
JERRON PAXTON

— THINGS DONE —
CHANGED



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THINGS DONE CHANGED

SFW 40266

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Produced by Alex Hall

- 1. THINGS DONE CHANGED** (5:15)
- 2. BABY DAYS BLUES** (3:16)
- 3. IT'S ALL OVER NOW** (2:48)
- 4. LITTLE ZYDECO** (2:40)
- 5. SO MUCH WEED** (4:07)
- 6. WHAT'S GONNA BECOME OF ME** (3:49)
- 7. MISSISSIPPI BOTTOM** (3:54)
- 8. OUT IN THIS WORLD** (4:32)
- 9. ALL AND ALL BLUES** (2:36)
- 10. BROWN BEAR BLUES** (4:05)
- 11. OXTAIL BLUES** (3:09)
- 12. TOMBSTONE DISPOSITION** (3:43)

All songs by Jerron Zeno Paxton (Black Folk Publishing, BMI)

THROWBACK

By Lynell George

Projected within Jerron Paxton's voice you can hear the wind, feel the hot prickle of the high-noon sun, smell the exhaust from an automobile on its last-gasp miles. It's all there. Not just his voice lifted in song, but it's in the very grain of his articulation. His singing, his stories, his playing. In those grooves, you'll discover context and background: the history of people and place and the come-what-may gamble of life-altering journeys.

"I write and sing about the culture I come from. It seems a bit neglected," he's observed: a people and a way of life, in his estimation, that are not as legible as they should be.

With his deep-pitched, 19th-century banjo and that weathered, lived-in voice, Paxton, 35, knows that the uninitiated might type him as an anachronism. What would be a more accurate descriptor, however, is vessel: "I grew up in Los Angeles playing for the last generation of folks who grew up listening to Black banjo players."

Things Done Changed places him firmly in the tradition, not as a translator but as an inheritor. It also announces a critical step forward for Paxton: The album is an offering of self-penned meditations, all situated in heirloom settings that bring the music forward with its emotion and urgency. Like many Angelenos from transplant pasts, hints of our migrated ancestors' elsewhere peek through. It's our "by way of" story, the carried-forward mementos we keep close to the heart. In Paxton's case, he's the product of circuitous passages, who-shot-John stories, and the rhythms and patterns of Southern Black folks' coded communication.

Los Angeles was one of the mythic, yearned-for locations for African Americans reaching for safety, opportunity, and a larger sense of themselves during the multiple waves of the Great Migration. Those Southern stories—about working the cotton fields or Creole preaching songs, or listening to Uncle Dave Macon on the Grand

Ole Opry—told around the supper table, or on the porch as a smog-streaked sunset closed the day, now reside deep inside him. That connection from there to here, from struggle to opportunity, he sums up this way: "I like to think of it as one little trip down the 10-Freeway. That little trip made a big impact on a bunch of generations."

Leaving Shreveport, Louisiana, in the mid-1950s, his family settled in the Athens neighborhood, an unincorporated municipality in South Los Angeles. His grandmother set to finding work right away. As Paxton tells it, she went from making \$8.00 a week "doing hard labor cleaning people's houses and picking cotton" to making \$8.00 a day working as a domestic in Beverly Hills—"and got better treatment." She didn't look back. Instead, she called for her own mother to come west.

Born and raised in South Central L.A., adjacent to Watts, Paxton was surrounded with love. "I grew up with three people that really molded me—my mother, my grandmother, and then my auntie. Between those three I got all the care that a child needs."

In this multigenerational context, culture was tended, in every respect: language, food, ritual, and of course music. Consequently, he reflects, people outside of the walls of their home felt free to comment on his "been-here-before" comportment: "'Well it ain't that you sound Southern, it's that you sound old,' they'd tell me."

Paxton will be the first to tell you that he is "throwback," in a "family of throwbacks," who understood the sturdy undergirding of a family tree and the histories that spin out of those roots and branches. He grew up shadowing his grandmother, watching her mannerisms, her gait, and listening to the way she embroidered her speech. An only child, "I grew up by myself," shadowing and absorbing.

