

THE
RADIO
ONE

Story of Pop

THE FIRST
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS



Eddie Cochran: The James Dean of Rock
The Everly Brothers: Everlasting Harmonies
Clockwork Rock: The Birth Of The Monkees
Plus: The New Breed, Black Writers & more

PART 22
25p
EVERY THURSDAY

AUSTRALIA 65c NEW ZEALAND 70c SOUTH AFRICA 70c NORTH AMERICA \$1.25



Fragmentation . . . one word that sums up the scene at the end of the Beatles' decade. After they had welded youth into a whole, after they had split, the young too broke into splinter groups, attracted to different life-styles, different groups exploring different musical fields. More change came faster after 1967 than at any previous time and the ways in which pop divided are explored in this chapter.

There were the first stirrings of a totally new pop audience – the sub-teens. The demise of the Beatles turned thoughts towards the 'new Beatles' and the most successful attempt was the creation of the Monkees. Several things emerged from this experiment; the use of television to sell a group; the manufacturing, in a cynical and totally commercial manner, of a group; and the emergence of an audience younger still than many of the Beatles' fans had been. The trend towards manufactured idols was to be important in the '70s. At about the same time but in among older kids was the beginning of a serious political and social disaffection with the established order, the birth of revolt in the young that was to lead to violence. Some writers reflected these feelings and pointed another trend – the singer who was also a songwriter and who crystallised his thoughts and emotions in his music and, concurrently, the new musical muscle discovered by black writers.

As the '60s drew to a whimper of a close there started a nostalgia quite unprecedented in rock before. Perhaps it was because rock was now into its teens and had behind it a short, but dynamic, history; perhaps there was a certain sterility of ideas; whatever the reason musicians started to look back to their roots and, slowly at first and then in a flood, rock & roll was reborn. The old songs were reperformed, new ones written based on their structures. Rock & roll was revived and in this spirit we look at Eddie Cochran and The Everly Brothers, who were so instrumental in the forming of the pop music that was to come. The old and the new, then, are the main topics for discussion.

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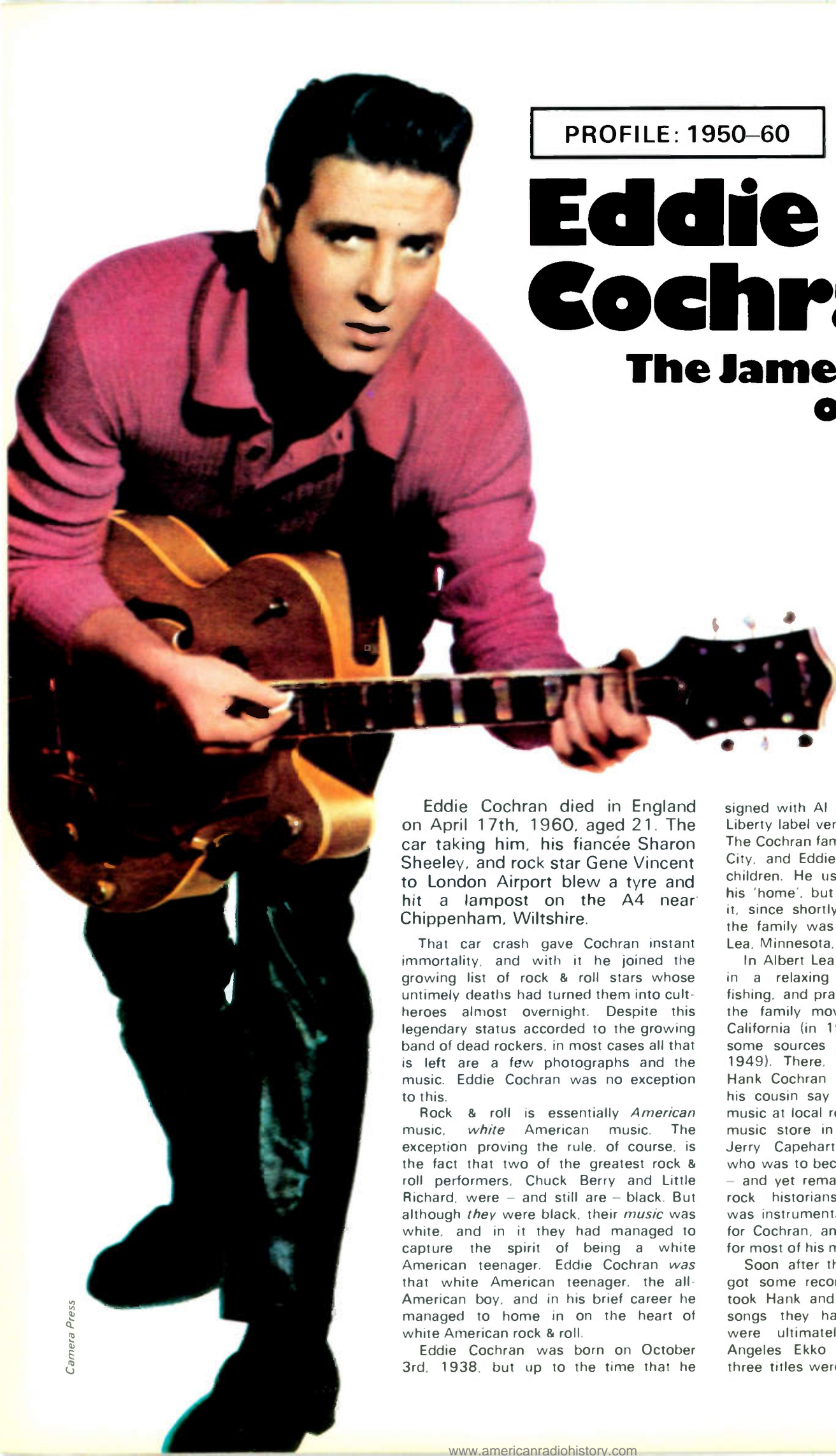
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 All charts positions and release dates refer to the UK unless otherwise stated.



PROFILE: 1950–60

Eddie Cochran:

The James Dean of Rock

Eddie Cochran died in England on April 17th, 1960, aged 21. The car taking him, his fiancée Sharon Sheeley, and rock star Gene Vincent to London Airport blew a tyre and hit a lamppost on the A4 near Chippenham, Wiltshire.

That car crash gave Cochran instant immortality, and with it he joined the growing list of rock & roll stars whose untimely deaths had turned them into cult-heroes almost overnight. Despite this legendary status accorded to the growing band of dead rockers, in most cases all that is left are a few photographs and the music. Eddie Cochran was no exception to this.

Rock & roll is essentially *American* music, *white* American music. The exception proving the rule, of course, is the fact that two of the greatest rock & roll performers, Chuck Berry and Little Richard, were – and still are – black. But although *they* were black, their *music* was white, and in it they had managed to capture the spirit of being a white American teenager. Eddie Cochran was that white American teenager, the all-American boy, and in his brief career he managed to home in on the heart of white American rock & roll.

Eddie Cochran was born on October 3rd, 1938, but up to the time that he

signed with Al Bennet's Hollywood-based Liberty label very little is known about him. The Cochran family home was in Oklahoma City, and Eddie was the youngest of five children. He used to call Oklahoma City his 'home', but it's doubtful he ever knew it, since shortly before or after his birth the family was forced to move to Albert Lea, Minnesota, in search of employment.

In Albert Lea (pop. 20,000) he grew up in a relaxing atmosphere of hunting, fishing, and practising the guitar, but then the family moved out to Bell Gardens, California (in 1953 say Liberty, although some sources give the date as early as 1949). There, Eddie began playing with Hank Cochran (no relation say Liberty – his cousin say others), playing rockabilly music at local reviews. And then in a local music store in Bell Gardens, Eddie met Jerry Capehart, an aspiring songwriter who was to become integral to his success – and yet remain totally ignored by most rock historians. Undoubtedly Capehart was instrumental in finding the right style for Cochran, and he also wrote the words for most of his major hits.

Soon after their first meeting Capehart got some recording studio time, and he took Hank and Eddie along to cut some songs they had co-written (and which were ultimately released on the Los Angeles Ekko label). After this session three titles were released as singles under

the name of 'The Cochran Brothers': 'Tired And Sleepy', 'Mr. Fiddle', and 'Guilty Conscience'. Hank Cochran, however, felt that their musical interests weren't really very close, and so set off for Nashville to play pure country music (he had some small success later with 'Little Bitty Tear').

Soon after Hank's departure in 1956, Jerry Capehart and Eddie made some dubs for American Music, a publishing company, and among the songs they laid down were 'Long Tall Sally' and 'Blue Suede Shoes' – an indication of how fast they had moved on to pure rock & roll once away from Hank's country influence. On the dubs, since released by Liberty, Eddie sang and played guitar, and Jerry Capehart played a cardboard box amplified to sound like a snare drum. Connie 'Guybo' Smith played fine bass on these sessions, as he did on most of Eddie's hits (some accounts place him on the Cochran Brothers' recordings as well).

From these dubs, Eddie had his first solo record released – 'Skinny Jim'/'Half-Loved' – on the Crest label (a promotional subsidiary of American Music). Armed with the dubs and the solo record, Jerry Capehart did the rounds of the record companies in the area and found Liberty interested enough to sign Eddie. Then, instead of using any Capehart/Cochran material (they later released a more polished version of 'Skinny Jim', which Capehart had written), Liberty gave them a John D. Loudermilk song, 'Sittin' In The Balcony', to record. Released in late 1956 it sold over 1,000,000 copies, with Eddie singing in his gulping, ersatz-Elvis voice, and Capehart on the cardboard box drums. As a direct result of the hit came a cameo part for Eddie in the film *The Girl Can't Help It*, starring Tom Ewell and Jayne Mansfield.

The film, directed by Frank Tashlin, was one of the better ones to come out of the period labelled as 'rock & roll films'. It featured most of the usual names – Little Richard, Gene Vincent, Fats Domino – but had them as incidentals . . . the story-line (about Jayne Mansfield's rise to stardom as a rock & roll star who couldn't sing) coming first. Eddie was in fact being watched on television during the film, singing a number he had co-written with someone called Fairfield, 'Twenty Flight Rock'.

In fact, neither 'Twenty Flight Rock' nor 'Sittin' In The Balcony' were really very good records. 'Twenty Flight Rock' was simply a variation on the numbers theme used by Bill Haley for 'Rock Around The Clock'; and 'Sittin' In The Balcony' was really little more than the one line about sitting in the back row of the balcony at the cinema holding hands with a girl. Liberty did, however, use a Capehart/Cochran song as the follow-up to Loudermilk's. Capehart now describes the release of 'Mean When I'm Mad' as 'a mistake', and if sales are any reflection he was quite right. The record was a disaster, and it marked the beginning of a lean period for them both. They spent the

time trying out various different styles, trying to find the right one for them. Also during this time Eddie made another film, *Untamed Youth*, which was about kids picking cotton in California.

It wasn't until March of 1958, though, that the whole thing came together. According to Jerry Capehart both of them were by then unashamedly searching for commerciality in their songs, looking for a sound that would sell and make them both successful. That sound eventually came along the evening before they were due in Los Angeles' Gold Star studios (where they did most of their recording). Eddie had travelled from his home to Capehart's Park Sunset apartment in Hollywood, and at the end of a fruitless night, Eddie came out with a riff that Capehart was keen to use somehow and find some lyrics for.

"I knew," he says, "that there had been a lot of songs about summer, but none about the *hardships* of summer. Of all the seasons, there'd never been a blues song about summer." And so, in less than an hour they had written the first summertime blues, in fact *the* 'Summertime Blues'.

That number proved to be what they had spent two years looking for. In its few verses the song captured the hang-ups and absurdity of having to work in the summer holidays, so wrecking your 'social' life. Beyond that, the song also seemed to harbour a more general discontent with authority – from parents and the boss,

right up to the most self-important politicians:

*'Ev'ry time I call my Baby,
Try to get a date, My boss says
'No dice, Son you gotta work late.'*

After its release in May, 1958, 'Summertime Blues' quickly became an enormous hit and Eddie's second Gold Disc. As an all-time, much-covered classic of rock & roll it stands as fresh and relevant today as it was then.

It wasn't merely Jerry Capehart's words that made the record such a classic: those few chords strummed on Cochran's semi-acoustic Gibson, the sudden pauses for the gruff voice of authority (which was dubbed on later by Eddie himself), the naturally exciting way he sang it, blended everything into a perfect cohesive whole.

The sparse instrumentation of Eddie's voice(s) and guitar, Connie Smith's bass and Jerry Capehart's cardboard box, were again used in the follow up-record, 'C'mon Everybody'. All the same ingredients were there, carefully re-mixed so that the formula would work again with the record sounding somehow 'similar yet different' (the key to the success of more than just Eddie Cochran).

'C'mon Everybody' was another Capehart/Cochran song, and retained that some teenage 'feel' that had hallmarked 'Summertime Blues': the same use of a simple-yet-effective strummed chord

Eddie Cochran giving one of his many unforgettable performances.



