on one side and by Mel Taylor on the other. And what a frame they provide! After a walking introduction, the group launch themselves into one of their most exhilarating workouts, careering along with the aid of pulsating rhythm guitar (crisp electric interchanged with more expansive closely-miked acoustic from the sound of it) and unflaggingly pounding percussion. A supercharged passage (1:07) is set off by superbly gulping bass guitar punctuations, and amongst all this we have the awesome soloing of Nokie Edwards, veering close at times to a riotous country hoedown (Don Wilson’s playing reinforces this impression).

6 [64/18] TALL COOL ONE

(Rich Dangel/ John Greek)

Another Wailers piece eagerly seized upon, cf. the comment on 1961 LP *The Ventures*, [61/11] WAILIN’. ‘Tall Cool One’ was not by any stretch of the imagination the only worthwhile recording from this group, which must surely rank as one of the very finest RI outfits ever, but it was the only one that gave them a taste of fairly respectable chart glory: not only did it make US #36 in 1959, but it also climbed to #38 when it was re-released in 1964. The Wailers were quite special in a number of ways. Especially pertinent here is their blend of sophistication (hinted at in the title, a reference to liquid refreshment in a long tall glass) with an earthiness and expressive power remarkable for a white band of that era. So this piece begins suavely, with a coolly laid back jazz-tinged piano passage taking over after a measured intro; a blaring, gutsy sax then intervenes to create an entirely different ambience, a pattern elaborated and repeated with an even more uproarious sax solo ushering in the relatively quiet fade.

The Ventures go about things rather differently, though the end result is equally telling. They start off in a subdued way, but then a piping organ is introduced, brash and forward sounding in comparison with the piano of the model. This is followed up with a raunchy guitar passage from Nokie. The sequence is repeated but Nokie's second contribution is raunchier still, in fact it turns pretty wild (1:40 on), so broadly matching the tonal shift observed in the second sax intervention above.

7 [64/19] ONLY THE YOUNG

(Jimmy Seals)

"Heartaches, bitter tears that blind you when they fall...". The opening verse of the song (lyrics by Charles Eugene) as recorded by Rick Nelson, still in devastated teen ballad mode in 1965, gives a fair idea of the tone of this brooding, haunting piece. It was written originally as an instrumental by Jimmy Seals of The Champs whose 1964 version with Glen Campbell on lead guitar has strings and mellow backing vocals. The Ventures' purposeful and brightly-etched version has no strings but it does have the anguished vocal support, which pushes to the foreground towards the close; the tone of the lead guitar is suitably acerbic.

8 [64/20] JOURNEY TO THE STARS

(Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Bob Bogle)

Well known saxophonist Steve Douglas is the musician behind the solo at 1:12, his instrument fed through a Leslie speaker and sounding like a reedy organ. Prior to that the centre image has been left vacant, in other words there is a yawning hole in the middle effect, a practice associated more with British sound engineers of the period. The soundstage could have been better managed: the left hand channel is initially overcrowded and muddled, and it is plain awkward to have the the sax coming in later on to complement a main melody stuck over to the right. Distortion levels do not seem too hot either on occasion. Still, there are some snazzy sounds to savour, with Nokie's buzzing, ringing, undulating Mosrite in red-hot form. He has been taken to task for the energetic tug of the tremolo arm at the close, but to me it comes over as an aptly swaggering final flourish. All this said, The Ventures would deal much more satisfactorily on stage with this stellar composition, for stellar it surely is.

9 [64/21] FUGITIVE

(Lou Josie/ Jan Davis)

A vividly constructed sound picture of a man on the run, written in the unrealised hope that the popular David Janson TV series might pick up on it: a repeated sequence of baying hounds (the genuine article), snarling lead lines expressing the threat of pursuit, a quickening tempo as the pursuers race after their quarry. Guitarist Jan Davis released it as a lead single in early 1964, and The Ventures' version, recorded in November 1963, has a similar arrangement, Mel Taylor playing on both tracks. The chief point of contrast is the way in which Nokie, who initially "had a helluva time mastering the lead"¹¹, handles the quick-fire runs in the chase sections, so much more fluent and assured. The Davis cut is scrutinised by Dave Burke in *Pipeline* 65 ("The baying hounds that open the track create a marvellous sense of drama and urgency, and Jan's taut riff-lead carries the tension along perfectly. At the bridge the lead guitar seems to be scrambling for escape and, surrounded by racing castanets, portrays a convincing sense of flight."); further background in id. 60¹².

