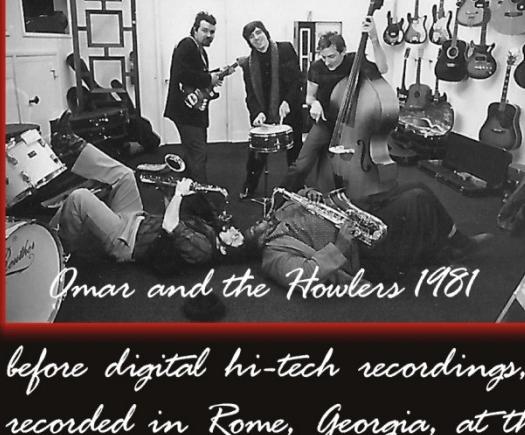


Recordings once lost... now found

TOO RAW FOR RADIO

OMAR AND THE HOWLERS



Omar and the Howlers 1981

Too Raw for Radio has been sitting untouched for 32 years. There are many reasons why: the format of the recording, the band constantly touring, and the lack of resources to do anything with it. The tapes laid dormant and got lost in the shuffle. Omar recently found the tapes and was blown away. Too Raw for Radio is a collection of songs that has an amazing story that must be told, and now is the time.

In 1981, decades before digital hi-tech recordings, Too Raw for Radio was recorded in Rome, Georgia, at the Midtown Music Store owned by Carlton "Hot Rod" Crowder and Ray Myer. The music store had a recording studio in the back room with the primary clientele being gospel artists. The most amazing thing about the studio was the hand-built analog tube sound board that came out of the legendary Muscle Shoals Studio B where some of the greatest artists ever known recorded some of the greatest hits of all time. Omar and the Howlers are included on the list of artists who had the privilege of recording on this iconic equipment.

The Ampex analog tube equipment produced a sound that many artists wish they could replicate today. Too Raw for Radio has that old time ambience that is impossible to duplicate on modern digital devices. The equipment was stored in Ray Myer's garage when Midtown Music shut down and was eventually bought in the early 1990s by drummer, Wes Starr, and sold to Jimmy Buffett.



Undoubtedly a blast from the past, Too Raw for Radio is a collection of vintage blues tracks featuring Omar and the Howlers and the incomparable Grady "Fats" Jackson on tenor and alto saxophones that he played simultaneously on some of the tracks. The recording session at Hot Rod's studio was scheduled in conjunction with an Omar and the Howlers tour through Georgia. Omar called his friend, Grady Jackson, to come over and record with the band, and Too Raw for Radio became a reality. Omar and the Howlers consisted of Omar Dykes on vocals and guitar, Bruce Jones on bass, Wes Starr on drums, and Richard Price on harp and saxophone. Omar played a \$30 "no brand" guitar for slide. Omar insists that he does not play slide, but his playing on "Talk to Me Baby" dispels this.

Omar was 31 years old and reflects on the recording session by saying, "I was strutting around like a banty rooster thinking I was a great player because I didn't know any better. And there was Grady, a seasoned and truly talented artist who really WAS something else. He was too kind and gentle of a man to let on that I was still a greenhorn. It was an honor to have Grady's expertise and musical contribution on the project, and he had a huge impact on the final result. He brought out the best in us, and we all played exponentially better than we would have if he hadn't been there." Grady Jackson, who played with some of the most accomplished blues artists in the business including Little Walter, Elmore James, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Robert "Junior" Lockwood, made Too Raw for Radio a very special and memorable experience for everyone.

The band submitted the music to a major record label expecting that they would release it for sure. The band was shocked when the material was returned with a note that stated the music was "too raw for radio," and the band "was not ready for a recording contract," although they had previously released their first album, Big Leg Beat, on Amazing Records in 1980. This collection of nostalgic material has been known to the band as "too raw for radio" ever since.

Recently having the opportunity to remaster the tracks, the music is being released to pay homage to the good old days of analog and low tech recordings, to the talent of Grady "Fats" Jackson, and to the longevity of the musical career of Omar and the Howlers.

Heartfelt thanks to Stan Starr, Wes Starr's brother, for taking the photographs; to Kevin Hall for digitizing the photos, and to Matt Shultz at Satellite Studio in Austin, Texas for remastering the tracks.

