

The Musical Legacy of Richard Barrett – Part 1

Written by Charlie Horner

With Contributions from Val Shively and Pamela Horner



Richard F. Barrett

In the crisp autumn air of sunny October 14, 2006, a crowd gathered inside the chapel of the West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Bala Cynwyd, PA, to pay their final respects to a great man. The attendees read like a “who’s who” of the fifties, sixties and seventies music industry – author Tony Turner, newspaper entertainment columnist Al Hunter, Philadelphia radio personalities Harvey Holiday, Jerry Blavat, Tommy McCarthy and Charlie Horner, producer/PR man, former Motown exec Weldon McDougal, record store proprietor Val Shively and R&B music icon Kenny Gamble. And then came the singers – Little Anthony and the Imperials, the Chantels, the Tymes, the original Blue Notes, members of the Three Degrees, the Valentines, the Orlons, the Sweet Delights and Bunny Sigler. All around the chapel were mementos of a remarkable life; labels and album covers, photos with singers and royalty, gold records -- all interspersed with white lilies and red roses. Host Tony Turner tossed red rose petals during his entrance and Jay O’Wharton’s saxophone wailed a mournful, “Amazing Grace”. While friends and relations sat solemnly in wooden pews, speaker after speaker took the podium to reflect on how their lives were changed for the better by one man. A photo slide show highlighted the life of that man. The Chantels sang a hymn acappella in Latin. The Imperials harmonized to “You Are the Wind Beneath My Wings”. Soul singer Bunny Sigler rendered an emotional 23rd Psalm.

On August 3, 2006, the world lost one of Rhythm & Blues’ and Rock & Roll’s most important figures. Richard F. Barrett, singer, musician, songwriter, producer, arranger, manager and label owner, died in Pennsylvania Hospital in his hometown of Philadelphia. Among his numerous accomplishments, Richard not only sang lead for the Valentines but discovered and produced Frankie Lymon and the Teen-

agers, the Chantels and Little Anthony & the Imperials. He was the creative force behind many (if not most) of the great records on George Goldner’s *Gee*, *Gone* and *End* labels by artists like the Dubs, Channels, Clefones, Isley Brothers and Flamingoes. He owned his own record label. He discovered and managed the Three Degrees. And he inspired the Beatles.

Richard Barrett was born in Philadelphia, July 14, 1933, and grew up North Philadelphia. As a child his two loves were art and music.

“I taught myself the piano,” Richard told interviewer Tony Cummings. “Through loneliness and because I liked music. I was our folks’ only kid. The first person I ever remember listening to on the radio was Wayne King [‘The Waltz King’]. [I listened to] Tommy Dorsey, Chick Webb, Louis Armstrong.”[1]

Richard joined the Army after high school; an airborne division that took him to the war in Korea and after that to Germany. In Germany he sang with a group of fellow servicemen. Once out of the service, he returned to Philadelphia around 1953 and began singing with a street corner harmony group called the Royal Angels.

The Royal Angels were from the 25th and Diamond Streets area (Richard lived nearby in the 2000 block of North Stillman Street) and often sang at the Moylan Recreation Center. The original group consisted of Richard Barrett, Robert Jones, Wilbur Crawford, Leon Booker and Otha Francis, who played piano and sang tenor.

“One of the guys in the group, Junior Booker, had a younger sister named Kathleen,” Richard recalled. “I used to tease her that I was going to write a song about her. One day I arrived at her home with a beat-up guitar and started to sing a song I’d written for her called, ‘Tonight Kathleen’. She cracked up.”[1]

The Royal Angels were one of several groups trained by vocal coach, Mrs. Joyce Mack Barnes. Mrs. Barnes had previously developed the talents of the Buccaneers (“Dear Ruth” and “You Did Me Wrong”). In March 1954, the Royal Angels won first prize in competition with 26 musical groups in the city-wide Philadelphia Department of Recreation tournament.[2]

The Royal Angels sang locally until one day when they headed to New York City to enter the talent contest at the famed Apollo Theater. They won, attracting the attention of numerous people who promised the group big opportunities in New York. Returning to Philadelphia, the Royal Angels were full of hope, but Otha Francis decided to call it quits. Tommy Wicks, later of the vocal group, the Sensations, was picked to replace him as tenor. Wicks had been singing with a group called the Cavaliers (forerunners of the Sensations) who had just recorded for *Herald Records*, but became discouraged when the label failed to release any of their songs. Believing his odds were better with the Royal Angels, Wicks joined Barrett on a trip back to New York City in Richard’s 1949 pink Oldsmobile convertible to follow up some leads for singing engagements. But those leads just



Royal Angels (1954): Robert Jones, Wilbur Crawford, Leon Booker, Otha Francis, Richard Barrett (far right). This blurry newspaper clipping is the only known photo of Barrett's first group.

did not pan out. Times were tough for the two singers in the "Big Apple". Their money soon ran out and they couldn't find work. They ended up sleeping in run down boarding houses and at one point, on a rooftop.

