

THE
RADIO
ONE

Story of Pop

THE FIRST
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS



THE WHO: First of the Thunderers
GENE VINCENT: A Classic Rocker
THE ANIMALS: The Best of British R&B
PLUS: LENNON & McCARTNEY, Soul, Merseybeat & More

PART II

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The first half of the '60s saw a totally unprecedented boom in British music. Britain – so long the Cinderella of rock – seemed suddenly to find an identity. The focus of the tremendous music activity emanating from the British Isles was, of course, the Beatles – and through them, Liverpool. The city port had long been a melting pot of races and cultures, and had consequently formed a very real identity, quite separate from the rest of the country. In the classical musical tradition – observed in other great music centres – there emerged from this cosmopolitanism a hybrid but distinct form of rock. The Irish – from just across the water – had brought to Liverpool an enduring interest in country & western; the Beatles and others had trekked as part of their apprenticeship to Hamburg; the city itself had a strong and lively folk tradition of 'Scouse' songs. From these and many other influences emerged a Liverpool or Mersey Sound. In the wake of the Beatles came a deluge of Liverpool artists, few of the same stature, but many with the same clean-cut freshness.

The early part of the '60s also found renewed interest in both the blues and R&B. In clubs all over Britain, R&B standards were vigorously performed by groups who identified strongly with the lot of their black originators. Newcastle – in many ways similar to Liverpool in its independence and musical strength, but on the opposite side of the country – threw up the Animals, who are featured in a profile this week. London itself gave us the Rolling Stones and the Who amongst many others. The Who – our superstars – started by advertising their act as 'maximum R&B', a strong contrast for anyone listening to Townshend's extremely individualistic music today.

Liverpool and R&B are our major themes this issue. Both Liverpool the city, and Liverpool the sound are analysed; the writing talents of Lennon and McCartney are further assessed; we look at hair – a hang-up for adults who were aghast at the length of locks – as a symbol and badge of the new '60s youth; and we conclude our investigation of soul. In addition there is a profile of Gene Vincent, one of the great rockers, who continued as a performer well after rock & roll had lost its impetus, and who influenced many of the new wave of performers. In this, as always, the radio programme reflects our publication – giving you an audio account of the second major chapter of the story of pop.

**Although the radio programme and this publication have been linked for readers in the UK, we have taken care to ensure that readers abroad will find this publication complete in itself.*

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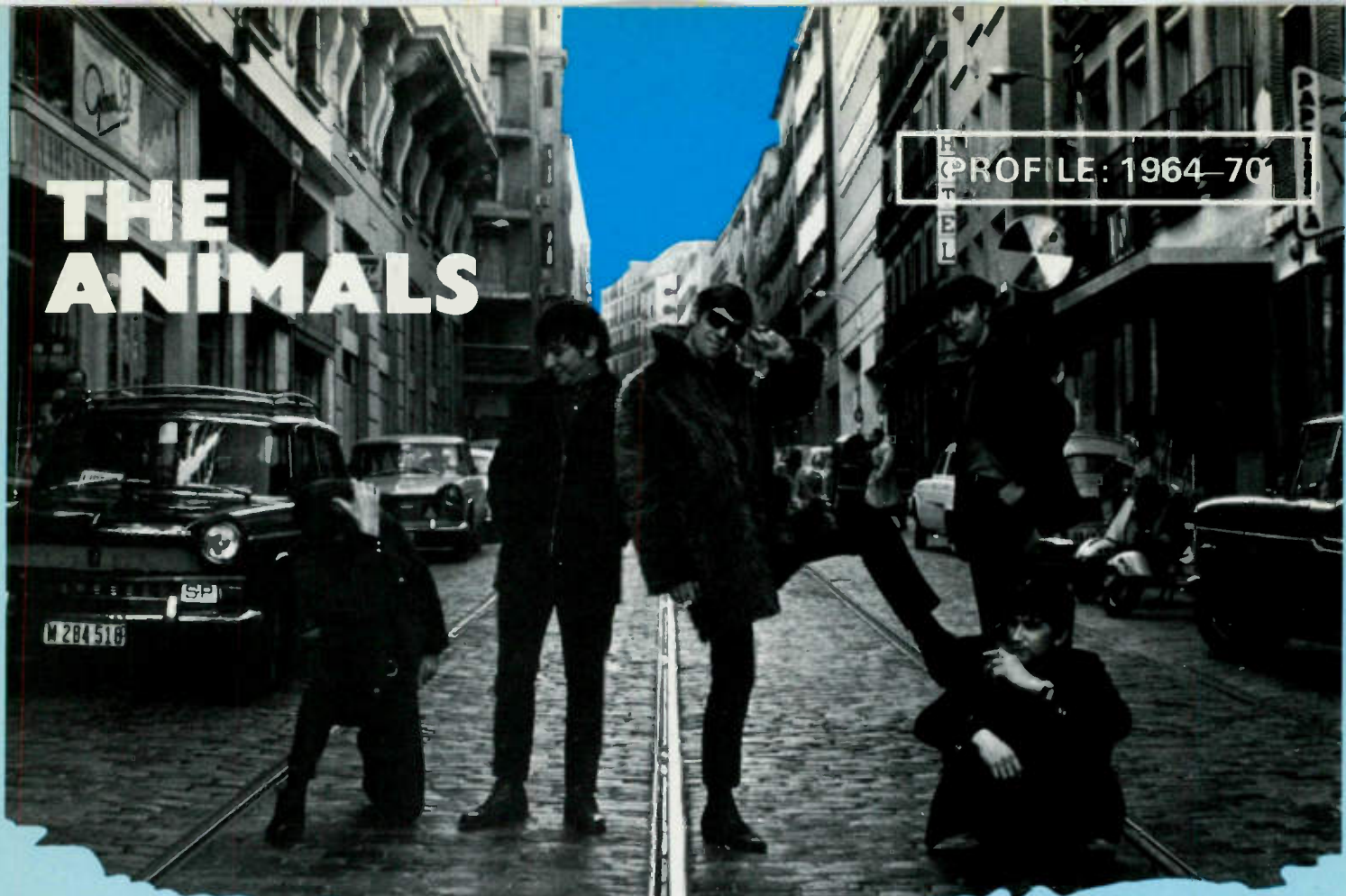
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THE ANIMALS

PROFILE: 1964-70



Dezso Hoffman

The Beatles' meteoric rise to fame just over 10 years ago ushered in a new era for British pop music. Out went Cliff Richard, Hank B. Marvin, the Shadows, Billy Fury, Marty Wilde and their many rather feeble imitators. In came the Mersey Sound and, hot on its heels, rhythm & blues – English-style. Looking back, it's hard not to be amazed by the excesses and world-wide trends inspired by this sudden change in musical fashions.

Following his successes with the Beatles, manager Brian Epstein quickly got most of the top-line Liverpool bands under contract – well before the London promoters and record company executives had really begun to grasp what was going on. The only potential challengers to the Beatles at that time were the London-based, blues-orientated Rolling Stones, and the promoters' initial reaction was to rush out and start signing up any bunch of young hopefuls that could tumble their way through a 12-bar blues and pronounce a few revered names like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

Virtually overnight, hundreds of so-called 'blues' bands sprang up. Partly, it was an attempt by the powers-that-be in the music industry to cash in on the phenomenal success of the Rolling Stones, but it was also a genuine recognition of the sudden awakening of interest in the black musical styles that had launched the whole rock & roll explosion 10 years earlier.



Flex Features

Predictably enough, many of the bands that flourished briefly in this hot-house atmosphere were pretty dire. Some, like the Kinks and the Who (both initially promoted as R&B bands), were very good indeed, but had little or nothing to do with any part of the blues tradition. But the British blues boom was never a total fraud, because among the many promoters and musicians busily jumping on the bandwagon there were at least a handful of musicians who did have a very real love for the blues – and also had the considerable musical talents necessary to do any real justice to one of the most disciplined and demanding forms of music. The London suburbs with their curious blend of sophistication and provincial funk, produced the Rolling Stones and the Yardbirds (then featuring Eric Clapton), two of the bands that went on to dominate the British R&B movement. Only one other band came anywhere near them. They were called the Animals, and they came from Newcastle upon Tyne.

Wild Stage Act

Like the Stones and the Yardbirds the Animals came up the hard way. They started out as the Alan Price Combo, playing a ramshackle Newcastle club called the Downbeat. Gradually they built up a fanatical local following, and moved to the larger and plushier, Club A Go Go. The wildness of their stage act prompted the nickname 'Animals' and, by the time they came down to try and make it in London in January 1964, the name had stuck. In those days the band was a five-man outfit, with Eric Burdon's vocals backed up by Alan Price on keyboards,



Dezzo Hoffman

Bryan 'Chas' Chandler on bass, Hilton Valentine on guitar, and John Steel on drums. All five were Newcastle born and bred, and their Northern working-class background helped add the conviction that so many of their middle-class Southern rivals sadly lacked.

Inverted Snobbery

There was always something intrinsically phoney and ridiculous about the attempts made by so many financially secure, white, English, middle-class kids to reproduce the music that had been born out of the poverty, despair and alienation of the American negroes. After 13 years of uninterrupted Conservative government Britain was stagnating, and the kids were heartily bored. The middle-class dream was rapidly going sour, and there was a lot of inverted snobbery in the air. Youngsters with impeccable grammar school and college backgrounds, who'd never seen the inside of a terraced house, suddenly developed working-class accents and ritualistically adopted a number of anti middle-class attitudes. But the Animals never had to fake it. They knew what it was like to be on the bottom looking up. More importantly, they really cared about the music. Their enthusiasm and their understanding gave them an emotional feel for the blues that was totally convincing.

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Like most other R&B bands at the time, the Animals built their repertoire around re-workings of songs by black American artists like Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Ray Charles, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Reed and Slim Harpo – all of whom had become immensely fashionable in the cellar-clubs of Britain. But the Animals were far more eclectic in their approach than most of their contemporaries, and never subscribed to the grotesque purism that was so common at that time. Their first single, 'Baby Let Me Take You Home', was a re-working of a traditional blues number called 'Baby Don't You Tear My Clothes' but, as they freely admitted at the time, their direct inspiration was a version called 'Baby Let Me Follow You Down', recorded by a then unknown white folk singer named Bob Dylan. The single was moderately successful, and in July 1964 they followed it with another old blues tune that Dylan had already recorded, 'The House Of The Rising Sun'. The record got to no. 1 on both sides of the Atlantic, and is reputed to have sold over four million copies. If it didn't, it certainly deserved to. Burdon's aggressively emotional vocal backed up by Alan Price's driving organ had in fact produced one of the greatest singles ever to come out of Britain. As the story goes this version of the song was so stunning that it provided Dylan himself with all he needed to move into rock music.

Now established as a top-line national band, the Animals embarked on a series of successful tours, both in Britain and abroad, and 'The House Of The Rising Sun' was followed, over the next two years, by a string of singles hits: 'I'm Crying' (September, 1964); 'Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' (February, 1965); 'Bring It On Home To Me' (April, 1965); 'We Got To Get Out Of This Place' (July, 1965); 'It's My Life' (November, 1965); 'Inside Looking Out' (February, 1966) and 'Don't Bring Me Down' (June, 1966). None of these records reached no. 1 in Britain and their much underrated second album, 'Animal Tracks' (1965), was ignored. In 1965 Alan Price left the group to pursue a solo career and was replaced by Dave Rowberry. In 1966, by which time John Steel had also left, Eric Burdon disbanded the group much to everyone's amazement.

At the end of 1966, Burdon reappeared with a totally new line-up under the name 'Eric Burdon and the Animals'. The new band enjoyed some measure of chart success in Britain with 'Help Me Girl' (November, 1966), 'Good Times' (September, 1967), and 'San Franciscan Nights' (November, 1967); but the aggressive energy of the old Animals was gone for good. Burdon himself had undergone a complete change of attitude – his old love for the blues was now overshadowed by his adoption of flower power's peace and love credo. In



December 1968, after producing 'Love Is' (ironically one of the best albums of the flower power era) Burdon announced his intention of forsaking music for a career in films. He resurfaced briefly in 1970 backed up by War (a funky black band that has since pursued a successful 'solo' career), and in 1971 recorded a rather patchy album with Jimmy Witherspoon. In August 1973 he reappeared for three sensational nights at London's Marquee Club with an unnamed three-piece backing group – and what the future holds for him is anybody's guess.

Driving Excitement

During their comparatively brief career the Animals were enormously influential. They were as good a live band in their time as the Stones, and in the studio they had Mickie Most's inspired production to help them reproduce the driving excitement of their stage act. Eric Burdon was (and, judging by his recent appearances, still is) the greatest interpretive singer England has produced. Rod Stewart is the only other British singer who rivals Burdon's amazing ability to take other people's material and mold it into something completely original. Unfortunately Burdon, Price, and the other members of the group lacked the songwriting talents of noted contemporaries like Lennon/McCartney and Jagger/Richard, and Burdon's efforts as a songwriter after the group's split in 1966 only served to emphasize his limitations in that field.

Unlike the Stones, the Animals never managed to move away from their blues roots and establish some sort of personal identity for themselves. First and last they were *the* great British blues band, but as the Beatles, Dylan and the Stones pushed pop music into an era of greater intellectual complexity, the blues boom died and the Animals died with it. Eric Burdon and Alan Price, though, have both kept trucking on with their respective solo careers. Chas Chandler (who managed Hendrix and now manages Slade) has been a major behind-the-scenes influence on pop music's development in recent years. But to most young people today the Animals are just history – one of the many bands that never quite managed to achieve lasting success. The Animals deserve more than that. Without their talent and their integrity, the R&B movement in this country would have been a much shabbier affair. They had a lot of guts and a lot of soul, and there are plenty of people around who still remember them with affection and respect. Maybe they weren't 'superstars', but the '60s would never have been the same without them.



Rex Features

S.K.R. Photos

NEXT WEEK IN PROFILE: Traffic; who produced some of the most inventive music in Britain.



THE MERSEY SOUND Part 2

As a pop seismograph the charts may not be sensitive to every micro-tremor, but they never miss a world eruption. Compare 1962 and 1963: of the 12 singles that made no. 1 in Britain in 1962, six were American (B. Bumble and the Stingers, Ray Charles, and Elvis Presley – four times), two were Australian (both by Frank Ifield), and only four were British (Cliff Richard's 'The Young Ones', the Shadows' 'Wonderful Land', Mike Sarne's 'Come Outside', and the Tornados' 'Telstar'); in 1963 Frank Ifield had two more no. 1s, Elvis Presley had one – the rest were British.

There was an even more rapid turnover of records at the top of the charts. Of the 18 no. 1s, only one retained its position for more than four weeks. What is at least as significant as these statistics is the fact that, after the first three months of the year, nine of the twelve subsequent chart toppers were recorded by groups from Liverpool.

Of course, these groups that so completely dominated record sales and

introduced a new term to the jargon of managers, agents, producers, journalists, DJs, and fans – Merseybeat – had been playing in local clubs and pubs for a bit longer than they'd been making records. The charts, however, reflected the attitudes of the public and business alike: that here, *suddenly*, was something totally new. The Merseybeat myth abounds with stories of the Tin Pan Alley railway excursions from London to Liverpool, of Alan Williams' Blue Angel club where the groups would hang out after gigs with the London agents outnumbering them, of talent plundered and abandoned, of 'The Ones Who Never Made It', of butchers and bread-slicers, bingo callers and bus drivers. This is the story of the lucky ones – lucky at least for a while.