10 [64/22] RAVIN' BLUE

(Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Bob Bogle)

I cannot see any force in the suggestion¹³ that this “was clearly inspired by [64/7] THE BAT” from *In Space*. Rather this is a pretty regular blues piece (similar in general approach to The Shadows’ ‘Blue Shadows’ also released in 1964) as the title indicates, though the description ‘ravin’ seems hard to uphold. It is agreeably laid back, slinky sounding in places. Don Wilson’s ostinato lines provide a naggingly catchy foil for Nokie’s exploration of the fretboard, the solo at 0:55 sounding as effortless as his solos habitually do, in whatever style; nice busy bass support too.

11 [64/23] WALKIN' WITH PLUTO

(Mel Taylor/ Don Wilson/ Nokie Edwards/ Bob Bogle)

One would like to have been a fly on the wall at this recording session which again called upon the services of Steve Douglas and his manipulated saxophone. On the face of it, WALKIN' WITH PLUTO has an affinity with some of the tracks on the *In Space* album, the weird ‘organ’ sound and ‘vibratoned’ lead guitar¹⁴ in particular contributing to that impression. On the other hand, there is a distinct soul feel to it, and if you think you sense a touch of Booker T here you could be barking up the right tree, for the piece is in fact rhythmically similar to the Booker T-backed Rufus Thomas 1963 hit ‘Walkin’ The Dog’ (and related songs like ‘Can Your Monkey Do The Dog’). So there could be a jokey allusion to a different Pluto (note ‘with’ not ‘on’!); a popular wind-up ‘Walking Pluto’ toy was marketed in America in the 60s. Bob Greenwood¹⁵ thinks of the Disney dog’s walk in connection with the previous track, but that is surely much less apt.

12 [64/24] THE PINK PANTHER THEME

(Henry Mancini)

Henry Mancini had a jazz/swing background which was reflected in many of his most memorable compositions for the cinema; he was also an accomplished tunesmith, and cultivated a big band sound with punchy brass a common feature, as on this particular piece. Very cool and laid back with an agreeable jazz feel to it (Nokie clearly relishes the part here), The Ventures’ imitation of Mancini’s #31 hit of May 1964 proves to be rather a grand production for a small-scale RI group: a (genuine) organ figures prominently and helps to build an expansive soundstage, the relative location of the various instruments well managed this time.

October 1964 LP

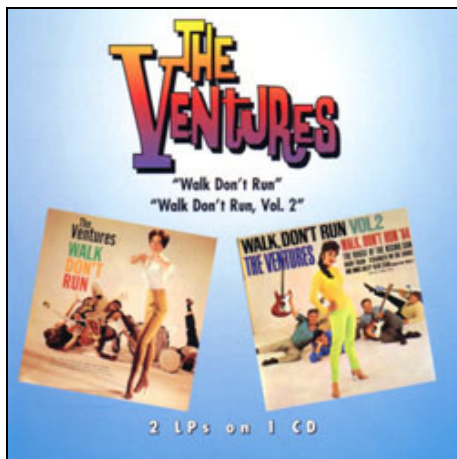
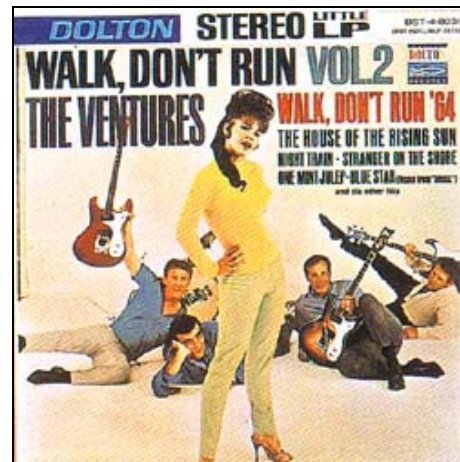
Walk, Don't Run Vol. 2