Inside their home, time didn't so much stand still; the past was pulled forward. It wasn't stored away in a cedar chest or in a cabinet of curios; it was part of the day-to-day.

MANY of Paxton's most vital exchanges with his grandmother happened under the California sun, in the garden, hands in the dirt, backs bent, tending rows of vegetables. "She'd be in the backyard piddlin'"—working, talking, singing—her blues station turned on full-blast, ringing through the house, reaching all the way to the garden rows. "I'd ask her about her grandmother. We'd be in the garden and she'd say: 'My grandma taught me to plant things with fish. A certain time of year, you keep the little fish and you plant your okra, and your greens and your turnips and your mustards, with the fish in the rows.'"

As with planting and cooking, Paxton noted, once the elders saw that you were curious, they would start to open up about other rituals: hunting, or religion, or the ways of life on a plantation, and of course music and its role.

What grew out of those sessions was an appreciation, a looping conversation between present and past. But it wasn't life in a bubble; Paxton saw throughlines, essential connections.

AS a traditional musician, says Paxton, "I get pegged as one of these people who only likes music from a certain period," he explains. "In the 90s, I grew up on Marvin Gaye in the house. Roger and all of that stuff. It ain't what I listened to. It ain't what I put on. But I didn't have to put it on, it was already on." He saw how those songs didn't simply bring people into the room, but how it brought them together—how it shifted or created a mood: "And I associate that music with a kind of beauty of family. And gathering. Like when [Al Green's] 'Love and Happiness' comes on, multiple generations get into this groove without even knowing it."

This was important, not as a distinction of genres, but as an example of unspoken rituals, and the seductive power of music, collective memory. A way to celebrate the moment, time, and place.

He learned, in time, that what lit him up like nothing else were these old, lived-in relics—and the terrain that lived within them—tunes radio DJ Bubba Jackson played during his blues show on 88.1, KLON FM. That and his grandmother's own voice wrapped around lyrics, humming little scraps of tunes, that traveled over time and through the radio speakers, opened onto new territory. "It wasn't until I was old enough, about 8 or 9, that I realized the music I heard in the house that meant the most to me came from my culture. The Southern culture. It kind of knocked my socks off. The music is great because of its own sonic qualities, but the reasons those voices on those records sound so familiar [is because] they are the voices of the people who raised me."

Around this time, Paxton first heard guitarist Bukka White's voice leap off the radio and into his consciousness. "His voice reminded me of the people who worked on cars in my grandma's best-friend's backyard. Those gravely voices where, you know, you have to grow up around it, or else you could only understand about 30 percent of it." These old men's voices and how they rose and fell, and the laughter that punctuated a moment, that was language itself. He heard an echo in White's sound: "It enthralled me and I couldn't tell you what it was," he says. "Bukka White was the start of active listening."

This revelation trained his ear. Piqued his appetite. From here on out, he knew to be ready: He'd devised a system—setting up a cassette recorder in front of his grandmother's radio and waiting for the DJ to play something stripped down. "It be 85 percent electric blues and then you heard this sound of acoustic guitar—and I knew nothing about 'acoustic' then, but I'd run to it. Hit the button to record."

It gave him a piece of something.

Those sounds that brought his family together—the soul and funk and R&B bands—he knew as a musician he couldn't create alone. But in them he heard *possibility*. With *this* music. He realized he didn't need a band to create a world, a mood and atmosphere; with a guitar and with this sort of expression he could levitate and travel through territory. And invite people in.

He asked for an instrument and lessons. Fiddle came first, at 12, then banjo. “The fiddle was a tough instrument to learn to speak the language of music on. I enjoyed it, but it was hard to play without being scratchy.”

In retrospect, says Paxton, unbeknownst to him at first, the banjo connected him to something personal. “While it was easier to chord and it accompanied itself, the banjo also allowed me to hang with my grandmother and ask her what music sounded like when she was a girl,” Paxton remembers. “She'd give me these one-line pieces of songs, some of them without melodies, and you know, she would always say: ‘Baby, you're smart. You gonna have to get the rest.’”