Although the Beatles were the first to break into the charts – with 'Love Me Do', which lasted two weeks in the Top 20 in December 1962 – they soon made it so big that the managers, agents, producers, journalists, DJs, and fans had coined another word: Beatlemania. The Beatles, however, weren't the first Mersey group to make no. 1. Having entered the charts on March 23rd, Gerry and the Pacemakers were at the top, a fortnight later, with 'How Do You Do It?'. Four weeks later the Beatles reached no. 1 with 'From Me To You', and stayed there

for seven weeks before Gerry and the Pacemakers returned with 'I Like It'. The Searchers were next, with 'Sweets For My Sweet' in August, then Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas with 'Bad To Me'. Between September and December the Beatles got to no. 1 three times – twice with 'She Loves You' (four weeks in September and October, two more at the beginning of December), and again with 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', Gerry and the Pacemakers made the top again with their third no. 1 of the year, 'You'll Never Walk Alone'.

Gerry's Year

Forgetting the Beatles (which nobody could), 1963 was Gerry's year. Three straight no. 1s. He never did it again, not even once. He had a couple more hits in 1964, the first of which, 'I'm The One', almost reached the top, then two more early in 1965, then nothing. Eventually he landed a part, one of the stars didn't want any more, in a West End musical (he'd dropped the Pacemakers by then and was Gerry Marsden on his own), and went on to make appearances on the *Sooty* TV show feeding lines to the puppeteer, Harry Corbett.

For a while, though, Gerry was enormous. He was signed up by Brian



Camera Press

SKR

Some of the Bands that drove the Americans from the charts, far left: the Hollies; top left: Brian Poole and the Tremeloes; bottom left: Tommy Quickly, Epstein's only big failure; above: John, Paul and George harmonising at the BBC; top right: Herman's Hermits; bottom right: Freddie and the Dreamers.

Epstein, the Beatles' manager, early on in June 1962; but then Epstein kept him hanging on without a record release for six months while he devoted himself solely to launching the Beatles. Marsden grew impatient, 'Love Me Do' showed in the charts, and he got to make his record. Maybe John and Paul didn't like Gerry, because although they wrote songs for other Epstein acts (notably Billy J. Kramer and Cilla Black), and even for the Rolling Stones, they never did the same for Gerry. Nevertheless, it did him no harm. His first two hits were up tempo, catchy – there was a nifty octave jump in the chorus – and ultimately forgettable apart from the hook. The third was altogether different. He revived a genuine old-time soul-stirrer: 'Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart, and you'll never walk alone'. It went into the charts as soon as it was released in October, and didn't drop out until the end of January. Normally that would have been that, except for the memory, but during those 14 weeks Liverpool's football team was stringing wins together as if the manager was Brian Epstein. It was a great team that season – Lawrence, Yeats, Callaghan, Hunt, St. John, Thompson, Smith, Lawler, Byrne, Strong, Stevenson – and a great season. As an expression of support and encouragement the football fans took up

Gerry's song and made it their own. 50,000 sang acapella. Liverpool won the League Championship; indeed, it seemed Liverpool cleaned up everywhere.

Confused Beatles

Next up for Epstein was Billy J. Kramer. The Beatles once said they thought he would take up where Elvis left off. They must have been confused by the fact he combed his hair back, because that's about all he and Presley had in common. He had half a dozen hits all the same, the first a Lennon/McCartney song, 'Do You Want To Know A Secret?', and the last by Bacharach and David, 'Trains And Boats And Planes', two years later. In the meantime he got screamed at, and his backing group, the Dakotas, once even had a hit of their own, an instrumental called 'Cruel Sea'. But Billy faded away, changed his hairstyle and made a come-back, dropped out again, tried again under his real name, William Ashton. But it didn't do any good.

While his acts were racking up hits through the autumn of 1963, Brian Epstein didn't rest. He saw a toothy, big-nosed girl singer called Priscilla White, and signed her up. Naturally he realised she wasn't quite right to be a star, so he changed her name to Cilla

Black. It worked. She used the same formula as Kramer: Lennon/McCartney first, then Bacharach and David. Only 'Love Of The Loved' (Lennon/McCartney) got nowhere. The next two however were both no. 1s. That was nothing new for Liverpool or Epstein, but what happened after was. Cilla didn't stop making hit records. Eventually she became a TV star, married her manager, had a nose job and a baby. She's everyone's Saturday night peak-time favourite, and she's got it made for life.

Epstein's other signings were mainly one-hit wonders. At least the Fourmost were and the Big Three. Tommy Quickly he never managed to break, and that was his one big failure. A lesser one was missing the Searchers. They were the one Liverpool group at the top of the charts that weren't his. But the Searchers, although putting out some fine singles, didn't last any longer than most of the others, and never made the Top 10 after March, 1965. There were the Swinging Blue Jeans as well. They managed three hits in the first half of 1964, two of them reaching the top 3: 'Hippy Hippy Shake' and 'You're No Good'. Like the Searchers and the Fourmost, when the boom was over and the hits stopped coming the Swinging Blue Jeans moved over into the Northern club-circuit, where they could



Pictorial Press

From left to right: The Dave Clark Five; the Rolling Stones – the Beatles only serious rivals as no. 1 rock band; the Swinging Blue Jeans; Billy J. Kramer and Cilla Black.



Syndication International

play a medley of their hits twice a night ... for ever.

Amongst all those Merseybeat no. 1s in the autumn of 1963, was Brian Poole. He wasn't from Liverpool, wasn't even from the North; he came from Barking in the suburban sprawl of London. In 1963 he was the only Southerner to offer much in the way of opposition. In August he had reached no. 4 with 'Twist And Shout' (he didn't claim to be offering any real alternative to Mersey Sound), and made no. 1 with 'Do You Love Me?' two months later. He had a backing group called the Tremeloes and was plain and wore glasses. He had very little going for him. Later, incredibly, he dropped his backing group and went solo. He failed. On the other hand the Trens, as they came to be known by their close fans, did well. They weren't quite as homely as Poole, but they carefully chose a good-looking singer for the girls to ogle while they played, and ended up with twice as many hits, as they had ever had with Brian Poole.

Tottenham Sound

Although Brian Poole and the Tremeloes represented the first Southern 'answer' to the Beatles, they were far from perfect. In January 1964 it looked as if the Dave Clark Five might be; for not only was

Dave Clark himself extremely handsome, but the arrival of the group's 'Glad All Over' at no. 1 was greeted as the start of a new sound, one that would match Liverpool's – the Tottenham Sound. However that notion was just as silly as the tag, for Clark lacked almost everything that made the Liverpool sound successful, except the fringe. The music was unimaginative and almost charmless, but perhaps Clark himself was not really to blame for he appeared to make little significant contribution. He drummed, harmonised, and grinned widely all the time, while Mike Smith sang and played organ. Smith evidently didn't mind, for he stuck with Clark even when the hits dried up.

When the Rolling Stones first emerged in the summer of 1963 and their single, 'Come On', almost made the Top 20, it was generally assumed that they were merely Beatles imitators – just longer-haired, scruffier and ruder. The fact that Lennon and McCartney wrote their second release, 'I Wanna Be Your Man', seemed like confirmation. The Stones and their followers could hardly have thought more differently. A year before (in July 1962), when the band played their first gig at London's Marquee Club, Mick Jagger was quoted in *Jazz News* as saying: 'I hope they don't think we're a rock & roll outfit.' The Beatles would never have said that.

Besides appearance, the assumption of similarity was based on common musical sources – Chuck Berry especially. The two attitudes to Berry, in fact, reveal just how far apart the groups were. Whereas the Beatles thought of him as a rock & roller, the Stones regarded him as a bluesman.

Silly On Stage

The real competition wasn't from the South at all, but from other Northern towns, and in particular from Manchester – a city barely 30 miles inland from Liverpool. First were Freddie and the Dreamers, who reached no. 3 at the end of June, 1963, with a cover of an American R&B hit, James Ray's 'If You Gotta Make A Fool Of Somebody'. They followed this up with formula songs in the style of Gerry and the Pacemakers, and managed six hits altogether. They were finished by the end of 1964, but at least they knew they hadn't made it on their looks alone. One had a face something like a potato, one was bald, another had a dodgy eye – Freddie himself was extremely small, wore glasses, and had curly hair. Presumably because of the way they looked, they decided to be silly on stage. Freddie was silliest. He jumped into the air repeatedly, skipped, and, once, on television, he performed a number swinging on a wire.



Pictorial Press

Better equipped for a more lasting assault were the Hollies. Their first two hits were re-worked American hits – the Coasters' 'Searchin'', and Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs' 'Stay' – but subsequently they alternated between material by British pop writers like Graham Gouldman, and their own songs. They never missed the charts.

Few Survivors

Herman's Hermits were straight formula. They owed their success almost entirely to Mickie Most, and he wasn't even in the group. He was a failed rock & roll star, but a great producer. He chose their songs and told them exactly what to do in the studio. In this way they had hit after hit – right up until Herman decided to become a solo performer under his real name of Peter Noone.

The longevity of Herman's Hermits was exceptional, since few of the groups who rode the Beatles' bandwagon survived beyond 1964 or 1965. The following had no hits after 1964: the Fourmost, the Swinging Blue Jeans, Freddie and the Dreamers; these none after 1965: Gerry and the Pacemakers, Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas, the Searchers (apart from one week at no. 20 in January, 1966), Brian Poole and the Tremeloes. And the Dave

Clark Five went two years without a hit between 1965 and 1967. Of those groups that outlasted the soul boom of the mid-'60s, flower power, and psychedelia, only Herman's Hermits did it without writing; for what pulled the Beatles through, and the Stones and the Hollies, was their self-sufficiency and their ability to adapt without losing (even, in the case of the Stones, establishing) their originality.

Merseybeat might have been the start of 'Swinging Britain', but by the time Roger Miller sang of it in 'England Swings' late in 1965, the country had almost swung itself to death. Certainly Merseybeat was finished in Liverpool itself, and it wasn't too long before they were selling-off bits of the stage from the Cavern itself.

NEXT WEEK IN POP: Punk Rock; After the British invasion the American pop industry collapsed into confusion. The result was a thousand imitations of the Beatles and the Stones.



Pictorial Press

GENE VINCENT

The Classic Rocker

The late Gene Vincent belonged to an elite of '50s rock & roll singers who collectively shaped rock's early history with records and visual images unlike anything ever heard or seen before. Like his contemporaries Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis (by whom he was always overshadowed), Vincent only had a handful of hits. He faded from popularity in the States as early as 1958, by which time rock & roll had attained middle-class respectability through cleaned-up rock artists like Connie Francis and Ricky Nelson.

However, European fans gave him a new lease of life, and he subsequently spent nearly 10 years on the road as the epitome of the greasy rock & roller – never really to escape the confines of this image. Like most of the early rock legends, he is remembered more for what he stood for than what he actually did.

Eugene Vincent Craddock was born in the seaport of Norfolk, Virginia, in 1935, and came from a poor background. Prospects were not high, so at the age of 15 he joined the US Navy as a despatch rider at the local naval base. In 1955, while riding despatch, he was knocked down by a naval car on the base and sustained multiple fractures of his left leg. Vincent was hospitalized and his leg re-set, but it didn't heal completely and complications set in. Eventually the leg became so wasted that it had to be permanently encased in plaster, and later on Vincent wore a leg brace.

As with most young white Southerners, hillbilly music was part of Vincent's



Pictorial Press

heritage, and during his lengthy hospitalization he began jangling around on a guitar. He was discharged from the Navy late in 1955 on a permanent disability pension and, early in the new year, began to hang around Norfolk's local radio station (WCMS), which broadcast hillbilly music and booked local bands through an affiliated agency. Under the guidance of WCMS DJ 'Sherriff Tex' Davis, Eugene Craddock, as he was still known, began broadcasting, backed by local musicians.

Day Off Work

These were primeval days in rock history and just at this time (February/March 1956) Elvis Presley hit the big-time with 'Heartbreak Hotel' on RCA. Over at Capitol, RCA's rival, an elderly but astute country producer named Ken Nelson had been warning his colleagues of the impending importance of rock & roll, but had been largely ignored. Nelson, who had previously been vying for Presley's Sun contract, nonetheless made up his mind to sign the first halfway-passable rock singer to come his way.

Meanwhile, back in Norfolk, Vincent had written 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' – a novel rocker based on 'Money Honey' – and Tex Davis saw distinctly commercial possibilities in it. He had Vincent record a demo one evening late in April 1956, using four hill-

billy musicians from the station house-band, and immediately mailed it to Ken Nelson at Capitol. Nelson was so excited that he had Vincent and his group flown to Nashville for a proper session. The lead guitarist, a plumber, and the bassist, a factory-worker, took the day off from work and the 15-year-old drummer cut class to play the session. Another song, 'Woman Love' (which Nelson supplied) became the 'A' side, but it was the flip, 'Be-Bop-A-Lula', which climbed into the US Top 10 in the summer of 1956. It was a landmark record – the first hard electric rock sound. Taken at a relaxed walking pace, it was hardly a rocker in the accepted sense, but because of the extreme tension in Vincent's voice – which was swathed in eerie tape-echo – the song moved in its own way. The lead guitarist, an elderly fellow named Cliff Gallup, played some of the finest rock guitar of the '50s, and on some records his lengthy improvised solos played as great a part in the overall sounds as Vincent's high-pitched vocals.

Fresh out of the Navy, with his injured leg only half-healed, a bewildered Vincent suddenly found himself catapulted from obscurity to national prominence. At this early stage in rock history no precedent existed by which to gauge the correct approach to rock & roll management, and the following months were a shambles as Tex Davis used Vincent as a guinea-pig for

his trial-and-error management methods.

Two more fine records, 'Race With The Devil' and 'Bluejean Bop', were released, but they flopped and the impetus was lost. On the strength of their first hit, however, Vincent and his Bluecaps (as they were called) toured extensively, and late that year sang 'Be-Bop-A-Lula' in the classic rock movie *The Girl Can't Help It*. Vincent's deathly-pale tortured face, overhung by a cascading cluster of untidy curls, was not an easy image to forget. Even by current standards he looked like a freak; by mid-'50s standards he was downright bizarre.

Without hit records, though, the gig money decreased rapidly, and at the end of the year, the original group – simple country boys – disbanded and returned to Norfolk to resume normal life. Vincent went into hospital for further treatment on his leg, came out, found new management, and formed another group. By this time, mid-1957, he had been half-forgotten; but another hit, 'Lotta Lovin'/'Wear My Ring', brought him back into the limelight. The new Bluecaps, with their snappy stage-show and another superb guitarist in Johnny Meeks, caused riots in Australia and in some American cities. Vincent had at this time reached his peak in the States; but success was not to last long.