Dolton BST 8031 Stereo/ BLP 2031 Mono

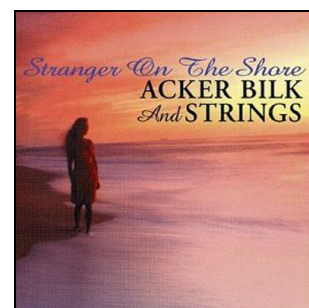
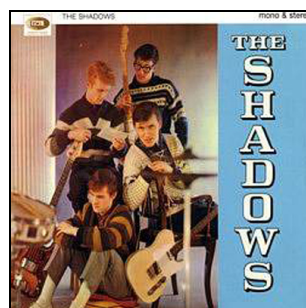
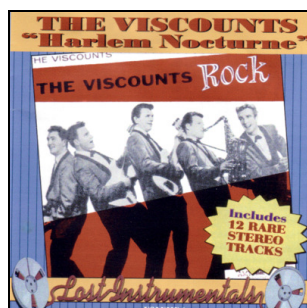
A highly regarded album with a title capitalising on their single triumph (see entry [64/31]), it made #17 in the charts, their best placing since *Play Telstar*. The Ventures are reinforced by both Steve Douglas and, more extensively and tellingly, by Leon Russell¹⁶, whose organ solos in THE CREEPER constitute one of the high points, if not the high point, of the entire set.

There is an interesting mélange. Three come into (fairly) recent hits territory: ONE MINT JULEP (Ray Charles 1961), STRANGER ON THE SHORE (Acker Bilk 1962), THE HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN as a high profile opener (The Animals

1964). A further two can be added here: NIGHT TRAIN, remade for this album, had been a (curiously styled) hit for James Brown in 1962, and it looks as if BLUE STAR (treated in the broad manner of the Bilk number) came their way via The Shadows, a track on a UK #1 album of theirs in 1961.



WALK DON'T RUN '64 openly cultivated surf associations, and not unnaturally the styling of that comes into play here, both in borrowed compositions (RAP CITY, an adventurous choice for sure, and the younger DIAMOND HEAD), and in one of their own, the brilliantly multi-layered THE CREEPER — though that is immensely more complex than your average surf number. To round off, there are three further group contributions, PEACH FUZZ, NIGHT WALK and PEDAL PUSHER, these focusing on The Ventures' ability to mould rudimentary musical forms into tight, powerhouse performances.



<<<<CHOICE CUTS>>>>

WALK, DON'T RUN '64 aside, the undoubted star of the show here is **THE CREEPER**, with **NIGHT TRAIN** and **RAP CITY** majoring on inventiveness and exuberance.

1 [64/25] THE HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

(Trad., arr. Alan Price)

Alan Price's four and a half minute arrangement of this folk-blues song, said by vocalist Eric Burdon to have been taken on board on the basis of a Josh White performance (but other sources of inspiration have been fielded), was a UK #1 for The Animals in July 1964 and, in abridged form, a US #1 by September. The Ventures' version likewise is shorter, not quite making the three minute mark. Their approach is essentially Animals-inspired, with some variations. Hilton Valentine's simple but supremely effective guitar introduction is organ-accompanied from the outset. The Ventures retain the guitar as a prelude to Nokie entering in fuzz mode, but the organ is deferred until 0:33, where however its ample and forceful tones make an immediate impact, heralding an atmospheric solo at 1:17. This in turn gives way to improvising runs at 1:52/2:25 from Nokie, performed *con brio* as is his wont. All in all, potent stuff, but with the rather abrupt fade (as per The Animals' US edit) we get no final flourish from the organ to bring down the emotional temperature a trifle — an attractive feature of the original.

