

# ALAN FREED



*Holiday  
Jubilee*



# ALAN FREED

Alan Freed was born Oct. 15, 1922 in Johnstown, Pa. After living for a while in Oklahoma City and Alliance, Ohio, the family settled in Salem, Ohio, which since Freed's rise to fame has looked upon him as a native son. Freed's parents still live there.

Freed showed some musical talent at an early age, and was introduced to the trombone at the age of 12. In high school, Freed organized a band, named it the Sultans of Swing after a famous Harlem orchestra of that name, and played dance dates in Salem and its environs.

In the last months of college, Freed, still infected with the radio virus, auditioned for stations for miles around and finally landed a \$17 a week job with WKST in New Castle, Pa. After graduation, Freed quit his inspector's job and went to work in radio, despite a hefty pay cut.

He stayed there for six months, a period which Freed calls the most important in his life. While at the station, he did everything from sweeping floors to writing his own continuity and acting as engineer for his shows.

Once, after auditioning for CBS in New York, he was told that his Midwest accent was too grating and that "if I had any other profession I should get out of the radio announcing business as soon as possible."

But Freed persisted and in 1945 landed a sports announcer job at WAKR in Akron, Ohio. Through an accident, he became a disk jockey. "One night," as he finished the 11:10 sports broadcast he got a very quick call saying the disk jockey for the 11:15 show had not shown up. As he was the only announcer in the studio, he was elected.

He grabbed a stack of records, any records, and the engineer in the control room told him which ones were popular. So he did the show. The next day the sponsor called up and said he liked the show. The owner of the station did, too, so he fired the other guy and gave him the job.

In 1950, Freed attempted to leave WAKR for a better job and wound up in a court fight over a clause in his contract with the station, which kept him from taking another radio job in the area for a year. The court upheld WAKR, so Freed quit radio and got a TV job on Cleveland's WXEL-TV. The clause in the WAKR contract did not cover TV.

Eighteen months later, Freed returned to radio, on WJW in Cleveland, at the urging of Leo Mintz, owner of Cleveland's largest record shop, who had noticed that "race" records—rhythm and blues—were beginning to get popular and believed that a R & B craze might be imminent.

Freed played only R & B records on his show, although he christened the style Rock and Roll to avoid the racial stigma of the old classification.

Early in the program, Freed developed his trademark—slamming out the beat with his hand. At first he whopped the table top, wearing a golf glove to protect his hand, until someone gave him the idea of using a telephone book, which was softer than wood.

In March, 1952, Freed decided to cash in on the success of Rock and Roll by staging a Moondog Ball in the Cleveland Arena, which has a capacity of 10,000. About 9,000 tickets were sold in advance, and the night of the ball 30,000 persons showed up, crashing the doors down and bowling over the outnumbered cops.

The show had to be called off, but it wasn't a financial loss. Everybody had such a grand time breaking into the arena they didn't ask for their money back.

Freed gave up the idea of staging dances in Cleveland, and instead ran eight reserved seat theater-type shows in the Arena and in the city's public auditorium. All were sellouts.

At the height of his popularity in Cleveland, Freed almost lost his career and his life, in the tangled wreckage of his auto. In April, 1953, he fell asleep while driving home after a late broadcast and his car smashed into a tree near his home in Shaker Heights, an exclusive Cleveland suburb.

For the first 10 days he was not expected to live.

Forty-eight hours after the accident his heart stopped beating and they injected adrenalin directly into the heart to get it beating.

Five weeks after the crash, Freed had recovered sufficiently to resume his Moondog broadcasts, lying flat on his back in his hospital bed. When he left the hospital after 16 weeks, he went home for three months of convalescence, and did his broadcasts from a chair beside his bed.

But as a concession to his healing insides, he temporarily gave up beating time on the phone book to the rowdy rock and roll beat.

He continued promoting Rock and Roll dances and shows and built up a sideline as a record distributor, while in his quieter moments he tried writing songs. In 1954, when New York, the biggest rat race of all, beckoned with showy displays of cash, he was ready to make the move.

Freed accepted the offer of WINS to put Rock and Roll on the local airwaves, in return for a contract calling for a guaranteed \$25,000 a year against a percentage of sponsors' fees.

Freed made his first New York broadcast on Sept. 8, 1954. The program was an almost immediate success. But one of the interested listeners was the real Moondog, the Times Sq. character, who hauled Freed into court and got him enjoined from using the name "Moondog" on the show.