It began a journey, Paxton says, “You know, finding the B-part to go with the A-part, as the fiddle players say....” Piecing the musical journey across landscapes—emotional and physical—together.

NOW, firmly on his path as a professional musician, Paxton has gathered a store of puzzle pieces, keeping them close at hand. *Things Done Changed* is an endeavor to embroider himself into the tradition that has made him who he is today.

For Paxton, it has required long practice and deep immersion into history, and too, reliance on the proper tools: Take for instance, that resonating, growling banjo you hear on a couple cuts. Of course, it has a story.

He reflects: “Years ago, I was watching a documentary about American roots music and my grandmother came in and saw Mike Seeger playing a low-tuned banjo, hide-head attached, and she looked at it and said: ‘Lord, that looks like my Daddy's banjo! I believe he left it on the plantation wall when we run off, 1934, 1935....’ She was six when they ran off the plantation. I was 12 when I learned this. But I was grown when I found something similar.”

The instrument was both a step backward into time and forward in his education. A 19th-century-style fretless banjo was key to navigating and communicating the music he felt most at home in.

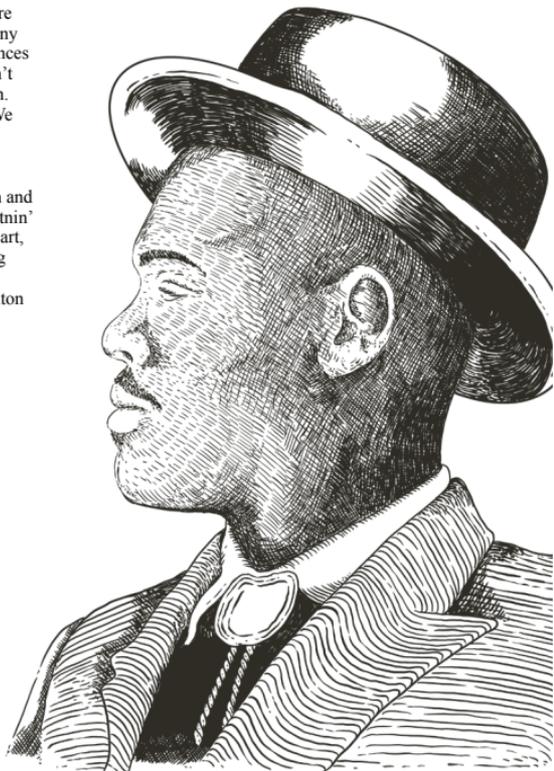
“Now it's my primary banjo, I'd say for 10 or 12 years. It's the only instrument I played once I bought it. It kind of ties me back to that sound, which you know, so little of Black folks' music has been recorded, you kind of have to reverse engineer to make sure it's right....” But he tells himself: “If I sound like myself that music will come out. I had to trust because I got it after my grandmother passed, and she couldn't tell me.... I had to feel it.”

“Where does this sensitivity come from?,” I ask Paxton. It's not just absorbing sound and patterns, but textures and atmosphere. The record summons the feeling of spinning a shellac 78, but without the noise or sonic distance.

“I took some time with this record. Because it is a record of my own songs. I think that is why that emotion comes across, because it is based off life experience. Things I have absorbed mixed with the sounds and my culture that I exude,” says Paxton.

THINGS DONE CHANGED

feels like eavesdropping, as if you've found some wormhole to the past, but better; there is an intimacy and urgency that jumps through time. "I tried to make something that feels a little more timeless and more like an abstract painting. That meditative part." Even with new material he'd amassed—some songs were written "for giggles" or for specific friends or thorny predicaments that he'd been salting into performances over the years. "People aren't aware that they aren't 150 years old," he notes. It's all in the presentation. "The style comes from an older time," he says. "We could say it comes from the past, but honestly it's a living tradition. A sound. And what I'm trying to present on that record are the roots. Just about everything we hear, if you trace it back far enough and take some circuitous routes, goes back there. Lightnin' Hopkins said, 'If you ever get the blues in your heart, you will always hear that.' That'll never stop being as long as there are Black folk. Just like religious traditions shifted, secular traditions shift too," Paxton acknowledges. It's sound moving, spinning, traveling across time and space. "But when you hear something that contains your grandmother's voice, you know it's home."