2 [64/26] DIAMOND HEAD

(Danny Hamilton)

The Ventures were served well by this number recorded in December 1964. Its US chart performance as a lead single in January 1964 (B-side [65/10] LONELY GIRL) was fairly modest: it peaked at #70 and was only three weeks on chart. However, it proved to be their first Japanese hit and a very big seller at that (see Halterman 113 for additional background), a significant attraction no doubt being the novelty aspect — the bird whistle produced by fingernail on guitar string, similar to that employed with such wearisome regularity over the years on the dreaded [63/5] APACHE. These fripperies apart, DIAMOND HEAD (the name of the well-known Hawaiian tuff cone often pictured on surf shop logos; there is an associated beach) is a pacy surf-styled piece, much admired in Ventures circles. It has some characteristically nifty descending runs from Nokie and a busy soundstage, with an organ vying for attention. For this listener however it is no stunner, though it improved in live performance — definitely not one for the repeat button. DB offers a warmer assessment: "I've always been mesmerised by the arrangement — that busy network of galloping guitars behind Nokie's clip-clopping lead, Mel's sudden unexpected switch to tom-toms, Don's exciting glissando slides, the haunting melody supported by that strangely wailing organ sound — it's a true diamond in my eyes".

3 [64/27] NIGHT TRAIN

Updated Version

(Oscar Washington/ Lewis C Simpkins/ Jimmy Forrest)

See under LP *Walk, Don't Run*, entry [60/7]. The earlier version majored on elegance and provided the smoothest of rides; in fact one would be hard put to it to close one's eyes and picture an actual train. There is no problem of visualisation here. A maturer, tougher sound, much tighter than that of The Viscounts, with meaner-sounding guitars, conjures up a picture of an engine moving along briskly and purposefully.

Lead lines centre-stage (as well as a simulated whistle slightly further back in the mix) and in the right channel (owing not a little, like the intro, to that lively rocker [62/25] LUCILLE) bring us at 1:10 to a superbly swinging organ passage cutting in from the left (you can feel the swaying of the carriages here!). This in turn ushers in a wonderful virtuoso solo from Nokie at 1:34; the organ is then retained in a supporting role to produce an all-systems-go effect up to the fade. The year before had seen an exceptionally expressive version of this number, depicting a much more easygoing locomotive, by Bill Black's Combo (LP *The Untouchable Sound Of ...*), how very different from the rough (no, very rough) ride provided by James Brown in 1962.

4 [64/28] PEACH FUZZ

(Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)

The wacky title represents one of the attempts to cast around for word associations with the 'fuzz' guitar, now cultivated so regularly in the group's recordings. Presumably it is just an allusion to the fruit's fuzzy surface, though the term was also used at the time to denote an exotic cocktail made up of, amongst other things, vodka and peach juice: cf. the drink-reference in [64/18] TALL COOL ONE encountered earlier, and in ONE MINT JULEP on this album. Anyway, it is a classy, breezy number which leans heavily on the old gospel song 'This Train', notable for Nokie's ever resourceful soloing, relentlessly driving rhythm guitar, and an agreeably jolly organ break.

5 [64/29] RAP CITY

Album Version

(Trad./ Johannes Brahms, arr. Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)
Rhapsody ~ Rap City eh? A title most definitely ahead of its time! However, this piece has nothing to do with any of Franz Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, as has sometimes been asserted. It is an adaptation of a composition from the same deep pool of gypsy music, Brahms' foot-tapping *Hungarian Dance No.5* (Brahms loved Strauss, a natural swinger if ever there was one), figuring commonly in classical 'pops' repertoire. *Billboard*, enthusing over this "sensational rouser", averred, with a fetching take on tenses: "The original composer will never recognise the melody". On the contrary, it is instantly recognisable. Nokie traces out the melody faithfully, while the ensemble 'surfs it up' with various tricks of the trade, turning it into a thudding, pulsating tour de force enlivened by a strenuously piping 'organ' (this seems to be Steve Douglas at work). The quick-fire stop/start sequences might well have intrigued Brahms himself, a craftsman well known for his relaxed attitude to distinctions of genre! Nokie Edwards had released the number in 1961 with Gene Moles as The Marksmen under the title 'Night Run', drawing upon Chet Atkins' 'Hybrid Corn'¹⁷. The track is now conveniently available on the 2007 CD *In The Vaults Volume 4*.

