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MILKING THAT 'JEJUNE' COMMENT FOR ALL IT'S WORTH

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Not many can boast a career as impressive as that of **Tom Dowd**, who recently passed away in Aventura at the age of 77. The physicist-turned-producer/engineer (during World War II he was assigned to the Manhattan Project) had worked with Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, James Brown, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Otis Redding, Derek and the Dominoes, Eric Clapton, Rod Stewart, the Drifters, Chicago – the list is nearly inexhaustible. And his mark on the Miami music scene was also felt: he produced the Island Records debut of singer/songwriter **Arian Fieles** (who has since moved to New York City) and **the Goods'** *Good Things Are Coming*.

Dowd's love affair with music began when rock and roll was just learning to crawl. He joined Atlantic Records in 1948 as a staff engineer, and during his 20-year-plus tenure he recorded some of the most memorable songs ever put to tape, crossing every genre radio would play, including "Mac the Knife" by Bobby Darin, Franklin's "Respect," Coltrane's "Giant Steps," Ben E. King's "Stand by Me" and the Rascals' "Good Lovin'." He was also a recording pioneer: he convinced Atlantic to switch from acetate recording to magnetic tape (thus paving the way for multi-tracking), was among the first to record in stereo, and bought the first eight-track recorder ever produced.

In the late Sixties, Dowd went freelance and continued his frenzied pace of recording now-classic music by the likes of Derek and the Dominoes (*Layla and Other Love Songs*), Eric Clapton (*461 Ocean Boulevard* and others), the All-

man Brothers (*Eat a Peach* and others) – most of these laid down at North Miami's Criteria Studios (now the Hit Factory). I don't think there's a human being in the industrialized world who hasn't heard a song that Dowd had a hand in, and that's an incredible legacy. Dowd, who suffered from emphysema, continued to work until early this year, even dragging around an oxygen tank to relieve his ailing lungs in order to do the thing he loved best: making music. He died on Oct. 27.

At the heart of it all, Dowd was a hardcore music fan and went to great lengths to pull the best from the artists he worked with. Where most of today's producers are hired for their "sound," Dowd was the antithesis of that trend. He was about the artist. "Tom was able to capture the essence of a band," says Mark Moormann, a local filmmaker who is working on a documentary about Dowd. "He was not the sort of producer that tried to manipulate them. He was the ultimate diplomat and coach."



Tom Dowd, at right with Eric Clapton in 1973; also worked with local acts.

sound advice

Moormann is in the midst of editing that documentary, *Tom Dowd and the Language of Music*, which is scheduled for release early next year. Containing numerous interviews with the musicians he has worked with, cool footage of him at work (even one of Dowd remixing "Layla") and a final interview a week before his death, it will be a tender portrait of a national treasure, a fitting tribute to a great man and his work. Visit

**TOM DOWD HELPED
SHAPE THE WAY WE
HEAR MUSIC**

www.TomDowd.com for more info.