THOUGHTS

from Jerron Paxton

MY friend the renowned chef Michael Twitty said something that made an impact on me. To paraphrase, he said, “The tool you use to survive your oppression is capital, and what your capital gets spent on will determine your future.” Black folk music has always been a tool to beat the bad, but the fruit of it is usually exported. The only way I know to make sure we eat is to feed the people and hope they have seed enough to grow their own.

Folk music is the most necessary kind of music for any given culture. It anchors you and gives you a sense of self-identity so that where you come from is ingrained and your endeavor stays your focus. This has been a great solace in a world where it is not uncommon for people to be searching for who they are well into adulthood.

I, Jerron Paxton, have been a musician since the age of 16. I was born on the border between Watts and South Central Los Angeles. My culture is a result of the Great Migration like most people in our area. Like many of them we came from the Black Belt (Louisiana and Arkansas specifically) and brought our music, food, and dance with us. The music I play is the folk music of this culture. This music is exotic and/or new to most people, but it’s the voice of my grandmother as she worked and rocked me to sleep as well as the sound of her friends, neighbors, and family. The melodies pepper and reflect the sly humor and joy in their voices. It is natural to me, and is the largest part of my musical influence, education, and

upbringing and offerings to the public this past half a lifetime, or getting close to thereabouts.

Other than the fact it sounds wonderful, it’s perfect for a person to play solo, it being natural to me by ways of my own cultural connection; along with the covert edification it provides and the understated sophistication it represents, these are a big reason why I play Black folk music for audiences around the world. Playing music for a living, a career chosen based on necessity as much as aptitude when one finds out a career driving trains isn’t possible due to the visual problems that emerged in my 17th year, is the surest way I know to spread the music to abroad.

The study of music and its rich history is my first love, and the composition of new, original music is some ways down on that list. The seeds of Black folk music have sprouted some original compositions that I have managed to sneak in on audiences without them necessarily knowing they weren’t composed by one of my forebears. I would like to think that these modern observations are just a small contribution to the tapestry of Black folk music. They come from the same tree but are just tender offshoots of the collective language of the music. These songs have added up, and due to some begging by my friends and musical admirers, we have committed them to tape, and we are proud that they have found a home with Folkways.

TRACK NOTES

1. THINGS DONE CHANGED

Jerron Paxton, vocals and guitar

This song represents the blues at face value and is based on lived experience. It was composed as a meditation on the subject (a changing dynamic) and has been mostly used in private and with a small handful of friends who have needed the musical therapy it offers. With it going public I hope it stands to be helpful to a few more folk.

*Ain't it sad baby and it hurts to my heart
(Been) together so long
now we got to get apart*

*[Refrain] (Since) Things done changed between you and me
Seems just like times can't be like they used to be*

*You're mad and ornery and wondering what it's all about
Have our poor (old) love,
has it done fizzled out
[Refrain]*

*Smiling face could always be found
Now seem like your smile don't want me around
[Refrain]*

*No need of me wringing my hands and crying
You go your way and I'll sure go mine
[Refrain]*

*Seems like you wanna go and leave it all behind
When you use to tell me your troubles and I'd tell you mine
[Refrain]*

*I can't stand this funny way of doing
The way you doing gonna carry my poor heart to ruin
[Refrain]*

*Love you baby, love your lover too
Have to love your lover just to get next to you
[Refrain]*

*Honey, Honey, Honey that was so long ago
Can't we do like we done once before
[Refrain]*

*Sure as those stars shine above you
You know I'm sure gonna always love you
[Refrain]*

2. BABY DAYS BLUES

Jerron Paxton, harmonica, vocals and guitar

This is the sound of reminiscing on where I grew up, so strong that you can hear the influences of my youth like DeFord Bailey and Sippie Wallace on the harp. To quote Fats Waller, "I wish that I were twins" so I could play twice as much guitar and harmonica as is natural, but multi-track technology helps out where a rack wouldn't allow me to shape the notes as well on the French harp [harmonica].

