

BOB SEGER AND THE LAST HEARD



Side One:
HEAVY MUSIC (PART 1)
EAST SIDE STORY (VOCAL)
CHAIN SMOKIN'
PERSECUTION SMITH
VAGRANT WINTER

Side Two:
VERY FEW
FLORIDA TIME
SOCK IT TO ME SANTA
HEAVY MUSIC (PART 2)
EAST SIDE SOUND (INSTRUMENTAL)

MONOPHONIC
8359-2

HEAVY MUSIC

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mono

BOB SEGER



THE LAST HEARD
HEAVY MUSIC

THE COMPLETE CAMEO RECORDINGS 1966-1967

abkco



THE GRITTY GLORY STORY OF BOB SEGER'S BEGINNINGS

Though Bob Seger finally achieved bona fide rock star status in 1976 with his Silver Bullet Band on *Live Bullet* and *Night Moves*, that hard-won success was the climax of a story that began in earnest a full decade earlier, with the gritty Motor City garage rock band Bob Seger & The Last Heard.

The scrappy, soulful style Seger established with The Last Heard in 1966-'67 contained the seeds of the sound he'd pursue in the '70s, but it bore a harder edge. Like Detroit area contemporaries MC5 and The Rationals, the band wielded a power that felt like it was forged amid the industrial machinery of the local auto plants that kept the whole country moving.

It was 1961 when high school sophomore Seger started his first band, The Decibels, with a couple of schoolmates. By '64 he was fronting The Town Cryers, but in '65 Seger joined Doug Brown & The Omens as keyboard player/some-time singer, cutting the single "T.G.I.F. (Thank Goodness It's Friday)" with them. Working with Brown, Seger encountered local rock 'n' roll entrepreneur Edward "Punch" Andrews. Andrews ran a string of Michigan clubs called The Hideout with partner Dave Leone, as well as indie imprint Hideout Records. The bond that developed between Seger and Andrews would prove unbreakable; Andrews would serve as Seger's manager/producer all through the latter's career.

After making his exit from The Omens, Seger formed The Last Heard with guitarist Carl Lagassa of The Soul Four, bassist Dan Honaker, and Town Cryers drummer Phillip "Pep" Ferrine. But in April of '66, the Are You Kidding Me? label—a Hideout subsidiary—released an Omens single recorded with Seger and credited to The Beach Bums. The novelty tune "Ballad of the Yellow Beret" was a takeoff on Sgt. Barry Sadler's contemporaneous pro-military hit "Ballad of the Green Berets," but instead of extolling the virtues of the Special Forces, it lampooned draft dodgers. (The composer was even listed as "D. Dodger").

At the same time, Hideout released Grosse Pointe band The Underdogs' "Get Down On Your Knees," co-written by Seger. But another song intended for the Underdogs would turn out to be an important part of Seger's own legacy: The Seger-penned "East Side Story" was originally meant to be an Underdogs single, but Leone and Andrews weren't happy with the group's version and asked Seger to try cutting the tune himself.

Hideout released Seger's version of "East Side Story" in June of '66. The single was originally credited to Seger alone, but it was quickly picked up by Cameo-Parkway, and when the Philadelphia label re-released the record in November, it bore the name Bob Seger & The Last Heard. Recorded on a micro-budget at Detroit's United Sound Systems with Brown producing, the track found Seger backed by Brown on guitar and organ, Bob Evans on drums, Honaker on bass, and Perrine on bongos.

In 1966, depictions of class struggle on the pop charts generally didn't get much grittier than Johnny Rivers' "Poor Side of Town," the lushly orchestrated ballad of a working-class girl getting above her raising. And even when the occasional garage-rock tune like ? & The Mysterians' "96 Tears" broke through, the lyrical content was still strictly boy/girl. But the poor side of the town depicted in Seger's song was a meaner, more dangerous one—a woman in a tenement apartment begs her man not to head uptown with his knife to mug affluent uptown denizens, but it all comes to a tragic end. Doug Brown's thick, dirty fuzz guitar riff and urgent organ solo add plenty of rough-edged urban intensity to the tale.

Even the instrumental version released as "East Side Sound" on the B-side feels like a soundtrack to urban unrest. But all that pathos obviously struck a chord with local listeners. The single sold more than 50,000 copies in Detroit and went to No. 3 on the regional charts. Seger made his television debut performing the song on *Swingin' Time*, Detroit's answer to *American Bandstand*, hosted by local mover and shaker Robin Seymour.

Seger's next Cameo-Parkway single took a drastically different direction. Keying in on his love of James Brown-style R&B, he cut "Sock It To Me Santa." A seasonal send-up of "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag," the tune adds a dash of Detroit rock 'n' roll fire to Brown's funky locomotion. As unrelentingly fierce as Seger got on "East Side Story," he allowed his sense of humor plenty of air here, with lines like "Come on Comet and come on Cupid, don't just stand there lookin' stupid." The song's B-side is another example of the young Seger's penchant for pastiche; "Florida Time," originally the flip of "Ballad of the Yellow Beret," takes the early Beach Boys template and swaps out Southern California for the Sunshine State, in a tongue-in-cheek homage complete with surf-pop harmonies and car engine sound effects.

There's loving satire of another '60s musical giant to be found on Seger's first single of 1967, "Persecution Smith" (No. 9 in Detroit). With the vocal inflection and bluesy stomp of *Highway 61 Revisited*/Bob Dylan, he light-heartedly lacerates half-hearted revolutionaries, effectively crafting a more sophisticated take on the "Ballad of The Yellow Beret" theme. Flip side "Chain Smokin'" reiterates



Seger's debt to R&B with a groove straight out of Junior Walker's "Shotgun," and keeps the A-side's humor going, as Seger dramatizes the difficulties of dropping a nicotine habit.