"I had a very comfortable childhood," Richard later recalled. "I learned about poverty when I was in New York... it was a brand new thing to me." [1]

Richard had brought a ukulele and the two singers used the time to work on songs, which they tried unsuccessfully to peddle in New York.

"When I was in the forces I'd written a song 'cause I thought I was in love," Richard remembered. "I put it in my pocket and I must have carried that song around for five years... When I got out on the streets of New York, I started checking out poverty and stuff and found it wasn't too good... not eating that is. So I remembered my song and went to the Brill Building on Broadway and 49th Street. That was where all the music companies were. Now I didn't know whose door I should be knockin' on so I listened to all the guys – the songwriters – who were talkin' outside on the sidewalk. And the publisher's name I heard the most was Morris Levy. So I went up and knocked on his door. He gave me a hundred dollars for that song. For years nobody did anything with it. Then eventually it was given to Frankie Lymon. That was 'Creation Of Love'". [1]

Tommy Ricks soon tired of scrounging for food and a place to stay and returned to Philly. There he rejoined the Cavaliers who would soon change their name to the Sensations and begin recording for *Atco*. One of his compositions from this depressing period, "Sympathy," later became a big hit for his group.

Richard Barrett, on the other hand, decided to "gut it out" and stay in New York. He took a non-entertainment related job to support himself while he pursued his singing career. Eventually Richard would join the Valentines. Richard Barrett's decision to remain in New York was paramount to the development of Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll.

The Valentines

The Valentines were one of the most dynamic R&B vocal groups ever, both on record and on stage. Their story began around 1952 when four young men in Harlem's Sugarhill district, began singing as the Dreamers. Initially, the group consisted of Raymond "Pops" Briggs (first tenor), Carl Hogan (second tenor), Mickey Francis (baritone), and Ronnie Bright (bass). They were assisted early on by vocal coach extraordinaire and Harptones' mentor, Raoul Cita. Cita helped the group with their harmonies. The Dreamers played house parties and talent shows until they connected with Richard Barrett.

While making the rounds in New York, Barrett had become friends with Solitaires baritone, Buzzy Willis. "Buzzy Willis... called me and said there was a group of guys who didn't have a lead singer and they had no songs. They just harmonized," recalled Barrett.

Richard tried to interest the Dreamers in the song he'd written in Philadelphia, "Tonight Kathleen". The Dreamers were more interested in singing their own songs. But Barrett was persistent and when the quartet was playing at Bowman's on 155th Street and St. Nicholas Place, he walked in playing the song on his ukelele. To his surprise, this time Richard was invited to sing the song with the Dreamers. He was asked to join the group as lead, so that the Dreamers could do "Tonight Kathleen".

In the beginning, times were tough for the Dreamers. They sang "Money Honey" at the Apollo Theater's Amateur Night, but were beaten out by a shake dancer, having to settle for third place. Even a name change to the Valentines didn't seem to help. Raoul Cita hooked the group up with *Bruce Records*, but aside from cutting a demo that got some airplay from deejay Willie Bryant, nothing happened. Disappointed, the quintet began looking for another record company. Carl Hogan left and was replaced by Donald Raysor of the Velvets. Possibly because of Richard's contacts with the Solitaires, the Valentines visited Hy Weiss' *Old Town Records*. There they soon had their first release, backed by the Solitaires' band. Trade magazines announced *Old Town's* signing of the Valentines in October 1954 and the release of their first record, "Tonight Kathleen" b/w "Summer Love" in November of that year. Both sides were penned by Richard Barrett, who also sang lead. The *Old Town* release did little nationally, but quickly established the group's reputation in Harlem. While Valentines' out of town appearances were limited in the early days, they did appear at Philadelphia's Cosmopolitan Club on February 19, 1955, for a one night stand with Dakota Staton and the Five Keys. [3] This was one of Donald Raysor's last appearances with the group.

