

POP CULTURE

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D THE GAZETTE | MONTREAL
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2005
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Jimi Hendrix



Janis Joplin



Lou Reed

Who the hell is Preston Epps?

BERNARD PERUSSE
THE GAZETTE

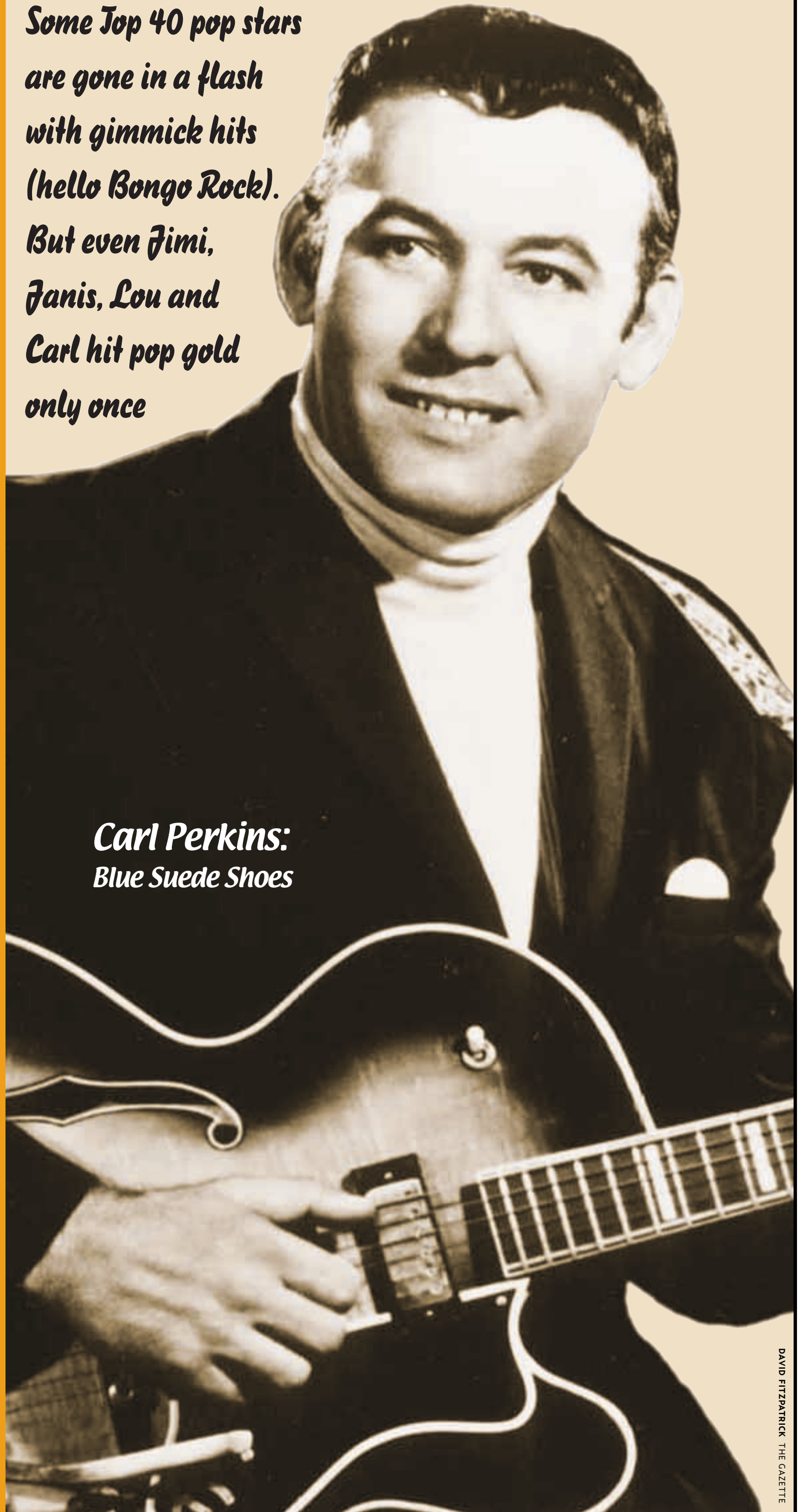
Who the hell is Preston Epps? The answer lies in a career that sounds more like a comedy sketch than part of a life story. Some guy learns how to play bongos while stationed in Okinawa during the Korean War. After his tour of duty, he pumps gas and plays Hollywood coffee houses at night. Discovered by a label owner, he records a bluesy shuffle with a twangy, stop-and-start bridge. Bongo Rock climbs to No. 14 on the Billboard pop chart in June 1959 and fame beckons Preston Epps.

Or does it? A follow-up single, Bongo Bongo Bongo, stalls at No. 78. Then comes Bongo in the Congo, which no one buys. Bongo Rocket stifles as well. Bongo Boogie? Nada. Flamenco Bongo and Mr. Bongo draw only yawns from the public. Six years after his hit, Epps releases Bongo Rock '65 – which, predictably, flops. He finally concedes – a little late, perhaps – that maybe the bongo thing is no longer happening.

Please see ONE-HIT, Page D3

One-hit wonders

*Some Top 40 pop stars
are gone in a flash
with gimmick hits
(hello Bongo Rock).
But even Jimi,
Janis, Lou and
Carl hit pop gold
only once*



Carl Perkins:
Blue Suede Shoes

DAVID FITZPATRICK THE GAZETTE