U.P.I.



Eddie Cochran ironically died when his single 'Three Steps To Heaven' was a hit.

sequence, the same 'voice', and the same teenage sentiments in the lyrics. This time though, Jerry Capehart focused on the complexities, problems and joys of kids holding a party while their parents are away.

Although 'C'mon Everybody' didn't do as well as 'Summertime Blues' – except in Britain for some strange reason – it still sold well over 1,000,000 copies and joined 'Summertime Blues' – which had been there most of the summer – in the autumn charts of 1958, carrying on over well into 1959.

During 1959, though, Eddie dissipated his energies somewhat. His next record after 'C'mon Everybody' was 'Somethin' Else' (written by Eddie and Sharon Sheeley, his girlfriend), which simply adapted the expression to a variety of things and girls. Although all the same ingredients were used, this time it just didn't come off.

Nevertheless, to aid his touring commitments, Eddie had formed a band which featured Connie 'Guybo' Smith on bass, Gene Ridgion on drums, and a variety of

musicians on piano and sax. The group even cut some records together, notably the instrumental 'Guybo'/'Strollin' Guitar'. This record clearly bore the marks of Eddie's growing interest in the production techniques involved in recording (he'd been a pioneer of the multi-dubbing process), and at the time he was seriously thinking of retiring from the rock business of touring and constantly performing. He wanted more time to use the studios, both for himself and for some other unknown performers he admired. One of these was a friend called Bob Denton, who played on some of Gene Vincent's records and who Eddie had met on the set of *The Girl Can't Help It*. Another was a duo called Jewel and Eddie (Jewel Atkins, who was to later have the hit, 'The Birds And The Bees', and Eddie Daniels); and he and Jerry Capehart were also both very keen to record with a young studio musician they'd come across called Glenn Campbell.

Another factor behind Eddie's wish to move out of the limelight was the death of a close friend of his, Buddy Holly. They'd arranged to tour together, but at

the last minute problems had prevented Eddie from making the trip. It was to be Holly's last tour, as the plane carrying him and two other performers, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper (J. P. Richardson), crashed in a snowstorm.

Holly's death on February 3rd 1959, affected Eddie very deeply, and it's said that he never played any of Buddy's records again (except, so one story goes, on the eve of his own death). As a tribute, Eddie cut 'Three Stars' (which was, incidentally, written by John D. Loudermilk), with the intention that the royalties should go to the bereaved families. Because of some lack of agreement with Liberty, the record was never released at the time.

Anyway, Eddie decided to make one last tour – of England – with Gene Vincent. Like Holly, who had played in England before them, they were received like Gods. American performers were never exactly regular visitors to Britain at that time, and their TV appearances and live performances blazed a triumphant trail around the country. The tour was jointly promoted by Jack Good and Larry Parnes, and it was so successful that Gene and Eddie were asked – and agreed to – a 10-week extension after a short break.

After the final date of the first half at the Bristol Hippodrome on April 16th, 1960, Eddie set off in a hired taxi to London Airport with Gene Vincent and Sharon Sheeley. Gene was going to Paris for a few dates and Eddie was returning to the States with his fiancée Sharon, to get married. They'd been together since the touring days of the Kelly Four, and she was a songwriter, known primarily for Ricky Nelson's 'Poor Little Fool' and Eddie's own 'Somethin' Else'.

In the early hours of the following morning, a burst tyre sent the car crashing into a lamppost. The three of them were sleeping in the back when it happened, and Eddie was thrown up into the car roof. Several hours later, he died of severe head injuries without ever regaining consciousness. Both Sharon and Gene were badly injured, and Gene was in pain from the injuries until his death in 1971.

Eddie Cochran's next scheduled release was the ironically-titled 'Three Steps To Heaven' (although it referred to the 'heaven on earth' of being in love, and not 'the great juke-box in the sky'), and in the month following his death it became his biggest hit ever. Both it, and the oft-preferred 'B' side, 'Cut Across Shorty', had been recorded at his last session in 1959, but this didn't stop more posthumous releases all varying successful.

The legendary reputations Holly and Cochran still have in England are no doubt due in part to the simple fact that they took the trouble to tour the country; but there is no doubt either that Cochran's reputation was made long before he crossed the Atlantic. Those two anthems for teenage America, 'Summertime Blues' and 'C'mon Everybody' – although only making a total of three minutes and forty-eight seconds together – were both the stuff of which legends are made.

The Great Rock & Roll Revival

Rock & roll continually refers back to its own history and mythology. 'Do you remember the guys who gave us rock and roll?' demanded the Beach Boys in 1964. 'Is the music dead?' asked Don McLean's 'American Pie' in early 1972. 'Rock & roll lives', insisted Gary Glitter, later that same year.

This obsession with roots and history is in almost complete contradiction to the spirit of pop. Pop music is *now*, what's in the charts and what's coming up, and yesterday's gone. Pop, the framework within which many rock musicians must work, is nearly completely ahistorical: there's little concern about where something is coming from or where it's going to.

If rock & roll *has* managed to retain a distinct sense of identity and a continuous aesthetic tradition, the credit must go to the musicians themselves rather than the pop audience. Only recently, with the nostalgia wave on the one hand and the growth of rock academia on the other, has the pop audience become in the least

Chris Walter



interested in history and roots – and then largely as an outlet for consumption. It is the musicians who have carried the flame of rock & roll onwards from the early 1950s to the present day.

Why is it that new rock musicians continually refer back to old rock & roll? Mostly because nearly all rock musicians start out as rabid fans. The Beach Boys thought that "Chuck Berry must have been the greatest thing to come along". Don McLean cried when Buddy Holly died. "I'm really a fan at heart", Gary Glitter told one fan magazine. Even the Beatles cut their teeth on Little Richard and Carl Perkins.

But if rock & roll retains a continuous tradition, it is a tradition of continuous change and mutation. The Beatles were rock & roll revivalists who changed the rock & roll form irrevocably: they changed it so much, in fact, that it ceased to be rock & roll and a further revival became necessary.

'Rock & roll', though, must be viewed here as less a distinct musical form than a distinct set of social and aesthetic attitudes. The Beach Boys, yet again, pinned it all down pretty well on 'Do You Remember?':

*'The critics kept a knockin'
But the stars kept on rockin'
And the choppin' didn't get very far . . .'*

In the very beginning, in the early '50s, rock & roll was literally *outrageous*. It really did upset parents everywhere. They condemned it as crudely sexual, barbaric, repulsive, a menace to society, and so on. *Only teenagers liked it*. Rock & roll was *their* property, and no one else's. It gave them a sense of identity as a new and unique generation.

Teenage Godfathers

The rise of the teenage crooners like Paul Anka, Pat Boone and Cliff Richard in the early '60s, soon put paid to the notion that rock & roll was a menace to anyone. They made teenage music acceptable to the whole family, if not necessarily well-liked. The Beatles, and then particularly the Rolling Stones, restored outrage to rock & roll. They made parents condemn teenage music all over again, they restored teenage consciousness, they were godfathers to the teenage secret society. But finally they, too, declined into respectability. The Beatles went progressive and intellectual; Mick Jagger joined the ranks of high society. Teenage consciousness lacked a focus.

Finally, the new rock & roll teenage idols broke through. Marc Bolan, a dedicated fan of Eddie Cochran and Chuck Berry; Slade with their post-Beatles hard rock; David Bowie with his late '60s 'New York Decadence'; Gary Glitter, the robot Elvis. To restore teenage rock & roll

Opposite page: Gary Glitter and the Beach Boys. From L. to R.: Brian and Carl Wilson, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson and Al Jardine.

consciousness, if not necessarily the original musical form, it's been necessary to continually roll back the frontiers of outrage. Actually, the '70s British outrage has been pretty tame stuff. It's doubtful that parents object very much to Bolan's glitter or Slade's vulgarity or Bowie's alleged bisexuality. But the kids *think* they're outrageous, and that's all that counts.

It's in America, once again, that the *real* outrage is going down. Alice Cooper, with his dead chickens and snakes and guillotines, is someone that parents definitely shouldn't like. Or the New York Dolls, the 1973 sensation in decadence, who made David Bowie look like a Christmas pantomime good fairy.

Pre-teen Appeal

All these bands aim for the *effect* of the original rock & roll, without necessarily repeating the original rock & roll form. And all these bands appeal primarily to a pre-teen and teenage audience, who buy hit singles and take little interest in intellectual notions about 'progression' or 'decadence', who barely remember the Beatles, and know nothing of Little Richard. If they like David Bowie it's because he's pretty or because he's good to dance to – not because he's 'the most intellectually brilliant man ever to use the medium of the long-playing record', as one American critic has claimed.

Bowie is unusual in having both a teenage and a post-teenage audience. Someone like Gary Glitter aims his act exclusively at a pre-teen and teenage audience; to the over-20s, he cannot help but appear as a lightweight camp oddity, an outrageous buffoon. Glitter's whole stage *persona* is a kind of pop art parody of rock & roll superstardom: obsessively repetitious music, half-funny and half-serious lyrics ('Do You Wanna Touch Me?'), ludicrous stage movements, motorbikes and silver lamé suits. And yet, to his audience, Glitter is a true star. Everything about him is *real*.

Where Glitter really lives out his role, other bands merely mimic teen outrage. Roy Wood's Wizzard runs the gamut from mid-'50s rock & roll ('Ball Park Incident') to early-'60s Phil Spector pop ('See My Baby Jive'). Wizzard's music is a more perfect re-creation of the old rock & roll than Gary Glitter's – but it's all too clearly an exercise in mere style. It's almost as if Roy Wood is ashamed of admitting a liking for rock & roll. Yet though Wizzard are thoroughly and self-consciously fake, their hit singles are real enough.

Some bands make a virtue of self-consciousness. They plunder the past in an effort to cast light on the present and the future. Roxy Music, who began as the latest progressive sensation and then followed Bowie into teen heroism, often use '50s melodies and stage choreography to put over their vision of a mutant future. Leader Bryan Ferry's appearance is that of an oriental Elvis, immaculately Brylcreemed and enigmatic. The lyrics are mostly high

camp stuff about Hollywood starlets and glittering mansions, 'looking for love in a looking-glass world . . .' Ferry's fascination with old rock & roll is matched only by his obsession with the silver screen (Roxy are named after a cinema), and both appeal to him on a level of pure *style*. Roxy are all style, elegant lounge lizards affecting a bored cynicism with everything. The music is cold, computerised, drained of nearly all emotion. It's difficult to imagine anything much further from the original rock & roll, but perhaps that's the point of it all, to show us how far we've travelled.

Less self-conscious, but equally mutated, rock & roll revivalists Hawkwind broke out of the Ladbroke Grove hippie ghetto of West London in the summer of '72 with their space-rock epic 'Silver Machine'. In theory, Hawkwind are psychedelic revivalists, the spirit of 1967, endless voyages into the infinite cosmos. But in fact their music reaches much further back: one-chord Chuck Berry riffs batter against the solar winds. Hawkwind are the space-surfing Beach Boys, and their lyrics are nearly as banal: comic book sci-fi crossed with heavy philosophy, Jet Ace Logan meets Kierkegaard somewhere near Alpha Centauri III ('This is your Captain speaking. Your Captain is dead'). Hawkwind recreate the original pure trashiness of garage-band rock & roll, without even trying to.

Silver Lamé And Leather

The American rock & roll revivalists Sha Na Na are an oddity in rock: a pure comedy turn. They specialise in near-perfect reproductions of '50s rock & roll and teen ballads, put over with meticulously choreographed camp exaggerations of '50s stage movements. They dress in silver lamé and leather, they drip hair oil. Sha Na Na have been performing this act for quite some time, having first broken through at the Woodstock Festival of 1969, an extremely incongruous setting. They've survived because they're so very funny, not because they evoke nostalgia. But they're not, of course, of very much musical interest.

Meanwhile, Donny Osmond scores hit after hit with pre-Beatles teen ballads like 'Puppy Love', recycled for the only audience that would now find them credible – the pre-teens. 'Puppy Love' was written by Paul Anka, one of the teen crooners who anaesthetized '50s rock & roll in the first place. A 12-year-old Donny Osmond fan is now, it seems, at about the same level of sophistication as a 15-year-old Paul Anka fan was in 1958. The age group for this kind of stuff has dropped, but not very far.

Donny Osmond appeals to the pre-teen girls, where Alice Cooper or the Rolling Stones couldn't, because he appears *innocent*. A virgin audience needs virgin stars, close to their own experiences and able to fill a role in their daydreams. Donny Osmond is 15 years old. David Cassidy, who appeals to very much the same



L.F.I.

The American rock & roll revivalists, Sha Na Na, are a very funny comedy act, specialising in '50s rock & roll ballads.

audience, is 23; but on the TV show *The Partridge Family* he remains 16. Innocence is preserved.