Shortly after the record for *Old Town*, Donald Raysor was drafted. His replacement was Eddie Edgehill. Eddie Edgehill was born in New York, raised in Philadelphia and moved back to New York City when he was sixteen. In New York he started singing in a group called the Val-Tones. When the Val-Tones competed in a show at a school, members of the Valentines were in the audience. "I had heard that the Valentines were looking for a second tenor, because Donald Raysor had been drafted," Eddie recalled. The Valentines were impressed with Eddie Edgehill's singing. But what impressed them even more was Eddie's dancing. Eddie had always been a great dancer. Richard Barrett knew that if the Valentines could combine talented singing with outstanding stage presence, they'd have the formula for success.

After the show, both groups began walking downtown, with Richard Barrett walking behind the Val-Tones. And Richard kept saying, "You see that guy there [Eddie Edge-



Valentines on Old Town (Clockwise from top) Richard Barrett, Raymond Briggs, Donald raysor, Mickey Francis, Ronnie Bright (Photo courtesy of Val Shively).

hill]. I'm gonna get that guy for my group."

Ronnie Bright and Eddie Edgehill knew each other, since both lived on 151st Street at Amsterdam Avenue. Ronnie told Eddie, "Richard wants to get you into the Valentines. They're gonna have a meeting about you. Come up to my house tomorrow night." So Eddie went over to Ronnie's house the next night and the Valentines had a private meeting. When they came out they told Eddie they wanted him in the Valentines. No audition was necessary. Eddie was given a copy of "Tonight Kathleen" and asked to learn it for the Valentine's next rehearsal. While rehearsing with the Valentines, Eddie continued singing with the Val-Tones. Eventually the Val-Tones broke up and later re-formed without Eddie to record for Gee Records.

"I wasn't really a second tenor," remembered Eddie. "I'd sung baritone with the Val-Tones. But Richard said, oh, you can learn second tenor. And he worked with me and I got it. But it took a lot of rehearsing, man, a lot of rehearsing."

"We had a whole bunch of songs we were doing at that time besides 'Tonight Kathleen,'" Eddie recalled. "We had one called 'Henry Ford' ['I Love My Baby,' no doubt taken from the Revels during Richard's Philly days] and a song called 'Chuck-A-Luck' that Richard wrote that we never recorded."

Before joining *Rama* records, the Valentines played mostly around New York, playing schools and teenager functions. Initially they rehearsed at Ronnie Bright's house on 51st street. Later they started rehearsing at Bowman's, 155th Street and St Nicholas Place, in the heart of Sugar Hill. Richard lived uptown (around 163th or 165th St), as did Mickey Francis. Eddie and Ronnie lived downtown.

The Valentines' recording contract with *Old Town*

was for one year. They were supposed to make another record for *Old Town* but time ran out.

George Goldner invited the Valentines to come to his *Rama/Gee* Records studio for an audition. Goldner formed his first label, *Tico*, in 1948, in order to record Latin and mambo records. Through the early 1950's his big star was Tito Puente. In 1953 he ventured into Rhythm & Blues, scoring big with the Crows recording of "Gee". Goldner was looking for R&B vocal groups when he happened to run into the Valentines.

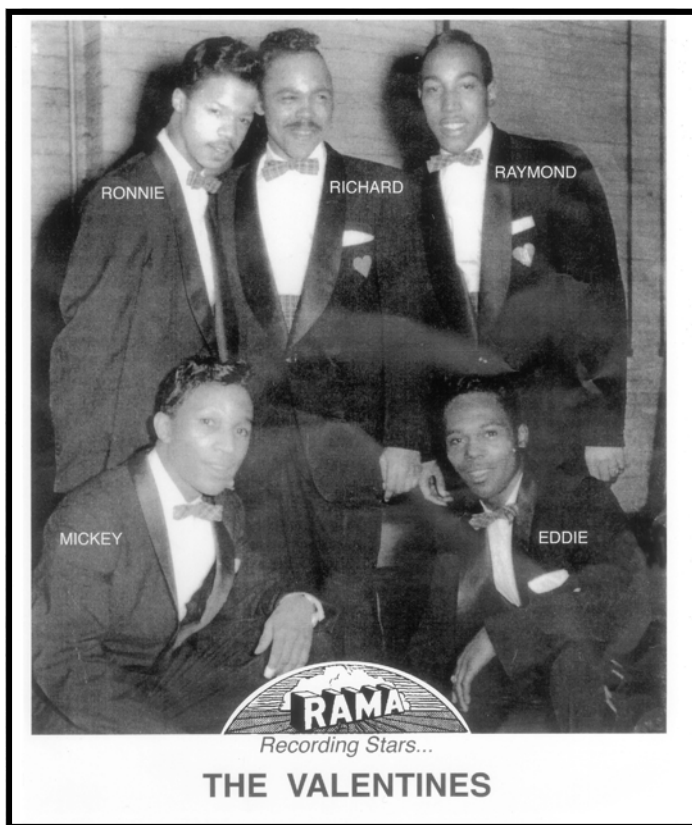
The Valentines auditioned with an early version of "Lily Maebelle". George Goldner liked the song but didn't like the beat. He told the group to use a beat similar to the Crows' "Gee". The original version was slightly slower but didn't have that finger snapping beat like the Crow's record. The Valentines went home and began rehearsing "Lily Maebelle" with a stronger beat and the "bo bo bo" baseline. When George heard the new arrangement, he loved it. He took the Valentines into the city and recorded it.