6 [64/30] BLUE STAR

Album Version

(Victor Young/ Edward Hayman)

This number was recorded by the group in July 1962 but set aside. Generally highly regarded in Ventures circles ("hauntingly beautiful" Dave Burke), and a recurrent element in a host of compilation albums from Japan (The Shadows' version first released back in September 1961 was popular there too), their rendition comes "complete with the ear-catching [opening and closing] phrases first heard on The Shadows' version of this much-recorded tune"¹⁸ (closer details in *A Pocket Guide To Shadow Music* p.56). It deploys the basic 3+1 line-up enhanced by a variety of effects,

notably steel guitar (and the later single [66/78S] by graceful vocal overdubs). Like many of the slower numbers they essayed in the 60s, it is big and bold, full of emphases. The styling is distinctly Hawaiian, the sound sharply etched and brightly lit like the unclouded sunny skies of those climes, and it works well.

Red Rhodes is commonly credited with playing steel guitar on this track, but according to Del Halterman¹⁹ it was Sneaky Pete Kleinow, both here and on [64/36] STRANGER ON THE SHORE.

7 [64/31] WALK, DON'T RUN '64
(Johnny Smith)



A recasting of The Ventures' classic hit, recorded May 1964: "When surfing came in, people would say: 'You guys invented surfing music'. So we decided to re-do 'Walk, Don't Run' surfing-style, kind of like 'Pipeline'" (Don Wilson). *Disc* in the UK described the track as "not all that different from what we originally heard", while *Billboard* remarked laconically "Sound is basically the same": just one of many indications that the music press by now were often dealing inattentively and cursorily with tunes lacking words. As a lead single (B-side: [64/16] THE CRUEL SEA) it had entered the charts in July 1964 and peaked in August at #8, remaining on chart for eleven weeks. It was not sentimentality that catapulted this new version into the best sellers. It is an ingeniously crafted example of the surf genre, its mannerisms astutely grafted on to a killer tune. It is bursting with energy; the bridge does not involve drums as previously, but instead (1:05) we get those nagging pattering runs on lower register strings echoing the intro, while Steve Douglas on soprano sax fed through Leon Russell's Leslie organ speaker (see Halterman 109–110 for a full treatment of the technique, and also for Don Wilson's distinctive 'surf-run') not only provides fills but also tracks the lead lines to add colour and emphasis. It is not often that true classics can be reworked with any degree of success, but here is a shining exception. It is not superior to its predecessor, rather it forges its own distinctive identity and must be counted as one of the group's most accomplished recordings.

Over the years stereo versions of this track have been subjected to a variety of what often appear to be capricious manipulations, with lead guitar, second guitar, rhythm section and sax assigned different parts of the soundstage, with or without a 'hole in the middle effect' and in both normal or reverse-channel mode — to a degree not as yet adequately explored and beyond the scope of the present survey. Two CD issues may serve as examples of the sharp divergences: contrast See for Miles *Walk, Don't Run Vol.2/ Knock Me Out!* with *The Best Of The Ventures* in the *Legendary Master* series.

8 [64/32] NIGHT WALK

(Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)

An undisguised stomper bearing more than a passing resemblance to the more energetic examples from America's past of the myriad compositions built on 12-bar blues riffs. It bounces along determinedly with stabbing, snarling lead lines, punctuated by two jaunty solo breaks from the organ, both of which are shunted along by an invigorating bass accompaniment and which close with divertingly staccato climaxes.

9 [64/33] ONE MINT JULEP

(Rudy Toombs)

Ray Charles had a #8 hit in 1961 with this novelty song (originally recorded by The Clovers in 1952) dealing humorously with the effects of this alcoholic beverage on a man's libido. This was yet another Ventures tune already covered by Chet Atkins in 1960 on his *Teensville* set, but that is worlds apart with his guitar work supported by a prominent silky smooth sax and busy backing vocalists. The Ventures deal suavely with it, Nokie's twangy lead lines and some organ embellishments just about keeping afloat a number which seems rather sterile and unrelieved when shorn of its lyrics, as Chet Atkins seems to have perceived when he called in reinforcements.

10 [64/34] PEDAL PUSHER

(Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)

Don Wilson: "We recorded it when volume pedals just came out. It was the first song that Nokie used the pedal on, so we called it 'Pedal Pusher'" — a term (we may add) for snug-fitting calf-length slacks worn by females, see the well turned out lady on the *Walk, Don't Run* LP cover. It is a thrusting if repetitious opus which would be at home in a go-go environment, with sprightly organ back-up (and nice vamping intro), undulating bass and a funky solo wrung from Nokie's nimble fingers that culminates in what might best be described as a rapid series of squawks!