While Donny Osmond revives old stuff, record companies continually re-release former hit singles by the original, often long-forgotten, artists. Sometimes, these songs are hits all over again: Little Eva's 'The Locomotion', Mary Wells' 'My Guy', and Carole King's 'It Might As Well Rain Until September', have all done a second round in the British charts. In attempting to account for their success, it becomes increasingly difficult to disentangle the nostalgia of an audience who were in their teens when they first heard those records, from the impulse of the new teenage audience towards simple, innocent and brilliantly contrived pop songs. Some of the people who bought 'The Locomotion' were reliving their youth – and some were just entering on theirs.

A Passing Phase

Nostalgia is a fairly new sentiment to the mass pop audience. In the old days, when pop was – in Nik Cohn's phrase – 'teenage property', no one was nostalgic. Teenagers were too busy thinking about today's pop to worry about yesterday's. And people over 20 didn't concern themselves very much with the pop music they used to listen to – it was just a passing

phase, something they'd grown out of.

The Beatles changed all that. They took a whole generation with them out of their teens, a generation who refused to grow out of rock & roll. But the price the Beatles paid was heavy: they created adult rock, progressive senility. The new rock knew too much, it had fallen from immaculate teen innocence. That was fine as long as it seemed to be going *somewhere*. But as rock music grew increasingly complex and more and more apparently directionless, people began to yearn for what they'd lost: good old rock & roll.

Nostalgia Trip

Nostalgia for rock & roll, though, is only partly musical. Partly, it's social. Nostalgia of any kind is a form of homesickness – a feeling of not belonging, a desire to return to a world we really knew how to handle, a need for some kind of security and roots. Nostalgia, though, is homesickness in time, which makes it a hopelessly pathological symptom. You can sometimes go home, though it's never quite the same. You can never go back. The wave of nostalgia for good old rock & roll that reached epidemic proportions in the early '70s, must be seen as a form of acute future shock. It celebrated an inability to cope not only with changes in the sphere of music but also with constantly insecure social

and economic realities.

Nostalgia, like everything else, was bigger and better in America than anywhere else. In Britain there was a rock & roll festival at London's Wembley Stadium in the summer of 1972, at which Chuck Berry triumphed and Gary Glitter outraged the Teddy Boys. But in America there was a whole series of revival concerts organised by the promoter Richard Nader, which brought back all the late-greats of the mid-'50s: Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bill Haley, everyone except Elvis . . . who was busy reviving himself. Nader also persuaded lesser stars of the past to re-emerge from retirement and re-form especially for these events. And when he'd worked his way through all the material for native nostalgia, he organised an English Invasion Revival Package, temporarily rescuing Gerry and the Pacemakers, Wayne Fontana and the Searchers from the North of England cabaret circuit.

Revival Shows

The film *Let The Good Times Roll* mixed footage from one of the Madison Square Gardens revival shows – featuring Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Bo Diddley as well as such unlikely choices as Chubby Checker and Danny and the Juniors – with actual film clips from the '50s. The film



L. Van Houten.

Roxy Music, with leader Bryan Ferry. They are pure style, singing high camp lyrics; the intellectual end to the '70s glitter spectrum.

cuts from an ageing full-colour Little Richard to a black-and-white mushroom cloud, or a high school prom, or a fall-out shelter drill, or the young Richard Nixon. The intention is comic, but the distance between the audience's memories of 1956 and the reality of it is quite apparent. The '50s were really dull times, being teenage was a miserable condition enlivened only by rock & roll. The fashions, the ideas, the heroes and the villains, are now part of a long-lost world. Times have changed – but the music remains the same. Or does it?

Obviously, nothing stays the same. People change, the world changes, and rock & roll changes. How many times can you listen to Chuck Berry playing 'Johnny B. Goode'? Hear it again after a long time and it's a revelation, a reminder of where we've come from. Hear it again and again and finally it must begin to grate. Nostalgia, at its most virulent, seems to demand that nothing must change, that Chuck Berry must repeat himself until the end of time.

The Carpenters nailed down nostalgia pretty well with their 1973 hit single 'Yesterday Once More'. Like all the Carpenters' records, it's shamelessly sentimental. But then, so is nostalgia:

*'When I was young I'd listen to the radio
Waiting for my favourite songs . . .*

*Now they're back again
Just like a long lost friend
All the songs I loved so well.'*

(Standard Music 1971/2)

The singer looks back on 'happy times . . . not so long ago'. She looks back on a brighter and less threatening world. She determines to live in the past, to let those old songs 'melt the years away':

*'All my best memories
Come back to me
Some can even make me cry . . .'*

'Yesterday Once More' is private nostalgia, reflections on lost individual innocence. The Madison Square Gardens' shows were collective nostalgia, a whole generation time-travelling back to their Golden Youth. "Honest to God" says the leader of the 5 Satins in *Let The Good Times Roll*, "this is just like 1956". In both instances, though, memory is fantasy. The past is idealised by comparison with the present. And yet the world itself has not changed *that* much: only our perceptions of it.

The main point about all this is, of course, that those who took a despairing line over the '70s spate of so called Rock & Roll revivalism, are themselves as much lost in a time warp as are those tinies and teens who flock to such performances. In

the beginning Rock & Roll was a teenage phenomenon, abhorred by all those of mature years.

Raising Eyebrows

In the '70s the scene is actually much the same. It is the tinies and teens strutting around in their glitter suits and painted lids who are now raising the eyebrows of the older audience. In the interim period, rock has become the music of the '20s and '30s and it's once again down to the kids to shock.

Nostalgia continues, though if a little half-heartedly. In his album, *Pin-Ups*, David Bowie tries to invoke nostalgia for Mod and Swinging London of the mid-'60s. He uses a Ray Davies' song as his theme: 'Where Have All The Good Times Gone?'. It's doubtful, though, that Bowie's increasingly more teenage audience know what he's talking about. Seven years in rock is a very long time. And as for the generation who lived through Mod, it all seems a little premature.

It's like they say: nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

NEXT WEEK IN ROCK:
Glitter Rock.

The New Breed Of Singer Songwriters

The term singer/songwriter appeared for the first time around 1965, when the Elektra label, who were riding the crest of the urban folk revival, followed their 'Blues Project' album (a compendium of songs by white country blues singers) with a sequel they called the 'Singer-Songwriter Project'.

There had been singers who wrote their own songs before, and in their thousands – Paul Anka, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, Woody Guthrie, to pick a few names out of the enormous hat – but this singer/songwriter idea exemplified by Elektra's album was, in fact, something genuinely new at the time.

Bob Dylan was the guiding light, the pioneer. He'd come to New York, started to make a name for himself by singing old blues and folk numbers as well as his own songs, and was well and truly at the heart – or so it seemed – of the sudden blossoming of the city folk singer movement. Many older luminaries hailed him as the saviour of the folk tradition, but as it happened, he quickly shed the confines of the folk scene.

In his wake, most of the folk singers who'd been based in Greenwich Village started to move away from traditional material, and though for the most part they shied away from the rock & roll that Dylan went for, they moved a good way

along from folk. The small-scale, one-man, one-guitar, anti-showbiz presentation remained. Where Dylan started to write nothing but songs of personal expression, however, the first wave of singer/songwriters tended to stick to such 'objective' topics as the Vietnam war, Civil Rights struggles and such. For more personal expression they often went to blues forms.

Among the important names in New York in the early and mid-'60s were people like Dave Van Ronk and Eric Von Schmidt, who did mostly blues songs they had written themselves, in fact, Dylan himself was by far the most important figure to emerge from the Greenwich Village folk explosion, but among his contemporaries, writing and performing their own songs, were Phil Ochs, Tom Paxton, Eric Andersen, Fred Neil and a host of others.

It was Elektra who signed nearly everybody up, with the Vanguard label coming a close second. Both had a reputation as intelligent, responsible record companies with a liberal point of view, and were well-respected as a part of the young radical establishment.

Although few of their artists, until the Doors, were hugely successful in commercial terms, they did have a comparatively intense following, and – deriving as they did from the simplicity and honesty of the folk movement – they, and particularly Bob Dylan, paved the way for a whole school of rock that reached its peak

towards the end of the decade. They showed that rock could rise to considerable heights of poetry without losing the essential ingredient of funk – until Dylan, nobody seriously gave artistic attention to rock & roll lyrics. After Dylan and the singer/songwriters, everyone else did, and usually tried to write them, as well.

Tom Paxton and Phil Ochs were both educated men, and they chose to sing largely what came to be known as protest songs. Paxton played simple, clean, finger-picked guitar, and sang in an unemotional, although not cold voice. He was very controlled in his delivery, and appealed to a wide range of people. Certainly, he offered no threats; he was comfortable, and gave a sort of respectability to the new folk music. Though he wrote his own words, his tunes usually sounded as if you'd heard them before, coming straight out of the folk tradition.

Ochs, however, was edgier and harsher. He tended towards the rocker in his appearance, with a big black quiff and a fondness for leather jackets (shared by Dylan). He seemed always to be running too fast, like an overwound clock, and had none of Paxton's restraint.

When he sang he sounded uncomfortably like a freaked-out Frankie Valli; he was piercing, and didn't vary his tone much, but his lyrics were, in the early days, as incisive as any. Eventually he – and Paxton – followed Dylan and began to sing of more personal matters, but he rose to prominence as an angry, left-wing, finger-pointer.

These two were at the top of the second division, Elektra's most popular male singer/songwriters in the mid-'60s. They represented a politically-conscious, somewhat élitist audience, the beginnings of the underground if you will. Paxton put his finger on the shared feelings of this sub-culture on his sleeve notes to 'Ramblin' Boy', his first album, in 1964, where he wrote:

'I'm still learning – mostly from Woody Guthrie, who showed us how and told us why. From Bob Dylan I've learned that you can't quit, you've got to go as far as you can. From Phil Ochs I've learned that a laugh can make a bloody serious point, and from Gil Turner I've learned that we've all got to carry it on. 'That's what we've all got to do, of course. We've all got to carry it on.'

The subjects dealt with on this album were: the Vietnam war, racialism, capitalist exploitation of workers, irresponsible right-wing newspapers, automation, and there was a love song and a tribute to Cisco Houston, a hard-travellin' contemporary of Woody Guthrie. Paxton was sure of his targets, a right-thinking, rational spokesman for the student movement, he never came anywhere near the anarchic surrealism of Dylan, who'd seen earlier

Left: Fred Neil, sings blues-based songs. Opposite page: Harry Nilsson, whose voice has amazing range; and (insert), the laconic Randy Newman.



Joseph Stevens



than the rest, that the old world wasn't going to be much changed by marches and wishful thinking.

Also signed to Elektra, and backed by the house mouth-organist John Sebastian (who went on to form the Lovin' Spoonful, and become a singer/songwriter in his own right), and Bruce Langhorne – the consummately tasteful electric guitarist on Dylan's 'Bringing It All Back Home' – came Tom Rush.

Rush was never a protest singer, and indeed wrote very little of his own material, but he turned out to be a strong influence and benefactor of the singer/songwriter movement. He started by singing songs that seemed to encompass the entire American folk tradition. Equally effective on cowboy songs, rock & roll, country blues, work songs and ballads, he was a central figure.

Rush's academic approach, and a certain modesty, may have prevented him from making it as a star himself, but he was, indirectly, a great innovator. He was the first artist to record songs by Jackson Browne, James Taylor ('Something In The Way She Moves' and 'Sunshine Sunshine' on his 'Circle Game' album) and Joni Mitchell ('Tin Angel', 'Urge For Going' and 'Circle Game' on the same album – which was, in itself, a pioneering work. It was a concept album, and the first by an ex-folkie to have orchestral arrangements.)

Over the years, Rush has recorded many of his own songs too. 'On The Road Again', a track on the rock & roll side of his 'Take A Little Walk With Me', which featured Bo Diddley, Coasters and Holly songs, was probably the best number.

Judy Collins, also a folk singer in the Elektra stable, who later turned her hand to songwriting, seemed to run parallel to Tom Rush in her capacity for unearthing good songs. Her early albums were mostly composed of traditional ballads, but soon she was doing Dylan songs, and then Joni Mitchell, Jacques Brel, Randy Newman and Sandy Denny numbers.

Tim Buckley, another artist to start his recording career with Elektra, was a

different matter again. People spoke of Dylan as a poet, but Buckley, with his light, high-pitched voice, was among the first of the new songwriters whose lyrics were unmistakably dense and precise enough to be judged by established literary standards. His second album, 'Goodbye And Hello', including 'Morning Glory' and 'Once I Was', was a remarkable achievement, establishing the idea of rock as a high art form without the taint of pretence. He was a real innovator, but became less of a commercial proposition as he journeyed further from his folk club origins into the realm of avant-garde jazz.

Fred Neil, too, helped to set the pattern for much that was to follow with his Elektra albums. He drew from blues roots for his songs, but sang in a rich, full voice that turned them into highly original creations. Harry Nilsson had his first hit with a Neil song, 'Everybody's Talkin'. The composer, however, made very infrequent appearances on the stage, seeming to be unconcerned with the success he could have had.