So the program became simply, "Rock and Roll Party." Whatever the name, the beat was the same, and the teenage crowd began listening steadily. In January, 1955, after only four months on the air, Freed threw two rock and roll dances at the St. Nicholas Arena. In a way, these dances marked the turning point in the acceptance of Rock and Roll.

Freed still carries a heavy broadcasting load. In addition to his programs for WINS, he tapes weekly shows for broadcast in Baltimore and St. Louis, and one for Radio Luxembourg, for broadcast in Europe, which is rapidly becoming Rock and Roll conscious. And for six months, he emceed a weekly Rock and Roll show for the CBS radio network.

He's a business executive, too, with interests in two firms that handle his theatre promotions and music publishing. His partners include Gene Goodman, brother of clarinetist Benny Goodman, and Phil Kahl and Morris Levy, who is associated with Birdland and The Embers.

In addition to his work as Rock and Roll impresario, emcee, band leader, recording artist, movie "star," song writer, and disk jockey, Freed is snowed under by chores that have resulted from his popularity in these fields.

There are more than 4,000 Freed fan clubs, mostly in the east, and each of them have from 10 to 300 members. And each of the kids seems to be impelled to write to Freed—he gets about 10,000 letters a week, in normal times, and twice that number when Rock and Roll and/or Freed is being attacked.





## THE PLATTERS

**THE PLATTERS**—Mercury Records' hottest recording artists—with two hits in the top 10 songs nationwide—have never had a dull moment in their short but illustrious career. The originator of the group, Herbert Reed, who sings bass and is the comedian, had a lot of difficulty keeping a group together the first year, but the local hot dog stand on the corner of 56th and Central in Los Angeles kept him supplied with replacements, for it was a hang-out for all the young singers. In spite of this discouraging situation, Herbert remained determined that one day there would be a group called The Platters, regardless of how long it took him to find the right combination.

It was not until February of 1954, however, that plans began to shape up and take hold—when by a strange coincidence Buck Ram—now personal manager of The Platters—met Tony Williams, the lead voice who sings "Only You" and "The Great Pretender." At that time, Tony was primarily interested in working as a single, although he told Buck he had been working with a group called The Platters, and had made two or three records with them, but nothing had happened.

Having had a great deal of experience developing new talent, Buck Ram was very much impressed with Tony Williams' voice, but he felt Tony would have the best chance by staying with a group which was in the direct trend of the day. While working with a group, Tony's showmanship and experience would develop naturally and quickly. The group, while supporting him would also complement him and he in turn would help them build a name of their own. Each would develop simultaneously, until one day each could stand alone without the other—so on this basis, the decision was made that Buck would handle Tony Williams individually and also the group.

So early in 1954 the Four Platters, Herbert Reed, Tony Williams, David Lynch and Alex Hodge joined forces with Buck Ram to build an act and try for a hit record. Their first rehearsals were rough but they were eager to work hard to make the grade. Buck was a stern taskmaster and drilled

them nightly in difficult harmonies, arrangements, choreography, tone precision and coordination of movement on stage. To give them a chance to back up their instruction with actual experience, he took them to the Brass Rail and The Oasis—every possible place to start them working smoothly. Hunter Hancock began to take interest in the group when they won first place on one of his amateur shows at the 54 Ballroom. He predicted a bright future for them and has been very instrumental in making it bright. Mercury Records recently presented him with a gold record for his being responsible for making "Only You" nationally recognized.

The Platters' first release under Buck Ram's supervision was "Beer Barrel Boogie" and a zany arrangement of "Roses of Picardy" with Herbert's booming bass as lead. It started a lot of talk about The Platters, but their next release of "Love All Night" and "Tell The World" was a tremendous West Coast hit, and their television appearances doing these numbers put them in quick demand with the L. A. teenagers.

Feeling The Platters were still incomplete, Buck Ram decided a girl would be a good addition to the group, and his wish was fulfilled when Shirley Gunter brought her new group "The Queens" to audition for Buck. Among the six girls, he found the one he wanted for The Platters—little Zola Taylor. She was thrilled and delighted to join The Platters, knowing she'd have much more chance to have her "say" with the boys than she ever would with the girls. The boys were proud of their new "dish," knowing that no other group had one like her, and adopted her as a kid sister. She has developed into an enchanting comedienne who catches the eye and turns the head of every spectator.