*I wish I could go back, honey, to my baby day
I wish I could go back, honey, to my baby day
But, at least I've never lost my brownskin baby ways*

*Honey Baby let me be your teddy bear
Honey Baby let me be your teddy bear
Want you to hold my hand and take me everywhere*

3. IT'S ALL OVER NOW

Jerron Paxton, banjo, vocals, and bones

A song that was written in my 16th year that is a real celebration of learning to play stroke style under the instruction of my grandmother. This was a favorite of Frank Fairfield when we first met, and it was used to entertain many audiences in and around Southern California.

*Henry Baby gotta have
a heart to heart
We've been together so long
I think we got to part*

*[Refrain] And if I didn't
know I know for sure
That it's over now*

*You done gone and put
me on the shelf
Done throwed me down
for somebody else
[Refrain]*

*You broke my heart
and left me blue
I see you when you're
down in hard luck too
[Refrain]*

*Been the best of friends
for a long, long time
You go your way and I'll go mine
[Refrain]*

*We been together for such
a long, long time
Now you go your way
and I'll go mine
[Refrain]*

*You told me you'd love
me if I stayed the same
But, baby looks like you are
the one who done changed
[Refrain]*

4. LITTLE ZYDECO

Jerron Paxton, harmonica

This is a medley of tunes that I have always associated with Louisiana but that are likely misremembered from my youth. They are very similar to the many takes of "Turkey in the Straw" or any number of Stephen Foster tunes that I also can't remember the first time I heard them. I've later come to realize the second tune in the medley seems to be "The Cottonwood Reel," which, again, is so close to home I can't remember where it was first heard. The shave and the haircut (ending lick of the medley) is the favorite song which all Americans and a few Canadians have absorbed: "The Chicken Reel."

5. SO MUCH WEED

Jerron Paxton, vocals and slide guitar

An observation on the changing attitudes toward an herb that caused many a person, in my baby days as well as into my adulthood, to lose their liberty. The juxtaposition of the attitudes of today with those of 20 or even 10 years ago has some ironies and paradoxes that the blues is one of the best artforms to express.

*Things done changed
from the 90s until now
Lend me your ear and
I'll sure tell you how
[Refrain] We got so
much weed (3X)
And the law don't even care*

*My poor uncles use to
have to run and hide
Now they sit on their
front porch with pride
(Enjoying) [Refrain]*

*Your grandpa do it and your
grandma do the same
They healthy and mellow
and ain't ashamed
(To have) [Refrain] (Gonna
make them live a long, long time)*

*Can't think of my poor trouble
and how my trouble loom
Can't think of why I walk
in this here room
[Refrain]*

*People ask if I get
nervous when I fly
Can't be nervous, I'm
already sky high
(From) [Refrain]*

*People make fun of you if
you walk around elevated
But, that tobacco and liquor
done left them dilapidated
(Now they want)
[Refrain] to heal their
body, ease their mind*

*New York's smell could
curl your hair
Now it smell nice and
fragrant everywhere
(From) [Refrain]*

*I sang you my blues and
it didn't take me long
You feel it too, won't you
help me sing this song
[Refrain]*

*If I come to a place and
it's mighty hard to find
Do me a favor just
to ease my mind*

*I got my wish
With blueberry kush
That little bitty bush
To help me ease my mind*

6. WHAT'S GONNA BECOME OF ME

Jerron Paxton, vocals and early banjo

The words to this song were thrown together by my grandmother and myself over years of late-night salmon court bouillon. The melody of the A section comes from sounds that seem the oldest in Black folk music as well as movement that feels left over from the forefather of the banjo, the folk lute (Akonting) of the Jola people. Songs like “Train 45” or “Reuben” are some of the more popular tunes to use this melody. The B section is me trying to copy my grandmother’s moan that she would half hum behind every verse.

