

JOHN M AYAL I
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Randall's Island

Paul Fleisher, known in the group as "Crazy Paul," plays flute, saxophone and clarinet. He has known Elliott since 1962 and in that time has played in several bands with him. He also attended the New York High School of Music and Art.

Paul is responsible for a good deal of the music for *Randall's Island*.

Allen Herman is basically a jazz drummer who up until the formation of *Randall's Island* was playing with *Ten Wheel Drive*. Allen also plays vibes and timpani.

Bob Piazza also played in *Ten Wheel Drive* until joining *Randall's Island* on bass guitar and vocals.

Pot is the name that the last member of the group lives under, and no amount of enquiring brings forth any other name.

With a degree in music from the City college in New York and the Mark Brunswick award 1967 for composition, *Pot* has played with many bands in the past few years including *Dr. John The Night Tripper*.

Pot plays several keyboard instruments including organ, piano and harpsichord.

Elliott Randall

Elliott Randall is an unusual product of New York City in that he is a warm and friendly individual. He appears to have absorbed only the good things around him and cancelled all the undesirable influences that are normally associated with the big city.

Elliott plays guitar, drums, violin and bass and was trained at the New York High School of Music and Art.

Whilst still at high school he was already playing in bands and in clubs in Greenwich Village. He played in a fourteen piece band that backed many top names before moving to Ohio to teach music theory.

After starving as a music teacher for several months, Elliott returned to New York. Since that time he has played in many bands including *Sea Train*, *Eric Mercury's Birthrite*, and the *Voices of East Harlem*.

After the tour of Europe with the *Voices*, Elliott decided to form his own band and record an album.

The result is an extremely fine first album from the new group *Randall's Island*.

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**ELLIOTT
RANDALL**

John Mayall

High priest of the blues, sire of super-groups, catalyst of incredibly good music within all kinds of basic blues frameworks . . . these things all reflect the different sides of John Mayall.

Remarkably enough, in a day of super-commercialism and big dollar consciousness, Mayall has remained a blues purist, often taking note of the distinction between the authentic blues for which he stands and the more broadly-based, top 40-styled contemporary pop music.

A host of the most famous musicians of the day performed at some point in their careers in one or more of the dozens of blues bands Mayall has fronted during the latter half of the '60s decade.

While many musicians would likely feel pressures from a constantly rotating personnel, Mayall seems to thrive on a variety of complements and styles. "I find that by continually changing my bands," he once told an interviewer, "I don't get stagnant as a performer, nor does my music as a composer. When I feel that the music with the musicians concerned has gone as far as it can possibly go, I then start to think about organizing a new set of musicians and some new music."

New music, however, is old music, given new voicings and variations on the foundation of Mayall's own singing and playing the guitar, organ, piano and harmonica, and applied to authentic American blues.

Blues crusader Mayall was born on November 29, 1933. He grew up in a small village outside Manchester, England, and became interested in the blues through the medium of records at age 13. About this time he also taught himself to play both piano and guitar.

Completing his studies at the Manchester Junior School of Art in 1949, he worked as a window dresser for a department store for two years, before being conscripted into the Army. For the last 18 months of his Army service, Mayall was stationed in Korea, and during a brief leave in Japan, he bought what was unquestionably one of the first of millions of Japanese-made guitars that later were to flood the markets of the world as the rock phenomenon took hold . . . a guitar which Mayall used for many years and which later was adapted to take nine strings.

Released from the Army in 1955, Mayall returned to England and to a four-year college course in graphic design, which ultimately led to a four-year career in advertising as a typographer and layout artist.

During these years, a long skein of band chapters began, with the *Powerhouse Four*, a group which "didn't work too much," in Mayall's own words, "just college dances." The group, consisting of Mayall on piano, plus bass drums and tenor sax, got paid the equivalent of \$2.50 a night for six hours of work (not much by any standards).