So with the exception of one replacement—Paul Robi for Alex Hodge—The Platters have managed to keep this combination and finally attain national recognition for their records, and their personal performances in leading theatres, hotels and night clubs. The most versatile group on the road today, the group has just completed a Columbia full length picture with Bill Haley called "Rock Around The Clock."



## FRANKIE LYMON AND THE TEENAGERS

The nation's newest and youngest stars is a group called "The Teenagers." The top tenor, Frankie Lymon, is only 13 years old and the other boys, Sherman Garnes, Jimmy Merchant, Joseph Negrani and Herman Santiago, have just reached 16. Frankie is in Junior High School and the rest of the boys are all High School students.

Just at the turn of the New Year, Frankie Lymon wrote a poem and the boys decided to set it to music and recorded it for Rama Records. The disc was released on January 10 and 10 days later over 100,000 records were sold. Since then it's zooming towards the million mark and is still going strong. The name of that record is "Why Do Fools Fall In Love?" Frankie Lymon has a natural tenor voice and a natural gift for the rhythm of words. He has written over a dozen poems of which the Teenagers have thus far recorded four. And they plan to turn all of Frankie's poems into tunes and

later into records. The four recorded thus far is the above-mentioned "Why Do Fools Fall In Love?" "Come On Baby," "Please Be Mine" and "Am I Fooling Myself Again?" Frankie began writing poems in English class at school. He writes them instead of the usual composition requested by the teacher.

The rest of the group consists of Sherman Garnes, the basso, he is six foot four inches with a voice just as big, Jimmy Merchant, Herman Santiago and Joseph Negrani. Joe is the organizer and leader of the group.

The boys rehearse at the Edward W. Stitt Junior High School from 7 to 10:30 P.M. It was here that they were discovered by George Goldner, head of Rama and Gee Records. Under the supervision of Phil Kahl of Kahl Music, Frankie taps out his tunes with one finger on the piano.