Capitol, it seems, were one of the few companies not to indulge in payola during the '50s, and few DJs were disposed towards playing Vincent's records – especially as he showed a certain antipathy towards the media anyway. Moreover, he looked distinctly working-class, as it always had been in the States – to middle-class respectability. Vincent also alienated Dick Clark of *American Bandstand* – at that time the single most influential TV pop show in America – and, by the summer of 1958, was a virtual outcast in an American pop scene now dominated by a new breed of pretty boys like Frankie Avalon and Ricky Nelson.

To cap it all the US tax authorities began hounding him for non-payment, the musicians union revoked his membership, and he was forced to work abroad. He arrived in Britain to a star welcome in November, 1959.

Black Leather Hamlet

Whereas in America Vincent had merely been one of a great array of rock stars; in faraway Britain each of the early American rockers was individually worshipped by fans who had yet to taste

real rock & roll first hand. Images were formed from available records and album covers, and fans and the media alike thought Vincent to be a lean, mean, no-nonsense character. In person, however, he turned out to be the total opposite – soft-spoken, gentle and shy. Jack Good, scholarly ombudsman of English pop and director of rave TV shows like *Oh Boy* and *Boy Meets Girl*, was at the airport to meet Vincent, whom he'd booked for a show. Expecting a leather-jacketed, stiletto-wielding hood, he was, instead, greeted with great courtesy by a polite Southern youth.

Fast-thinking Good, a brilliant creator of images, took one look at Vincent and decided that he needed a grittier demeanor if the British public were not to be disappointed. Before long, Vincent was seen on British TV clad from head to toe in black leather, with a huge silver medallion hanging around his neck (Good recently said he'd based this image on Hamlet!).

Gene now entered a new phase in his career – as a European idol he became renowned for his black leathers and unique stage act: the curtain would go up and Vincent would be there like some demon possessed by the beat, face contorted in an agonised smile, and his huge eyes

Left: Gene Vincent with the Vernon Girls from *Boy Meets Girl*. Below: Gene Vincent on TV in the '60s.





staring at some vision only he could see. Suddenly, he'd swing his left leg right over the mike, spin round 360 degrees and tear into the first number. Transformed into a crouching wildcat, he'd carry the mike-stand a few feet off the ground, spin, throw and catch it in a single short burst of movement. Then he'd be stock still for minutes on end. In his heyday, he was the most extraordinary and terrifying spectacle on stage.

His management worked him to the bone on big money for three years and he became an integral part of the British pop scene, eventually settling in England, in 1961. Major hits eluded him, but his popularity was unaffected. This, in itself, was unique in an era when artists depended on hits for survival.

Suitcase Existence

By 1964, however, the years of constant touring and the pain from his ailing leg had taken their toll and his drinking had reached the critical stage – he made the national press on several occasions through ill-behaviour in his private life. He became something less than a demi-god, and more a provincial rock & roller who could be seen performing daily at minor venues around the country. He finally returned to the States in 1965 for operations on his leg, and nothing more was heard from him for several years.

When he re-emerged suddenly in 1969 for a British tour, he was barely recognisable. The years of inactivity had made him obese, and it was hard to equate his appearance with that of the erstwhile wild rocker. Later that year he appeared at the Toronto rock festival (backed by Alice Cooper), but found work hard to come by in America and returned to Britain in 1971 – only to be involved in alimony proceedings with his English former-wife. He fled to the States, and died a fortnight later after a seizure attributed to a bleeding ulcer.

Throughout his career, Gene Vincent lived a day-to-day existence out of a suitcase, and never once settled down to contemplate either his future or his health. He could be vindictive when drunk, and caused endless management feuds, but as long as he was on the road he was happy. "I'll play anywhere anyone wants me," he once said towards the end. It was the thought of that road finally running out on him that killed him.

NEXT WEEK IN ROCK:

The British R&B Boom; The movement that produced the Rolling Stones, the Animals, the Who, Eric Clapton, Rod Stewart and Jeff Beck, and many others, who changed the history of rock & roll.

Rex Features

HAIR

The Root of all Evil?



SKR

Since time began, hair has been one part of our anatomies that always provokes emotion. At first glance, changes in hairstyle may seem to be as insignificant as whims of fashion in clothes; in fact hair has always provoked far more reaction than any garment, including the mini-skirt or hot pants.

One reason is that, unlike clothes, hair is part of ourselves. True, it grows and alters unlike other bits of our anatomy, but to commit yourself to a hairstyle is to commit yourself, for many months at least, to a way of life; making an unalterable statement about who you are and what you think. "Hair is the only built-in decoration," says one hairdresser. "You can mess around with hair and differ from your fellow man in all sorts of ways. It's a primal thing, animal. Primitive tribes still use it as a way of showing who's boss.

SKR

You can stick bits of twig into it and it means 'Me head man, you small fry'. It's used to denote tribes, like the Apaches, or religious sects, like monks, Sikhs, the Hari Krishna people, Jews. . . ."

For the best part of this century, hair has been totally ignored in Western cultures — mainly for so-called hygienic and financial reasons. Short-back-and-sides was the norm for soldiers in both World Wars (partly to prevent disease in the trenches), and anyone who even paid attention to their hair was, or could only be, in society's eyes, either a poet or a homosexual — and probably both.

But the Teds and Beats changed that in the '50s. True, they didn't dare to actually grow their hair or do anything very daring with it, but they were the first men for a long time to be interested (or disinterested) in their hair, and still remain unquestionably masculine. The Teds horrified the older generation by openly and frequently combing their Duck's Arse hair-dos in shop windows. The D.A. was a look which boasted sideburns, sprouting well past the ear-lobe, and hair which was worn long and swept up in a quiff at the front, then dragged back at the sides and all pulled down heavily with hair-oil. Meanwhile, in a different way, the Beats were sporting beards and growing their hair a daring couple of centimetres — demonstrating that they were young, anti-bomb, pro-jazz and probably modern too. These were the long-haired beatniks of the art schools and universities; the thinking man's hairies. From this hirsute bunch emerged the first bearers of hair as a youth symbol, the Beatles.

The Beatles were working-class and boy-next-door, and they had worn their hair in Ted style in the early days. But they'd knocked around art schools and beatnik students too. They bridged the gap between working-class and intellectual, and, even though these days their hair looks exceptionally short, in 1963 the Beatles were the symbol of hairiness, known, in newspaper jargon, as 'the Four Mop-Tops'.

To see the length of the Beatles' hair then, and to imagine the outraged reaction from society, gives some idea of what the general attitude was to hair and life at the time. To compound matters and make everything much, much worse, the Rolling Stones appeared.

Fox Photos

Now the Rolling Stones were, as we all know, rather clean young characters who were endlessly telling reporters about how often they shampooed their hair. The public, however, would have none of this. The Rolling Stones' hair was *filthy*, and filth covered a multitude of sins including being unwashed, immoral, degenerate, decadent, disrespectful, and every other nasty anti-social thing imaginable. And when you grew your hair to Rolling Stones' length you were *committed* in a way that no one ever quite was with a Beatle cut – you could get away with the latter, certainly in the offices of 'liberal trades', like advertising or the media.

Really Long Tresses

From then on the fashion grew – literally. Flower-power sprang up in the States and, like the flowers, hair flourished to the extent that, as a symbol of youth, it even included girls – hitherto excluded from being able to demonstrate anything by means of hair, since hair fashions have always changed for females, and they were never forced into short-back-and-sides with conscription. Girls with long, but *really long*, tresses that lay matted down their backs, even they were seen to be part of the awareness gap that separated the old from the young.

The idea was, as with all outrageous hair-dos, to say something with it. In the hairy late '60s and early '70s, hair said a lot. And long hair said: 'I am against society, and I want to change the system. I am young and free and different'.

"Why do boys like to have long hair?" asked magistrate Garrett McGrath of 18-year-old apprentice fitter Arthur Docherty, in 1968. "Because," replied Docherty simply, "it makes me feel better." A 19-year-old French boy felt so bad after his father forced him to have his hair cut in 1970, that he burnt himself to death, leaving a suicide note saying that he refused to accept 'the dictatorship of society'.

In April 1969, a survey of a sample of London's young men showed that 80% would rather lose their jobs than have their hair cut at the request of their employer.

And lose their jobs they did. Employers who agreed to employ men with long hair earned much publicity by issuing them with hairnets and ribbons to avoid the danger of their long hair catching in the machinery. But sackings and refusals of employment on the grounds of long hair were frequent. For instance:

1967: 16-year-old David Jackson handed in his notice as attendant of the giraffe house of Dudley Zoo because his boss thought his hair was too long in spite of a hair-cut. "We've got to start somewhere," said the manager, "the public would think we were inefficient if they saw lads going around with long hair."

1967: Raymond Harson, 20, was sacked from a glass company because his long hair was 'a fire hazard'.

1968: Karl Taylor, 23, unemployed for 9 months because prospective employers didn't like his long hair. "I refuse to have my hair cut," he said. "I fail to see why it should prevent me doing a useful office job."

1969: Mike Flattery, 18, refused to cut his long hair and sideboards, and lost his job as apprentice to a dental mechanic in Philadelphia.

1969: Stephen Davies, 20, sacked as junior reporter on the *Hendon Times* after refusing to cut his hair.

1970: 120 men went on strike at York Trailer Company, Northants, because apprentice Graham Wadsworth was sent home with orders to get his hair cut.

1970: Out of work youngsters actually ordered to step out of the Dole queue in California, because of their long hair.

1971: 12 tram conductors were sacked on the spot in Blackpool for having long hair. 700 bus drivers and conductors went on strike in sympathy.

Enough? They weren't only sacked. They were refused drinks in pubs and bars. Several cases of schoolboys being suspended for having long hair occurred: 14-year-old Carl Towner was even sent to a boy's prison in New York for refusing to cut off his hair, and flew to England to go to school rather than get his hair cut. Long hair was designed to provoke and separate, and it succeeded totally.



A spiky topped DA style.

Perhaps the most tyrannical reaction against long hair, however, came from outside Europe. Americans, could not only wear their hair longest, but dealt out pretty severe punishments when they disapproved. Seven out of eight Supreme Court judges, no less, ruled in 1968, that schoolboys had no constitutional rights to long hair. Schoolboys were endlessly being sent home and veritable witch-hunts against 'long-haired hippies' were carried out in the conservative Mid-West and Southern states. Even this was nothing compared to Asia, where long hair provoked police action, public barbering, suicides, government laws, and deportation of long-haired tourists. Algiers, South Africa, Singapore, Sydney, Belgrade,

Bulgaria, Morocco . . . each has their tales of police forcibly giving haircuts to schoolboys or tourists. In Athens, long-haired schoolboys had their heads shorn under government decree in 1968, and Syria and Iraq both launched forcible hair-cut campaigns. Youths found with long hair in Syria, in 1968, were given a forced haircut and 48 hours in gaol.

The fad had to end. With the famous *Oz* trial in London, where long-haired defendants like Richard Neville were unnecessarily (according to three Labour MPs) given an enforced hair-cut while awaiting trial, the long-hair cult petered out. As one old hippie sadly said: "Was a time when you could be sure to thumb a ride from anyone in a car with long hair. Now they've all got long hair – everyone from TV producers to bank managers and estate agents. You can't tell who's who any more."

Musical Hair

The final (commercial) nail in the coffin of long hair came when they made a best-selling popular musical about hippies – called *Hair*, which ran for enormously long periods both sides of the Atlantic.

Skinheads made an attempt at counter-revolt by shaving their heads practically bald, but no one noticed after a year of frantic press coverage. The rise in men's hairdressers, however, made long hair and attention to hair not only fashionable, but socially acceptable in the upper-classes, and therefore killed it stone dead as a symbol of revolt. Salons like Sweeney's and Todd's opened up, and for £2 the rich could have their hair washed in lemon and herbal lotions, they could be fed with coffee, deafened by rock music, and sent out primped and permed. 'His 'n' Hers' shops started, and heralded the current equalising of the sexes. Apart from the odd cult like Afro hair (which still shows you're pro-Black Power), the fuss about hair seems, at last, to be dying down.

The strength of hairstyle as a symbol still shows though, but this time men seem to have finally decided to freak their elders out for once and all. It began with the borrowing of their womenfolk's henna, which gave them little more than a mild red hair-blush. From there, they blossomed into untold rainbow heights, with brilliant flashes transforming their locks into a Kaleidoscope of colours. A high that seems to have left the oldies speechless.

But as a reflection of youth in society, hair played a huge part in the youth revolution between the '50s and the '70s. There must, after all, be something in it for agitated governments to pass decrees, and for the Pope to feel the necessity to comment on the matter. The Pope? Yes. In 1971 he announced to hairdressers that "such things as a shampoo and set or short-back-and-sides should be executed soberly. Otherwise they could have a harmful effect on the customer's life – especially his or her morals. For a hair-do," he added, "reflects what we are."



The Who on stage in London. Roger Daltrey lets rip while Keith Moon seems unusually restrained behind his drums.

band. Bass player John Entwistle had studied classical French horn, played in youth orchestras, and in the Detours with guitarist Pete Townshend. Drummer Keith Moon was the last to arrive, managing to muscle and browbeat his way into displacing a previous drummer, having decided that he very much wanted in.

The Who were shock treatment right from the start. They battered the ears of their predominantly Mod audiences around North and West London with the loudest, fiercest act yet. They'd discovered the possibilities of driving amplification to its limits, setting up a fearsome howl of feedback, chaos, rage and frustration as they wrecked their way through old Motown, Beach Boys and Pete's own compositions, or maybe decompositions. The image they put out was pure Mod: clean, sharp and nasty; although, in truth, Pete was an art-schoolie, Roger a rocker at heart, and they were a good deal older than the average Mod.

Mod, however, was the character they chose — as epitomized by the suburban teenager who spent all his money on clothes, rode a zippy scooter, indulged in fearful battles with the loathed and despised greasy rockers on holiday weekends, and swallowed enormous quantities

of pills to give him the energy to get through a weekend up in town. He was just hanging around, looking sharp, and getting off to uptown R&B and soul music at clubs like the Flamingo and the Scene in Soho. It was the big fashion — all to do with Carnaby Street and swinging London — and was catered to by ITV TV's *Ready, Steady Go*, starting the weekend at six on a Friday night.

Still, it took a little time before the Who had their first hit with 'I Can't Explain'. They'd found managers in Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, who at first suggested they change their name to the High Numbers. But, with no record contract forthcoming, the name reverted to the Who; and eventually they signed to Brunswick — an unfashionable label that had sadly declined along with Bill Haley, their one big act.

Anarchic Breakdown

'I Can't Explain' was a rough record, hard, edgy, and above all powerful. Pete Townshend had started to put some feedback into his guitar — it produced the effect of an instrument about to fall over the edge into total anarchic breakdown. But it wasn't until the next single, 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere', that all hell really



London Features

broke loose on record. Loaded to the gills with electronic menace and confusion, it was a perfect single — strangely, it didn't climb as high in the charts as 'I Can't Explain'

But the next one did. 'My Generation', the Who anthem, summed up the group and its Mod following in remarkable style. Again, the subject was ostensibly an extremely stoned Mod teenager, stuttering out his yell of defiance: 'Things they do look awful cold/Hope I die before I get old', to a thundering bass, and Keith Moon's wild cascade of thump and crash on the drums. It was a winner, and the band were still playing it on stage almost a decade later. But the Who weren't content to leave it at that. Along with aggressive

words and music, they took the act a stage further — to actual physical violence, and into the realms of what was being called auto-destructive art. Anyway, that was the intellectual interpretation of Pete Townshend's guitar-smashing on stage. It had all started perfectly naturally, he insisted — one night he'd bashed his guitar's neck off at the climax of the act, there was no premeditation — but he started to do it every night and, of course, it was all very good publicity. Was he making a protest against materialistic society? Was it a deeply philosophical statement? Did it just look good? And anyway, did it matter?