The first *Rama* release was the catchy jump tune, "Lily Maebelle", released in October 1955. The most well known Valentines' personnel of Barrett, Francis, Edgehill, Briggs and Bright were now in full force. They could do it all. The quintet could handle up-tempo and ballad songs with equal ease. But the energetic jump tunes really showed off their self-taught, carefully choreographed dance steps.

At Richard's insistence, the Valentines took great pride in their appearance. "We each had a white tux, a black tux, a red tux and a blue tux," Eddie said. "We had black suede jackets. We had a black corduroy jackets with white pants. We had black shoes, white shoes, red shoes. And we had a red heart on the pocket of each of our uniforms. Richard had a red heart made of oilcloth sewn on the pockets of all our uniforms. That was our logo."

One of the first appearances by the Valentines after the release of "Lily Maebelle" was an Alan Freed stage show at the State Theater in Hartford. The show also included the Moonglows, the Heartbeats and the Nutmegs. It was Halloween night and Richard said, "Let's buy some masks to put on." "We came out with masks on and the audience kept yelling, 'Take the masks off! Take the masks off!'," remembered Eddie. "We had a routine where we spun around and when we turned back to the audience we had the masks off. Alan Freed loved that."





(Photo courtesy of Val Shively.)

On November 18, the Valentines began a week at the famed Apollo Theater with the Four Fellows, Chuck Berry, the Solitaires, Arthur Prysock and the Buddy Johnson Orchestra. It was the Valentines' first show at the famed Apollo. The show was billed as "Hal Jackson's Rhythm & Blues Review." "The Solitaires and Valentines sang and presented their songs in the colorful rhythm and blues style, with lots of choreography," recalled Four Fellows' lead Jim McGowan. "Compared to them, we [the Four Fellows] must have seemed like stiff[s]."[4]

From there, the Valentines appeared on dee jay Georgie Woods' "Rock 'N' Roll No. 4" show in Philadelphia. The show was held in the magnificent Mastbaum Theater at 20th and Market Streets, a five thousand seat venue, complete with marble imported from Italy and twenty-two karat gold leaf decorated lobby and ceiling. During the show, the stage came up out of the floor. Also on the show were Bubber Johnson, the El Dorados, Philadelphia vocalist Gloria Mann, Screaming Jay Hawkins, Lavern Baker and the Four Lads. Bobby Roberts' twenty-three piece rock & roll orchestra supplied the music.[5,6]

While in the Philadelphia area, many of the stars of the Georgie Woods show, including the Valentines, El Dorados and Screamin' Jay, also performed at the Tippin Inn on Sunday, Dec. 18th. The Tippin Inn was a black-owned establishment in Berlin, NJ, that sported a grand showroom and featured some of the country's best known African-American entertainment.

The grandness of the Valentines bookings reflected the popularity of "Lily Mae Belle" and their follow up release, "I Love You Darling". While there was no evidence that "Lily Mae Belle" broke national (*Billboards* national R&B charts contained only the Top 15), the record sure made noise in some key local markets. The record spent the month of December in Cash Box's Hot Ten R&B charts in Philadelphia,

ironically jockeying for position with Tommy Wick's Sensations' first record ("Yes Sir That's My Baby" b/w "Sympathy"). The song was also big in New York. No wonder the Valentines were invited to join Alan Freed's Christmas holiday show. It opened at New York City's Academy of Music on December 22, 1955, and ran for twelve days. The show also included Lavern Baker, the Wrens, the Cadillacs, the Chuckles, Count Basie, Joe Williams, Boyd Bennett, Don Cherry, Gloria Mann, the Heartbeats, Sam Taylor and Al Sears. To coincide with the Christmas season, the Valentines released "Christmas Prayer," another Barrett composition. Before long the Valentines were one of the hottest groups on the East Coast.

