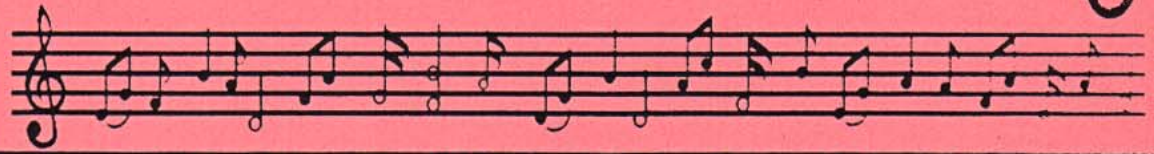


# SUNCOAST BLUES SOCIETY

# Twelve Bar Rag



YOUR SOURCE FOR THE BLUES IN WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA



## Bruce Conte

### *Bullet Proof*

Severn 0015

So who's this Bruce Conte anyway? I turn the CD over in my hands. A picture shows a guy with a high priest's collar and small bowler hat holding a lovely blonde (maple?) Gibson 'Les Paul'. His 'straight ahead' gaze reflects the music to come. He plays that pretty guitar spare, lean, clean. No bad boy histrionics here. In a previous life Bruce was guitarist for Tower of Power. My first thought, there's a lot of vocals and horns here—not my favorite things. Then I listened and these people are GOOD!

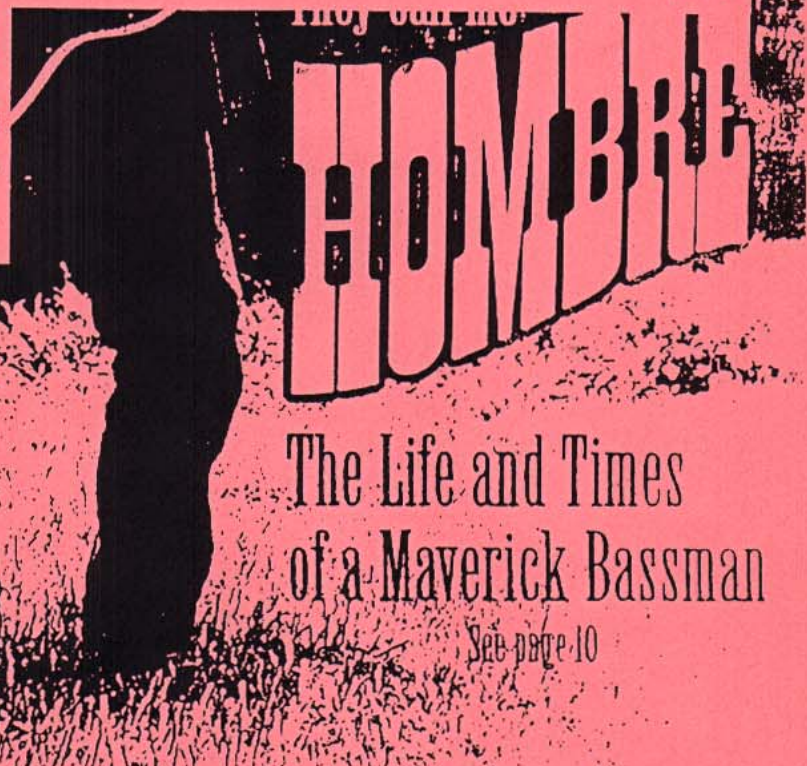
There's lots of featured L.A. artists, virtually a different vocalist on every cut. On *Mojo Mambo*, a rocky, Louisiana-reminiscent number, there's eight musicians. *Just Won't Act Right* has a much sparer line-up. Mr. Conte adds pretty licks and emphasis to Tim Scott's rough, happy voice. Julian Molina on bass and Steve Stephens on drums provide a flexible, professional rhythm section. Larry Williams' keyboards is quality clean stuff. On *Too Sad To Sing The Blues*, Windy Barnes gives a raucous 'up' feeling to the vocals.

*It's Always Darkest Before the Dawn* is one of two cuts Bruce wrote. He croons an almost 'torchy' ballad and manages to throw in some warm, honey-eyed licks as well. When he and that Les Paul solo, they've got my attention! The longer I listen the more they own me. *Bullet Proof* starts out with a jazzy, urban bar feel. Lenny Williams' vocals cut in to reinforce the *Superfly* sensation. Michael Acosta on sax and John Fumo on trumpet supply a relaxed yet alert edge. Bruce has that guitar talking about some suspicious stuff.

*Feel So Bad* is a sparse, funky treatment of a sad situation. Bruce's voice and guitar work are plaintive while Tom McMorrans' keyboards and Herman Mathews' drums are more out front than the previous purveyor's of these instruments. *There's Room At the Top* is a horn-y comment on movin' up, like someone walking fast with a purpose.

I started out under impressed, but now I'm sold. Catch an audio glimpse of this pretty baby when you get a chance.

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The Life and Times  
of a Maverick Bassman

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