

## Big Jay McNeely - The Godfather of Honking Rhythm & Blues Saxophone

For Big Jay, the path to R&B stardom had already started in the forties. 'Race Music' as Rhythm & Blues music was still called at that time, was a kind of music enormously popular with the black population in the US, featuring ambiguous texts with a leading role for the saxophone. The Americans called this music style 'honking and screaming', and the saxophonists sporting that style, among them Hal Singer, Lee Allen and Big Jay, were the 'honkers'. Billboard presented one of the first records of this music ( Johnny Otis' Barrelhouse Stomp with Big Jay on saxophone) as one of the loudest records ever!

Big Jay was at the top of the R&B charts with his title 'Deacon's Hop' and together with an unbelievable stage show, by far the wildest around, he became the leader of the wild 'honkers'! During all that time Big Jay recorded more than 30 singles up to 1955 and toured the US.

In 1981 Big Jay made his come-back to the music-scene and everybody who sees Big Jay today, will find it hard to believe that this man is nearly 70 years old! In Europe (the Netherlands) he'll perform with the Rinus Groeneveld Quartet, and Big Jay already showed that he's still capable of performing his famous 'Jay Walk'!