The Valentines quickly acquired their own fan club, the Valenteens! A number of young women came to Richard and asked if the Valentines wanted a fan club, and Richard said yes. They wanted to come to the group's rehearsals, but Richard would not allow that. The Valenteens came to all the Valentines shows and always sat in the front rows. They would call all the radio stations and request Valentines' records. [see matchbook photo]

One of the Valentines' recordings from late 1955 didn't give them any label credit at all. The vocal group the Wrens were scheduled to record "C'est la Vie" but only lead Bobby Mansfield and George Magnezid of the Wrens showed up. The Valentines were already in the studio to record "Hand Me Down Love". George Goldner had the idea that the Valentines could lend backup voices, which they did.

In later years, Richard Barrett would become the quintessential A&R man/producer – the one who would be in the studio making sure the mikes were positioned and mixed right, making sure the recording had the sound the label wanted on the record. Yet through most of the Valentines recordings, it was George Goldner who filled this role. Richard watched and learned skills he would later use to produce records for the Teenagers, Chantels, Flamingos, Isley Brothers, Imperials and Dubs.

TIPPIN INN

Presents

GEORGIE WOODS

And His Guest Stars

of ROCK 'N' ROLL No. 4

- ★ THE VALENTINES
- ★ THE EL DORADOS
- ★ SCREAMING JAY HAWKINS
- ★ FLORINE (EXOTIC BEAUTY)
- ★ THE PHILATONES

SUNDAY DEC. 18TH

Matinee—3-7 .. 8-3

BERLIN, N. J., ROUTE No. 73
BERLIN 7-0486



The Valentines (1955)

Top (l to r): Mickey Francis, Richard Barrett, Eddie Edgehill
Bottom (l to r): Pops Briggs, Ronnie Bright

WINS's Alan Freed was not the only dee jay out promoting R&R stage shows in the New York – New Jersey area. WLJB jock, Hal Jackson, staged the first such stage show in the Bronx on February 10–12, 1956. Held at the Opera House Movie Theater, the line-up included the Valentines, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, the Bonnie Sisters, Cadillacs, Heartbeats, Ann Cole, Ruth McFadden, Al Sears and Frank ("Floorshow") Cully's band. Such shows could be grueling, presenting five or six performances a day.

Also in February, the Valentines joined an R&B stage show package to tour the Stanley-Warner theater chain in northern New Jersey. The package was promoted and MC'd by Ramon Bruce of WAAT (Newark) and also included the Heartbeats, Jesse Powell, Sam (The Man) Taylor, the El Dorados, the Cadillacs, Ray and Jay, Harriet Kaye, and Gloria Mann. At opening night, Feb. 12, at the Capitol Theatre in Passaic, 8000 people circled the block waiting to buy tickets. The following night at the Embassy Theater in Orange, both performances had been sold out a week in advance. By Wednesday night at the Ritz in Patterson, 4000 teenagers jammed the streets.[7] Shows in Hoboken, Bayonne, and Elizabeth did just as well. All told, the six-day tour played to more than 25,000 people.[8] Audiences were mixed race and generally well behaved.

At one show in Connecticut, fans stormed the dressing room, looking for autographs and pieces of the performers clothing.

In April 1956, Alan Freed put together another rock & roll stage show to run Easter Week at the Brooklyn Paramount. Actually, the show ran ten days with six or seven performances a day. The show was heavy on vocal groups – the Valentines, Teenagers, Platters, Willows, Flamingos, Clefones, Rover Boys, and Royaltones – plus the Jodimars, Ruth McFadden, Cindy & Lindy, Dori Anne Gray and the Alan Freed Orchestra featuring Sam (The Man) Taylor and Al Sears. This was the first time the Valentines performed on the same billing as Richard's protégé, young Frankie Lymon. The twelve-year-old Lymon spent a lot of time in the Valentines' dressing room between sets. Little did the group know, the youngster secretly tied the shoelaces of some of their shoes together. "He tied mine together and those of Ronnie Bright," Eddie recalled. "He used to do things like that." The show was a huge success. An estimated \$240,000 was netted over the length of the show. At \$1.25 to \$2.00 per ticket, that amounted to a half million tickets sold. [9]

One of the Valentines most popular songs was "Woo Woo Train", released in the spring of 1956. "Woo Woo Train" was notable for the great sax solo by Rama band leader, Jimmy Wright. "Jimmy Wright – Oh man, he was great!" exclaimed Eddie Edgehill. "I loved that man. He was great, especially on "Woo Woo Train".