Richard and Mimi Farina (Joan Baez' sister) made several excellent albums for Vanguard, singing wildly surreal lyrics of considerable subtlety over simple backings characterised by Richard's ringing dulcimer work and, had it not been for his death in 1966, they would undoubtedly have achieved greater popularity.

The Music Suffered

These were the artists who showed that the best songs didn't have to come from inside the music business, and then cleared the path for a host of successors over the next few years. In retrospect, it sometimes seems that in stressing the importance of lyrics, their music suffered. At any rate, they tended to prefer simple tunes played on acoustic guitars.

Other currents, however, were beginning to take shape elsewhere. Tim Hardin, who wrote 'Reason To Believe', 'If I Were A Carpenter' and many more modern standards, sang with the range and richness of a jazz singer, and recorded with excellent musicians, resulting in a more generally acceptable sound.

Harry Nilsson on the West Coast, was nearer to pure pop. He wrote songs with the melodic invention of the Beatles without suffering in lyric quality; he was also something of a genius with his grasp of recording studio techniques and ability to write startlingly original arrangements. His songs appealed instantly as catchy tunes and he displayed a sense of humour too – rare qualities among the first wave of singer/songwriters who'd come up through the folk clubs.

From a classical background, with a strong helping of Fats Domino and black humour, came Randy Newman. Although hailed as a genius by legions of critics, his records didn't sell – possibly his finely-worked rock tunes with their usually bleak, ironic lyrics were too laid-back, too sophisticated for the average record buyer.

He's fared well, though, at the hands

of other singers. Alan Price did well with such Newman delights as 'Simon Smith And His Amazing Dancing Bear' and 'Tickle Me'; Harry Nilsson recorded an entire album of his songs; Three Dog Night had a big hit with 'Mama Told Me Not To Come'; Ry Cooder did a fine version of 'My Old Kentucky Home'; and the Everly Brothers included 'Illinois' on their 'Roots' album – yet Newman remains, outside of a small, devoted following, a great unknown.

Those who seem to have been most successful are the ones who came up through the mill of playing in rock bands before going solo. James Taylor, Neil Young, Van Morrison and John Sebastian, leading figures in terms of record sales, all surfaced as soloists around the turn of the decade. The excitement of the groups of the '60s was dying down – the Beatles had split, hopes for an alternative culture were fading in the light of Altamont and the passing of the hippie phenomenon was well advanced – and introspective songwriters came into their own, offering no solutions except the hope that singing about their own feelings might give something to be shared.

Nonetheless, with the exception of Sebastian, a cheery sort of bloke, the term singer/songwriter came to be associated with outpourings of sensitive woe. Neil Young's songs, frequently of overwhelming power and presence, tended from the start towards melancholia, culminating in 'Harvest', a grandiose, lushly-orchestrated album which raised the common criticism that he was wallowing in despair.

Van Morrison, though he acknowledged the darker side of life, tended to be more optimistic, but his songs were by no means happy little tunes to dance to, despite the strong rhythmic flow in his work.

Perhaps the most eloquent of the singer/songwriters, and the most unlikely candidate for pop stardom, was Leonard Cohen, the Montreal poet who was quickly raised to cult-hero status.

Cohen seemed to spare himself no torment in his soul-searchings. His voice, often broken and harsh, was pure sadness, his words explored his personal hells – and occasionally heavens – with utter starkness and sometimes great beauty, to a simple Spanish guitar accompaniment.

In the early '70s the singer/songwriter school of rock seems to be lying fallow, having run the course started by Dylan and the New York folkies of the early '60s. Cohen has announced his retirement from singing; David Bowie, the ultimate blender of rock, poetry and spectacle, despair and decadence, chose to return to the R&B pop hits of the '60s on his album, 'Pin-Ups', and neither James Taylor nor Neil Young seems quite as creative as in the past.

Dylan, however, *does* appear to be on the verge of a new period of creativity. As he moved away from protest songs to personal songs with a rock band, then on to country music before anyone else, it seems safe to assume that he'll continue to blaze a trail that others will follow.

Left: Tim Hardin. Right: Leonard Cohen.



Joseph Stevens



Rex Features

NEXT WEEK IN THE MUSIC: The Girls.

THE MUSIC: LYRICS

Talking 'bout my generation

CROCODILE ROCK

Words and music by
Elton John & Bernie Taupin

*I remember when Rock was young
Me and Susie had so much fun
Holding hands and skimmin' stones
Had an old gold Chevy and a place of my
own
But the biggest kick I ever got was doin'
a thing called the Crocodile Rock
While the other kids were Rockin' round
the Clock.
We were hoppin' and boppin' to the
Crocodile Rock,
Well Crocodile Rockin' is something
shockin' when your feet just can't keep
still,
I never knew me a better time and I guess
I never will.
Oh Lawdy mama those Friday nights when
Susie wore her dresses tight
And the Crocodile Rockin' was out of sight.*

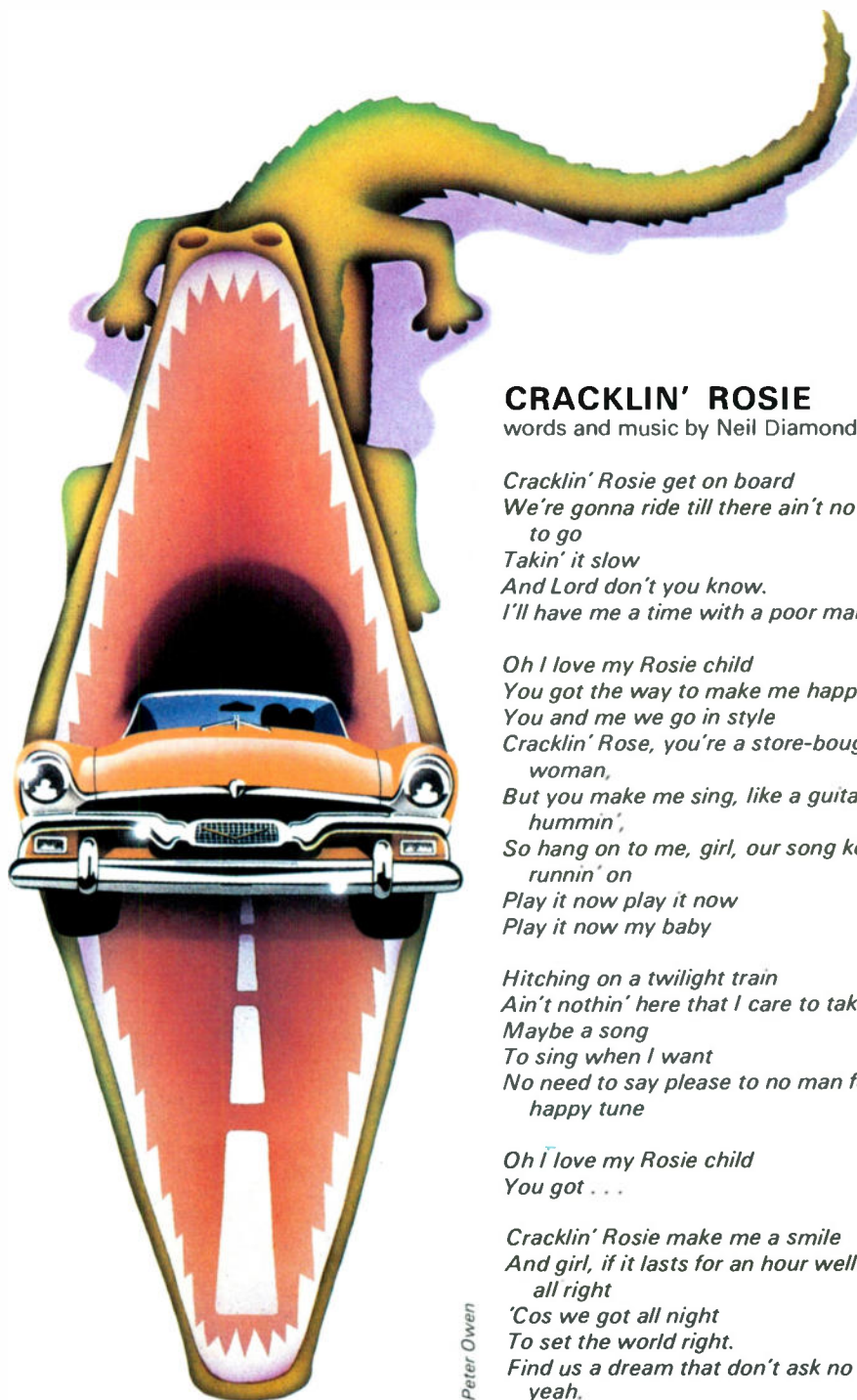
*But the years went by and Rock just died
Susie went and left me for some foreign
guy.
Long nights cryin' by the record machine
dreamin' of my Chevy and my old
blue Jeans,
But they'll never kill the thrills we've got
burning up to the Crocodile Rock
Learning fast till the weeks went past
We really thought the Crocodile Rock
would last.
Well Crocodile Rockin' is something
shockin' when your feet just can't keep
still,
I never knew me a better time and I guess
I never will.
Oh Lawdy mama those Friday nights when
Susie wore her dresses tight
And the Crocodile Rockin' was out of sight.*

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The exploration of unusual or realistic subjects marked the rise of the singer/songwriter. Artists started to use rock as a way of communicating experience that sprang from their own lives or touched the lives of their audience. This was not to say that it need be philosophically introspective; indeed it could be thoroughly commercial in its appeal, as are the two printed here.

Neil Diamond's 'Cracklin' Rosie' is an imaginative work based on an actual experience. He happened to visit a remote settlement where there were no women and the sex-starved men took comfort in a rosé wine. This apparently would not be very inspirational to a songwriter, but Diamond's mind conceived a song that told of a man who substitutes the drink for a woman – a 'poor man's lady' – and in it finds a temporary euphoria and escape from everyday misery. His 'store-bought woman' has got

600



CRACKLIN' ROSIE

words and music by Neil Diamond

*Cracklin' Rosie get on board
We're gonna ride till there ain't no more
to go
Takin' it slow
And Lord don't you know.
I'll have me a time with a poor man's lady*

*Oh I love my Rosie child
You got the way to make me happy
You and me we go in style
Cracklin' Rose, you're a store-bought
woman,
But you make me sing, like a guitar
hummin',
So hang on to me, girl, our song keeps
runnin' on
Play it now play it now
Play it now my baby*

*Hitching on a twilight train
Ain't nothin' here that I care to take along
Maybe a song
To sing when I want
No need to say please to no man for a
happy tune*

*Oh I love my Rosie child
You got . . .*

*Cracklin' Rosie make me a smile
And girl, if it lasts for an hour well that's
all right*

*'Cos we got all night
To set the world right.
Find us a dream that don't ask no questions
yeah.*

Peter Owen

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the way to make him happy, to make him sing. The listener needs to know none of the background to appreciate the worth of the song but once the realisation of the truth behind it comes, he can look at the images and metaphors contained in the lyrics with a new respect.

The John/Taupin number also touches a reality in that it is a nostalgic look to the past. 'Crocodile Rock', as its name and music imply, is a harking back to youth, to careless days and to a girl. In many ways it is reminiscent of Chuck Berry, with its ability to grab utterly truthful snatches from the past and make them live again in the mind of anyone who knew the times. To those who were too young to be nostalgic for those times, that music, those clothes – it works just as well as a pleasant evocation of youth or, more fundamentally, as an excellent song.

The Everly Brothers

Nobody sounded like the Everly Brothers, before or since. They put their adolescent heads together, leaned coaxingly into the microphone, crooned cheek-by-cheek in a wailing, sensuous harmony; the sound of heartbreak made vocal. Phil and Don Everly made a noise that was an orchestra in itself, or could sound like one remarkable voice.

The combination of the two voices, Phil's light and seductive, Don's a shade deeper, both of them husky and persuasive, was something more than just a simple duet. Their roots were in American country music, good neighbourliness and fiddles round the fire. They grew up into the new excitement and independence of rock & roll, and away from their folksy family act at a time when the rest of American youth was growing away from *their* parents. The plaintive sweetness of country music and the driving power of rock & roll merged into a unique Everly Brothers sound – a sound so distinctive and unforgettable that for many people the opening bars of 'All I Want To Do Is Dream', the nostalgic twang of 'Crying In The Rain', the low-down growl of 'Bird Dog', bring on the pangs of forgotten adolescence more than any of the other giants of rock & roll.