*Oh look baby what
have I done that caused
you to treat me
You cause of me weep and you
the cause of me lose my home
Sometimes I wish I had
not been born or died
when I was young
I never would have kissed
your red rosy cheeks or
heard you lying tongue*

*You done told me more lies
than the stars in the skies
And you'll never get to
heaven when you die
[Refrain] What's gonna
become of me*

*I feel like jumping, God
knows I do, from the
treetop to the ground
The one say she love me
and done had my child says
she don't want me around
Oh Lordy Me, Oh Lordy My,
what's gonna become of me
I'm 900 miles from my wife
and my child wondering
what's gonna become of me*

*You might as well go get you
a hard-shooting pistol and
come blow out my brains
I'd rather be dead and
in my grave than to be in
all the trouble I'm in
I've been a hobo,
I've been a bum
If you get some cornbread
save me some
I ain't never never been
so hungry in my life
I swear I ain't never never
been so hungry in my life*

*That graveyard you see over
yonders hill is a terrible
old lonesome place
They lay you down in that
cold, cold ground and
throw dirt in your face
I done been to the east, they
done brought me to the west
I done been this whole
wide world around
That's the only place I have
not been, but I'll be there
before the sun goes down*

7. MISSISSIPPI BOTTOM

Jerron Paxton, vocals and guitar

This song may be considered marketing at its finest! It was written about moving to New York City. Figuring people would prefer a location that would fit the tones of my voice, Mississippi did just fine for most people up here. They seem to have as easy a time as I do swapping one river for another in their imaginations to enjoy the song as it is intended, especially since it's intended for dancing.

*Mississippi bottom is
filled with mud and clay
Mississippi bottom is
filled with mud and clay
That Mississippi woman
stole my heart away*

*If you didn't want me you
sure didn't have to stall
If you didn't want me you
sure didn't have to stall
I can get me more lovers than
a passenger train can haul*

*It take rocks and gravel
to build a solid road
It take rocks and gravel
to build a solid road
It takes a great big engine
to carry a heavy load*

*When I was way out west
I was doing as I please
When I was way out west
I was doing as I please
When I got down here you told
me I have to work or leave*

*The one I love baby
sure cannot be found
The one I love baby
sure cannot be found
But the one I hate is
always hanging around*

*Put carbolic in coffee and
turpentine in my tea
Put carbolic in coffee and
turpentine in my tea
I believe to my soul sweet
mama trying to hoodoo me*

*The one I love is
Oh so far away
The one I love is
Oh so far away
The one I hate I got I
see her everyday*

*Mississippi bottom is
filled with mud and clay
Mississippi bottom is
filled with mud and clay
That Mississippi woman
stole my heart away*

8. OUT IN THIS WORLD

Jerron Paxton, vocals and guitar

As I travel around the world every so often I get a little lonesome for what is familiar. This song is about a few of those times or experiences. Some of those things I can carry with me on the road, like my trusty bottle of Lawry's, but others, like people, I've got to carry in my heart.

*So far out in this world
washcloth can't be found
So far out in this world
washcloth can't be found
I'm mama's poor child and
I've just been drifting around*

*So far out in this world I
can't hear Jimmie Reed
So far out in this world I
can't hear Jimmie Reed
That's someplace I never
thought poor me would be*

*So far out in this world
no family can I find
So far out in this world
no family can I find
You invite to your family, but
I sure Lord do miss mine*

*So far out in this world
seasoning salt been
my best friend
So far out in this world
seasoning salt been
my best friend
If I didn't carry it all
the time Lord knows
the shape I'd be in*

*So far out in this world
y'all don't nod ya head
So far out in this world y'all
don't speak nod ya head
You act like you're my
people, but wouldn't
care if I was dead*

*So far out in this
world seasoning ain't
something you do
So far out in this
world seasoning ain't
something you do
You leave it on table and wait
until the cooking is through*

*So far out in this world I
can't shake grandma hand
So far out in this world I
can't shake grandma hand
I'm at my own home, but I feel
like I'm in some foreign land*

*I ain't got nobody I'm
all here by myself
I ain't got nobody I'm
all here by myself
I might as well make it when
I sure ain't got nobody else*

*I got to carry y'all in my heart
to give my mind some ease
I got to carry y'all in my heart
to give my mind some ease
And let every place I hang
my hat seem like home to me*

9. ALL AND ALL BLUES

Jerron Paxton, vocals and guitar

This is a simple blues composed on the fly. There have been many such songs like this that disappear as soon as they come to me. This one got captured after a nice long walk in some foreign country that I can't recall.