The Who had always looked like the sort of blokes you'd try to avoid on a Saturday night — they looked, in a word,



Rex Features/Syndication International

Top: The Who as pin-ups in the late '60s. Above: The Who on stage in France with their thunder-wall of speakers behind them.

mean. Pete would glare at the audience, swinging his arm across his guitar in great sweeping arcs; Roger swung the microphone round his head like a lasso and barked out his words like bullets, while Keith went storming berserk behind his enormous drum kit. Only John, usually dressed in black with a supercilious half-smile of considerable threat, stood still. Smoke bombs exploded, drums were sent crashing over, and the stage was invariably left looking like the aftermath of World War Three. No encores: the band would suddenly vanish from the stage, maybe Keith staying a little longer to see if there was anything else to destroy, while the amplifiers and guitars buzzed and shrieked in abandoned agony.

Backlog Of Debts

The Who were the first to do it. Later on, the Move tried a similar trick, which involved attacking TV sets with hatchets, and Jimi Hendrix (unwillingly) tried to set light to his guitar with some lighter fluid. The Who remained the only ones to do it convincingly; though it became a standard feature of their act. Pete said he only smashed guitars when he felt like it, but few were the occasions when he didn't.

Each time a couple of hundred pounds' worth of guitar went, and the group built up a vast backlog of debts to guitar shops.

After 'My Generation', their first album was released — showing the group in best natty gear. It wasn't an enormous seller, and is now unobtainable. 'It's A Legal Matter' and 'La-La-Lies' were probably the most effective tracks despite the fairly dismal recording quality. After this they changed labels, joining Reaction, on which they released their next three hits: 'Substitute' in March 1966, 'I'm A Boy' in October, and 'Happy Jack' at Christmas. All reached the Top 5, though they never had a no. 1. All three featured typical Townshend freak characters — the Substitute 'was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth' — looked all white but his dad was black; in 'I'm A Boy', his mother wouldn't admit it and treated him like a girl; and Happy Jack lived in the sand in the Isle of Man. All featured that same unique Who style of thudding, overcrowded bass lines, that occasionally took on the role of lead guitar, a welter of drums leaving no part of the kit unhammered, great slashing crescendoes of guitar chords and high harmonies in a style reminiscent of the Beach Boys — strangely smooth in comparison with the

BACK TRACK

1964 The High Numbers, having been turned down by EMI, released their first and only single on Fontana, 'I'm The Face'/'Zoot Suit'.



- 1965 Reverting to their original name, the Who reached no. 8 in the charts with a Pete Townshend composition, 'I Can't Explain' on Brunswick. 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere' and 'My Generation' followed during the same year.
- 1966 The group signed to the Reaction label. 'Substitute', 'I'm A Boy' and 'Happy Jack' all reached the Top 5.
- 1967 Now released on Track, 'Pictures Of Lilly' and 'I'm A Boy' reached the Top 10. 'The Last Time'/'Under My Thumb' released in support of Mick Jagger and Keith Richard during their controversial trial for drug offences – but failed to make the Top 10.
- 1968 Townshend's long-promised rock opera, 'Tommy', released to great critical acclaim.
- 1969 The band played at the Woodstock Festival, N.Y.
- 1970 'Live At Leeds' released; included a revival of Johnny Kidd's

- 'Shaking All Over' and Eddie Cochran's 'Summertime Blues'.
- 1971 John Entwistle released his first solo album, 'Smash Your Head Against The Wall'.
- 1972 Pete Townshend released 'Who Came First', a solo album dedicated to Meher Baba.
- 1973 Roger Daltrey released his solo album, produced by Adam Faith. 'Giving It All Away', a single from the album, reached the Top 10.

The Who in their early mod days.



Syndication International

uproar of the backing. No group ever got more variety, more meat, into a three-piece instrument line-up.

Townshend was by now being recognised as something of an expert on pop, and was frequently quoted as a sort of ambassador from the teenage wasteland. He was getting credit for his songwriting, and he was talking about moving on to bigger things than the pop single. An album released on Reaction, 'A Quick One', was his first move towards the pop opera he kept on talking about. Nobody believed that rock – and, least of all, an uncouth bunch like the Who – could come up with a major work. 'A Quick One' was a short domestic drama, featuring such unlikely characters as Ivor The Engine Driver. And more singles came along, now on the newly-formed Track label, which was run by Lambert and Stamp, the group's managers. 'Pictures Of Lilly' was the first, in May 1967, and was followed by what is often considered the finest Who single, 'I Can See For Miles'. Strangely enough, this cataclysm of a record only just made it into the Top 10. Like 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere', it seemed that pure and total Who music was a bit too strong for the majority of record buyers to take. Also, the group had failed to make much impact in the States. Whereas the Beatles, Stones, even the Dave Clark Five and Herman's Hermits had had the nation's teenagers entranced, the Who – and the Kinks – weren't making it.

Two events won America over to the Who – both in 1969. One was their appearance at the Woodstock Festival, which finally put the seal on their slowly growing fortunes. The other was 'Tommy'. Townshend had finally done what he said he would for so long, and written the first successful pop opera, the beautifully-

packaged story of the deaf, dumb and blind boy Tommy. The form was traditional opera – it had an overture, giving a glimpse of all the main themes and of various characters – Uncle Ernie, Cousin Kevin, Sally Simpson and the Acid Queen – but this was fused with a formidable mixture of religion, drugs, the business of pop stardom, metaphysics and pinball. (Oddly enough, Ray Davies had written his pop opera shortly before. His was called 'Arthur', but it slipped by largely unnoticed. The Kinks, at the time, were not a very fashionable band.)

Pretty Sick Of Tommy

The floodgates of America had opened, once and for all, and after 'Tommy' the Who were vying with the Rolling Stones for the honour of being called the 'Best Rock Band In The World'. 'Tommy' was performed by the band at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Critics said it was the first complete rock work on a large scale, and the band survived with 'Tommy' as the centrepiece of their stage act for three years after, by which time they were pretty sick of playing it.

As if exhausted by the gargantuan effort of getting 'Tommy' out, the Who went through a relatively quiet patch in the early '70s. They continued to do tours, they put out the occasional single, but there was a gap of almost two years between 'Tommy' and their next 'Who's Next', studio album. 'Live At Leeds' came out the year before, a rough and ready counterpart to the polished studio work of the opera, it was notable for a documentary history of the group provided through copies of early contracts, accounts, letters and pictures. Creatively though, the band were marking time. 'Who's Next', in 1971, was nothing

like the band had ever done before. Townshend's writing had become smoother and more abstract, and he'd also, more importantly, discovered the synthesiser, which set the keynote of the album. It was a big step forward, but was it pop? At any rate, things have been relatively quiet for the Who since 'Who's Next'.

All the members of the group have had time to get out and do their own things. Entwistle has made a couple of albums under his own name which have sold very well in the States. Daltrey has had a couple of big single hits, and made an excellent solo album under the direction of Adam Faith which bears little relation to his work with the Who. Moon has acted in *That'll Be The Day*, become a DJ, and a leading contender for the British hovercraft racing championship. Meanwhile, Townshend has put out his own solo album, and there's been the glossy all-star stage production of 'Tommy', starring Rod Stewart, Maggie Bell and others. Perhaps the most hopeful sign of lingering Who creativity is that they are to appear in yet another version of 'Tommy' – this time a film by Ken Russell.

Keith Moon said in a recent interview that the group are more united than ever. They've all been doing their various individual projects, but the biggest thing in their lives is still, 10 years later, the Who. Among all the bands, who else has managed to keep the same line-up through such a long and pioneering career?

NEXT WEEK'S SUPERSTARS: The Rolling Stones. The critic's choice as no. 1 rock band in the world.



THE SUPERSTARS

For the Beatles and Stones, it was American R&R and R&B of the '50s that provided the inspiration. They, and many of the other bands that surfaced in the first wave of British rock, based their acts on the true hard sound of Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Carl Perkins and Bo Diddley; and won their success largely through re-introducing American kids to a music they'd forgotten about. In the early days, at least, it was a case of selling refrigerators to the Eskimos.

Two groups, the Kinks and the Who, formed the second wave of the British assault, and they were something very different in flavour – the attitude had changed. They were purer products of Britain – which is perhaps a reason for the comparatively long time it took them to make it in the States. But right from the start, unlike many of the 'first wave' bands, they made it on the strength of their own songs.

In many respects the Who and the Kinks can be seen as twin groups: both emerged from very ordinary lower middle-class suburbs of London; the Kinks from Muswell Hill in the north, and the Who from the west, around Shepherd's Bush and Acton. And both were very much products of the blossoming of the English art school/fashion scene that the Beatles and Stones had initially brought attention to. And, particularly, both groups had songwriters of a very quirky, original genius in Ray Davies and Pete Townshend, neither of whom would have made it, by any strength of the imagination, on looks alone. They had to come up with something new and remarkable in the way of image, and quality of songwriting too, since neither band was staggeringly good on a purely instrumental level. That they both succeeded is evidenced by their continued presence as functioning bands nearly 10 years after their first hits – the Kinks made the charts in autumn of 1964 with 'You Really Got Me', followed in spring the next year by the Who's 'I Can't Explain', both were choppy, violent upbeat numbers characterised by aggressive chord work.

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Roger Morton



THE WHO

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The Who on stage in London. Roger Daltrey lets rip while Keith Moon seems unusually restrained behind his drums.

band. Bass player John Entwistle had studied classical French horn, played in youth orchestras, and in the Detours with guitarist Pete Townshend. Drummer Keith Moon was the last to arrive, managing to muscle and browbeat his way into displacing a previous drummer, having decided that he very much wanted in.

The Who were shock treatment right from the start. They battered the ears of their predominantly Mod audiences around North and West London with the loudest, fiercest act yet. They'd discovered the possibilities of driving amplification to its limits, setting up a fearsome howl of feedback, chaos, rage and frustration as they wrecked their way through old Motown, Beach Boys and Pete's own compositions, or maybe decompositions. The image they put out was pure Mod: clean, sharp and nasty; although, in truth, Pete was an art-schoolie, Roger a rocker at heart, and they were a good deal older than the average Mod.

Mod, however, was the character they chose — as epitomized by the suburban teenager who spent all his money on clothes, rode a zippy scooter, indulged in fearful battles with the loathed and despised greasy rockers on holiday weekends, and swallowed enormous quantities

of pills to give him the energy to get through a weekend up in town. He was just hanging around, looking sharp, and getting off to uptown R&B and soul music at clubs like the Flamingo and the Scene in Soho. It was the big fashion — all to do with Carnaby Street and swinging London — and was catered to by ITV TV's *Ready, Steady Go*, starting the weekend at six on a Friday night.

Still, it took a little time before the Who had their first hit with 'I Can't Explain'. They'd found managers in Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp, who at first suggested they change their name to the High Numbers. But, with no record contract forthcoming, the name reverted to the Who; and eventually they signed to Brunswick — an unfashionable label that had sadly declined along with Bill Haley, their one big act.

Anarchic Breakdown

'I Can't Explain' was a rough record, hard, edgy, and above all powerful. Pete Townshend had started to put some feedback into his guitar — it produced the effect of an instrument about to fall over the edge into total anarchic breakdown. But it wasn't until the next single, 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere', that all hell really



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broke loose on record. Loaded to the gills with electronic menace and confusion, it was a perfect single — strangely, it didn't climb as high in the charts as 'I Can't Explain'

But the next one did. 'My Generation', the Who anthem, summed up the group and its Mod following in remarkable style. Again, the subject was ostensibly an extremely stoned Mod teenager, stuttering out his yell of defiance: 'Things they do look awful cold/Hope I die before I get old', to a thundering bass, and Keith Moon's wild cascade of thump and crash on the drums. It was a winner, and the band were still playing it on stage almost a decade later. But the Who weren't content to leave it at that. Along with aggressive



Rex Features/Syndication International

Top: The Who as pin-ups in the late '60s. Above: The Who on stage in France with their thunder-wall of speakers behind them.

words and music, they took the act a stage further — to actual physical violence, and into the realms of what was being called auto-destructive art. Anyway, that was the intellectual interpretation of Pete Townshend's guitar-smashing on stage. It had all started perfectly naturally, he insisted — one night he'd bashed his guitar's neck off at the climax of the act, there was no premeditation — but he started to do it every night and, of course, it was all very good publicity. Was he making a protest against materialistic society? Was it a deeply philosophical statement? Did it just look good? And anyway, did it matter?

The Who had always looked like the sort of blokes you'd try to avoid on a Saturday night — they looked, in a word,

mean. Pete would glare at the audience, swinging his arm across his guitar in great sweeping arcs; Roger swung the microphone round his head like a lasso and barked out his words like bullets, while Keith went storming berserk behind his enormous drum kit. Only John, usually dressed in black with a supercilious half-smile of considerable threat, stood still. Smoke bombs exploded, drums were sent crashing over, and the stage was invariably left looking like the aftermath of World War Three. No encores: the band would suddenly vanish from the stage, maybe Keith staying a little longer to see if there was anything else to destroy, while the amplifiers and guitars buzzed and shrieked in abandoned agony.

Backlog Of Debts

The Who were the first to do it. Later on, the Move tried a similar trick, which involved attacking TV sets with hatchets, and Jimi Hendrix (unwillingly) tried to set light to his guitar with some lighter fluid. The Who remained the only ones to do it convincingly; though it became a standard feature of their act. Pete said he only smashed guitars when he felt like it, but few were the occasions when he didn't.

Each time a couple of hundred pounds' worth of guitar went, and the group built up a vast backlog of debts to guitar shops.

After 'My Generation', their first album was released — showing the group in best natty gear. It wasn't an enormous seller, and is now unobtainable. 'It's A Legal Matter' and 'La-La-Lies' were probably the most effective tracks despite the fairly dismal recording quality. After this they changed labels, joining Reaction, on which they released their next three hits: 'Substitute' in March 1966, 'I'm A Boy' in October, and 'Happy Jack' at Christmas. All reached the Top 5, though they never had a no. 1. All three featured typical Townshend freak characters — the Substitute 'was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth' — looked all white but his dad was black; in 'I'm A Boy', his mother wouldn't admit it and treated him like a girl; and Happy Jack lived in the sand in the Isle of Man. All featured that same unique Who style of thudding, overcrowded bass lines, that occasionally took on the role of lead guitar, a welter of drums leaving no part of the kit unhammered, great slashing crescendoes of guitar chords and high harmonies in a style reminiscent of the Beach Boys — strangely smooth in comparison with the

BACK TRACK

1964 The High Numbers, having been turned down by EMI, released their first and only single on Fontana, 'I'm The Face'/'Zoot Suit'.