Family Act

The Everly Brothers were once the Everly Family. They were born in Brownie, Kentucky, the Bluegrass State on the borders of America's South, and through the years of travelling, of jetting the world, the strain of stardom and one night stands, they've kept the feeling of their country roots. Ike and Margaret Everly, their parents, were established country artists. Ike, a guitar-picker of considerable Southern charm is still capable of stealing the show from his sons once he is behind a guitar, but back in the '40s the birth of Don, and then Phil, gave Ike the promise of a family act. When Don was eight and



SKR

Phil was six they were singing on the radio in Shenandoah, Iowa. Phil was telling jokes and Don was reading the commercials for Deacon's Rat Poison. The Everly family had a regular breakfast show, and anyone who wants to know the melodies and folksiness which accompanied their exceptional childhood should listen to the LP 'Roots', where the recorded voice of Ike Everly introduces little Don and baby boy Phil to the world. It was sweet music.

Big Brothers Break

The Everlys grew up to the sound of country and folk, to grassroots country guitar and harmonica. But as Don and Phil changed from children to adolescents their parents could see the break up of the act. They knew they would never make it big on their own, but they thought Don and Phil might, so they stepped back and the brothers found themselves on their own, already experienced performers looking for a break in a bigger world than the small-town radio stations and country shows they knew.

For a while they were lost. They found themselves in Nashville, the home of country music, but something more was happening – rock & roll was on the move.

Although the Everlys weren't yet part of it, neither were they content with the songs of their childhood. Other artists recorded their songs, but nothing happened for them until they met a man called Wesley Rose, a country music producer looking to expand his operation into newer, more profitable markets. Together they found a song which united their innate gift for melody and harmony with a driving, hand-clapping rhythm. It was called 'Bye Bye Love', and it sold a million, just like that.

Incredible Harmony

The Everly Brothers were no one-hit wonders, no rock & roll flukes. They were as professional as any musicians could be who had been performing in public from the age of six. Their sound was already unique – united, polished, harmonious. One only has to look at what harmony meant in the cruder music of the late '50s, in the turgid early efforts of rock & roll. It was heavy, it was unsubtle. It usually involved a high voice which sang a few solo bars, a deep bass voice which sang a few solo bars, and some voices which chugged out a pedestrian rhythm in between. The Everly Brothers soared. After they arrived, voices never combined

in quite the same way again. Their sound was liquid, the perfect vehicle for emotion, but never sugared. The words they sang touched hearts tussling with the agonies of adolescence and unrequited love, rejection, crying in the rain. And their music was white.

Unlike Elvis Presley, another Southerner who drew his musical power from a heritage of black blues, the Everlys built their strength on a white sound. Their music wasn't down to earth and dirty, though it was sensuous and sexy. Nor were they themselves blue-jeaned and raunchy. They started as country boys in all the wrong clothes, then they turned into college boys. They wore greased-back quiffs and Ivy League jackets, they were presentable, charming boys-next-door, but something else as well. They were, are, good looking in a slightly feminine way, but more than this, they had something disquietingly delinquent about them. They photographed as hood-eyed and sinister for all their charm, and part of their attraction was this air of fragile corruption, a hinted decadence.

Success Built On Power

But it takes more than physical appeal to make a rock & roll superstar. Up until the early '60s the Everly Brothers never put a foot wrong in their career. They simply kept coming up with great songs, they never repeated themselves or fell back on any gimmick, they relied on their unique double voice, on a simple, relaxed stage act, and on songs which they themselves liked. Their success was built on the power of their music. The greater part of their most lasting hits were written for them by Boudleaux Bryant, who came up with the handclapping mournfulness of 'Bye Bye Love' and kicked them off to an unbeatable start. The Everly Brothers were at their most plaintive and wistful with Bryant's song 'All I Have To Do Is Dream', one of the indispensable standards of rock & roll.

*'When I feel blue in the night,
When I want you to hold me tight,
Whenever I want you all I have
to do is dream . . .
I can make you mine,
Taste your lips of wine,
Any time night or day,
Only trouble is, gee whizz,
I'm dreaming my life away.'*

The Everly Brothers spun that 'dream' out to five notes, and no other singers could have stripped 'gee whizz' of its mawkishness the way they did.

Bryant's songs for Don and Phil weren't all sad. There were quirky, irresistibly catchy, tongue-in-cheek numbers which Don and Phil put across dead-pan. There was 'Wake Up Little Susie', where Don and Phil and Susie fall asleep in the movies and sing, with terrific verve and rhythm, about the moral thunderbolt that is going to hit them for staying out all night. That was in the days when kids drank Coke,



SKR

A nostalgic look at the young Everly Brothers. From L to R: Don and Phil Everly.

went to the high school hop, and accounted to their parents for every movement made after midnight.

*'Wake up, little Susie, wake up,
Wake up, little Susie, wake up.
We've both been sound asleep,
Wake up, little Susie, and weep,
The movie's over, it's four o'clock
And we're in trouble deep . . .
What're we gonna tell your mamma,
What're we gonna tell your pa?
What're we gonna tell our friends when
they say ooh la la?'*

And Bryant wrote 'Bird Dog,' that flat song of resentment about Johnny, the teacher's pet who manoeuvred himself next to Don and Phil's baby. Buddy Holly wrote 'Not

Fade Away' for the Everly Brothers, and Don and Phil also wrote some of their own. 'Til I Kissed You' was the Everlys in a chirpy mood. 'So Sad To Watch Good Love Go Bad', and the classic 'Cathy's Clown' showed them more unashamedly distressed. Perhaps it was something to do with their grounding in the open, homely sentimentality of country music, but the Everly Brothers, more than any other rock & roll singers, had the ability, with their talent for rhythm and melody, to turn corn into gold. And their sound was more and more distinctive. It sometimes seemed as if Phil Spector later filled studios with orchestras and choirs just to catch that particular spaciousness that the Everlys achieved with two voices, guitars, and a little echo.



BACK TRACK

Born in Brownie, Kentucky, the Everly Brothers' first professional appearances were on their parents' radio show when Don was eight and Phil was six.

Singles on Cadence (USA) and London (UK).

1957: July, 'Bye Bye Love' (no. 6) November, 'Wake Up Little Susie' (no. 2).

1958: May, 'All I Have To Do Is Dream' (no. 1). September, 'Bird Dog' (no. 2).

1959: January, 'Problems' (no. 5). May, 'Poor Jenny' (no. 11). September, 'Till I Kissed You' (no. 2).

With Warner Brothers Label.

1960: April, 'Cathy's Clown' (no. 1). July, 'When Will I Be Loved' (no. 4). September, 'So Sad'/'Lucille' (no. 4).

December, 'Like Strangers' (no. 12).

1961: January, 'Walk Right Back' (no. 1). June, 'Temptation' (no. 1).

September, 'Muskrat' (no. 16).

1962: January, 'Crying In The Rain' (no. 8). June, 'How Can I Meet Her?' (no. 12). November, 'No One Can Make My Sunshine Smile' (no. 11).

1965: 'Price Of Love' (no. 2). November, 'Love Is Strange' (no. 11).

There were no further single hits and in February 1971 Don Everly released a solo album on A & M (Don Everly). 1972 the Everlys moved to RCA label. 1972: April, 'Stories We Could Tell' (LP). November, 'Pass The Chicken And Listen' (LP).

1973: August, solo album by Phil Everly, 'Star Spangled Springer'.

The persistent rumours that the Everly Brothers were splitting up were confirmed in September 1973.

Their records sold all over the world in millions, but the stresses of popularity were becoming intolerable. Don and Phil had the normal quarrels that brothers have, then in 1962 on a tour to Britain, Don was taken into hospital with an overdose of drugs. The strain of being a flying star, the years of one-night-stands, crummy dressing rooms, worse hotels, and the harsh lights of airport lounges had told on him. Reportedly high on amphetamines, he tried to commit suicide. He was saved that time, but the superstar, rock & roll jungle phase of the Everlys' career was drawing to a natural close. They never had a big smash hit single again in the way that they had up to 1962, but then the rock scene was changing. The English groups were taking over, and the peculiar sounds and harmonies of the Everlys were a big influence on new groups like the Beatles. Don and Phil themselves carried on thinking, playing, working out new music. They had been the idols of a teenage audience, but the audience itself was growing up and Don and Phil, professionals from kindergarten, were growing up with them.

Back To The Roots

Now they look different. Their hair is long, their clothes are individual and relaxed, they are proud of being different, and they don't have to pretend to be musical twins any more. They have stopped chasing the Hit Parade, and now they can concentrate on the more satisfying business of just turning out good music, on following their own instinct, on going back to roots.

Their recent albums have pulled in the help of other musicians whose music runs along similar lines: Delaney and Bonnie, John Sebastian, David Crosby, Graham Nash. The sound is terrific, always musical, professional, imaginative and full of melody, drive and ease. The songs are about themselves, and about America.

The Everlys were country singers before they were rock & roll stars, and what they do best and most distinctively pulls together the best of both worlds. Whenever they play now, in the world's biggest concert halls or in small clubs, they are greeted with affection and respect. They are faultlessly professional, simple still; just two people, two guitars and a small band. They will sing all the songs everyone wants to hear – 'Dream', 'Crying In The Rain', 'Temptation', 'Bird Dog' – and they sing new songs that go farther back and deeper in, songs like 'Green River', the river that winds through Kentucky.

*'Green River you're still my home,
Green River, why did I roam,
Green River, some day I'll come
home to stay.'*

**NEXT WEEK IN THE
SUPERSTARS: The 4 Tops**



Camera Press

POP CULTURE: '60s-'70s

Youth In Revolt

The concept of youth in revolt is not just a product of this 'permissive century' as the mass media would have us believe. The way societies change and progress is through young people questioning and fighting for new and better ways of life, for more justice, more equality and more freedom.

In earlier centuries, revolutions and demonstrations were traditionally led by minority groups, communications were restricted, and things took longer to happen. Television, radio and the press

have, however, speeded things up considerably. Any riot, fight or demonstration now has immediate coverage, and from the '50s onwards the emphasis has always been focused on the young as rebels.

After World War Two, there was a period of resettlement and a search for security and calm. It took about a decade for young people to start wondering what life was all about again. The advent of rock & roll in the '50s, though, provided a stick for young people to hit out with – at parents and society in general. They rejected the status quo, adopted greasy hair, leather gear and Teddy Boy suits and showed that they were different. But

politics at that time was strictly out. Teds weren't interested in changing society, only in proving they could be different within it. The music of the time reflected individual hang-ups rather than broad-based protest.

By the time the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was under way in Britain, leaders of protest in music had also emerged, primarily folk-singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez. Suddenly it was possible for millions of people to hear through music that all was not right with the world, and that young people were no longer to be fooled by lying politicians. Later, the Beatles and the Stones furthered those ideas, getting through to



Both pics Camera Press

Opposite page: In 1968, 2,000 Japanese students joined forces with local farmers and rioted to prevent an airport being built on their land. Above: Left-wing students and workers during the Paris revolution of May 1968.

an even wider audience and hitting hard. The emphasis was on *action*. 'If you don't like things the way they are – change them'.

In the '60s, there was an almost universal youth movement to do just that. In Japan, Mexico, Greece, Germany, France and the States, young people were fighting in the streets for what they believed in – and getting killed for it. It was all part of a growing awareness on the part of youth that revolution had to take place in the streets. Trying to change things through the normal channels of government was no longer relevant – youth was finally disillusioned.

Throughout the decade, rock proved itself on the side of revolution. Groups like Country Joe and the Fish at the Woodstock festival were saying in no uncertain terms what they thought of the Vietnam War. Jerry Rubin, leader of the Yippies and defendant in the Chicago Conspiracy Trial of 1968 said that the New Left Politics had merged with the

'psychedelic life-style' of the time.

But the whole movement was strongly intellectual, consisting in the main of students who liked their music to match their mood. A far cry from the Teddy Boys and Mods and Rockers confrontations that had hit the British headlines through pitched battles on the beaches of the South Coast in the mid-'60s.

In 1968, Eugene McCarthy's 'children's crusade' appealed to the young to change the tone of American politics and set the scene for what was to develop into the Chicago Convention Riots. The political heritage of that crusade was the Civil Rights movement and the anti-war movement. However, it was McGovern in 1972 who crystallised the union of the political heritage of youth politics and that of youth culture, and really put the kids to work in a campaign that drew heavily on the organisational experience of the former and the heroes of the latter (so much so that McGovern became the first candidate for the Presidency to be supported by what

is ostensibly a music paper, *Rolling Stone*).

Just as rock, has, since the early '60s, come to dominate the music industry, so youth culture/counter culture/the underground – has, in the Anglo-American context at least, also become part of the establishment it originally defied.

A brief contrast of Chicago and Paris in 1968, demonstrates that the two confrontations operated in wholly different fashions. Both were essentially student events, but whereas at Chicago the convention controlled the events, in Paris the events were of the students' making. The one, even accepting the role of the Yippies, was fought within the accepted political arena; the other was a direct challenge to the power of the authorities, the end result of which was a near overthrow of government. Both sets of people were unified in their different conceptions of struggle against authority – a struggle in which rock music has consistently played an influential part, without ever having taken a lead.