The sight of the group bounding onto the stage dressed in white suits with red hearts on their front pockets to the tune of "Lily Mae Belle" was a sure crowd pleaser. But what



THE VALENTINES

Management
VARIETY MANAGEMENT CORP.
J. Roberts and T. Vastola
1619 Broadway N.Y.C.

GALE AGENCY, INC
48 West 48th Street
New York N.Y.

really tore up the show was the group's closing song. They saved "Woo Woo Train" for the end because it showcased their choreography. Recalled Eddie, "We had canes and Ronnie [Bright] would have a conductor's hat on, and he'd say, 'All Aboard!' And then they'd start 'Woo Woo Train'. We had a lot of dancing in that song and saved it for our closer."

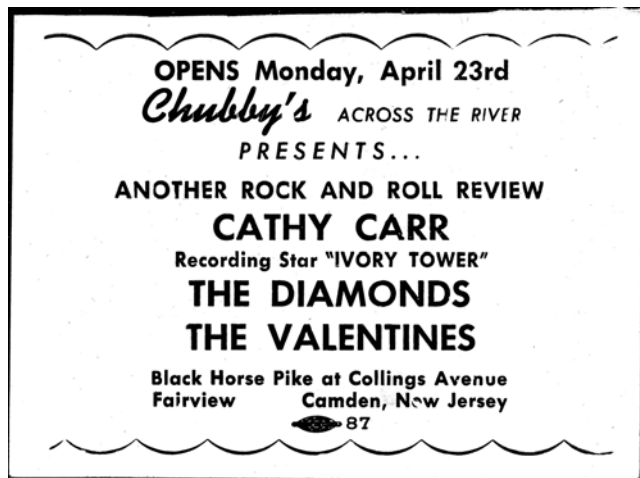
According to Eddie, most of the choreography was worked out by Eddie Edgehill and Mickey Francis, and sometimes Ronnie Bright. "We all put our heads together and worked out the routines. Richard said, 'We're not going to put no money together to go to no dance school. This is something we can do ourselves!' And we did. The Cadillacs and lots of other groups went to Cholly Adkins, but we did our own choreography."

By May, "Woo Woo Train" had reached #6 on Joe Smith's Boston (WVDA) survey, prompting the Valentines to cut a radio promo for him. They also cut a promo for Ramon Bruce.

In June of 1956, The Valentines, along with the Moonglows and Solitaires, donated their services to assist Alan Freed with entertaining an "alcohol-free" prom for Horace Greeley High School, in Chappaqua, NY.[10]

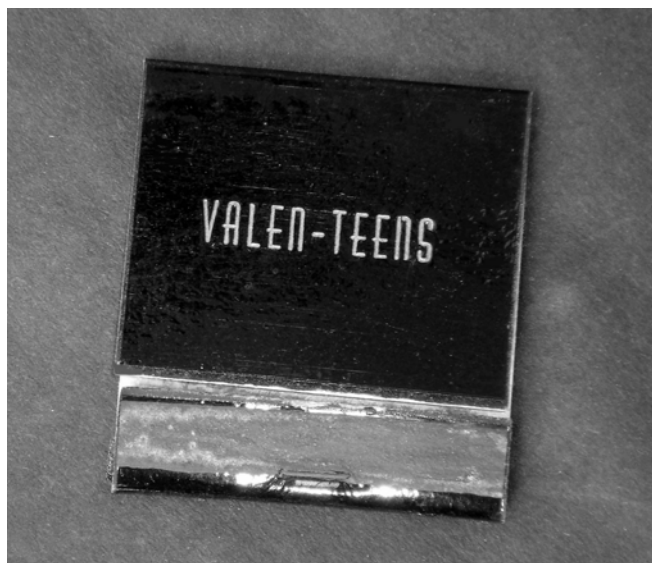
Also in June 1956, The Apollo Theater in NYC featured on its bill five groups from the *Rama/Gee* label stables: The Valentines, Teenagers, Cleftones, the Pretenders and Mabel King from Charleston, SC. The show also featured Clyde McPhatter, recently split from the Drifters.

