

James Cotton was only five years old when he picked up his first harmonica. "I would try to mimic the sounds I heard my mother make," says Cotton. "Nothing fancy," he adds, "she would make train or hen sounds on the harmonica, and I'd imitate her." It didn't take long, though, for Cotton to discover the harp's many other capabilities. He was also captivated by the harmonica players themselves, and at the age of 9, ran away from his home in Tunica, Mississippi, to track down one of his idols, **Sonny Boy Williamson** (a.k.a. Rice Miller). Cotton convinced Williamson that he was an orphan; and Williamson, convinced that Cotton had talent, took Cotton on the road with him for the next six years.

By the age of 15, Cotton had left Sonny Boy Williamson and formed his own band, "**James Cotton and His Rhythm Playmates**." After recording a couple of albums under the Sun Records label, the band split up, and for the next 12 years, Cotton played with the legendary **Muddy Waters**. Since then he's been off on a spectacular solo career that includes playing with **Paul Butterfield**, **Janis Joplin**, **Steve Miller**, **Todd Rundgren**, **Johnny Winter**, and **Bonnie Raitt**, among others.

And if three *Grammy* nominations, including albums in the Best Contemporary Blues and Best Traditional Blues categories, and the *W.C. Handy International Blues Award* for "Best Instrumentalist/Harmonica" in 1988, aren't enough to convince someone of Cotton's talent, then audience reaction to him should. As Anne Swartz, of The Georgetowner, "If the reaction



James Cotton

of a crowd is any way to judge a performance, James Cotton has the cat in the bag." And Denise Tessier, of the Albuquerque Journal, says, "The audience showed its appreciation [for Cotton] by stomping up a rumble with their feet."

And Cotton is still going strong today. "Cotton remains a potent blues force, one whose acute sense of dynamics and range enables him to make good blues," says Robert Santelli of Asbury Park Press. Today, at age 58 Cotton is "still one of the liveliest, most able performers the blues ever produced," says Jim Kelton of the Boston Herald.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA —

A series of advertisements produced by Hohner, Inc. which memorialize the lives of legendary blues harmonica players has been recognized with a *RAMY* (Richmond Area Marketer of the Year) achievement award by the American Marketing Association. The campaign was created by Hohner's agency of record, Edelman Scott, Inc.

The first three ads feature **Little Walter**, **Big Walter** and **Sonny Terry**, and focus on their lives as blues musicians. The campaign has been reproduced in limited-edition museum-quality reprints and has been featured in communications publications ranging from Advertising Age to Communication Arts.

More importantly, from a marketing prospective, the series has generated considerable enthusiasm among blues music fans. Hohner has received requests for the prints from as far away as Japan and Sweden. The modest cost of the reprints (\$10 which include all shipping and handling) will be used to subsidize future ads/reprints in the legends of the blues series. Also, Hohner has earmarked a part of the proceeds for donations to previously approved blues organizations in the United States.

According to Hohner's Director of Advertising, **Jack Kavoukian**, "We're proud to be able to celebrate the great lives and characters who are the legends of blues harmonica music. The tremendous response to the campaign tells us the blues music category enjoys a loyal following and is here to stay. We hope to do our part to keep the blues tradition alive."

Jerry Murad's Harmonicats have had a change in personnel. Bob Bauer (chord) and Dick Gardner (bass) have retired and have been replaced by Al Data and George Miklas, respectively. We wish Jerry, Al and George the best in their new venture together. See page 10 this issue for more.