Black Writers of The '70s

From the Gale Storms and Billy Vaughns of the olden days, through the Beatles and Stones in the mid-'60s, to Janis Joplin and the Grateful Dead at the dawning of the 'rock' era, when, for better or worse, pop took on new pretensions; original ideas from the black side of the fence only achieved mass acceptance once they'd been cleaned up and ripped off by blander, blue-eyed plagiarists.

Looking back, however, it's clear that from around 1967 onwards the boot began to be on the other foot: no longer was the traffic in influence strictly one-way (excepting the South, where country and soul, from such as James Carr or Percy Sledge, had but a thin line between them). Whilst rock acts continued to draw inspiration from the ghetto, so also did R&B people begin to take note of what was happening in rock.

New Look Rock

With the emergence of hip FM radio, greater racial tolerance, fairer practices within the industry, and the burgeoning economic force and sheer numbers of the young and open-minded, some of the technical sophistication and musical freedom of the 'new rock' in its full '67/'68 flowering was reflected in the hitherto rigid, format-ridden field of soul. Sly and the Family Stone's 'Dance To The Music' album, for instance, epitomised the growing tendency of black artists to frown on convention and take care of business themselves.

Not that the old mastermind-producer method had died – some of the '70s' finest stuff, much Motown and most Philly gold, is made that way, under the aegis of men like Norman Whitfield, Thom Bell, and Gamble-Huff. Furthermore, singles are still



Bobby Womack, who began his career singing with the Valentinos.

the bread and butter of soul music. But an increasing number of singles hits are forced off albums in the first place, by public/DJ demand, as has been the pattern in rock for some years. In the past, black acts would only ever put out albums to cash in on a single hit – and even then, they would be likely to consist of past, flopped single cuts.

All-Round Sound Creators

In a parallel development, the mushrooming species of 'singer/songwriter' soon found its equivalent – in the area of soul – and just as people like Carole King had been around in other guises for years, so the leaders of the black pack have, for the most part, long pedigrees. Success in R&B has always been as much a matter of sound and feel as of the content of songs. The new black 'writers' weren't *just* writers – the names that formed the soul vanguard were all-round sound creators; from vocals to instrumentation, rhythm arrangements, voice back-ups and the general 'groove'.

No longer feeling bound to the unwritten laws of a-a-b-a song layout, three-minute tracks, and relentlessly repeated hook phrases, figures like Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye grew tired of closeted attitudes, took risks by doing exactly what they wanted, and held their breath. Happily, the public smiled; and the flood-

gates were open for the new black music.

As with most major innovations, it all started by accident. In 1968, while under the heavy umbrella of the Gulf Oil Corporation, Stax Records in Memphis, hotbed of past soul classics such as Sam and Dave and Otis Redding, had to quickly come up with 32 albums-worth of 'product'. Isaac Hayes, then a staff A&R man/pianist/writer, offered the opportunity to pad out the total, with a set under his own name. He casually happened on a formula hitherto considered grossly uncommercial: long, elaborate readings of pop hits, employing heavy guitar licks, epic production, and laconic, lowdown, leisurely gospel-style opening raps. To the universal surprise of the business, the album tagged on as an afterthought struck gold. Thus the black album market exploded, paving the way for many a mute singlorious would-be black Milton to bare his soul at length.

Black Explosion

Three years later, Hayes, whose slender vocal and pianistic talents had been bolstered by outrageous visual hype, was responsible for a black explosion of a different sort – on celluloid. The wah-wah riffs and hi-hat sixteenths on the 'Theme From Shaft', launched many TV series, hit records and similar soundtracks. From the seed of 'Shaft' grew a bumper crop of black-orientated, white-financed, potboiled

quickies, helped along by funky music of higher calibre than the films themselves. At present, a 'blacktrack' album has come to represent a badge of membership to the pantheon of new black writers. Credits for background music loom as large as the stars' names, and a legion of directors continue to scrape an increasingly empty barrel.

Earnest Pleading Quality

After *Shaft* came *Superfly*, and the biggest name on the posters was that of Curtis Mayfield. From the mid-'60s, Curtis pretty well ruled the roost in Chicago, producing and composing great stuff for various protégés, as well as for his own vocal group, the Impressions, for whom he sang unforgettable lead in a high falsetto. The style descended from the doo-woppers, but had an earnest, pleading quality all its own. Like their name, the Impressions' records were fragile, delicate – and all the carefully honed material was Mayfield's. He even had his personal chord changes – those mellow major/minor sevenths so prevalent in the sweet soul of the '70s, hark back to the Impressions.

Since leaving the group to go solo, Curtis has become ensconced as a rock star, keeping his original audience in the process, a gentle prophet purveying socio-political ditties, lacking neither the musical

nor the lyrical beauty of the old things. Compare 'Superfly' or the overblown 'Back To The World' with timeless classics of the standard of 'People Get Ready', 'I've Been Trying' or 'I'm So Proud' and the former falls into insignificance.

Eschewing angry dogmatism in favour of a more tolerant, persuasive stance, Curtis' sloganeering is not without social influence – and his going on the road with a hornless rhythm section assisted in freeing soul from the stabbing, sock-it-to-me brass lines stereotype.

Self-Produced Classic

Most of all though, the '70s sun shines on Marvin Gaye. A period in rumour-inducing seclusion followed his string of soul/pop smashes in the '60s: 'Try It Baby', 'I'll Be Doggone', 'Baby Don't Do It' and scores of others. A consistent, if bland, Motown hitmaker, in 1970 he emerged with a self-produced set unlike anything he, or anyone else, had done before. 'What's Goin' On', an across-the-board monster, established an unbroken groove – understated, spacey, laid-back, and conga-driven; unfamiliar chord changes were married to unobtrusive strings and serene, quasi-religious lyrics.

It endeared him to the white album buyers, and showed a new avenue for soul artists to explore. His score for the black

movie *Trouble Man* proved slightly less successful and decidedly more conventional, marking time before his next blockbuster – 'Let's Get It On': sexually rather than spiritually directed this time, it nevertheless carried on in the 'What's Goin' On' vein, with the relaxed feel as primary ingredient, and lots of ad-libbing. The title track broke all records for fastest-ever-selling soul single.

On the face of it, Marvin Gaye's work is samey, rambling, sloppy; but there's an indefinable magic, a sense of euphoria pervading it all. Perhaps the man's main contribution to the current scene is that 'feel' – letting the groove take overall precedence over the niceties of arrangement or structure. At times his melodies are merely improvised over the chord sequence – on occasion even the words themselves sound off the cuff. In fact, unheralded earlier work of his for an underrated Motown group the Originals, as composer/producer, bears this same stamp. Now, cultivating his mystique through lack of public appearances, comfortable in his own niche, in total creative control, Marvin Gaye is healthier than ever.

One of the 'new breed' who *hasn't* been around for long is Bill Withers – a true original, and a law unto himself. Sporting an acoustic axe, mixing homely warmth with biting sarcasm, well into his 30s with more experience of airline plumbing than music-making, he has his own things very much together. When his top-notch back-up group (the Watts' 103rd St. Band's ex-rhythm section) are on hand to inject some musical beef into a bare riff, he's at his best.

Limited Vocabulary

Vocally, Bill seems to have listened to nobody, delivering his ironic, intelligent observations in a friendly drone, often suspect in the lower register; and he's not afraid to tackle topics outside the normal run of love song/platonic friendship in 'Lean On Me' or 'Friend Of Mine'; childhood in 'Grandma's Hands'; drinking problems in 'Better Off Dead', or the self-explanatory 'Harlem'. In view of Bill's limited musical vocabulary, it seems uncertain how long he can maintain his present stature; in interview, he consistently gives the impression that he can take or leave the music business. Like Curtis, however, he's been in part responsible for liberating black contemporary music from its stultifying stereotype.

Bill Withers' film project – the theme tune for something called *Man And Boy* – went by unnoticed. Bobby Womack also wrote a soundtrack, in collaboration with veteran J. J. Johnson, for the gratuitously violent, shamelessly faddy, *Across 1100th St.* – but that's the least of his claims to our hall of fame. As Marvin Gaye originated in the Moonglows, and Mayfield in the Impressions, so Bobby started out in an old-style vocal group, singing with his brothers in the Valentinos, whose 'It's All Over Now' came to be copied by the Stones. An accomplished guitarist, he

Donny Hathaway writes, plays piano and sings a rich, impassioned gospel-soul sound.



remained in the shadows through the '60s, gaining respect as a session player and composer, notably for Wilson Pickett, without making it nationally as a recording artist. Albums like 'Communication', 'Understanding', and 'Facts Of Life', all of which have spawned hit singles during the '70s, have established him as a solo name to be reckoned with. They blend remodelings of pop hits with tasty Womack originals, often partially made up on the spot on a jamming basis. Bobby will record basic tracks in double-quick time and add refinements later at his leisure. Like Marvin Gaye, he doesn't mind stretching out on a groove if it feels right – and it often does.

Nicknamed 'the Preacher' after his fiery stage act, Bobby's sanctified, distinctive vocal style owes much to the legacy of his wife's first husband, the late Sam Cooke. His approach – half-tight, half off-hand; secular sermonising punctuated by strangled screams in best church fashion; spare voice tracks popping up around the melody line, and a never-failing loose, stoned feel – puts Bobby Womack in the front line of new black writers.

Donny Hathaway is a fine writer too, but he's known best for his slushy duets on other people's songs with fellow Washingtonian Roberta Flack. Both are young and classically trained, both play piano and both range far wider than just the R&B market with their material – but whereas Roberta sings in a stiff, pure, distinctly unsoulful soprano, Donny's voice is rich, impassioned, and straight out of church. On 'Extensions Of A Man' – a symphonic 'tone poem' rubbed shoulders with country rock, funky jamming in 5/4 and even Herb Albert-type easy listening – Bobby's determination to be versatile dims his appeal to those who love what he handles naturally – gospel-soul – as on his initial 'Everything Is Everything' set, with great sides like 'The Ghetto', and 'Thank You Master'.

Motown Master

Maybe it's coincidental, but Donny's voice has always sounded uncannily close to another master exponent of electric keyboards – Stevie Wonder. Blind at birth, still in his early 20s, Steveland Morris has seemingly been blessed with a correspondingly sharpened sense of sound. Since re-negotiating his contract with Motown in 1970 on reaching the age of maturity, he's been his own master on record and has given full rein to his creative impulse. Four albums, 'Where I'm Coming From', 'Music Of My Mind', 'Talking Book' and 'Inner Visions' have since poured forth in a torrent of brilliance, breaking new ground technologically and musically, each one more successful than the other, so that the 'new' Stevie Wonder is now regarded with awe by black and white alike.

Working virtually alone in the studio, playing all instruments save the odd guitar or horn part (with help from two expert synthesiser programmers), overdubbing all

the vocals, writing all the songs, his influence on rock musicians – European and American alike – is paramount. His songs, many of lasting quality like 'Girl Blue', 'Evil' and 'Misstra Know It All', flout all tradition, stay free of cliché, and yet pick up covers by the dozen. Stevie Wonder was good by any standards at age 12; at 23 he's in the forefront of contemporary music. At the risk of sounding

paternalistic, what'll he be like when he's, say, John Lennon's age?