11 [64/35] THE CREEPER

(Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)

A few years too early to see an allusion to the weird superhero of DC Comics, but *The Creeper* was already the title of a 1948 film about a deranged doctor whose serum turns men into catlike killers, and it was also the name of the vicious, disfigured serial killer terrorising a whole city in the 1946 film *The Brute Man*. The tone is dark and menacing, of a piece with the fear-inspiring/horror-evoking numbers in the *In Space* set. The effects are spectacular, from the metallic stridency of Mel Taylor's intro to the startlingly abrasive deep-toned fuzz guitar. The guitar/drum call and response sequences at 0:28 and 1:09 are clearly based on [63/46] WIPE OUT, but its exchanges sound positively urbane in comparison with the ferocity unleashed here, particularly in the second of the two! As if that were not enough, there are two inspired organ breaks as intense and turbo-charged as the Alan Price-styled solo on the opening track. The second of these especially is treated to some Nokie magic in the form of bursts of a growling ultra low-frequency background drone which must have been created by application of the crowbar-like Moseley tremolo arm on the Mosrite!

Here is Dave Burke's enthusiastic appraisal²⁰: "This commences as a showcase for Mel with a simple but dramatically effective drum routine. He's soon joined by the most enormously fuzzed up guitar playing and insistent, menacing riff — Mel spreads out a little on some tom tom work, and then switches to some crashing snare to herald

in a heavy organist while that guitar groans in torment underneath. Mel takes over again with some echoey tom toms and then moves to the most solid snare you ever heard as that heavy fuzz marches in obliterating everything in its path like some kind of Sherman tank ...”.

DB also comments colourfully on “the disappearing drums on the diabolical stereo versions of this track on CD where Mel seems to be playing in two different bathrooms several miles apart. Try converting the track to mono, or, if it must be stereo, listen to the version on Magic which is at least bearable”. Cf. further p.23 below, and Alan Taylor in *Pipeline* 76²¹.

12 [64/36] STRANGER ON THE SHORE

(Acker Bilk/ Robert Mellin)

A #2 in the UK when Cliff Richard & The Shadows were riding high with ‘The Young Ones’ (though *NME* had the jazzman at #1 for the week ending 6 January 1962). Acker Bilk was a true record-breaker when he topped America’s charts in April 1962, anticipating ‘Telstar’'s spectacular success there by several months. Largely due to the expressiveness of Bilk’s clarinet playing, which enjoyed the tasteful support of The Leon Young String Chorale, the number was shot through with an air of melancholy — a mood well captured by the UK Eagles in their guitar-led version of 1963. The Ventures in contrast treat this mellow piece in a distinctly upbeat way, one of the tricks of their trade. The stranger here is on sunny Hawaiian shores and in high spirits to judge by the radiant, genial sound picture created by lead lines “shared by conventional, steel [see on BLUE STAR, entry [64/30]], fuzz, and bass guitars”²². It is hard to see what is “brooding” here²³.

1964

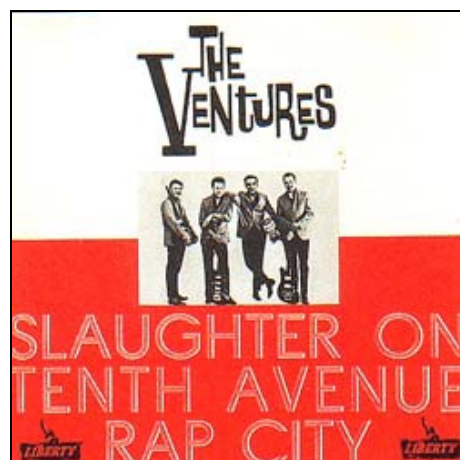
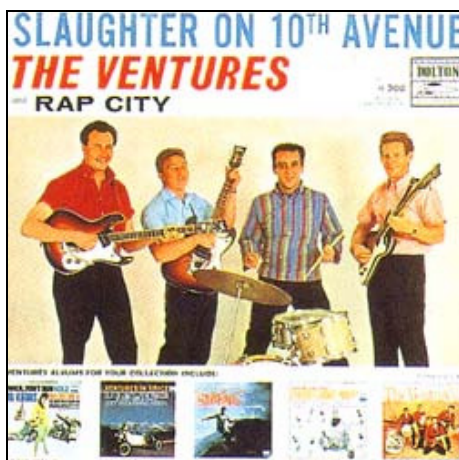
FURTHER TRACK

