

# Jesse Winchester brings his new band to the Back Door

By DAHE LANZEN

Jesse Winchester has been singing and playing guitar around Montreal for a couple of years now. Most of that time, he worked as a solo star, doing gigs at the old New Penelope, the various Door coffee houses, and elsewhere around town.

Sometime last month, Jesse joined up with a three-piece band. And two nights ago the new quartet was unveiled at the Back Door, which is on McTavish Street at the corner of Sherbrooke.

Jesse sounds better than ever. His own songs constitute about 80 per cent of the group's repertoire, and, when all the microphone and amplifier problems are worked out, they sound great.

Playing with a band is nothing really new for Jesse; rather it's a return to what he likes to do. After coming to Montreal (as an American draft-dodger) two years ago Jesse worked with a string of bands here. And before that, he'd played guitar, bass, drums, organ or piano with half a dozen groups in his home town of Memphis, Tennessee.

"There's one good thing about Memphis," says Jesse, with a noticeable Tennessee accent, "and that's the music. There's a lot of good, creative people making a lot of good music."

"But I had to leave. I looked in the encyclopedia and found that Montreal was the biggest city in Canada and I came here. I've noticed nothing essentially different culturally, except that people here are a little more reserved. It takes a while to know them, but they're very kind. I love it here."

"When I think about it, it's a drag that I can't go back to the States. Sometimes I miss Memphis. But the way America is now, if I have to be cut off from somewhere, the States is a good place."

"So I came up here and got a job playing guitar in a French rock 'n' roll band. We

taured Amos, Chicoutimi and Trois Rivières. Then I played in an R 'n' B band around town, and then in a psychedelic group in clubs.

"Finally, I got tired of the hassles of playing in bands and decided to do a single act. I did that for a year; but I really wanted to work with a group again. I feel more at home."

Jesse's band consists of a bassist named Jean Charbonneau that Jesse knew from the old days, a drummer named Guy Black, and a knock-out piano player called Kim Pearson. Jesse met Guy and Kim through Penny Lang, the Montreal folksy singer who at this very moment is touring in New York state.

Jesse is going to be at the Back Door till Sunday. On Monday morning, he'll be in Toronto, recording his first LP. The record is being made for none other than Albert Grossman, the superman of folk and pop music who has guided the careers of all the great heroes from Bob Dylan to The Band. And producing it will be Robbie Robertson, of The Band.

Besides Jesse and his trio, the studio musicians will include David Rea and several others from Toronto and a few more from New York. Jesse plans to record as many as twenty songs, most — but not all — his own, and pick the best from that.

FAMOUS PLAYERS