

## Lloyd Price

Among the premier rhythm & blues singers of the Fifties and Sixties, the Louisiana native can also claim a host of other talents: musician, bandleader, songwriter, producer, record-company executive and booking agent. In his prime he recorded for the Specialty and ABC-Paramount labels. The bulk of his R&B sides were cut for Specialty and bear the hallmark of the New Orleans sound. His biggest R&B hit, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," was an original song produced by Dave Bartholomew and featuring Fats Domino on piano. Based on a commercial jingle he'd written, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" topped the R&B charts for seven weeks in 1952. It was also widely covered, both in the Fifties and beyond, by the likes of Elvis Presley (who performed it on his 1968 NBC-TV special), the Buckinghams, John Lennon and Elvis Costello. "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" is a rhythm & blues classic that helped give birth to rock and roll. Price recorded more hits during his early-Fifties tenure at Specialty, but his career was interrupted by the Korean War. Upon returning from three years of service, he launched KRC (Kent Record Company) with Harold Logan, a longtime friend and collaborator. A shrewd businessman, Price leased his recordings to ABC-Paramount, thereby retaining control of his music while receiving national distribution. His most renowned recording came with "Stagger Lee," an R&B remake of the folk-blues standard "Stack-o-Lee" that topped the pop and R&B charts. Recorded versions of the song date back to the Twenties, but Price's "takes the prize," according to Greil Marcus in a detailed analysis of the song's roots and evolution. "Price's record was hard rock, driven by a wailing sax, and in retrospect his manic enthusiasm seems to be what many earlier versions lacked," wrote



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Marcus. Price's biggest year was 1959, during which he released four hits: "Personality," "Where Were You (On Our Wedding Day)," "I'm Gonna Get Married" and "Come Into My Heart." His entrepreneurial skill led to the helming of more labels (Double-L and Turntable), as well as a New York City nightclub (Lloyd Price's Turntable). Double-L launched the recording career of Wilson Pickett in 1963. Price continued to place his own recordings on the R&B charts into the Seventies. Meanwhile, he performed around the country with a nine-piece band while keeping a resourceful hand in various other entrepreneurial pursuits and ventures.

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