November 1964 B-Single, Dolton 300

[64/37S] RAP CITY

Single Version

(Trad./ Johannes Brahms, arr. Don Wilson/ Bob Bogle/ Nokie Edwards/ Mel Taylor)



Flipside of the charting SLAUGHTER ON TENTH AVENUE (in line with the principles governing this book the number is considered under its album release, see entry [65/8]). A variant of the version put out on the *October Walk, Don't Run Vol.2* album (entry [64/29]): tweaked to produce a mix that projects a much denser, meaner sound, the lead lines are churned out like an unstoppable steamroller. The track is conveniently available on the Magic Records CD *Walk, Don't Run Volume 2*.

1964

DAVE'S VIEW FROM THE VAULTS

1

The *Let's Go!* album had been a return to the *Telstar* idea of covering current and recent hits, and The Ventures' stock in the chart rose again accordingly as they cruised up to number 30. From now until the end of 1966 nearly every Ventures album would make the Top 40, only the *Batman* LP dipping slightly below that to number 42. Getting back to 1964 — on July 16th Don, Bob, Nokie and Mel were at United Recorders to cut an unknown original plus 'The Lost Surfer'. This title illustrates again how easily The Ventures and Bob Reisdorff were able to put a different spin on an instrumental recording to enable it to fit their needs. The track is actually a version of The Frantics' *Werewolf*, which Reisdorff himself had produced back in Seattle around 1959–60. On the Frantics disc Reisdorff delivered the opening monologue in his best deadpan Boris Karloff voice: "Even a man whose heart is pure, and says his prayers at night, can change to a wolf when the wolfbane blows, and the full moon is shining bright". Not to be listened to alone on a dark night! On The Ventures' 'The Lost Surfer', Reisdorff uses the same flat monotone voice to declare: "The sun is gone now; as the searchlights sweep the dark and lonely sea, he has still not been found..." The track was finally issued, shorn of all narration, as 'The Fourth Dimension' on the *In Space* album. From a horror number to a surfing number to a space number — it's all done with mirrors you know...

2

Further tracks for the *In Space* LP were cut at United Recorders during November by Don and Mel accompanied by Billy Strange, David Gates, Red Rhodes, Leon Russell, Julius Wechter, Bill Hinshaw and guitarist Roy Lanham. The latter was one of the first to fuse jazz and country during the forties and fifties; he played on Bob Reisdorff's productions for The Fleetwoods and recorded an album for Dolton titled *The Most Exciting Guitar* in the early sixties. Bill Hinshaw was a French horn specialist who appeared on 'Out Of Limits'. Illinois born Orville 'Red' Rhodes was another country musician who became well known because of his regular appearances at the Palomino Club where he eventually took over leadership of the Gene Davis Band. Steel guitarist Rhodes also ran an amplifier repair and customising service, and he was the man who designed the fuzz box that The Ventures used on the classic '2,000 Pound Bee' single. Percussionist Julius Wechter played vibes on Martin Denny's exotica hits in the late fifties and then worked extensively with Herb Alpert during the sixties. He wrote 'Moon Child' for the *In Space* album and contributed to several later Ventures LPs. The other tracks cut at the session were 'Twilight Zone', 'One Step Beyond' and 'War Of The Satellites'. Incidentally, 'He Never Came Back' originally had the even more colourful title of 'Monster Monkey'!

