

Billy Pres

Soul Stirrers and in many ways one of his strongest vocal inspirations, had a session in February 1962 which yielded some of the hardest-edged, most passionate, and *bluesiest* of SAR's gospel offerings, with Sam even here making his own strong production contributions (listen to his brisk instructions to the chorus on "Somebody"). "Sam had a vision," says L.C., a vision of a day when gospel would get pop airplay. "Real gospel music," Sam told British journalist Ray Coleman, "has GOT to make a comeback."

Then in the spring of 1963 he and J.W. launched a new label, Derby Records, just one in a string of "classy-sounding" names (including Malloy Artist Management) that J.W. had devised to give SAR an "establishment" sheen. Derby was designed specifically to go pop, with the unstated aim of incorporating white artists some day. Its initial release was an organ instrumental by 16-year-old "boy wonder" Billy Preston, a frequent SAR session player who had won his first fame as the five-year-old choir director of his mother's Los Angeles church (and then at eleven played the young W.C. Handy in *St. Louis Blues*). "Greazee" didn't do much in the way of sales, but Derby's second release, "When a Boy Falls in Love," captured

