Published on *Highland Park Public Library* (http://hplibrary.org)

The Sirens Records

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Highland Park is home to many fine things. The city proudly hosts the Ravinia Festival every summer. We have well-crafted homes that are the pinnacle of architecture, a breathtaking beachfront and a thriving culinary scene. But what you may not know is that Highland Park is also home to an excellent blues record label, The Sirens Records.

The Sirens Records was founded in the mid 1970's by Highland Park resident, Steven Dolins, when he was a teenager. He was enraptured by the raucous musical stylings of Erwin Helfer, who specializes in a form of piano-centric blues known as boogie-woogie. He approached Mr. Helfer and started taking piano lessons from him. Their relationship grew and they eventually recorded the album, "Heavy Timbre", which was released on Dolins' recently established record label.

Life happens to all of us. Steve Dolins is no different. He went to school for his master's degree, took a job, and gotmarried. In the midst of all of that, The Sirens Records became dormant. This all changed in the early 2000's when he was laid off and suddenly found himself out of work. He decided to relaunch the label with a reissue of "Heavy Timbre". It was successful. He has been working with a growing number of Chicago based boogie-woogie, jazz, gospel, and blues musicians booking shows and steadily releasing albums by them ever since. The Sirens Records has also taken on the mission of "preserv(ing) authentic Chicago blues, boogie woogie, gospel, and jazz piano music."

At the library, we are proud of what Steven Dolins has accomplished and own many of his record label's releases within our collection which are free for you to use. The following is a list of the albums that we own.

- Barrelhouse Chuck - Prescripton for the Blues
- Ari Brown - Madam Queen
- Katherine Davis - Rock This House -- Live!
- Geraldine & Donald Gay - Soulful Sounds
- Heavy Timbre: Chicago Boogie Piano
- Erwin Helfer - I'm Not Hungry, But I Like to Eat -- Blues!
- In the Right Hands: Chicago Gospel Keyboard Pioneers
- Primitive Piano
- Emma Thompson - Just in Time
- Skinny Williams & Erwin Helfer - St. James Infirmary

Tags: Music Blog, Blues, Buried Treasure, Jazz

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