at the session were 'Journey To The Stars' and another track identified only as 'Oriental'. There are no tapes listed under that title and it's my guess that this is actually 'Saigon', one of the highlights on *In The Vaults Volume 2*. Also present at the session was the band's new producer Dick Glasser. This was the beginning of a purple patch for The Ventures, partially due to innovative use of studio technology by Glasser whose job as head of Liberty's publishing company, Metric Music, meant that he was constantly in the studio making demos, which gave him plenty of time to experiment and stretch his capabilities. Glasser had been working in the industry since 1955 when he wrote the Top 20 hit 'Angels In The Sky' for The Crew Cuts. He was a vocalist for the Golden West Cowboys and also recorded as Dick Lory for both Dot and Liberty Records, later writing songs for many of the label's artists such as Vic Dana, Bobby Vee, Gene McDaniels and The Fleetwoods. According to Don Wilson it was Glasser who came up with the arrangement for 'Slaughter On Tenth Avenue', and he also co-wrote 'Bluer Than Blue' with Tommy Allsup for The Ventures.

4

In April Don, Bob, Nokie and Mel were back at United Recorders in company with a new keyboard player named Evelyn Freeman. Most Ventures fans of the time would probably have been quite surprised to learn that the band's hot new keyboard player was actually a 45 year old black woman. Freeman was sister of established musician, arranger and Hollywood producer Ernie Freeman and already had a long and illustrious career behind her, including a stint as leader of her own swing band in the late thirties. In 1959 she produced the arrangements for the fabulous gospel choir on Duane Eddy's classic *Twang's The Thang* album after receiving critical acclaim for her arrangements for the Wings Over Jordan gospel group. Later still she would be a significant contributor to many of The Ventures' most dynamic sixties albums, her exciting keyboard work fitting in with the band perfectly. Together this ensemble recorded tracks for *The Fabulous Ventures* LP, namely 'Pink Panther', 'Only The Young' and 'Tall Cool One'. Interestingly, early versions of 'Scratchin' were logged under the title of 'Hoot Nanny'.

5

In August the band were rushed back into the studio to capitalise on the success of 'Walk, Don't Run '64' with their follow-up LP, entitled, logically enough, *Walk, Don't Run Volume 2*. At United Recorders along with Don, Bob, Nokie and Mel were Leon Russell and Steve Douglas to cut 'House Of The Rising Sun', 'Diamond Head', 'Peach Fuzz', 'Night Walk' and 'Slaughter On Tenth Avenue'. 'Diamond Head' was first logged under its composer Danny Hamilton's original title of 'Blue Coral', while 'Peach Fuzz' was initially listed as 'Clickety Clack'. One of the mysteries about the CD re-issues of this LP is why 'The Creeper' sounds so unimpressive. The wonderful, full-blooded mono version that I enjoyed throughout the sixties is entirely different to the stereo mix to be found on CD. Here Mel's drums are separated into one channel while the curious slap echo that accompanies them is in the opposite channel, and as a consequence it sounds as if Mel was lost at the back of the studio somewhere. The best stereo version is undoubtedly to be found on the French reissue by Magic, even if the left and right channels have been reversed for some inexplicable reason. Perhaps we will exhume the mono version for the *Vaults* series at some later date.

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H *Del Halterman's Ventures book*
 NGD *New Gandy Dancer*
 P *Pipeline*
 VR *Ventures Resurgence*

- 1 *P* 44 [1999] 12.
- 2 *P* 66 [2005] 9–15.
- 3 *P* 33 [1996] 5.
- 4 Dave Towers, *P* 39 [1998] 63.
- 5 *P* 19 [1993] 38.
- 6 *P* 73 [2007] 45.
- 7 *NGD* 12 [1978] 7.
- 8 *P* 44 [1999] 12–13.
- 9 *P* 71 [2006] 12.
- 10 *P* 58 [2003] 7–21.
- 11 H109.
- 12 *P* 65 [2004] 39; id.60 [2003] 13–14.
- 13 Alan Taylor, *P* 69 [2005] 50.
- 14 Cf. H110.
- 15 *VR* 40 [1995] 5.
- 16 Dave Burke, *P* 44 [1999] 12–13.
- 17 H59.
- 18 Ray Steer, *P* 63 [2004] 65.
- 19 H111.
- 20 *NGD* 48 [1996] 10.
- 21 *P* 76 [2008] 51.
- 22 Dave Burke, *P* 28 [1995] 27.
- 23 Dave Peckett, *NGD* 45 [1995] 34.