Most of the Valentines performances were on the East Coast. They did play the Downtown Lounge in Springfield, MA, Chubby's in Camden, NJ (April 23, 1956), Washington, DC and the El Mocambo Club in Toronto, where they stayed for a month. Richard felt they should perform where *Rama* records had the best distribution. Most of the traveling was done in the group's station wagon, with "Valentines" written on the side or by Trailways bus. The group traveled with their music written out and used the house band of the venue they were playing.



Meanwhile, June 1956 saw the release of the Valentines' fifth Rama release, "Twenty More Minutes," which was another Barrett composition. By August 24, the Valentines were back at the Apollo Theater with Tommy (Dr. Jive) Small's R&B show. The line up also included the Clovers, Big Maybelle, Claudia Swan, Bo Didley, the Five Satins, Charlie & Ray, and the Channels.

By late summer 1956, Raymond Briggs left the group and was replaced at first tenor by David Clowney. Clowney had been playing piano for the group and moved into the role of singer. The Valentines first met David Clowney earlier in



Matchbook from the Valentines fan club, the Valen-Teens.
(From the Horner Archives)

1956 while he was singing and playing piano with the Pearls ("Shadows of Love"). The Pearls were a Detroit group who were on a week-long show at the Apollo Theater. "The Valentines had seven days off so we went down to the Apollo and after the show went backstage and talked to David Clowney," Eddie stated. "We asked him where he was going next and he said the Pearls were heading back to Detroit but he was staying in New York. So we asked him how he'd like to play piano for the Valentines and he said, 'Sure!' So he came to rehearsal and that's how he got into the group." Clowney left the Pearls and joined the Valentines. The Valentines' recording of "Nature's Creation," released in October, still has Briggs as tenor, with Clowney on piano.

In late 1956, Eddie Edgehill left the Valentines and returned to Philly due to an illness in his family. He later recorded with the Del-Knights. Eddie's part was taken by Carl Hogan, who rejoined the group.

On January 1957 the Valentines returned to the Apollo along with Dinah Washington, Ocie Smith and comedian Slappy White. From there they moved to the Empire Theater in Brooklyn to perform with the Heartbeats, Channels, Teenchords and Bull Moose Jackson.

The Valentines' last recording was "Don't Say Goodnight" in March 1957. Their final Apollo appearance was during the week of May 3, on the Dr. Jive Show with the Paragons, Dells, Avons, Charlie & Ray, Metronomes, Robin Robertson, Jo Ann Campbell and Titus Turner. The Valentines career came to an abrupt end after only a little more than two years.

"How'd that happen?" Richard recalled. "Well I had a fist fight with a promoter who wouldn't give me the money after a Valentines' gig. And I went to jail with the promoter. We got arrested at the same time. The Valentines were at the auditorium and when I came back that morning I had the money. The police sergeant told me I was playing without a contract and I told them I was going to kill that son-of-a-bitch if I didn't get my bread. So the promoter gave me the money. And when I went back to the Rothman [Roseland?] Palace and the boys were all there all lovey dovey with their chicks. I said, 'Where is the music?' And they said, 'Oh we forgot about the music. We lost it.' So I said, 'Well that's it. You could lose anything else but when you lose your music, you're NOTHING.' So I quit." [1]

Of the Valentines, Ronnie Bright went on to sing with the Cadillacs and was the bass voice on Johnny Cymbal's hit,



"Mr. Bass Man". After that, he joined Harry Douglas' Deep River Boys and Carl Gardner's Coasters. David Clowney began playing piano and arranging songs for the Jesters. He would later have organ instrumental hits ("The Happy Organ" and "Rinky Dink") under the name Dave "Baby" Cortez. Eddie Edgehill went back to Philadelphia to sing with the Del Knights. Carl Hogan joined a group called the Miracles on the *Fury* label and later wrote songs with Richard Barrett. Donald Razor would also later write and produce records with Richard.

On April 12, 1997, Richard Barrett, Eddie Edgehill, Ronnie Bright and Mickey Francis were reunited on stage at New York City's Symphony Space Performing Arts Center as they were inducted into the United In Group Harmony Association's Vocal Group Hall of Fame.

Part 2 of Richard Barrett's musical legacy will continue in the next issue of *Echoes of the Past*.