- 1965 Reverting to their original name, the Who reached no. 8 in the charts with a Pete Townshend composition, 'I Can't Explain' on Brunswick. 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere' and 'My Generation' followed during the same year.
- 1966 The group signed to the Reaction label. 'Substitute', 'I'm A Boy' and 'Happy Jack' all reached the Top 5.
- 1967 Now released on Track, 'Pictures Of Lilly' and 'I'm A Boy' reached the Top 10. 'The Last Time'/'Under My Thumb' released in support of Mick Jagger and Keith Richard during their controversial trial for drug offences – but failed to make the Top 10.
- 1968 Townshend's long-promised rock opera, 'Tommy', released to great critical acclaim.
- 1969 The band played at the Woodstock Festival, N.Y.
- 1970 'Live At Leeds' released; included a revival of Johnny Kidd's

'Shaking All Over' and Eddie Cochran's 'Summertime Blues'.

- 1971 John Entwistle released his first solo album, 'Smash Your Head Against The Wall'.
- 1972 Pete Townshend released 'Who Came First', a solo album dedicated to Meher Baba.
- 1973 Roger Daltrey released his solo album, produced by Adam Faith. 'Giving It All Away', a single from the album, reached the Top 10.



The Who in their early mod days.

Syndication International

uproar of the backing. No group ever got more variety, more meat, into a three-piece instrument line-up.

Townshend was by now being recognised as something of an expert on pop, and was frequently quoted as a sort of ambassador from the teenage wasteland. He was getting credit for his songwriting, and he was talking about moving on to bigger things than the pop single. An album released on Reaction, 'A Quick One', was his first move towards the pop opera he kept on talking about. Nobody believed that rock – and, least of all, an uncouth bunch like the Who – could come up with a major work. 'A Quick One' was a short domestic drama, featuring such unlikely characters as Ivor The Engine Driver. And more singles came along, now on the newly-formed Track label, which was run by Lambert and Stamp, the group's managers. 'Pictures Of Lilly' was the first, in May 1967, and was followed by what is often considered the finest Who single, 'I Can See For Miles'. Strangely enough, this cataclysm of a record only just made it into the Top 10. Like 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere', it seemed that pure and total Who music was a bit too strong for the majority of record buyers to take. Also, the group had failed to make much impact in the States. Whereas the Beatles, Stones, even the Dave Clark Five and Herman's Hermits had had the nation's teenagers entranced, the Who – and the Kinks – weren't making it.

Two events won America over to the Who – both in 1969. One was their appearance at the Woodstock Festival, which finally put the seal on their slowly growing fortunes. The other was 'Tommy'. Townshend had finally done what he said he would for so long, and written the first successful pop opera, the beautifully-

packaged story of the deaf, dumb and blind boy Tommy. The form was traditional opera – it had an overture, giving a glimpse of all the main themes and of various characters – Uncle Ernie, Cousin Kevin, Sally Simpson and the Acid Queen – but this was fused with a formidable mixture of religion, drugs, the business of pop stardom, metaphysics and pinball. (Oddly enough, Ray Davies had written his pop opera shortly before. His was called 'Arthur', but it slipped by largely unnoticed. The Kinks, at the time, were not a very fashionable band.)

Pretty Sick Of Tommy

The floodgates of America had opened, once and for all, and after 'Tommy' the Who were vying with the Rolling Stones for the honour of being called the 'Best Rock Band In The World'. 'Tommy' was performed by the band at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Critics said it was the first complete rock work on a large scale, and the band survived with 'Tommy' as the centrepiece of their stage act for three years after, by which time they were pretty sick of playing it.

As if exhausted by the gargantuan effort of getting 'Tommy' out, the Who went through a relatively quiet patch in the early '70s. They continued to do tours, they put out the occasional single, but there was a gap of almost two years between 'Tommy' and their next 'Who's Next', studio album. 'Live At Leeds' came out the year before, a rough and ready counterpart to the polished studio work of the opera, it was notable for a documentary history of the group provided through copies of early contracts, accounts, letters and pictures. Creatively though, the band were marking time. 'Who's Next', in 1971, was nothing

like the band had ever done before. Townshend's writing had become smoother and more abstract, and he'd also, more importantly, discovered the synthesiser, which set the keynote of the album. It was a big step forward, but was it pop? At any rate, things have been relatively quiet for the Who since 'Who's Next'.

All the members of the group have had time to get out and do their own things. Entwistle has made a couple of albums under his own name which have sold very well in the States. Daltrey has had a couple of big single hits, and made an excellent solo album under the direction of Adam Faith which bears little relation to his work with the Who. Moon has acted in *That'll Be The Day*, become a DJ, and a leading contender for the British hovercraft racing championship. Meanwhile, Townshend has put out his own solo album, and there's been the glossy all-star stage production of 'Tommy', starring Rod Stewart, Maggie Bell and others. Perhaps the most hopeful sign of lingering Who creativity is that they are to appear in yet another version of 'Tommy' – this time a film by Ken Russell.

Keith Moon said in a recent interview that the group are more united than ever. They've all been doing their various individual projects, but the biggest thing in their lives is still, 10 years later, the Who. Among all the bands, who else has managed to keep the same line-up through such a long and pioneering career?

NEXT WEEK'S SUPER-STARS: The Rolling Stones. The critic's choice as no. 1 rock band in the world.



Neshui Ertegun



Ahmet Ertegun

BLACK MUSIC: 1945-73

ATLANTIC/STAX The Style Leaders

The great developments in rock music always seem to occur when two kinds of interest coincide: the interest of a sub-culture in expressing itself, and the interest of large-scale entrepreneurs in making a lot of money.

These moments are relatively rare, largely because the more cash there is at stake, the less willing its handlers are to take a risk with those products that don't obviously appeal to an 'established' market. Consequently, the impetus for the major breakthroughs in popular rock music has come, more often than not, from the smaller, independent companies. The enormously successful history of Atlantic Records – now a very large and wealthy organisation and part of the massive WEA corporation – provides the most vivid example available of this process in full spate. No other label can boast a comparable list of major musical innovators over the years.

Atlantic was formed 25 years ago in New York by a former A&R director, Herb Abramson, and Ahmet Ertegun, who entered the business to earn some money

on the side while he completed his Ph.D. His studies soon went by the board, however, when the problems of making records pay became apparent.

At that time, the record industry in the States was dominated by Columbia, RCA Victor, Decca and Capitol. These companies – the 'majors' – had a stranglehold on the main retail outlets, and smaller concerns generally had no choice but to record the kind of music that would sell in the back-streets and the ghettos. In the words of the trade paper *Billboard*, Atlantic's initial output was 'of the race and hot jazz variety'. Ertegun's unerring sense of what would go down well with this audience kept the firm afloat through the early months on the basis of local sales. At the same time, the company was continually looking for national openings for its performers and making records that it hoped would appeal to *both* markets.

In 1949, Sticks McGhee did the trick with a national rhythm & blues hit, 'Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee'. From this moment on, the big distributors sat up and took notice of Atlantic recordings. The result was that Joe Turner, Ruth Brown, and the Clovers consistently reached the national R&B charts over the next few years.

These performers were all introduced by Atlantic; whereas other black artists made their first nationwide impact by moving to Atlantic from other companies and maturing with the label – developing a radically different, more personal style. Among these were Chuck Willis – who had major hits with 'C.C. Rider' and 'What Am I Living For' before dying prematurely in 1958 – and, above all, Ray Charles.

It was with good reason that Charles was nicknamed 'The Genius'. Before he moved to Atlantic he was a cool, jazzy blues singer and pianist who modelled himself in many ways on Nat 'King' Cole. With Atlantic, he forged a highly original and influential form of music, combining the raw emotional power of gospel styles with swinging jazz-combo arrangements and the driving beat of R&B. The classic record that established him as a national star was 'What'd I Say?'. Shortly after this record hit the charts in 1959, Charles left Atlantic for ABC-Paramount, and the quality of his music lost an edge that it has never seemed to regain.

One reason why Charles' unique style could flourish at Atlantic was that the company's directors were attuned to a wide variety of black music, including jazz.

Nesuhi Ertegun – Ahmet's brother – took over this side of operations in 1956, and the musicians that went on to achieve fame with the label have been responsible for many of the most significant advances in jazz in the past two decades – such as John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Charlie Mingus and the MJQ.

Another constant underlying factor was that the small scale of the outfit meant that artists and their music could be handled fairly sympathetically, not *merely* as production line commodities. The men dealing with the business side were simultaneously choosing the artists, producing the records and – in the case of Ahmet Ertegun – writing many of the songs as well. When Jerry Wexler became a partner in the firm in 1953 he followed the pattern, as a producer and occasional songwriter. Of course, such a pattern is scarcely avoidable when the studio and the office are in fact one and the same room with the furniture re-arranged – as was the case at Atlantic for much of the '50s.

Fat Cheque Books

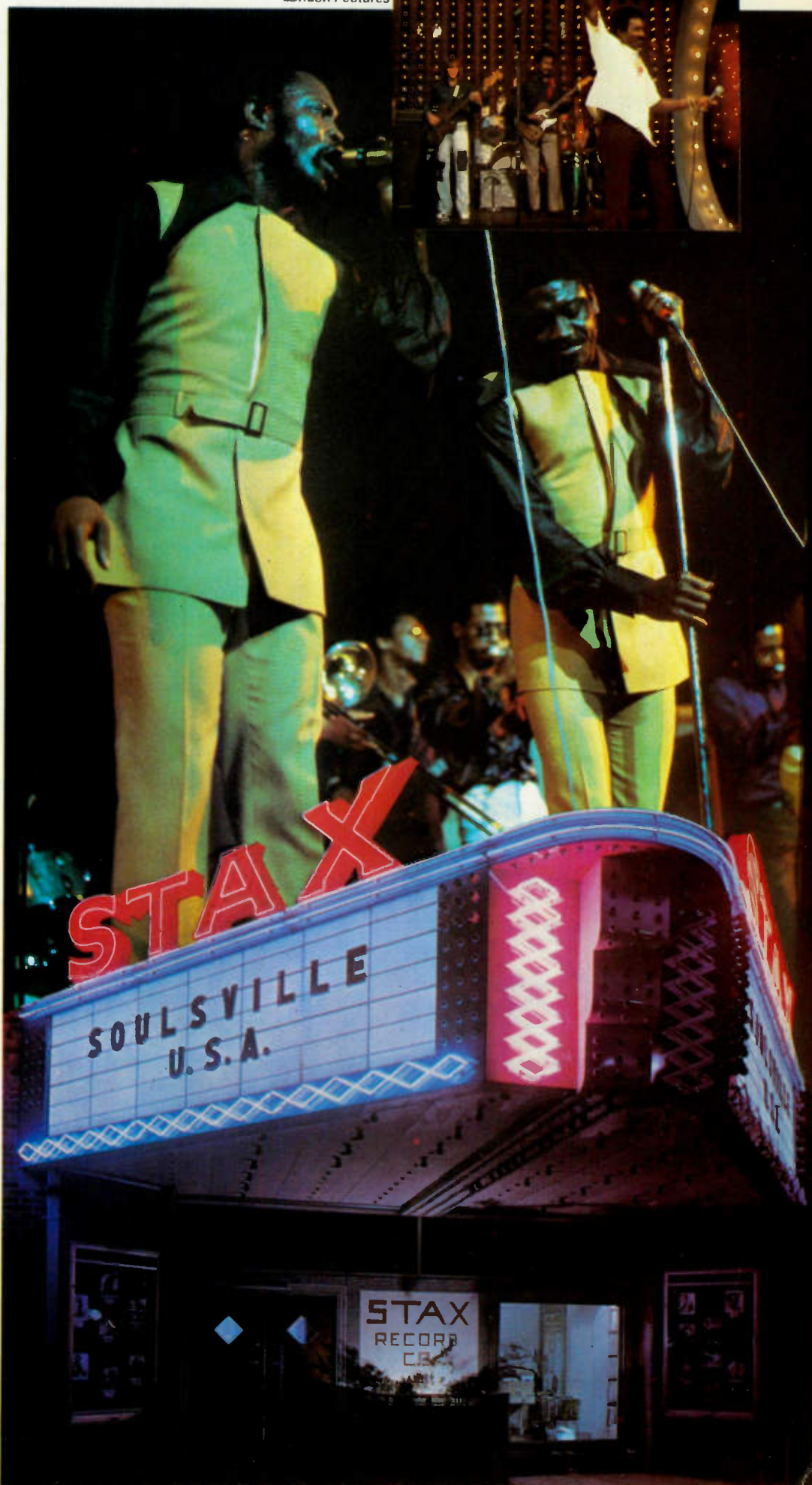
But Atlantic was repeatedly deprived of the financial rewards which its outstanding talent-nurturing abilities might have been expected to earn. One problem was the majors' cover versions usually done by white singers, and usually diluted. These obviously had a big advantage in the promotion stakes; and it's hardly surprising that many Atlantic R&B hits were never released outside the States at the time. The Drifters: 'Such A Night', for instance, was a hit by Johnny Ray; and Joe Turner's original of 'Shake, Rattle And Roll' was rapidly forgotten as the song became a standard for white rock & roll stars.

On top of this, the bigger companies could always wait for an artist to prove himself with an 'indie', and then move in with a fat cheque-book to sign him up. In this way, Atlantic lost not only Ray Charles but also Clyde McPhatter, the original lead singer with the Drifters. It was a typically astute commercial move on the part of Atlantic to encourage McPhatter's talent for blending intense, high-pitched gospelly vocals with established popular ballad forms; and the resulting records were as exciting creatively and as important historically as anything Charles ever did.

But McPhatter left; and Atlantic began to realise that if they were to continue expanding they would have to compete for the mass market on the existing terms. The rock & roll explosion had meant that weighty profits stood to be made by any record company that could find arrangers and composers capable of capturing those magic sounds. Thanks largely to the pioneering work done by Atlantic itself, this was becoming easier all the time; and the majors had a very important extra edge because they could push their white singers as teen idols as well. Atlantic's response was to sign up their very own identikit version of Frankie Avalon and Tommy Sands – a young New York singer

Sam and Dave above the Stax building in Memphis. Right: Wilson Pickett on American TV.

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of Italian descent by the name of Bobby Darin. Mainly because of the production, Darin's music tended to be a good deal more raunchy and stylish than his rivals: the comic catchiness of 'Splish Splash' started the ball rolling in 1958, followed by a driving dance number, 'Queen Of The Hop', after which Darin turned to more sophisticated, 'cabaret' material.

Another play was to make the records so idiosyncratic or so accomplished that nobody could hope to copy them. Atlantic's signing of the producing and songwriting team Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller in 1956 exemplified their knack of keeping a jump ahead of the opposition. The team's work with the Coasters includes several of the greatest 'pop' rock & roll records. 'Young Blood', 'Searchin'', 'Yakety Yak' and many others featured amazingly colourful and witty lyrics, exciting instrumental work – including stuttering sax solos by King Curtis – and some of the neatest, sharpest group-vocalising ever to grace the Top 10.

