



MUSIC

Our Blue Period

Shake It Records uncovers treasures from a bygone era.

» DELTA BLUES, MEMPHIS blues, Chicago blues, and... Cincinnati blues? Darren Blase, co-owner of Northside's Shake It Records, wants to add that to your musical vocabulary. The store, which also has its own record label, just released its first Music From Ohio compilation—a 29-song double LP called *Play It Like You Did*

Back to George Street: An Anthology of Cincinnati Blues 1927–1936 (with a cover illustrated by graphic artist Justin Green). The liner notes paint a picture of an era when Cincinnati bluesmen made their living busking our streets, most notably downtown's George Street, a musical hotbed in the West End. A vinyl enthusiast, Blase sifted through his 4,000 Ohio-centric records to amass material, which includes pianist Jesse James playing “Lonesome Day Blues” and the Cincinnati Jug Band tearing it up on “George Street Stomp.” All the performances existed in some reissued form, Blase explains. “We went after the best material, whether it was a 78 or an LP reissued from the '60s or a CD from the early '90s.” For future releases, Blase plans to resurrect recordings of performers such as Albert Washington—“by far the best soul singer out of Cincinnati”—and local legend Mr. Spoons. “There’s that whole group of people who say, ‘Ohmigod, I never knew about that; that’s really cool,’” he says. “That’s the person that I want to turn on.” —GARIN PIRNIA

FYI

» \$24.99. Available at Shake It Records, 4156 Hamilton Ave., Northside, (513) 591-0123, shakeitrecords.com



Q+A

Jerry Gels Goes Gangster

» After three years of research—including trips west to interview aging Las Vegas pit bosses about their Kentucky roots—American Legacy Tours cofounder Jerry Gels has brought Northern Kentucky's Godfather-esque history into focus. *Murder? Mayhem?* Gels's documentary, *Newport: Gangsters, Gamblers, and Girls*, which got its first screening late last fall, has it all. Or as much of “it” as old timers were willing to reveal.

Was making a documentary something you always wanted to do, or did the idea come as you worked on your tours?

I've always loved the story of Newport gangsters. There's enough for Martin Scorsese to be making *Boardwalk Empire* into the story of Newport. To be honest with you, that's one of the challenges of the film. It's, “OK, what exact piece of the story do we want to tell?”

What were some of the challenges you faced?

Some of the stories that you know are really cool, people don't necessarily want to share. [Talking about Newport to people in Las Vegas] was a big frustration. We had a lot of people say, “Hey, we'd like to see you guys, we want to tell you these stories.” Then you get there and they said, “Well, it's probably better I don't talk about it.”

Were there any big surprises during this process—anything

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