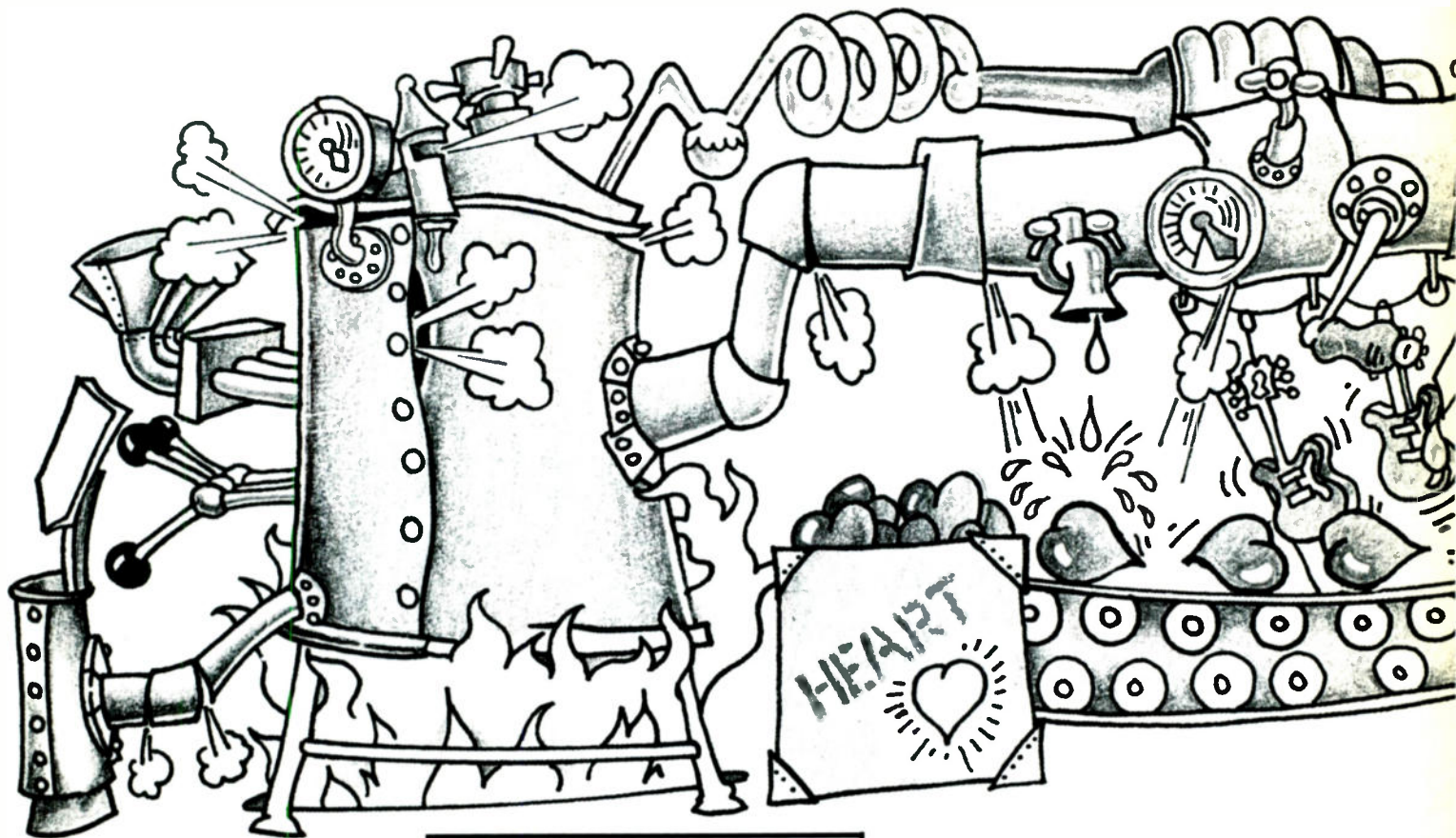
The point of it all, then, is that the '70s are seeing a quiet revolution in black music. The old ways and old forms won't ever go away, but with talents like those around today some new and exciting directions are beginning to emerge that before long could have demolished the old black music stereotypes as we know them.

Another successful black writer, Isaac Hayes, the man responsible for the 'Theme From Shaft'.



SKR

NEXT WEEK IN BLACK MUSIC: James Brown.



POP: '60s-'70s

Clockwork Rock

For all its possible cultural significance and supposed artistic merits, pop music today remains what it really always was, a business, a commercial industry run like any other with the prime aim of making money.

Like any other industry, pop requires its own breed of entrepreneurs and managers, unsung backroom boys boasting the keenest of business senses and an acute eye and ear for what is likely to sell best at any given time. Often from the ranks of record producers and former recording artists as well as business managers, these people are figures as important in their own way to the development of rock & roll and pop music as the stars whose careers they help to launch. Names like Wes Farrell of *Partridge Family* fame, Snuffy Garrett, the man behind Bobby Vee, Bob Crewe, Mickie Most and the ubiquitous Jonathan King immediately come to mind. But there is one producer/manager who, in terms of influence, stands head and shoulders above the rest – that is Don Kirschner.

Kirschner is a figure who appears time and time again in the history of pop in the '60s. He was there right at the start of the decade, as head and co-owner (with partner Al Nevins) of Aldon Music, an

independent publishing firm with a staff of writers that included among its 'unknowns': Gerry Goffin and Carole King, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weill, Neil Sedaka and Howie Greenfield. The factory-like discipline and conditions under which they worked – rows of box-type rooms along seemingly endless corridors – may seem harsh and hardly conducive to good craftsmanship, but it worked brilliantly. For a year or so at least Aldon Music remained the most successful publishing firm on New York's Broadway, and the Brill Building in which it was housed became synonymous with dollars and cents and the pop industry at its most efficient.

Tin Pan Alley Resurrected

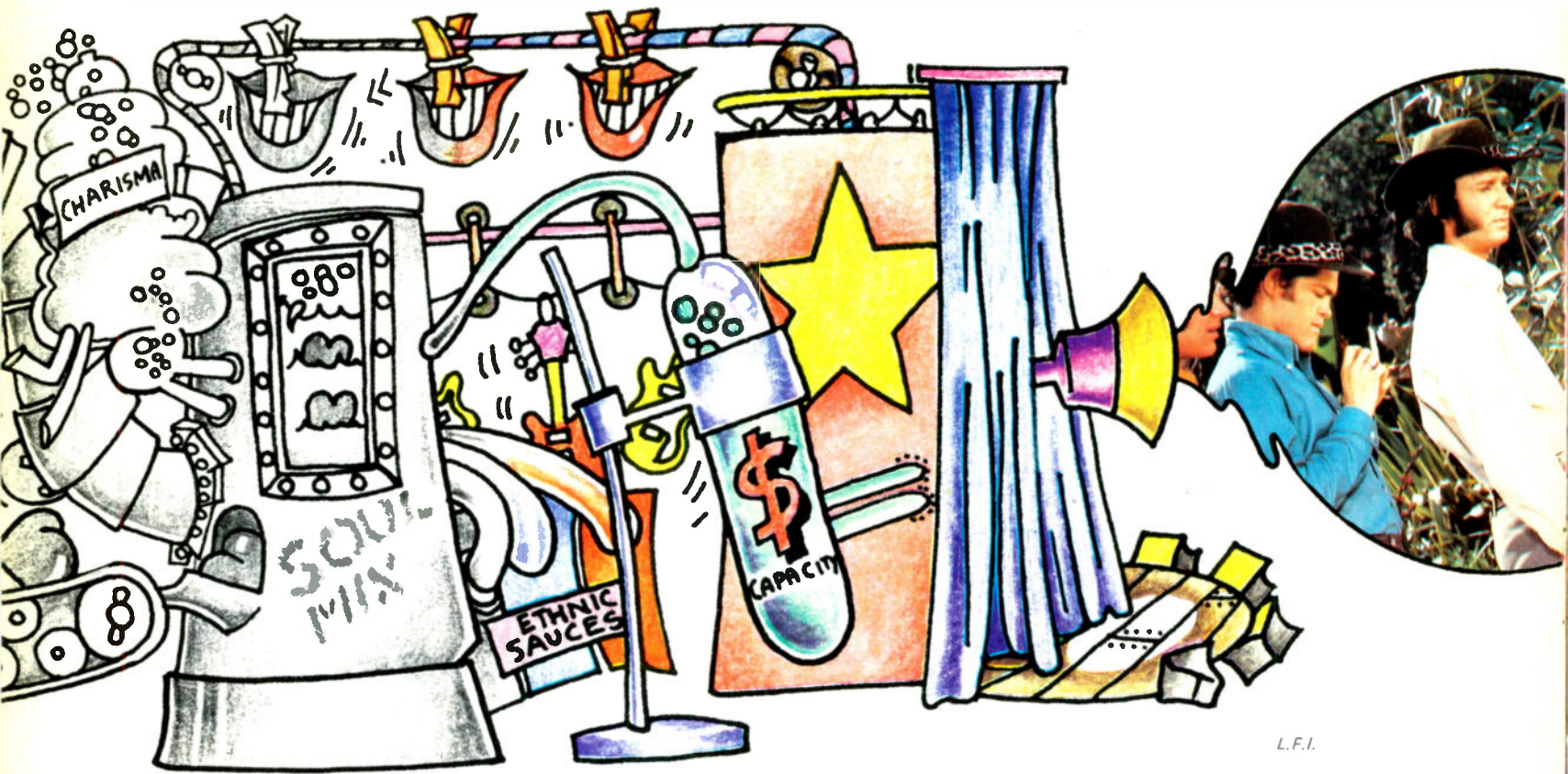
Kirschner put Tin Pan Alley back in the running: rock & roll had created a desire among artists for self-sufficiency, for being able to record their own material, and, besides, it was a music that the old hack songwriters of the Alley were both out of sympathy with and suspicious of. Even if they had needed to, the publishing houses of Tin Pan Alley could not have supplied the demand for teenage songs in the '50s simply because they had no idea of how to produce them.

Kirschner had, though, and this was why his experiment was so successful. He was

one of a new breed of entrepreneurs: young, in sympathy with rock, and a 'child' of the music himself. Unlike the fat old men with cigars who had dominated the high school era, Kirschner had a very clear concept of musical quality. The payola hearings of 1960, part of a general government enquiry into the way the pop business in the States was run, had put an end to a lot of the more glaringly illegal activities such fat old men indulged in, and had caused the business to sort itself out and put its own house in order.

After this, a new, almost sanctimonious air of 'decency' set in, which was reflected in the music: the business having been cleaned up, everything was seen to be working smoothly and with respectable efficiency. Working in this atmosphere, Kirschner found his niche. His production-line methods, though exploitative in one sense (i.e. from the songwriters' point of view), were unarguably efficient. His ideas worked in practice, and teenage pop songwriting became a mini-industry in itself.

Aldon Music had two good years at the top before various developments, most notably the onslaught of the Beatles, caused the demand for ready-made pop songs of the Goffin and King/Neil Sedaka variety to slacken off. Groups and artists were more keen to use their own material, and Aldon's biggest customers like Bobby



L.F.I.

Vee and Tony Orlando were themselves finding it very hard to compete against the newer and frankly more interesting teen idols from across the water.

In 1961 Kirschner had signed independent producer Lou Adler, then working with Johnny Rivers and Jan and Dean, to open an office for Aldon on the American West Coast. As the market changed, Kirschner increasingly focused his attentions on this new branch, sensing that if the company was to have a future then it would have to base itself in Hollywood, showbiz capital of America. So, in 1964 – by which time New York's musical reputation rested on folk-rock and Greenwich Village rather than pop and Tin Pan Alley – it came as no surprise when Kirschner and Nevins sold the company to Columbia Pictures, who in turn formed a new company, Screen Gems-Columbia Music. Kirschner remained as head of the new company and the old team of songwriters – still under contract – moved everything to the West Coast.

Columbia Pictures was not only a film company but also a well-established TV corporation. Having acquired the Aldon publishing house and having set up their own small subsidiary record label, Colgems, Columbia decided to move into the pop music field in a big way. The result was *The Monkees*, a situation-comedy series about the life of a mythical pop group. The 'group' was manufactured: Columbia simply advertised for actors, preferably unknown, to play the parts. The four who were eventually chosen were indeed unknowns – two actors and two musicians – but their professional status soon proved entirely irrelevant. The TV show was a wild success and teenybopper fever, absent from the American pop scene since the

appearance of the Beatles, was reborn. And they were pop idols, not just TV stars. Every record they made in their early days went to no. 1, they took Britain by storm, they became, in terms of hysteria and actual record sales, the new Beatles.

But the point was that musically they had absolutely nothing to offer. Although two of the group were experienced and talented musicians, they were never even allowed to play on their records – union rulings and Don Kirschner were the twin obstacles. Kirschner, in his position as head of Screen Gems Music, had been assigned the musical supervision of the series, which meant his influence extended beyond even telling the group and its producers, including at this time Jeff Barry and Carole King, what they should record (only Screen Gems songs could be used).

Empty Computerised Music

The whole 'Monkees sound' became Kirschner's responsibility, and so he put to use the same 'industrial' techniques on the Monkees as he had at Aldon. But the songs provided by the Screen Gems writers, and the Monkees' first records, became correspondingly computerised, empty and bland – products of craftsmanship without effort, professionalism without magic.

With the Monkees, Kirschner almost reached the peak of his career, establishing that the application of normal business practice and production methods to the pop industry could bring the pop industry to its most commercially efficient level ever. As for the music itself, quality hardly mattered as long as it was both simple and professional enough for kids to listen and

dance to. Efficiency was the key word: there's nothing particularly cynical in wanting to run an industry as a commercial proposition, and to Kirschner pop was never any more than that.

On a broader level what the Monkee business proved was that any big company owning the means of exposing a particular artist or group to the public, *and* having control of both that artist's output and the technical means of production could hardly fail. Centralisation – putting the business of making records, of image-publicity, of merchandising, of media exposure under the same umbrella of one large organisation – had come to pop music, and Kirschner was partly responsible for it.

Monkee Revolt

But the Monkees rebelled against their image by insisting that they be allowed to play on their recordings and have more say in what they were to record. In the end, they proved to be quite talented, but by the time their very own 'Sgt. Pepper' came out, an album called 'Pisces, Aquarius And Jones', neither the public nor Columbia was much interested. Kirschner, though, had by then moved on to bubblegum – exploiting the pre-teen age group to whom the Monkees had most appealed . . . a mere extension of the Monkee principle.