Leiber and Stoller were involved in another development at Atlantic which proved something of a turning-point in the history of pop. Working as producers with the Drifters, they were largely responsible for the introduction of a vast echo-laden effect, and a quasi-classical string arrangement on 'There Goes My Baby'. The record was a major hit in 1959, and helped pave the way for the whole school of 'uptown' R&B in the early '60s – from which many of today's pop-soul hits are directly descended. Several of the key figures in that area of music were connected early in their careers with this phase of the Drifters' music. Phil Spector was there as a production assistant and session guitarist; and the Drifters were among the first performers to record numbers by the composing teams of Goffin/King and Mann/Weill. The Drifters themselves had about a dozen hits between 1961 and 1964; and Ben E. King – the lead singer on their first British hit, 'Save The Last Dance For Me' – had equal success when he embarked on a solo career.

Gee Whiz

Even bigger things were on the way. Early in the '60s, Jerry Wexler secured distribution rights to the Memphis-based Satellite label – later renamed Stax. The first national hit from that direction was Carla Thomas' 'Gee Whiz', a dramatic, string-drenched ballad. But that gave little indication of what was soon to become world-famous as 'the Memphis sound'. The foundations of the sound were laid by a tight, funky little combo called Booker T and the MG's – who had a huge hit with 'Green Onions' in their own right – and by the Markeys, who provided the label's rich, solid horn riffs and also put the instrumental 'Last Night' at no. 1.

The Stax material's unique combination of flow and punch made it extremely popular as dance music; and when a number of extraordinary gospel-flavoured vocalists began to emerge from the same source, the result was a stream of records

in the mid-'60s which, for many people, defined an entirely new musical genre – soul. It should be added, however, that the sounds being made at Stax were very much influenced by the harsh energy already being generated by James Brown.

For most white fans, the boss man at Stax was Otis Redding, who recorded on a subsidiary label, Volt. His rough, searing vocals were cleverly delivered to counterpoint the surging insistence of the backing on hits like 'Respect', 'Mr. Pitiful', 'Pain In My Heart' and 'I've Been Loving You Too Long'. By the time he died in 1968, he had secured a sizeable following among the white rock audience, and his last record, 'Dock Of The Bay', seemed to have been made with that market in mind.



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Rufus Thomas' daughter, Carla.

But equally outstanding soul records were made at the Memphis studios by Sam and Dave – who worked with an upcoming Stax producer called Isaac Hayes – and by Wilson Pickett, who changed his recording base to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, after his Memphis-cut hit 'In The Midnight Hour' (1965) had provided rock music with one of its all-time greats.

Other Southern soul stars whose records were distributed by Atlantic included Percy Sledge, who had a mammoth hit with the haunting 'When A Man Loves A Woman'; and Joe Tex, who turned out some inimitable ballads in which he 'preached' half-humorously to his audience.

Meanwhile, back in New York, Atlantic had found their own gospelly vocalist – the self-styled 'King of Soul', Solomon Burke. His advent helped to foster a circle of superb session musicians at Atlantic's home base, which stood the firm in good stead when it began to record one of the very greatest black female singers, Aretha Franklin, in 1967. Atlantic's unflinching support for Aretha constitutes one of its most notable contributions to music. She – like Pickett and Tex – has recorded some of her best material at Rick Hall's legendary Fame studios in Muscle Shoals, where Duane Allman first started as a session man.

Not content with providing the vanguard of the soul boom, Atlantic continued to extend its interest in white artists during the '60s. Nino Tempo and April Stevens, who topped the Hot 100 with 'Deep Purple', were among the first to make an

impression. And it was through this duo that Sonny Bono became involved with the company. Sonny and Cher's colossal world-wide hit of 1965, 'I Got You Babe', opened the way for Atlantic to sign up several successful white rock acts during the next few years. These included the Young Rascals, Iron Butterfly, and one of the richest talents to come out of California in the mid-'60s – Buffalo Springfield. Their popularity was very limited at the time and their few albums are now collectors' items, but two of the Springfield's former members, Steve Stills and Neil Young, later made themselves and Atlantic a fortune by teaming up with Graham Nash and David Crosby in the CSNY band.

The success of CSNY illustrated Atlantic's uncanny sensitivity to changes in audience taste, and its ability to pick up performers who are among the classiest in a particular new style. The company was aware of the potential of British records very early, for instance, and this trans-atlantic leaning paid off with the signing of Led Zeppelin at a time when heavy-metal music was in its infancy. Their judgement paid off well, and the band's second album stands today as most-probably the definitive piece of work in that vein. Similarly, the music of Yes is probably regarded as tepid, slack and indulgent by most Clyde McPhatter fans; but it would be hard to deny that they are among the most polished exponents of '70s orchestral rock.

The outcome of Atlantic's continuing shrewdness is that the artists on the roster in the '70s represent a remarkably wide spectrum of contemporary music – almost all of them highly respected in their own areas. In the new field of composed, near-languid soul music, Atlantic came quickly to the fore with Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. In rock terms, Atlantic in the '70s have become a major force: Dr. John has been able to re-discover his New Orleans rock & roll roots and develop from freakiness to funk; the Allman Brothers have grafted a psychedelic dimension on to Muscle Shoals precision; the J. Geils Band has just about the fiercest rocking-blues combination ever; Boz Scaggs is being compared with Van Morrison; and there's even a batch of country-styled singer/songwriters on the books, the most impressive being Danny O'Keefe. A measure of the company's growth and good taste since the late '40s was shown clearly enough when it won the contract to distribute the Rolling Stones on their new label. Yet Atlantic is still run – and not merely in name – by the Ertegun brothers and Jerry Wexler.

**NEXT WEEK IN
BLACK MUSIC: Aretha
Franklin. The first lady of
soul . . . in spite of every-
thing.**



Keystone Press

POP INFLUENCES: THE '60s

WHY LIVERPOOL?

Why, when the rest of Britain in the late '50s and early '60s was back-peddalling away from solid rock & roll into a goo of Bobby Vee and Shadows imitators, did literally hundreds of groups spring up on Merseyside punching out a raucous no-holds-barred mixture of rock, country music and black rhythm & blues?

The answer, as with most questions about Liverpool, lies initially in the role of

the city as a major port – or more particularly as a major North Atlantic port.

First becoming prominent in the late 18th Century, when Cotton was King, by the early 19th Century this previously minor port was the main English point in the trade triangle that stretched from the west coast of Africa (with its slaves), to the United States (and its cotton), to England (and the Lancashire cotton industry).

Long after the great days of cotton the links that were forged then remained, and Liverpool's merchant shipping has been

particularly dominated by the trade with America ever since. This close tie with the States was to have a profound effect on the city's teenage population in the aftermath of the mid-'50s rock & roll explosion.

The whole 'Ted' culture that surrounded rock & roll depended largely on America and Americana for its style and imagery; certainly the *classic* Teddy Boys that appeared a couple of years earlier were a home-grown phenomena, but with the advent of rock the 'punk' image of sneakers and sideburns, Lucky Strike and James Dean came to the fore, and from then on the 'Ted' became a strange hybrid of Edwardian draped jackets and imitation-cowboy bootlace ties. And the Americanisms in all this were never more evident than in the seaport of Liverpool.

Whereas the kids in most other parts of the country had to make do with black-and-white reprints of *Superman* comics, Woolworths baseball boots and Western shirts made in Manchester; in Liverpool there was a chance of getting your hands on the real thing. Everyone had a big brother, or knew someone with a big brother, in the Merchant Navy . . . those that didn't would probably end up at sea anyway. In a town that depended on the seasonal variations of the docks, full employment was unknown, and for a whole generation of working class youngsters, after National Service was abolished, the only viable alternative to the Dole was 'joining the 'Merch'.

Cunard Yanks

So emerged the 'Cunard Yanks' . . . these were the lads that worked the Cunard and Blue Star lines to New York and the eastern seaboard down to New Orleans, and came home looking real flash, like a million dollars . . . and acting it. And they were the lads to contact if you wanted anything in the way of American ciggies, clothes or records – the supply, in this way, of otherwise unavailable records proving to be the most significant part of this strange trans-Atlantic export of a sub-culture.

Even at the height of the mid-'50s rock & roll madness, the record companies only released the most obviously commercial material from the States, and much important music, especially in the field of black rhythm & blues records, was only available to those who could get it direct. This situation got worse towards the end of the decade, as fashions once more began to wallow in the more traditional syrup of Tin Pan Alley. At this time there were no shops selling imported records (except for highly specialised fields such as jazz or folk music, and these few and far between), so the consequence of the 'Cunard Yank' trade was that there was a whole wealth of material fairly easily available in Liverpool that simply wasn't to be found elsewhere.

The effect of all this on local musicians and groups was to create a tradition quite distinct from what was happening in the rest of the country. Like every town and

city in the land, Liverpool had felt the effect of the skiffle boom in the person of hundreds of teenage (would-be) guitarists and guitar-based groups. But whereas elsewhere they had generally (those who had stuck at it) bent to the winds of fashion and were, by 1960, churning out the current Top 20, the pressures surrounding a group in Liverpool were very different – skiffle was dead, certainly, but the rock & roll that had been its contemporary back in 1956 was still a vital and developing force, not just a memory. All the latest releases from the US of A (although usually a few months late) were keeping the local musicians in ideas and songs – although often the same ones from group to group (there seemed to be a stock hard-core of a couple of dozen numbers that *everyone* could play).

Jive Halls

These Merseyside rock & roll groups (or 'beat groups' as they were starting to be called) played a growing local circuit of youth clubs, 'Jive Halls' (usually municipal halls hired by a promoter), regular dance halls on rock & roll nights, and, increasingly, in city-centre jazz clubs sandwiched between the trad bands. The grass-roots teenage following of the groups built up around the youth club venues and the Jive Halls – these catered for a few hundred kids at a time and were to be found in all areas of the city, from the inner working-class areas out to the suburbs, out again to the industrial wastelands of the new estates, and on to surrounding towns. They were pioneered by promoters who, although interested in making some cash, also had an enthusiasm and pioneering spirit about them. Men like Bob Wooler (who later was the DJ and driving spirit behind the Cavern), who put on countless events like the one that was announced as:

**TONIGHT TONIGHT TONIGHT
THE BEATLES
GERRY AND THE PACEMAKERS
THE BIG 3
AINTREE INSTITUTE
ADMISSION 3/6**

... but although a huge following was developing for the groups on this circuit, it wasn't until the music appeared in city-centre clubs that a sense of an identifiable 'scene' began to emerge.

Liverpool, which sprawls northwards along the Mersey estuary, and eastwards inland towards Manchester, has a surprisingly small centre that radiates from the Pierhead and built around the commercial life of the port. Here the 'clubland' consisted of the normal cabaret-type places, the usual seamans' joints (often illicit 'shebeens' selling booze without a licence) that one finds in any great port, the coffee clubs (a peculiarity of the '50s), and the jazz clubs (which, as all over the country at this time, were overwhelmingly



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Left: Paul McCartney and above: John Lennon playing at the Cavern before they became superstars.

trad clubs, catering for a dancing rather than listening clientele).

These last two, the coffee clubs and jazz cellars, were the unlikely spawning-ground around 1959 for the whole Merseybeat scene to come; unlikely, because the coffee and trad places (on the face of it at least) were at the opposite end of the teenage cultural spectrum to the grease and guitars of the rock & rollers.

The coffee clubs catered for the art student/ban-the-bomb sort of crowd, who were still describing themselves as 'bohemian' ... though the rest of the world tended to call them 'bloody beatniks'. The clubs seemed to perform exactly the same function as ordinary coffee bars (in as much as they served coffee), except that they often stayed open

later and the members-only tag gave them an air of exclusiveness. They usually went under fairly arty or exotic names (the Studio Club, the Picasso, the Boomerang), and would probably have had little or no effect on the fortunes of the growing army of rock & roll groups were it not for a few enterprising proprietors.

Alan Williams became one of these proprietors. He recalls: "... we used to go to the Studio in Colquitt Street ... there was always a guitarist or two playing ... y'know, just folk songs, but the crowd lapped it up ... it used to get packed ... and all the Bohemian decor, candles in bottles and all that ... I thought it would be great to have a place with a regular band."

So, in 1959, he opened the Jacaranda

in Slater Street – "... we got a couple of artists to do murals in the basement, y'know – the end of the world with the H-Bomb ... real weird stuff ... and we hired a West Indian steel band, who were there for the seven years the club was operating."

The next time the basement was decorated, a year or so later, it was done by two art students who were playing in the rock outfit Williams had hired to play alternate sets with the steel band; their names were Stuart Sutcliffe and John Lennon. The Beatles had arrived in clubland.

The Beatles were the only group at that time to have any strong connections with the artists and such who lived in Liverpool. John and Stuart were students at the College of Art, and shared a notorious flat in 3, Gambier Terrace – where legend has it they once burned the furniture to keep warm. Outrageous stories concerning Lennon were legion – even in an art school he tended to shock and disgust, 'coming on like some loud-mouthed Ted'. The traditional art students' pub, Ye Cracke, insisted for years after (with a certain amount of pride) that he was barred – and still is, probably to this day.

Weirdies Up The Hill

For most groups in 1960, from solid working-class families, the music (like the Merchant Navy had been for their big brothers) was a way off the 'Dote' without actually resorting to crime. The art school crowd were just the 'weirdies up the hill' ... the nearest they (the groups) ever got to it was the increasing number of formerly arty coffee bars now giving them work, as the tiny basements sweated to rock & roll until the early hours, unhindered by the licencing laws.

Alan Williams was by now also acting as agent for several groups, (including the Beatles) and one of the most important roles he performed in this context was to set up a whole series of gigs for Liverpool groups at the Top Ten Club (and later the Star Club) in Hamburg. Here, working murderous hours, groups served a fierce apprenticeship and came back either physical wrecks or super-tight rock & roll outfits (and sometimes both!).

A short-lived venue opened by Williams was the Top Ten (taking its name from the Hamburg club), which was destroyed by fire after only five days. In that time, five of the top groups in the city had appeared there, including Howie Casey and the Seniors (Howie was the king of Liverpool rock tenor sax) and Gerry and the Pace-makers. Williams admits now, "the place was just a barn," but all you needed in those days was a room with a stage at one end and a coffee counter at the other.

The most important venture on the part of Alan Williams, however, came in 1960, not in another coffee club but a late-night drinking club, the Blue Angel. Right through the '50s the only place where local jazz musicians and frustrated jazzers from the dance bands could go for an



George, Pete Best, John and Paul with rocker hairstyles.

after-hours blow had been Linda's Quaver Club, a 'shebeen' on Crown Street, and that was illegal and open to frequent police raids and closures. The 'Blue', which was originally aimed at the older modern jazz (as opposed to trad) crowd, started by employing a regular trio and soon, every other night or so, it became the scene of frantic jam sessions.

It didn't take long for rock musicians, who were involved with Alan anyway in his other ventures, to get the message. Soon the group fraternity had found itself a base where people could be found, deals could be made, and music played until three in the morning with the beat musicians around. The combination of a common background of material and this jamming tradition was to later lead a lot of outside observers to comment that all the Liverpool groups 'sounded the same', and to be the precise reason for a Mersey 'sound' if there was such a thing ... Mersey 'style' would have probably been more accurate.