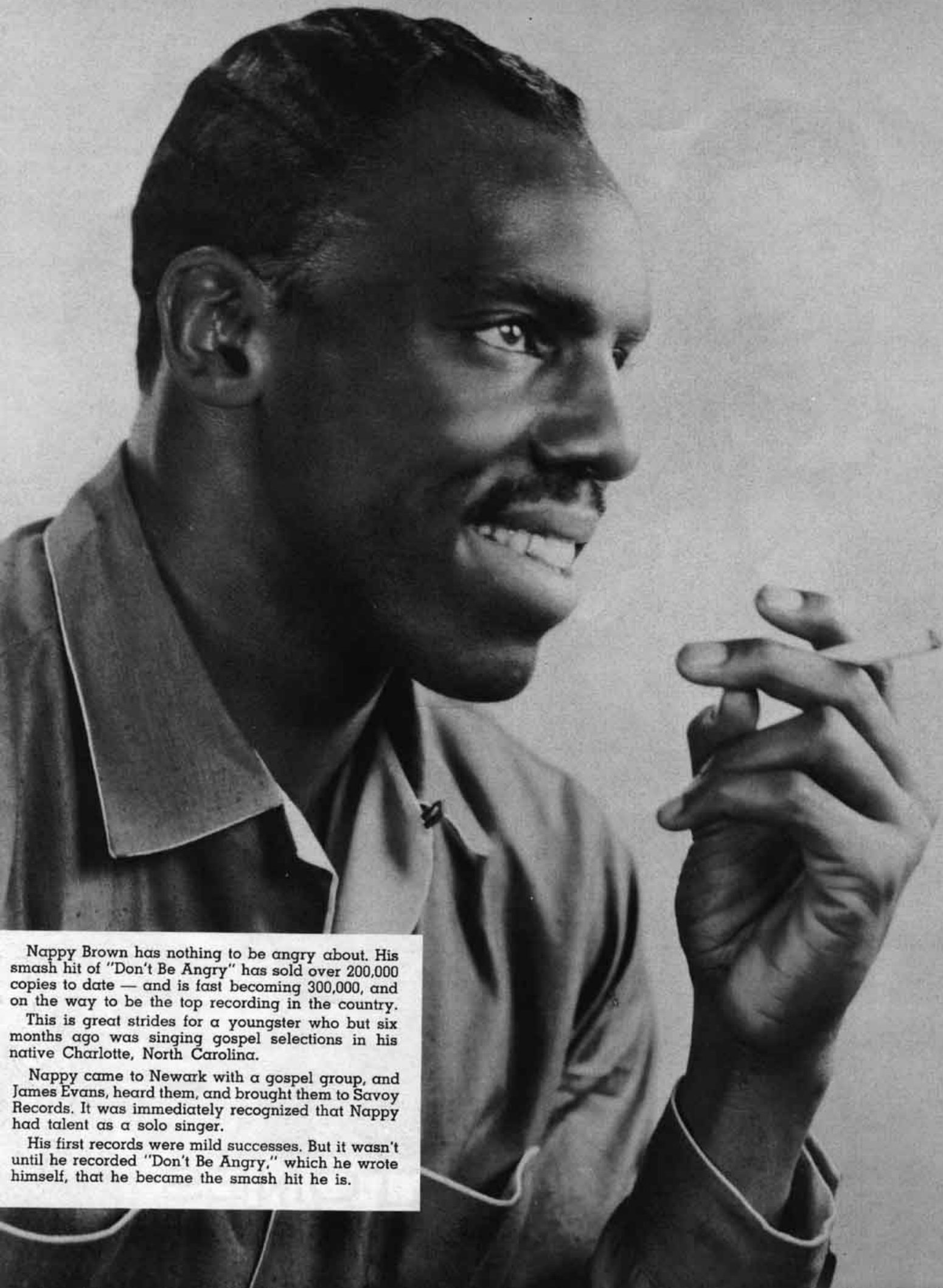


**RUTH BROWN**



THE CLEFTONES

# NAPPY BROWN



Nappy Brown has nothing to be angry about. His smash hit of "Don't Be Angry" has sold over 200,000 copies to date — and is fast becoming 300,000, and on the way to be the top recording in the country.

This is great strides for a youngster who but six months ago was singing gospel selections in his native Charlotte, North Carolina.

Nappy came to Newark with a gospel group, and James Evans, heard them, and brought them to Savoy Records. It was immediately recognized that Nappy had talent as a solo singer.

His first records were mild successes. But it wasn't until he recorded "Don't Be Angry," which he wrote himself, that he became the smash hit he is.



**THE CADILLACS**





# PROGRAM

**ROBIN ROBINSON**

**THE DUPONTS**

**RUTH BROWN**

**THE CLEFTONES**

**BOBBY CHARLES**

**FRANKIE LYMON**  
and the  
**TEENAGERS**

*Intermission*

**NAPPY BROWN**

**MAUREEN CANNON**

**BUDDY KNOX · JIMMY BOWEN**  
and the **RYTHM ORCHIDS**

**THE CADILLACS**

**THE PLATTERS**

**ALAN FREED** and his **ORCHESTRA**

*Featuring*

**SAM (The Man) TAYLOR** and **AL SEARS**

*Program subject to change without notice*







**MAUREEN CANNON**



**ROBIN ROBINSON**



**BUDDY KNOX · JIMMY BOWEN  
AND THE RYTHM ORCHIDS**



THE DUPONTS





**BOBBY CHARLES**



## AL SEARS

Born in Macomb, Ill., population 550, Al Sears' first big job as Tenor Saxaphonist was with Lucky Millinder's Band in 1941. He later joined Duke Ellington, with whom he played for 10 years.

More recently, he was featured Tenor man with Johnny Hodges, and during that time rocked the country with his recording of "CASTLE ROCK."

His life-long ambition has always been to head a music publishing firm, which he now does, namely, Sylvia Music Publishing Company, in New York.

Al has sat in on recording dates with such names as Joe Turner and Roy Hamilton, and has recently signed to record for Coral.

## SAM TAYLOR

All during his childhood, Sam was interested in music. While in high school, he started to teach himself how to play the clarinet. By 1934 he was able to play the instrument professionally. While in Alabama State Teachers College he learned how to play the alto sax and later changed to the tenor sax which now is his specialty. Sam played the tenor sax with his school band and then joined Sherman (Scatman) Crothers in 1938 in Akron, Ohio . . . later played with the Sunset Royal Entertainers in New York, the Cootie Williams Orchestra and in 1946 through 1949 Sam played with the Cab Callaway Orchestra . . . He toured with Callaway in 1951 through South America and the following year the Caribbean Islands.

Sam has appeared on many radio and TV shows throughout the country; such as the Kate Smith program, the Kriesler Watch Band program. He has also played many theatres such as the Roxy, the Strand, and the Paramount in New York City.