References:

1. Tony Cummings, "Some Other Guy," *Black Music* [London], April 1974, pp. 62-63.
2. "Won Citywide Competition," *Philadelphia Tribune*, Mar 13, 1954, p. 13.
3. Lee Cotton, *Shake Rattle & Roll*, (Popular Culture Ink, Ann Arbor, MI: 1989), p. 226.
4. James A. McGowan, *Hear Today Here To Stay*, 2nd edition. (Akashic Press, Ambler, PA: 1983), p. 128.
5. Archie Miller, "Fun 'n Thrills In Philly Town," *Philadelphia Tribune*, Dec 17, 1955.
6. Barbara L. Wilson, "Rock 'N' Roll At Mastbaum," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 13, 1955.
7. "Ramon Bruce Six Day Rock 'n Roll Jaunt Sets Records." unknown magazine, Mar 6, 1956.
8. Ramon Bruce, "Ramon (I Am The) Bruce" *Rhythm & Blues*, unknown month, 1956, p. 17.
9. "Fantastic Freed Fans Tie-Up Traffic As Easter Show Sets New Record," *First Pressings: Vol. 6, 1956*, Ed. Galen Gart (Big Nickel Pub., Milford, NH: 1991), p. 44.
10. Charles Gruenberg, "The Drinks Were Soft But Man That Beat!" *New York Post*, Jun3 26, 1956.
11. http://www.geocities.com/doo_wop_gino/freed.htm
12. Charlie Horner's interviews and conversations over the past thirty years with Richard Barrett, Eddie Edgehill, Gerry Edgehill, Mickey Francis, Alphonso Howell and Raoul Cita.
13. Special thanks to Julie Barrett.
14. Raymond "Pops" Briggs' personal scrapbook.
15. Phil Groia, *They All Sang On The Corner*, Phillie Dee Enterprises, Inc., NY, 1983.
16. Marv Goldberg, "Marv Goldberg's R&B Notebooks: The Valentines,"
17. <http://home.att.net/~marvart/Valentines/valentines.html>
18. Jonathan Takiff, "Barrett's Ear Was Educated." *Philadelphia Daily News*, 7 Oct. 1987, p. 41.
19. Al Hunter, Jr., "Richard Barrett Dies Of Cancer: He Discovered Musical Stars," *Philadelphia Daily News*, Aug 4, 2006.
20. Charlie Horner, "The Valentines," Program for UGHA's 7th Annual Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony (1997).



Valentines on Stage at a Ramon Bruce show.

Valentines Discography

As "The Valentines":

Bruce (unreleased)	Summer Love For You	54
Old Town 1009	Tonight Kathleen Summer Love	11/54
Rama 171	Lily Maebelle Falling For You	10/55
Rama 181	I Love You Darling Hand Me Down Love	11/55
Rama 186	Christmas Prayer K-I-S-S Me	11/55

As "The Wrens" (Valentines uncredited backup of Bobby Mansfield):

Rama 194	C'est La Vie	1/56
----------	--------------	------

As "The Valentines":

Rama 196	The Woo Woo Train Why	4/56
Rama 201	Twenty Minutes I'll Never Let You Go	6/56
Rama 208	Nature's Creation My Story Of Love	9/56
Rama 228	Don't Say Goodnight I Cried Oh Oh	4/57

Rama – unreleased cuts: later issued on Murray Hill LP
Nature's Creation (alt. take)
If You Love Me Pretty Baby
The Joe Smith Theme
Sweetheart Of Mine

Recorded live on Alan Freed's 1956 CBS Radio "Camel Rock 'N' Roll Dance Party"

These shows were also edited and transcribed for the Armed Forces Radio & Television Service (AFRTS). These transcriptions were 16-inch phonograph records prepared and distributed exclusively for broadcasting to the Armed Forces. Songs taken from these AFRTS' were later released on several collections of LP's and CD's. [11]

Woo Woo Train	56
Lily Maebelle	

JUST RELEASED — THEIR LATEST & BEST

THE VALENTINES

great Rama Recording of

"HAND ME
DOWN LOVE"

b/w

"I LOVE
YOU DARLING"

RAMA 181



RECORDS, INC.

220 W. 42 St. (WI. 7-0652) N. Y.

RR171

RR171

"A Hit on the Rama Label"

LILY MAEBELLE

by THE VALENTINES

Tico Distributing Corp.

220 WEST 42nd STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Order by Label No. RR171

RR171

RR171