*Can't be yourself and have
pains in your heart
Can't be in love, you
might as well be apart
Can't be yourself and have
pains in your heart
Can't be in love, you
might as well be apart*

*Some people know your ways,
some people know your mind
Seem like you ought to*

*leave them all behind
Some people know your ways,
some people know your mind
Seem like you ought to
leave them all behind*

*You don't need no mind
reader with no crystal
All you really need is a
sweet little all and all
You don't need no mind
reader with no crystal
All you really need is a
sweet little all and all*

*If I was your all and all I'd
be under your control
You'd have me mind,
body, heart and soul
If I was your all and all I'd
be under your control
You'd have me mind,
body, heart and soul*

*Your new recruit might
be sweet and cute
But your all and all
beat your substitute
Your new recruit might
be sweet and cute
But your all and all
beat your substitute*

10. BROWN BEAR BLUES

Jerron Paxton, vocals and guitar

This was a song about my home state of California, but quickly turned into a song about myself. I mostly like leaving myself out of the subject matter because on stage I try to communicate culture more so than personality—although you'll certainly get plenty of the latter—but every person who sings the blues has to boast about themselves a bit. I'll have to become more familiar with the feeling as a song that is usually reserved for my own private pleasure escapes those comfortable confines and makes its way toward the public.

*I'm from that Brown Bear
State everybody sure knows
I'm from that Brown Bear
State everybody sure knows
Spreading peace and love and
good times everywhere I go*

*I'm just like that bear,
I'm so nice and brown
I'm just like that bear,
I'm so nice and brown
I can lift you up high and
let your love come down*

*You looking for somebody
to ease your mind
You looking for somebody
to send chills up and
down your spine
Come here baby don't
you want to go
I'll take you someplace
you never been before*

*Won't you shake glad hands
with your loving boy
Won't you shake glad hands
with your loving boy
And enjoy 300 lbs., I
swear, of heavenly joy*

*In the summer you're
feeling fine
In the winter you're
gonna be mine oh mine
Brown Bear Baby, meat
shaking on my bones
Every time the meat goes
to shaking I swear all
your blues is gone*

*Honey Baby let me be
your teddy bear
Honey Baby let me be
your teddy bear
Won't you hold my hand
and take me everywhere*

*My hook's in the water
and my cork on top
How can I lose with
all the stuff I got
My hook's in the water
and my cork on top
How can I lose with
all the help I got*

*One little lesson I swear
you ain't never learned
Fishing all day and ain't
gonna never get burned
Because I'm so brown skin
chocolate to the bone
I got what it takes to make
you moan and groan*

*My cats and dogs
are brown skin
My pigs and hogs
are brown skin
The book I read is brown skin
I'm the boy in your head
and I'm brown skin
So glad I'm brown skin
chocolate to the bone*

11. OXTAIL BLUES

Jerron Paxton, vocals and piano

This is a little covert commentary on gentrification, which I have seen plenty of in my own neighborhood and neighborhoods like it across the world. When the food of the poor folks hits the mainstream, it usually prices the poor folks out. Such is the case with oxtails, a longtime staple in Caribbean and soul food cuisines, which seems to have nearly doubled in price once it entered into mainstream awareness and tastes.

*Can you believe they done
made these oxtails so high
Can you believe they done
made these oxtails so high
Now they're selling neckbones
that the rich folk buy*

*Can you believe who
done moved to the
old neighborhood
Can you believe who
done moved to the
old neighborhood
Mama if you live a little
while longer it just might
mean you some good*

*Now April 20th seem like
any Black Friday sale
Like any Black Friday sale
And they're selling the
same thing that put
poor papa in jail*

*Baby don't you think I know
Baby, oh baby, don't
you think I know
Can't get no oxtail now
Can't get no oxtail now
I sure don't need no
oxtail nohow*

*Since you can't get 'em
they're expensive ain't
that some funny news
Ain't that some funny news
Mama would be kicking in
her sleep if she knew how
much y'all want them blues*

12. TOMBSTONE DISPOSITION

Jerron Paxton, vocals and guitar

One can easily imagine a person at the end of their rope singing this song. Such is the intent of the composer. I've seen this look and attitude surround many a person, and this is the song my heart renders when I see them.

