

Beneath the Sleeve

by Michael Marek

I spread my allegiance across all 88 keys. On each I lean to a certain degree, and in accordance my weight moves. Habitually, with every note I strike, I see there to be one less for others to own and one more for me to monitor.

As difficult as it may seem, maintaining such a tight grasp on what appears on artists' records is simply a matter of dividing one's day between brief sit-downs and phone calls with A&R, and routine visits to the bank.

Only recently have I found myself more often than not, at doors, wiping the grits off my shoes on the various rugs thrown my way. As music's arsenal for instrumentals, it is a necessity for me to be suspicious whenever my intellectual property isn't being stepped on.

On one hand, I stealthily tread through countless recording studios, ready to make a copyright claim; on the other, it is as if I am scavenging previously excavated territories with my music.

Not too long ago I caught myself reaching into the sleeve of a soul record in search of some information regarding to whom I could credit the sample. Outraged at the mere thought of compromising the originality in my harmonies with such an act, I immediately discarded any liner notes that I could find. As unreasonable as it may be, this is the type of sacrifice I was forced to make after the record preceding that incident got Louisiana talking, and all they had to say was that my style was *passé*.

With my kidneys exposed and my relevance fading away, it was only a matter of time before the jabs ensued. To prevent this, I commissioned a few individuals to relieve me of some

of my duties so that I could spend the next few months once again conquering every aspect of sound with those black and white keys.

“Abel, so is it settled?”

Abel, frantically shuffling through at least half a dozen records, approached me at a quickening pace.

“Where are all the liner notes?!”

“Liner notes? Why do we need liner notes?”

Abel threw a stack of papers at me.

“Read that.”

“This is ludicrous. We should be suing them; not the other way around. Look—”

I heard a sudden reverb, followed by a pause. I glanced up at Abel, only to realize that a new sound had already emerged.