

overestimated.

By now the reissue market was beginning to take shape and a surprising amount of small, obscure, labels came and went having made productions which in themselves have become rarities - such as the EPs produced by Pirate Records in Sweden and the Natchez label in Argentina. Yet despite the concerns towards the uncertain viability of the reissue market both by the majors and independents, two independent labels began to take form in the late 1960's leading the way and taking a more permanent foothold. One was what began as Belzona which then became Yazoo following the first few titles. Based in New York, this outstanding and imaginative label was headed by the late Nick Perls and is now part of the Shanachie organisation.

A more unlikely setting for a successful Blues reissue label was Vienna, Austria. Yet, here was the birthplace of the Roots label established by Johnny and his second wife Evelyn Parth which would also eventually metamorphose into another entity Document Records.

In the mid fifties, Jazz enthusiast Johnny Parth (pronounced "Part") created two record labels; Jazz Perspective and Hot CIL De Vienne. Productions on both labels were released in small quantities, sometimes as little as twenty or thirty copies at a time, manufactured with hand printed covers. These were so locally to the budding fans of Jazz. Seventeen LPs were produced on the Jazz Perspective label. There was also an eleven volume box set which illustrated the history of Jazz. "We called it 'The Coffin' Johnny remembered "because it was a huge black box with gold lettering on it." In addition, a three LP box set outlining blues music was produced on Jazz Perspective.

Evelyn recently recalled how, in the m 1960's she wanted to produce a label which did for Austrian music what Chir Strachwitz's label Arhoolie was doing for American music. She and Johnny telephoned Strachwitz who was based in California and during the conversation was suggested that they should combine resources with a view towards making field recordings of Austrian Folk music. A trip was organised and the group set off to capture some of the finest recordings of their kind. On completion, the recordings were released simultaneously on Arhoolie and on the 500 series of the newly formed Roots label. In the same phone call Strachwitz suggested that it would be an idea to use the new label to re-release vintage Country Blues recordings. With finance provided by Evelyn, who was also great Blues music enthusiast, the Roots label was firmly established and they went ahead and produced the first Country Blues re-issue album under the Roots label ; RL 301 Blind Lemon Jefferson. Many of the album sleeves credited Evelyn with the production and compiling of the albums. Limited editions of no more than three hundred copies were produced with their distinctive, mainly black and white, covers. Only the barest of information was given on the backs of the covers, accompanied by the rather unlikely Austrian address of the company. The sound of what were often extremely rare original records was transferred to LP with a minimum of interference from the sound engineer. The original 78 rpm records used for these recordings were rare and old and if a record was found in a junk store or the basement of a house in Chicago or Mississippi then what was heard on a Roots album was unashamedly close to what that original record sounded like. To experience such finds were unknown to the majority of the worlds' ever growing population of Blues fans, so what the Roots label provided was the next best thing.

Forty-one albums appeared on the Roots RL 300 series and nine albums, including four featuring Austrian Folk Music, one Flamenco and one Bluegrass, appeared on the SL 500 series. There was also a Roots RSE series which released three albums and there was even a "single" EP released on the Roots label. At the same time Johnny and Evelyn produced a handful of albums on the Truth and Paltram labels.

These labels introduced collectors to some of the rarest blues recordings to have been issued during the pre-war era. So dedicated was Johnny to making such recordings available to collectors that he produced a limited pressing of one hundred and fifty LPs featuring 'The World's Rarest Country Blues Records'. This was a curious album supplied in a plain white sleeve with no references to the recording either on the sleeve or record label which declared 'For Specialists Only'.

Johnny's ever growing network of collectors now included young Bernie Klatzko of Origin records