"Vagrant Winter," released not in wintertime but in April of that same year, is a prime piece of garage psychedelia. Seger's most adventurous tune up to that time, it boasts a poetic, almost bookish lyrical stance and relatively elaborate chord changes, replete with the kind of reedy combo organ tones that were de rigeur for any psych track worth its salt at the time. The single's other side found Seger venturing ambitiously into new territory, too. "Very Few" is a delicate, melodic love ballad that mates doo wop-informed vocal harmonies with an almost jazzy harmonic sensibility. Seger sets aside his signature lupine howl for a tender-voiced croon that he'd scarcely revisit.

In retrospect, it seems like Seger's success with his earlier singles was only a prelude to the heights he'd reach with his final Cameo-Parkway single, "Heavy Music (Part 1)." Earning him even more attention than "East Side Story," it went all the way to the top spot on the Detroit charts. The pumping, party-starting track achieved a perfect blend of the R&B and rock 'n' roll sides of Seger's musical personality. The flip, "Heavy Music (Part 2)," let the good times roll for a few minutes more, with Seger vamping over the A-side's instrumental track. Released in July of '67, the summertime sizzler had a vibe not a million miles from fellow Motor City soul-rocker Mitch Ryder's "Jenny Take a Ride" and "Devil With a Blue Dress On/Good Golly Miss Molly," which had already taken the Detroit Wheels frontman from regional

renown to national stardom. Seger was set for a similar ascent, but fate had other ideas in mind.

Before the steam the single had picked up in the Midwest could spread nationwide, the record lost its momentum due to Cameo-Parkway's impending demise and declining promotional resources. "Heavy Music" stalled just below the Hot 100 on the national charts, and Seger was (temporarily) denied the brass ring. Obviously, the story still has a happy ending—within months he was picked up by Capitol, and though it would take several more years of slogging it out, massive success eventually came the rock journeyman's way.

But the first chapter in the Seger saga, never fully documented before this collection, remains as important as the superstar part of his story. Maybe even more so, since the latter would have been impossible without those crucial first steps. Besides, most self-respecting rock 'n' rollers would sell their souls for a string of singles as explosive as the ones that gave Seger his start.

—Jim Allen



- 1) Heavy Music (Part I)** (Bob Seger)
Recorded in 1967
Produced & arranged by Bob Seger & Doug Brown
"A Hideout Record Production"
Cameo C-494-A released July 1967
Billboard Pop #103 / Cash Box Pop #70
- 2) East Side Story (Vocal)** (Bob Seger)
Recorded in 1966
Produced & arranged by Doug Brown & Bob Seger
"A Hideout Production"
Hideout H-1013-A released June 1966
(credited to Bob Seger)
Cameo C-438-A released October 1966
- 3) Chain Smoker** (Bob Seger)
Recorded late 1966
Produced & arranged by Bob Seger
Hideout H-1014-B released January 1967
Cameo C-465-B released February 1967
- 4) Persecution Smith** (Bob Seger)
Recorded late 1966
Produced & arranged by Bob Seger
Hideout H-1014-A released January 1967
Cameo C-465-A released February 1967
- 5) Vagrant Winter** (Bob Seger)
Recorded March 1967
"A Hideout Production"
Cameo C-473-A released April 1967

—SESSION INFO—

- 6) Very Few** (Bob Seger)
Recorded March 23, 1967
"A Hideout Production"
Cameo C-473-B released April 1967
- 7) Florida Time** (Edward "Punch" Andrews)
Recorded late 1966
Produced & arranged by Doug Brown & Bob Seger
Cameo C-444-B released November 1966
- 8) Sock It To Me Santa** (Bob Seger, Dan Honaker, Carl Lagasse)
Recorded late 1966
Produced & arranged by Doug Brown & Bob Seger
Cameo C-444-A released November 1966
- 9) Heavy Music (Part 2)** (Bob Seger)
Recorded in 1967
Produced & arranged by Bob Seger & Doug Brown
"A Hideout Record Production"
Cameo C-494-B released July 1967
- 10) East Side Sound (Instrumental)** (Bob Seger)
Recorded in 1966
Produced & arranged by Doug Brown & Bob Seger
"A Hideout Production"
Hideout H-1013-B released June 1966
(credited to Bob Seger)
Cameo C-438-B released October 1966

All tracks recorded at United Sound Systems, Detroit and engineered by Les Cooley except track 6 recorded at Bell Sound Studios, New York City

Bob Seger and The Last Heard:

Bob Seger - lead vocal, organ, piano, guitar
Dan Honaker - bass
Carl Lagasse - guitar
Pep Perrine - drums, percussion

Additional vocals - **Doug Brown**, **David Whitehouse**

Personnel on tracks 2 and 10:
Bob Seger - vocal, guitar
Doug Brown - guitar, organ
Dan Honaker - bass
Pep Perrine - drums
Bob Evans - drums

Reissue Producer: Teri Landi

Liner Notes: Jim Allen

Mastering: Robert Vargien, Capitol Mastering

Sound Restoration: Steven Battline

Analog to Digital Transfers: Teri Landi, ABKCO Studio & Matt Cavaluzzo, Battery Studios

Production Coordinators: Anthony Kott and Maria Papazahariou

Legal: William Pittenger

Sales and Marketing: Cathy Bauer and Julian Klein

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