In the spring of 1963, Mayall, in his spare time, was leading a Manchester blues combo called, *The Blues Syndicate*, whilst in London, Alexis Korner and Cyril Davis were leading a kind of R & B rebellion away from what the British had come to call traditional jazz. Korner heard Mayall's group and encouraged John to try the London clubs. Subsequently, he did, but without his colleagues, who weren't ready to leave home. Therefore, he had to form a new group and drop the title, *Blues Syndicate*. Then in March 1963, *The Bluesbreakers* were born and Mayall had, as a friend observed later, "at long last reached the bottom of the ladder."

From strenuous beginnings at the *Flamingo* and *Marquee* clubs, he slowly built up enough of a following to warrant quitting his daytime job in a London advertising studio and go over to blues music full time. Almost exactly one year after his arrival in London, this major step was taken and since that time, Mayall has never looked back.

Up until this moment, *The Bluesbreakers* had been featuring the first of a long line of lead guitarists, Bernie Watson, who had previously made an impression with audiences through his work with Screaming Lord Sutch and Cyril Davis. Mayall's career at this time was also helped in a significant way by the opportunity of touring in England with the famed American blues singer, John Lee Hooker, from whom John personally learned much about playing on stage. He also worked with Sonny Boy Williamson and learned equally as much about harmonica playing from this noted artist.

John McVie was the group's original bass player and he remained through numerous line-ups until departing in 1967 to help form *Fleetwood Mac*. Guitarist Watson was replaced in 1964 by Roger Dean, who in turn was replaced in 1965 by the ex-*Yardbird*, Eric Clapton. It was a significant moment for not only Clapton, but for Mayall as well, and a time from which things really began moving ahead.

"From the first day Eric joined us, I knew I had met someone who was genuinely interested in the blues," Mayall reflects. "He was my first partner who really knew what the blues were all about. You could hear it in his playing which was so emotional."

Another *Bluesbreaker* who was also associated in that earlier period with Mayall and Clapton was the formidable Jack Bruce. In 1966, when Clapton left the group with Bruce to become a part of *Cream*, he was replaced by another talented but then unknown guitarist, Peter Green. Drummers of this period included Aynsley Dunbar, who later formed his own group, *Retaliation*, and Mick Fleetwood, who one year later joined McVie and Green in forming *Fleetwood Mac*.

Still other names have since been added to the ever-growing list of famous Mayall graduates. When Green left in 1967, he was replaced by Mick Taylor, who two years later made world headlines by becoming the new lead guitarist with the *Rolling Stones*.

At this time, Mayall dropped the quartet formula and added horn players, which included Britain's best-known tenor and soprano sax star, Dick Heckstall-Smith, thus bringing to the public the only blues band in the country at that time with a brass section. Drummer Keef Hartley formed a band of his own, incidentally, after leaving this outstandingly successful grouping. This was the very first Mayall band to appear in the United States. The first American tour, another Mayall milestone, occurred in January of 1968.

Upon returning to England, more changes took place. Trumpeter-violinist, Henry Lowther and the brilliant drummer, Jon Hiseman joined the ranks. Then, during the summer of that year, all but Mick Taylor departed to form yet another British band, *Colosseum*.

Steve Thompson and Colin Allen became the new quartet rhythm section and two more U.S. tours were made in addition to concert tours in England, Germany and other parts of the Continent. By this time, Mayall's stature was assured throughout the world. And still, Mayall the innovator, moved forward and startled the music scene again in June 1969 with a new blues quartet which broke away from the traditional by not sporting either a lead guitarist or drummer. The justification of this experiment was, according to Mayall, that every instrument in the group was essentially its own rhythm complement. This group in turn disbanded in June of 1970, leaving its own strong impact on current styles.

During these years, the various Mayall groups continue to be subjects of conversation, long after they've broken up, as indeed are the stars of those groups as they go on about the business of making their own individual brands of blues music.

