

[Minty Fresh], Steve Earle's *I Feel Alright* [E-Squared/Warner Bros.], Guided by Voices' *Under the Bushes Under the Stars* [Matador] and Squirrel Nut Zippers' incandescent

Hot [Mammoth].

King Tears, for me, was one of those. It may not have been the masterpiece of the century, but sometimes a charming little album, like an

unpretentious small budget film with a great story line, is the one that catches your fancy. If it was released today, it might get racked under male vocals, sophisticated eclectic division.

(Then again, it might get dismissed as Jimmy Buffett does a Michael Feinstein.) Like the tunes of Lovett, who had a hand here, this is smart, classy music for grown-ups: Over spatial backup accompaniment that adroitly mixed cocktail piano trinkle and jazz guitar chord voicings with gently swinging acoustic string aplomb steeped in dawg music, Hyatt laid down his relaxed vocal magic, not unlike a latter-day Bing Crosby. Whether he was singing one of his nifty originals ("Blind Love Blues," "Tell Me Baby") or covering French icon Charles Trenet ("Que Reste t'il de Nos Amours"), Hyatt wrapped his warm, occasionally raspy baritone around his material and delivered the news like an old pal.

Too bad he's gone, and too bad this album was deleted so you can't hear it. Because, aside from its putative goodness, hearing this will personalize what was lost on ValuJet Flight 592: Sure, 110 people went down, and their names were listed on the roster of the doomed. And sure, it'll happen again, because some greedhead airline CEO will want to cut a few "frills" like safety so he can operate at a higher profit, and because some right-wing think tank has done a cost-benefit analysis for its corporate benefactor on the value of a human life and has come to the conclusion that yours ain't worth bupkes, and because a bunch of big-biz-tool-fellating politicians finally figured out who their real constituents are, and hey, it ain't you, buddy.

Personally speaking? I'd like to sit ValuJet's president, Lewis Jordan, and Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña down in matching side-by-side Barcaloungers. I'd let 'em get real comfortable; maybe have a flight attendant from a real airline serve some drinks. Then I'd play 'em *King Tears*.

Now, chances are that neither of these clowns would give two shits about art or music or anything that moves the emotions, but I'm willing to wager that the charms of Hyatt's record would pull them in. And, when it was over, I'd ask them how they liked it, then I would quietly tell them: This record was made by a man named Walter Hyatt. He was on your ValuJet DC-9. This is what we lose when people like you put your own greed above the well-being of the people you serve. His blood, and the blood of 109 other human beings who lived and breathed until you got hold of them, is on your hands. Deal with it.

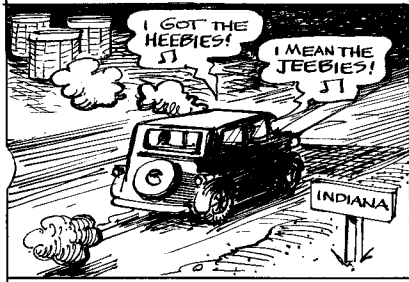
(Oh, and in a final touch of macabre irony: *King Tears* was named after a funeral home in east Austin, Texas. Pretty sad, huh?) ■



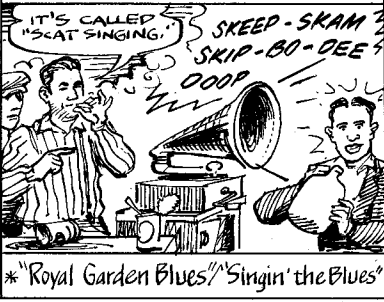
Though some critics and musicians take issue with Mezzrow's saxophone and clarinet work, he is known as a jazz purist who made a life's work of pursuing that unique hybrid first born in New Orleans. Part of that job description was making sure his friends had the best marijuana around. His biography, *Really the Blues*, (first published in '46) provides invaluable insight into the early days of jazz. It documents the racial tensions and wild abandon of the Prohibition Era. The book reads like a sprawling prototype for Jack Kerouac's later *On The Road*. **Required reading.**

JUSTIN GREEN

THE '26 OKEH RELEASE OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S "HEEBIE-JEBBIES" WAS GROUNDS FOR MEZZROW AND SOME OTHER CHICAGO JAZZMEN TO TAKE A MIDNIGHT RIDE TO THEIR FRIEND AND IDOL, "BIX" BEIDERBECKE, IN NEARBY HUDSON LAKE.



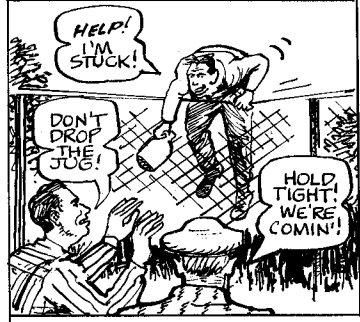
THE POWER OF THIS DISC WASN'T LOST ON BEIDERBECKE. LATER THAT YEAR HE WAS TO CUT TWO DERIVATIVE RECORDS, WHICH WERE ALSO TO BECOME CLASSICS.*



AT DAWN, MEZZROW'S HERB HAD NO ATTRACTION FOR THE ALCOHOLIC GENIUS, WHO CRAVED A DOSE OF "KING KONG" THE WAY MOST OF US NEED THAT WAKE-UP COFFEE.



AS THE EXPEDITION RETURNED WITH ITS QUARRY, ONE OF THE MEMBERS BECAME DETAINED.



MEANWHILE, BEIDERBECKE WAS ELSEWHERE, DUMPING THE SAND OUT OF HIS SHOES.



"BIX!" "HUH?" "THERE'S A TRAIN COMIN'!"