Through all this of course trad was still the fad in the larger jazz clubs all over town. For thousands of kids in their teens trad jazz was still the only music they could dance to in the city centre, in somewhere with a bit of atmosphere. The late-night haunts the rock groups played were not really the average kid's scene, being as they were full of sailors and students. But these kids *had* heard the rock & rollers back at their local halls and youth clubs, and started asking for them at the jazz clubs.

Between The Arches

The Cavern had been going since 1958 as a jazz cellar, yet it wasn't until 1961 that the Big Beat started to edge out the ring of the banjo. At first a group like the Beatles, or the Bluejeans Skiffle Group (later to be the Swinging Blue Jeans), or Faron's Flamingoes, would appear between two or three trad bands – never more than one rock group a night. But the kids doing the stomp between the arches of this old warehouse cellar found the groups better to dance to, more 'modern' sounding, and with loads of personality and sex appeal. Soon the groups had a night all to themselves, and by the middle of 1962 it was the traddies who were playing the intervals every night.

A similar takeover took place at other jazz strongholds – the Mardi Gras, the

Downbeat – all were presenting an almost 100% beat programme by the end of 1962, along with places that opened specifically as a response to the growing demand for beat music, places like the Iron Door and the Peppermint Lounge.

Of all these establishments the Cavern was certainly the most important, for several reasons other than the fact that the Beatles could be heard there two or three times a week – which only became a noteworthy reason in retrospect. For a start it wasn't licensed, the only refreshment served being coffee or Coke, hot dogs and the infamous Cavern soup; consequently kids didn't have to be 18 to get in, and the management had a lot more freedom in terms of opening hours. This freedom gave rise to another strong factor in the Cavern's favour – lunchtime sessions. Every weekday lunchtime, kids who worked in the offices and shops of the city centre, along with numerous kids who didn't work at all, would spend their lunch-hours jiving to one of the top local groups (the Beatles averaged a couple of lunchtimes a week) ... two hours of rock for one and sixpence.

Most important of all, the Cavern seemed to have a heart. Ray McFall, the owner, and Bob Wooler, the booker/DJ, really believed in the music, the fans, and the groups. The non-stop enthusiasm and encouragement of Wooler particularly rubbed off on everyone in those heady days ... not long before 'Please Please Me' was going to change the world.

The rest is history. We've all read how Epstein discovered the Beatles in the Cavern, how there were five Merseyside artists in the national charts in the same week in 1963, how less than a year later the Beatles occupied five places in the American Top 10 simultaneously. But to read the papers at the time, you'd have thought God had waved a wand over Liverpool and said 'Let there be groups' – as simple as that. Very few stopped to ask – why Liverpool? Yet things just wouldn't have happened in the way they did if it hadn't been for the jam sessions, the jive halls, and those Cunard yanks.

NEXT WEEK IN POP INFLUENCES: Bare Wires; The mysteries of fuzz, equalisation and doppler effects explained.

Talking 'bout my generation

TOBACCO ROAD

*I was born in a dump
Mamma died and daddy got drunk
Left me here to die or grow
In the middle of Tobacco Road*

*Grew up in a rusty shack
All I had was hangin' on my back,
Only you know how I loathe
This place called Tobacco Road*

*But it's home
The only life I've ever known
Only you know how I loathe
... Tobacco Road*

*Gonna leave get a job
With the help and the grace from above
Save some money get rich I know
Bring it back to Tobacco Road*

*Bring dynamite and a crane
Blow it upstart all over again
Build a town be proud to show
Give the name Tobacco Road*

*But it's home
The only life I've ever known
Only I despise you 'cos you're filthy
But I love you 'cos you're home*

NEEDLES AND PINS

*I saw her today
I saw her face
Was a face I love
And I knew
I had to run away-yi-yay
And get down on my knees and pray-yay
That they'd go away
Still they'd begin - a
Needles and pins - a*

Although British groups dominated the early '60s they were still, to quite an extent, relying on the work of American composers. The British themselves were beginning to lose their inferiority complex about writing, and were starting to develop their own style rather than ape their transatlantic counterparts. The States still indisputably produced the best craftsmen composers, and initially it was to them that the British groups looked.

Evidence is seen here. 'Tobacco Road' was penned by Nashville-orientated John D. Loudermilk, but was a hit for a British group who expressed their musical leanings in their name - the Nashville Teens. The Searchers were firmly Liverpoolian, and are of the great wave of talent that spilled out of that city in the wake of the Beatles. Their material though was mostly American in origin, with 'Needles And Pins' coming from Jack Nitzsche and Sonny Bono (who was to have a series of hits with wife Cher a year later). Both are polished, commercial numbers that typify the type of straightforward, simple material that was so popular at the time. This, perhaps, was pop's highest point. It was more sophisticated than its predecessor of the '50s, and less contrived than its successor of the '70s.

'Tobacco Road' is, in content and style, as far removed from Britain as is possible to imagine; it's doubtful whether those who sang and heard the lyrics knew or cared what 'Tobacco Road' represented. On the face of it the song has no appeal outside



Carol Viner

*Because of all my pride
The tears I gotta hide*

*Hey I thought I was smart
I'd won her heart
Didn't think I'd do
But now I see
She's worse to him than me
Let Her go ahead
Take his love instead
And one day she will see
Just how to say please
And get down on her knees
Hey that's how it begins a
She'll feel those needles and pins
Hurt'n her, hurt'n her*

*Why can't I stop
And tell myself I'm wrong, I'm wrong,
so wrong
Why can't I stand up and tell myself I'm
strong.*

*Because I saw her today
I saw her face
Was a face I love
And I knew
I had to run away-yi-yay
And get down on my knees and pray-yay
That they'd go away
Still they'd begin - a
Needles and pins - a
Because of all my pride
The tears I gotta hide*

'Tobacco Road': Words and music by John D. Loudermilk. © Cedarwood Publishing Co. Inc. Reproduced by kind permission of Southern Music Publishing Co. Ltd.

'Needles And Pins': By Jack Nitzsche and Sonny Bono. © Unart Music Corp.(USA). Reproduced by kind permission of United Artists Music Ltd.

America or even the Southern States, but it is living proof that a good tune well performed can be international, and the Nashville Teens executed it with an irresistible exuberance.

'Needles And Pins' was a perfect match for the harmony of the Searchers, and was the third in a series of rather similar numbers that gave them world-wide success. A well-turned, highly professional piece of writing, its free-form lyrics allow the voices to float through, emphasising the interesting and often dramatic changes of tempo. The words themselves tell a typical story of stormy love, but their meaning is subservient to their sound. 'Pins-a', 'away-i-yay', 'hurt'n her' are used to add phonetic weight and contribute to the harmony; grammar and syntax are abandoned in favour of style - a more sophisticated device than the cruder jabberwocky of Little Richard, but used for the same ends. Pop, by 1964, was a streamlined, well-honed popular music form, and was to survive as such until the more verbose, self-conscious 'creativity' of the later years of the decade.

NEXT WEEK IN THE MUSIC: The lyrics to 'Sympathy For The Devil' and 'Satisfaction' - surely the classic song of the 1960s.



THE MUSIC: 1962-73

LENNON and McCARTNEY Part 2... Plus HARRISON

Even as far back as 'Revolver' in 1966, the different songwriting approaches of Lennon and McCartney, the tense imagery of John, and Paul's dramatic storytelling – were beginning to show themselves. And then along came 'Sgt. Pepper', and the rock world had found itself an undisputed standard.

Paul had originally written a good rocker, 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', and had an idea to build an album around the song. As with so many albums before, John and Paul started tinkling their pianos, strumming their guitars, scanning the newspapers and watching TV in a search for inspiration. With some help from their friends – a word here, a phrase there – they had Ringo's song in the bag.

John based his song 'Good Morning, Good Morning' on a Kellogg's Cornflakes TV commercial; while his 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' was inspired by a painting that his son, Julian brought home from school one day (it had the added advantage of throwing the US rock press into disarray

when they realised the initials were LSD!); and Paul's 'She's Leaving Home' came from a *Daily Mirror* story. Also from a newspaper story came the last verse of 'A Day In The Life', mainly written by John, but with Paul supplying the middle dream sequence.

Probably one of the best songs in this era missed a place on the album. 'Across The Universe' was Lennon at his best, and the words flow into each other as one line flows into the next:

*'Words are flying out like endless rain into
a paper cup
They slither while, they pass, they slip
away across the universe'*

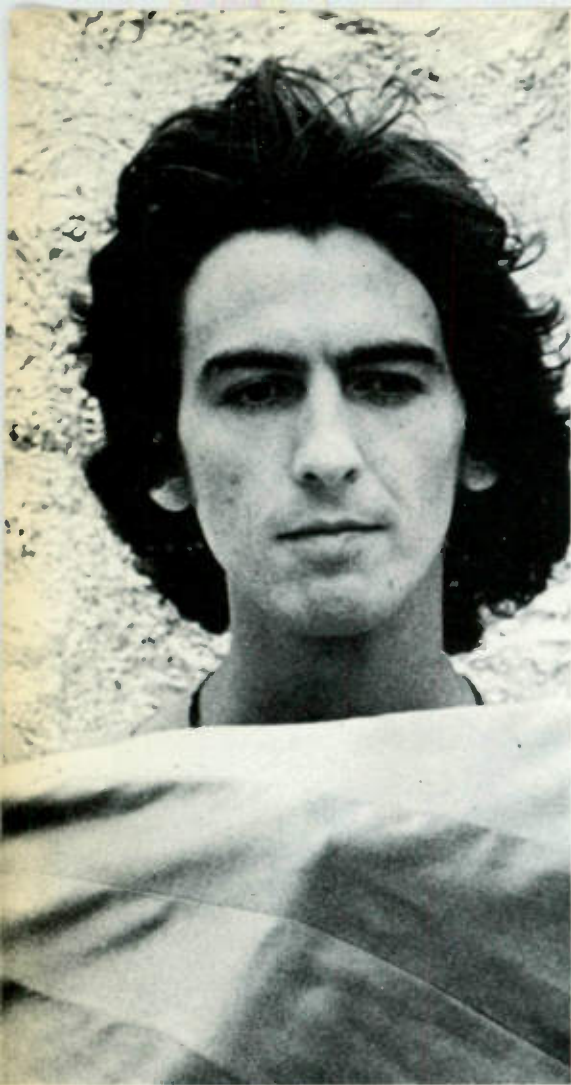
The song was given away to the World Wildlife Fund, and sank into the obscurity of a 'Various Artists' compilation; to be resurrected, re-recorded and released on 'Let It Be' – only time and production having taken some of its magic away.

'Penny Lane'/'Strawberry Fields Forever' was issued before the album, and had already taken the public by surprise. In the days when Beatles singles went straight to the no. 1 slot, it had seemed they were on the wane as the single just hung around

the no. 2 position. Although their last two singles, 'Paperback Writer' and 'Eleanor Rigby', were also untypical, the boy/girl situation was still expected by the fans. John based his song around the reality/unreality situation of a mental institution outside Liverpool. 'Strawberry Fields Forever' was, however, full of Lennon's experimental ideas, and clearly bore the signs of LSD experience in the jocular nihilism of its lyrics:

*'Let me take you down,
'Cos I'm going to Strawberry Fields
Nothing is real
And nothing to get hung about'*

In contrast to John's writing, Paul's bouncy, melodic story in 'Penny Lane' – a song typical of nearly all his ballads since 1963 – described an everyday Liverpool street in almost fairy tale terms. This trend in Paul's work was to continue through 'Sgt. Pepper', and later enabled him to conceive the idea of 'Magical Mystery Tour'. The single, however, finally became a milestone along with 'Sgt. Pepper', an album that to many people the Beatles have never equalled or surpassed. From that time on, other groups' best works



Camera Press

& STARR

have usually been tagged 'their 'Sgt. Pepper'.

The film of *Magical Mystery Tour* took the public by surprise when it was screened in Britain by the BBC on Boxing Day 1967. It wasn't exactly the holiday entertainment people were used to, and didn't ever rate as a star-studded spectacular – it was just a simple, original, sometimes beautiful short film. There had already been a preview of the music on the 'B' side of 'Hello Goodbye' in the form of John's 'I Am The Walrus' – the first Beatles song to incorporate Hari Krishna in its lyrics. 'Walrus' was probably the highlight of John's intense imagery songs:

'Yellow matter custard dripping from a dead dog's eye

*Crabalocker fishwife pornographic priestess
Boy you been a naughty girl,
You let your knickers down.'*

Although many of the songs on 'Magical Mystery Tour' weren't of the same quality as those on 'Sgt. Pepper', 'I Am The Walrus' and 'The Fool On The Hill' still contained the magic. 'Fool On The Hill' was a continuation of Paul's romantic melodic theme; a natural progression from

'Yesterday', 'Michelle', 'Here There And Everywhere' and 'She's Leaving Home'. Another noteworthy song on the album – showing Paul's continuing interest in the 1930's that had been there since the Cavern days and numbers like 'When I'm Sixty-Four' – came out again on this album with 'Your Mother Should Know', on which he captured that same nostalgic mood beautifully.

While the Beatles were in India in 1968 holidaying with the Maharishi, John and Paul wrote many new songs. When they returned there were strong rumours of a new album titled 'Get Back', with songs like 'Teddy Boy', 'Junk' and the title song; even the cover was announced as having the Beatles standing on the steps of the EMI building – as on their first album, 'Please Please Me', and their 1973 greatest hits set. What they *did* produce was 'The Beatles', a mixed helping of rock that showed a swing away from lush production towards a more uncomplicated, earthy rock & roll.

'Baby You're A Rich Man'

Also released at this time was the soundtrack from the full-length cartoon feature *Yellow Submarine* – not really a stunning new album, especially as what was probably the best song written for the film, 'Baby You're A Rich Man', had already been put out as the 'B' side of 'All You Need Is Love'. The Beatles' 'White' album that came at the end of 1968 nevertheless covered all the streams of their writing.

From the straight rock & roll of 'Back In The USSR' (a mixture of Berry and the Beach Boys) and 'Birthday'; to the romantic 'Mother Nature's Son', 'I Will' and 'Julia'; the story-in-a-song of 'Rocky Racoon', 'Bungalow Bill' and 'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da'; and the strong images of 'Glass Onion', 'Cry Baby Cry' and 'Happiness Is A Warm Gun', the album represented as wide a range of material as anything the Beatles had offered up before.

Also in 1968, in the midst of the British rock & roll nostalgia revival, had come Paul's Presley-esque 'Lady Madonna', and what was probably *the* song of 1968 – or even the '60s – Paul's gigantic 'Hey Jude', backed with John's 'Revolution'. They had done it again; as during their whole career it had seemed that when the Beatles' talent was wearing thin they stood up and showed the world where their music was at.

But it wasn't long before disillusion started to set in. John's interests outside the Beatles were becoming more important to him, and his avant-garde music with Yoko Ono and the Plastic Ono Band was taking most of his time. It was left to Paul to keep the Beatles Myth alive. In the midst of apathy and eternal business troubles at Apple he organised the *Let It Be* film, and up there on the big screen the world witnessed the end. What music there was, was very thin – apart from John's revamped 'Across The Universe'. The songs were by now mainly left in Paul's hands. He produced the gospel-flavoured title song 'Let It Be', the rocking 'Get Back', and his hopefully romantic 'Long And Winding Road'.