Fortunately, most of the key groups are captured on record albums, beginning with the 'Live at Klooks Kleek,' featuring Roger Dean. The LP list also includes 'Bluesbreakers,' with Eric Clapton; 'Hard Road,' with Peter Green; 'Crusade,' with Mick Taylor; 'Diary of a Band,' with Keef Hartley; 'Blues Alone,' with Mayall, the one-man band; 'Bare Wires,' with Heckstall-Smith and Hiseman; 'Blues from Laurel Canyon,' with Mick Taylor on organ; 'Looking Back,' with a cross-section of all these earlier Mayall colleagues; 'Turning Point' and 'Empty Rooms,' with Johnny Almond, Jon Mark and Steve Thompson.

Now with his new group and new LP, 'USA Union,' Mayall works for the first time with an all-American complement. For this album and his autumn 1970 tour of America, Mayall favours another variation of the drumless concept. The instrumentation of violin, guitar and bass guitar is another example of the challenging changes for which Mayall has become well known and respected in the constantly evolving presentation of the blues with style, class and fidelity.



Larry Taylor

At 16, Larry Taylor was out on the road jiggling about with the renowned Jerry Lee Lewis. With an association so strongly blues-tinged as this, it's no wonder John Mayall picked Taylor as his newest bass player, a seat made uniquely important in the current Mayall grouping due to the complete lack of drums or other basic percussion.

Born on June 26, 1942, Taylor stayed in Brooklyn until his family moved westward when he was 11. Today, he happily calls Kagle Canyon his home (that's in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles). Taylor is actually a veteran at touring, since, in addition to his work with Lewis, he was also a member of *Canned Heat* for three years. On the studio side, he has played bass on sessions for *Boyce and Hart*, *Anthony and the Imperials*, and *the Monkees*, to mention a few. He also expects to record a solo bass LP when his life at last becomes less hectic, a time that may be delayed in view of the current exciting Mayall association.

ABOUT MAYALL'S BAND

Don Harris

Don Harris is without question the first electric violinist ever to be featured with a Mayall ensemble. He is also the only member of the autumn 1970 chapter of the group who is a native Californian. He was born in Pasadena on June 18, 1938, and still lives in the area.

Starting at the age of six, Don studied classical violin for 10 years, before extending himself into his own highly individual style of modern electric violin playing. Not content with the mastery of one instrument, he later learned both piano and bass guitar and fronted a band of his own called *The Squires*, as far back as 1956, while attending Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles.

A few years later, he was part of the duo, *Don and Dewey*, which became quite famous for the hit, "I'm Leavin' It All Up To You," on the Speciality label. Later still, Don became almost a legend among blues fanciers for his amazing violin performance on a rare 45 r.p.m. single, "Soul Motion."

Harris worked as a member of Little Richard's band during a world tour in the early '60s and more recently was a featured star soloist on LP's by Johnny Otis and Frank Zappa. He also has worked with numerous jazz groups on club gigs and at one time appeared with the late great John Coltrane. His blues orientation is distinct and obvious and his great talent should now at last achieve its full recognition under the leadership of John Mayall.

Harvey Mandel

Harvey claims citizenship of two different home towns, both of which are steeped in blues traditions. Born in Detroit on March 11, 1945, and the junior member of the current Mayall clan, Mandel did most of his growing up in Chicago, also known for its blues currents.

Not long after finishing school in the Windy City, Harvey shoved off for a look at the rest of the world and soon came to roost in San Francisco, where he was able to play alongside Buddy Guy and other such blues greats. During this phase, he began to make a distinct impact on the American music scene to the point where he now has four LP's on the market under his own name on the Philips label. He has also been heard prominently on albums by Graham Bond, Barry Goldberg and Charlie Musselwhite.

In mid-1969, he became a member of *Canned Heat*, replacing lead guitarist Henry Vestine, and made several trips abroad with this chart-topping group, before forming an association with John Mayall in the LP, "USA Union." Currently, by the way, Mandel resides in Sunland, California.



On Tour

John Mayall

Elliott Randall

Albums

U.S.A. Union

Randall's Island

Empty Rooms

Turning Point