*I don't know, I don't know,
from here I can't tell
I don't know, I don't know,
from here I can't tell
I may get better Lord
knows I'll never get well*

*Got a tombstone disposition,
got me a graveyard mind
Got a tombstone disposition,
got me a graveyard mind
You know I've been
mistreated, sure
don't mind dying*

*Got a .32-.20 shoot like .45
Got a .32-.20 shoot like .45
Walk that whole Mississippi
levee, sure don't have to hide*

*What can you do to
pacify my mind
Baby, what can you do
to pacify my mind
I've been mistreated and
sure don't mind dying*

*I wanna see the one
I'm so crazy about
I wanna see the one
I'm so crazy about
When my baby come
along I know my baby
gonna jump and shout*

*Come to me baby
and get my arm
Come to me baby
and get my arm
And if I don't mean you
no good, I sure don't
mean you no harm*

*I don't know and from
here I can't tell
I don't know and from
here I can't tell
I may get better Lord
knows I'll never get well*

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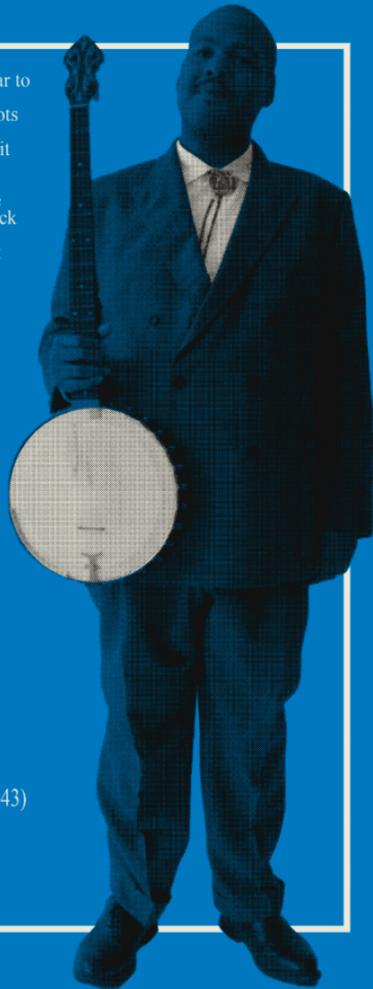
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Growing up in Los Angeles, Jerron Paxton would sit with his ear to the radio, eagerly absorbing the nuances and history of Black American traditional music that connect him to his ancestral roots in the South. A songwriter, inheritor of tradition, and a walking, talking jukebox, Paxton approaches his craft with equal parts wit and reverence, with a knack for leg-pulling and cracking wise. *Things Done Changed* is an album of original songs that sound performed in from nearly a century ago, when jazz and blues were performed as a means of both personal and cultural survival. Lick by lick, Paxton builds a bridge between generations gone and generations to come, singing the heartaches and joys of the past and present.

Produced by Alex Hall

- 1. THINGS DONE CHANGED** (5:15)
- 2. BABY DAYS BLUES** (3:16)
- 3. IT'S ALL OVER NOW** (2:48)
- 4. LITTLE ZYDECO** (2:40)
- 5. SO MUCH WEED** (4:07)
- 6. WHAT'S GONNA BECOME OF ME** (3:49)
- 7. MISSISSIPPI BOTTOM** (3:54)
- 8. OUT IN THIS WORLD** (4:32)
- 9. ALL AND ALL BLUES** (2:36)
- 10. BROWN BEAR BLUES** (4:05)
- 11. OXTAIL BLUES** (3:09)
- 12. TOMBSTONE DISPOSITION** (3:43)



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