John's lack of fresh material was sadly missed, but he had nevertheless been quite successful with his Plastic Ono Band singles 'Give Peace A Chance', 'Cold Turkey' and 'Instant Karma' – with a chord sequence borrowed from 'All You Need Is Love'. Also released under the Beatles label at this time was the magnificent 'The Ballad Of John And Yoko', recorded by just John and Paul with John supplying the Berry-type lead guitar lick, and Paul on bass and drums.

It seemed a difficult period for the foundering career of the Beatles, but they somehow managed to keep the Myth alive with the last album they were to record together (although it was released before 'Let It Be'), 'Abbey Road'. The 'Let It Be' recordings were just left lying around because, for the first time since 'Please Please Me', no one wanted anything to do with their material. Eventually the tapes were handed over to Glyn Johns to try and make an album.

Although 'Abbey Road' may have kept the Myth alive through 1969, and could be called 'Sgt. Pepper Part Two', it was dismal to realize that the Beatles had got to a point where Paul was too embarrassed to ask John if he could sing harmony on John's 'Come Together'. 'Come Together', though, found John at his strongest, and firmly in the 'Walrus' vein with what was probably the best song he'd produced for some months.

John's 'I Want You (She's So Heavy)' on 'Abbey Road' was, however, not quite as successful – based as it was on an R&B structure similar to Bob Dorough and Ben Tucker's 'Comin' Home Babe'. The 15-minute sequence of 'Sun King', 'Mean Mr. Mustard' and 'Polythene Pam' stood out on side two of the album as unquestionably John's contribution, as did his other interesting song on the album, 'Because', which was written with the help of Yoko and Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata'.

Paul also supplied a varied assortment of songs for 'Abbey Road'. 'Maxwell's Silver Hammer', which had first been introduced being rehearsed in the film *Let It Be*, was a typical McCartney storey-in-a-song. For his second contribution, a rocker called 'Oh! Darling', Paul had arrived early at the studio every day for a week to sing it to himself and so make his voice hoarse as though he'd been performing on stage for a week. He also made up the majority of a 15-minute sequence with his beautiful 'You Never Give Me Your Money', 'Golden Slumbers', and the good-time rocker, 'She Came In Through The Bathroom Window'. The sequence, made up mostly of material John and Paul had written while in India, wasn't completed as individual songs, but nevertheless formed an interesting collage. The closing of the album, and ironically the Beatles' career together, was marked by Paul's karmic song, 'The End'.

*'And in the end the love you take is equal
to the love you make'*

George Harrison's first credit as a songwriter had been for an instrumental written with John Lennon and recorded in the early



Pictorial Press



Kobal Collection



Camera Press

Top left: The Beatle who remained almost untouched by it all. **Top right:** Up on the roof at Apple for *Let It Be*. **Bottom left:** George with Patti Boyd and the Maharishi.

days in Hamburg. Then there was a gap until the Beatles' second album 'With The Beatles', and the song 'Don't Bother Me'. Then a further gap until 'Help', with 'I Need You' and 'You Like Me Too Much'. 'If I Needed Someone' from 'Rubber Soul' was, however, the first song to put George in the Lennon/McCartney class; this was his first song to be covered by another artist (the Hollies), and become a hit.

Then came 'Revolver' and George's opening track 'Taxman'. Here was a typical Beatles opener in the same vein as Lennon and McCartney's 'Rubber Soul' opener 'Drive My Car' – a good solid beat with a nice catch-phrase. The Indian influenced 'Love You Too' wasn't the first time George had played sitar on record – he had already used the instrument on John's 'Norwegian Wood' – but this time he was joined by Anil Bhagwat on tabla.

'Sgt. Pepper' brought Indian influence to the ears of the public in a big way with 'Within You Without You', and from this point on George really started experimenting. 'Blue Jay Way' from 'Magical Mystery Tour' was the result, and found him using images almost as well as Lennon.

George contributed two songs on the *Yellow Submarine* soundtrack, 'Only A Northern Song' and 'It's All Too Much', in which he incorporates some beautiful feedback at the start, and a couple of lines

from an old Merseybeats' hit 'Sorrow', in the final fade. He was writing so much in those days that John at one point remarked: "George is turning out songs like soft Mick these days."

George in fact was digesting influences from all around him – the Band, Bob Dylan, Lennon and McCartney, India, the Blues – everything and everyone. The 'B' sides of Beatles singles were by now becoming an outlet for George's writing skill and 'The Inner Light', the 'B' side of 'Lady Madonna', drew fine complements from Paul: "Forget the Indian music and listen to the melody. Don't you think it's a beautiful melody? It's really lovely."

The 'White' album again showed George had the wit and imagery of John in songs like 'Piggies' and 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps', which incorporated Eric Clapton playing lead guitar. 'Something' from 'Abbey Road', could even have been pure Paul McCartney despite the suggestion that the opening line had come from a song James Taylor had recorded on Apple a year before titled 'Something In The Way She Moves'.

The question of originality, in fact, seemed to plague George's writing. It arose again later with 'My Sweet Lord', which closely resembled the Chiffons' 'He's So Fine'; but there can be no question as to the Harrison song on the 'Abbey

Road' album – 'Here Comes The Sun' was beautifully inspired. In retrospect it's a shame to think of how George had already penned 'All Things Must Pass' at the time of 'Let It Be', as had Paul with 'Teddy Boy' and 'Junk' from his first solo album.

Although 'All Things Must Pass' was written at the time of 'Let It Be', George's contributions to that album were in no way as innovative; the waltz tempo 'I Me Mine', and the straight 12-bar blues 'For You Blue' were both, however, proof of a fine songwriting talent.

Ringo's songwriting career started when he was credited along with Lennon and McCartney for the C&W flavoured 'What Goes On' on 'Rubber Soul'. Then came another rocka-hillbilly, 'Don't Pass Me By', from the 'White' album, and a glimpse of Ringo and George rehearsing 'Octopus's Garden' on the set of the *Let It Be* film – a recording later released on 'Abbey Road'. Ringo has often admitted that he only knows three chords, but he certainly makes the most of them, and with his LPs and singles of the '70s appears to be enjoying the musical possibilities of life outside the old foursome.

Since the demise of the Beatles in 1970 all four have had successful albums and written good-quality songs, but somehow the magic of a new Beatles album has yet to be captured.

POP FILE

... the Who's Who of Pop. Week by week the A-Z of who did what and when.

J GEILS BAND are Peter Wolf (vocals), Seth Justman (piano and organ), Magic Dick (mouth harp), J. Geils (guitar), Danny Klein (bass) and Stephen Bladd (drums and vocals). Formed in Boston, Mass., in the late '60s from two rival local bands, J. Geils are one of the few American white bands to play authentic soul, blues and rhythm & blues. Influenced by the bluesmen who played small clubs in Boston, and by English bands like the Yardbirds and John Mayall, the band are a punchy live act and this feeling comes across well on their four albums on Atlantic.

BOBBIE GENTRY, a California girl, hit the charts in 1967 with her own song 'Ode To Billy Joe', which she followed in 1969, with 'I'll Never Fall In Love Again', reaching no. 1 in Britain. The same year she duetted with Glen Campbell, on a successful revival of the Everly Brothers hit 'All I Have To Do Is Dream'. She then became a big-name star with TV programmes on both sides of the Atlantic.



SKR

GERRY AND THE PACEMAKERS, led by Gerry Marsden, were Brian Epstein Liverpool prodigies who made no. 1 with their first release 'How Do You Do It' early in 1963 - before the Beatles made no. 1. Gerry and Co. followed with two more chart-toppers, 'I Like It' and 'You'll Never Walk Alone' the same year, and had more hits including 'I'm The One', 'Don't Let The Sun Catch You Crying' and 'Ferry 'Cross The Mersey', and 'I'll Be There', up to 1965. Gerry has since made a name for himself in pantomime and stage shows.

BOBBY GOLDSBORO, who comes from Nashville, had spent some years on the road, playing back-up to Roy Orbison among others, before he signed to United Artists in 1964. In 1968, he had a massive hit with 'Honey', which sold five million copies. It was the biggest seller of the year outselling even the Beatles' 'Hey Jude'.

Pictorial Press



JACK GOOD, an Oxford graduate, was one of the first people in Britain to realise that rock was more than a passing fad. He produced the best TV shows of the '50s, *6.5 Special* and *Oh Boy!*, which were only bettered by his *Ready Steady Go* in the '60s. He emigrated to the US to produce *Shindig* and sent PJ Proby to England in 1964. He probably understands more about presenting rock on TV than any other man alive.



Rex Features

BERRY GORDY started out as the independent record producer of Marvin Johnson and the Miracles. In 1959, his sister Anna formed Anna Records in Detroit, and the following year Gordy set up Tammie, later renamed Tamla. Legend has it that Gordy gave up his job in a car factory and borrowed \$600 to form his company; the American Dream with a new twist - because he was black. His earliest successes were with the Miracles, the Marvelettes and the Contours and he soon established other 'Detroit Sound' labels - Motown, Gordy, Soul and VIP. Gordy and his producers took elements of black church music, fused them with rock, using the highest possible production techniques. From the mid-'60s, Motown grew to massive proportions with acts including the Temptations, the Four Tops, the Supremes, Marvin Gay, Stevie Wonder, and Martha and the Vandellas.

GOLD DISCS are awarded by record companies to artists, songwriters and themselves, for million-selling records. In Britain this means sales of more than one million copies, while in the USA this means sales worth more than one million dollars.

THE GRATEFUL DEAD were formed in San Francisco in 1966, when love and acid hit that city. The band, fronted by Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir and Phil Lesh has been bearing that standard ever since. From their 1967 album onwards, the Dead have been hailed as the leaders of acid rock, and the leaders of a 'tribal' lifestyle mythology. Renowned for long improvised numbers and performances lasting up to five or six hours, the band became more country influenced after their 1967 album 'Workingman's Dead' and later on 'American Beauty'.

SKR





SKR

AL GREEN was born in Forrest City, Arkansas, where he got into gospel music at an early age. From 16 to 19, he worked in R&B groups before making his first record (and hit) 'Back Up Train', which he followed in 1972, with 'Tired Of Being Alone', 'Look What You Done For Me', and 'Let's Stay Together', which sold over two million copies and won Al a number of awards for 1972.

ELLIE GREENWICH AND JEFF BARRY came up with the songs 'Then He Kissed Me', 'Da Doo Ron Ron', and 'Be My Baby', for Phil Spector in 1963. Again working with Spector they wrote 'River Deep Mountain High' for Ike and Tina Turner.

THE GROUNDHOGS,

led by guitarist Tony McPhee, have been playing blues since the '60s. In 1968, McPhee reformed the group and they moved more into heavy rock with great success. They have recorded a number of best-selling albums including 'Thank Christ For The Bomb', and 'Split', and 'Who Will Save The World? The Mighty Groundhogs'.



SKR

GRAND FUNK RAILROAD, guided by manager Terry Knight, became a major teenage sensation in the US in 1969, with a diet of uncompromisingly deafening free rock. The group - Mark Farner, Don Brewer and Mel Schacher - started their quick rise to fame at the Atlanta Pop Festival in 1969 and soon sold out across the US, cut five million-selling albums and planned to do same thing throughout the world. But as quickly as it started, all the fuss stopped. The group flopped in Britain, lost the imagination of their US fans and all that was left was a pile of writs and counter writs, as the group and Knight tried to work out who had ripped off who.

GUESS WHO are one of the few Canadian groups (apart from the Band) to gain any recognition outside their own country. The group are Jim Kale (bass), Gary Peterson (drums), Randy Bachman (guitar), and Burton Cummings (lead vocals and keyboards).

ARLO GUTHRIE, son of Woody Guthrie, started singing professionally in 1966. In 1967, he made it with his song 'Alice's Restaurant', that became the high spot of that year's Newport Folk Festival. Arlo's humour came out on that, and on his other 'long song', 'Motorcycle'. He made a film of *Alice's Restaurant* and a good song became a full-scale commercial venture and, Arlo, the head of a new US fun-generation myth, that ran its course within a year.



SKR

WOODY GUTHRIE was song writer, folk poet, writer and traveller who worked in the '30s and '40s with 'This machine kills fascists' emblazoned on his guitar. The archetype for all wandering folk singers since, Guthrie held strong revolutionary but humanitarian political beliefs, which often came out in his songs. Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, Jack Elliott and Cisco Houston were among his close friends. Woody Guthrie died in 1968 after many years in hospital. Guthrie wrote ballads, talking blues, political songs, and children's songs, and was a major influence on folk, country and rock artists - notably Bob Dylan, who modeled his early style on Guthrie.

TIM HARDIN, descended from wild west outlaw John Wesley Hardin celebrated by Bob Dylan, made his first album in 1966. When Bobby Darin had a hit with Tim's song 'If I Were A Carpenter' that year, Hardin quickly acquired a reputation as an imaginative songwriter and singer. Originally a white bluesman, he was one of the first to play electric folk blues in the early '60s,



Redfern

before Dylan and the Byrds were doing that very thing. Among the songs he has written are 'Misty Roses', 'Lady Came From Baltimore', 'Reason To Believe' and 'If I Were A Carpenter'.

WEE WILLIE HARRIS enjoyed some success in Britain in the '50s, mainly through his wild live appearances and his ruffled pink or green hair, baggy candy-striped suits and outside bowties. One of the first to bring direct humour into rock.

POP FILE

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BLACK MUSIC

Aretha Franklin: The lady with a voice that's the epitome of emotional speed. Aretha has had hard times and strange times and never quite fulfilled her early promise.

POP CULTURE

Beatlemania: No one who didn't actually live through these fantasy scenes can really believe the amazing lengths that the whole world went to – just to show their appreciation of four boys in a rock group.

POP

Punk Rock: America's answer to the Beatles and the Stones was a riot of totally forgettable imitations all trying to look as mean as Eric Burdon or Eric Clapton. Necessity was no longer the mother of invention, but plagiarism the only quick salvation for survival.

ROCK

British R&B: The early '60s saw the rise of fanatical following for R&B and Blues in the South of England. A movement which produced The Rolling Stones, John Mayall, Eric Clapton, Geoff Beck and Rod Stewart, the Who and many others who have since dominated the history of pop.

THE MUSIC

Jagger and Richard: Where the Beatles sang 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand', the Stones sang 'Let's Spend The Night Together'; Jagger and Richard just said it straight out; with a wry wit and sardonic social awareness that made them the true heirs of their idol – Chuck Berry.

THE SUPERSTARS

The Rolling Stones: The critics choice as the no. 1 rock band in the world, the Stones have been setting the pace for 10 years now, and still retain that special magic for their fans – after all, 'they've been outlaws all their lives'.

PROFILE

Traffic: Formed by Steve Winwood as a refuge from the pop circuit and the Spencer Davis Group, Traffic has had a checkered career. At times they produced some of the most inventive music in Britain; at other times they just produced more changes in personnel than their fans could follow.

POP INFLUENCES

Bare Wires: An explanation of the technology of rock music from the instruments, via those several tons of mysterious black boxes, to the sound you actually hear.

Plus: Pop File and more Lyrics

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