Kirschner's group this time was the Archies, several experienced session-men recording under a pseudonym for yet another TV series. *The Archies* was a cartoon show, so the lead characters couldn't act up and rebel as the Monkees had done. The sound was entirely contrived, even moreso than the Monkees', and the hit formula was much copied. With



Pictorial Press

Other pics. SKR

The Monkees was a situation-comedy series about the life of a mythical pop group; Peter Tork on guitar (top picture); Mickey Dolenz, guitar, lead vocals and drums (centre); Davy Jones, vocals and tambourine (right) and Michael Nesmith, bass.

bubblegum, American music hit an all-time low: this was music that didn't even have an image, that lacked a complete sense of identity or character. Pop had become like TV itself: mundane, and commercial.

'The Archies', the group and the TV show, were extremely successful, but neither of them was destined to last very long. After their enormous one-off bubblegum hit single, 'Sugar, Sugar' in 1969, the group was lost without trace to the pop world. But Kirschner's next experiment with pop and the media never even got off the ground, and was a disaster from start to finish. Moving away from TV into films, he became involved in the production of a film called *Tomorrow*, a science-fiction fantasy set in the next century concerning, yet again, the adventures of a pop group. So antipathetic was the critical reaction to the film, premiered in 1970, that it was never actually given a general release either in Britain or the States.

Perhaps because of this he moved out of TV for a while and set up his own publishing company in conjunction with ATV, titled, with majestic simplicity, ATV-Kirschner. Then, in 1971, he joined an American TV company to produce and network *In Concert*, a new pop series of filmed live performances.

Having seen that Kirschner's role in pop has been to increasingly industrialise it and arguably dilute the musical standard in the process, is he then to be seen as a sort of bogey-man figure working outside the youth culture and almost destroying it? No, because pop music needs its entrepreneurs, people within the industry who know the way popular taste can change and who can anticipate it. Kirschner didn't create those dull periods in pop – the early '60s and the last few years of the decade – he

exploited them because of the public's apathy and musicians' lack of direction. In a way, he enlivened them by so doing.

Pop songwriting today would be nothing without the example set by the Brill Building school of writers that Kirschner brought to popular attention. The Monkees and the Archies fulfilled a certain need or function, were the pint-sized Beatles of a new generation. It could even be argued that by industrialising the music he and others like him saved it from dying the death that other, earlier forms of popular music had. The point seems to be that without people like Kirschner the future of the music is left entirely in the hands of the people who make it, rather than the people who listen, with the result that the music lacks direction and the public loses interest. Entrepreneurs are the go-betweens who maintain that interest, and their role in doing just that is a vital one. After all, without Brian Epstein there would have been no Beatles.

Golden Ear Of Pop

The example set by Kirschner continues to be followed. Jonathan King, head of U.K. Records, is Britain's nearest answer to the first pop man to be accorded the title of 'the Man with the Golden Ear'. Like Kirschner, King was never too concerned with promoting images (Kirschner left that to Screen Gems publicity department), but more with achieving a saleable sound. He often makes records himself under different names, often novelty re-creations of old hits like 'It's The Same Old Song' (under the name of Weathermen) and 'Satisfaction' (as Bubblerock). Also a very shrewd observer of the current

pop scene, King's 1973 venture was to promote two youngsters, Simon Turner and Ricky Wilde, as the British answers to David Cassidy and Donny Osmond. This move, though, seems destined for failure: none of the artists' records have made the Top 50, and they seem to have made it only as far as pin-up heroes, not record stars. Why? Probably because King was a little late, and because Cassidy and Osmond were too much competition.

Hit Maker Of '73

Jonathan King was, nevertheless, the top record producer of 1971 according to volume of sales. That status in 1973 must go to Mickie Most, veteran of an earlier phase of British pop. Head of Rak Records, his business sense has been proved virtually infallible, manifested in hit after hit for Suzi Quatro, Mud, New World and others. Most shares Kirschner's belief in his own ear for a good sound, and refuses to be swayed by his artists in choice of material and recording approach. His job, as he sees it, is just to make hit records, period; although he does accept, as Kirschner always did, the distinction between mainstream chart pop, contemporary bubblegum, and more serious rock.

To call Mickie Most a manufactured pop maker in the sense that Kirschner was is slightly unfair, but what they have in common is an appreciation of what pop itself is really about – teenagers – and of the practical realities of the pop industry. Entrepreneurs, managers, record producers, agents and executives are necessary, and it is far better that men like Most and Kirschner, people who understand both the business *and* the music, fill those positions.

NEXT WEEK IN POP: On stage.

Rockin' The Classics

Frank Zappa, as so often, turned out to have pretty shrewd and unfashionable opinions about the fusion or rock and roll and the classics. It was 1969, and all sorts of bands were dabbling with the classics, taking themselves as seriously as the arty critics took them. Zappa was dead on target when he said:

"The pop/classical gap should definitely be bridged, but . . . honestly. Not by slapping a few stringed instruments behind an electric band, having them play a few unison riffs together and following that with some low-grade rock & roll, bouncing the two back and forth and calling it bridging the gap."

In Britain, Jon Lord, organist for Deep Purple, had written his 'Concerto For Group And Orchestra' with the assistance of Malcolm Arnold, a respected composer of film scores, and the result was performed at a gala Albert Hall shindig in London. Despite the best of intentions, the emperor turned out to have no clothes. Hardly more successful were adventures by Barclay James Harvest, Ars Nova (an American band) and several others current at the time. But these weren't the first musicians who had tried the mixture.

'Nutcracker Suite'

Certainly these long, ponderous works couldn't hold a candle to the two minutes of sheer mind-blow released in 1962 – the unbelievable 'Nut Rocker' by B. Bumble and the Stingers. These unknown Americans had simply taken a melody from the 'Nutcracker Suite', and played it note for note at twice the speed of the original over a surging rock rhythm section. Quite a performance from the pianist – parents could hate this terrible vulgarisation of the classics, but they couldn't level the criticism so often used against rock that the musicians couldn't play their instruments. This guy could have played it straight; he obviously *wanted* to rock it.

It was pure genius, totally commercial, 'Roll over Tchaikovsky' to the ultimate degree. Where Jon Lord and the others seemed confused, combining the worst of rock and the worst of the classic forms, B. Bumble (who was actually the guitarist, and turned out a pretty fine solo on the record) had seen that rock had the rhythm and Tchaikovsky had the melody. He had, in the minds of rock fans, improved upon the original, given it an injection of beef to

bring it up to date. He knew you couldn't afford to be too reverent.

While 'Nut Rocker' was the most striking rocked classic out of the States (other close contenders for the title being B. Bumble's 'Bumble Boogie', an incredibly dexterous re-working in similar vein of Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Flight Of The Bumble Bee', and Kokomo's 'Asia Minor'), there was a whole school of British groups trying to crack the charts with instrumental hits.

The Shadows, Cliff Richard's group, had formulated a very individual sound around fast-strummed rhythm guitar and clear, simple melody lines from Hank B. Marvin's tremolo and echo-laden Stratocaster. It was a simple formula to copy; all a budding band needed was a good melody on which to stick a simple backing, and there they were. It didn't really seem to matter where the tune came from, whether an original or a standard.

Classics Plundered

An obvious place for plunder was the classics, though the Shadows themselves tended to steer clear of them. However, the Cougars, a one-hit-wonder group, created quite a stir with 'Saturday Night At The Duck Pond', which was a cheerful bludgeon-job on 'Swan Lake' and Peter Jay and the Jaywalkers had a bash at the 'Poet and Peasant' overture.

Altogether more heavyweight were a number of singles by Nero and the Gladiators. They were a pretty big attraction in the rocker ballrooms – where there were a lot of good, hard bands with a big following, but who rarely got into the charts, which were full of candyfloss and high school at the time. Nero and the Gladiators were masters of outrageous stage flash, appearing in togas with bleached hair and mean looks. One of their records, 'Entry Of The Gladiators', opened with a deep voice announcing: "Uh, say, Brutus man, like here come the Gladiators", followed by a roaring welter of echo and reverb. Even more camp was the follow-up, for which they chose Grieg's 'Hall Of The Mountain King', an inspired choice. Its opening was: "Say, Brutus man, like where is this king's pad?"

The tune, even in the original form, was loud and gutsy enough to appeal to the staunchest rocker. But Nero and the Gladiators didn't have the class of B. Bumble and Co – and looking back, their music frequently failed to live up to their inspired stage gimmick of things Roman – but another British band, Sounds Incorporated, had more quality.

Discovered, as legend has it, by Gene

Vincent while playing a Saturday night hop in East London, Sounds Incorporated were immediately booked as his backing-band for his second British tour. They quickly came to be rated very highly by rockers and musicians alike, and their line-up of two saxes, guitar, organ, piano and rhythm section gave them a lot of scope and a very full-blooded sound. One of their first singles was the 'Lone Ranger Theme', or Rossini's 'William Tell Overture' which, again, was an inspired choice for re-bopping. The straight version was as heavy as 'Hall Of The Mountain King', and familiar to everybody through the popular children's TV series (and, one suspects, via desperate music masters). The difference between Nero and Sounds was that the latter hardly changed the arrangement; they played it (almost) as the composer would have wished, and managed to sound like a full orchestra in the process, brass and guitar ringing clear and stirring above a thunderous backing. However, their musical fame died with the advent of the Beatles and R&B, even though Brian Epstein tried to remedy matters by signing them to Nems. It was a bit too late.

An American band called the Piltown Men also attempted a re-vamp of 'William Tell', which they titled 'Piltown Rides Again'. They were a group of classical musicians from Los Angeles looking for light relief, and although they gave the impression of slumming it in the neolithic darkness of rock & roll, they made some worthy records characterised by honking sax and great bubbling crescendoes on the tympanis. Indeed, they got higher in the charts than Sounds Inc. ever did, with such numbers as 'Macdonald's Cave' (a re-working of 'Macdonald's Farm') and 'Goodnight Mrs Flintstone' ('Goodnight Ladies').

Love Sculpture

After the Beatles and Stones arrived, the Shadows and the whole instrumental scene – along with most popsters of the time – were washed right away by their wave. It was a long time before anybody resurrected the idea of re-working the classics for the singles charts; a Welsh blues band called Love Sculpture were a lone example.

They stepped out of the blues field in 1968 and released a remarkable guitar/bass/drum instrumental version of Khatchaturian's 'Sabre Dance' which got to no. 6 in the charts. It followed the B. Bumble tradition in that the guitarist really did play all the notes. As it happened, the com-



mercial success of the record caused the band to split. Everywhere they went, people just wanted to hear that one number, and the band couldn't reconcile that sort of mass demand with their more serious aims as blues players. Love Sculpture's guitarist was Dave Edmunds, who again demonstrated his unfashionably commercial rocker tastes a couple of years later with a fine re-working of the Smiley Lewis/Fats Domino classic 'I Hear You Knocking'.

With the exception of 'Sabre Dance', the old way of rocking the old masters died out in 1962. Until the coming of *fin de siècle* rock with Bowie, Glitter, Roxy and perhaps Marc Bolan, everyone seemed to be looking for progress in rock. It became, round about 1966, a culturally OK think to enjoy rock and analyse it in best nouveau-intellectual style.

Nik Cohn quotes Bert Berns, a master of commercial rock of high quality, as saying in 1963 that the Beatles had genius and could be the ruin of them all. Maybe he could see the advent of art rock looming on the horizon; at any rate, Paul McCartney started the serious-classical

school of pop when he recorded 'Yesterday' with a string quartet.

Until then, all the classics had ever provided for rock were good tunes to plunder and a particular way of using orchestral backings. Other people to use full orchestral arrangements included Phil Spector, for example, who had an amazing gift for creating a symphonic sound of extreme soul with his multi-tracked tympanis, strings and grand pianos. Also Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, who wrought excellent funk from strings with the Drifters' 'There Goes My Baby' and 'Save The Last Dance For Me'. Apart from Spector, Leiber and Stoller and a few others, most producers were content to use strings in the light pop manner typical of the '50s, as on Buddy Holly's 'It Doesn't Matter Anymore'.

'Yesterday' opened up new vistas. It sounded classical, and though the Beatles came to renounce the full orchestral sound towards the end of their career, they did have a rich, symphonic sound on some of their best songs ('Strawberry Fields', 'A Day In The Life' and 'I Am The Walrus' in particular). However, they had lapses ('The

Long And Winding Road'), and many who followed their trail didn't have their taste and got bogged down terribly with orchestral experiments.

At any rate, rock was full of vitality in '66 and '67, and some bands managed to carry off their 'classical' experiments. Procol Harum were the first of the symphonic rock groups. In France, Jacques Loussier had made a successful career from discreetly jazzing Bach pieces. But Procol burst on the scene in 1967 with a loose re-working of Bach's 'Air On A G-String' to which they added quasi-surreal lyrics and the title 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale'. It was a monster hit, but it seemed as if the old Pharaoh's curse was at work again when the band all but broke up and had little success over the next couple of years. Just as the previous pop instrumental bands never seemed to get more than one hit after rocking a classic, so Procol suffered – and after a lot of bad publicity, a couple of members split.

Procol Harum didn't really return to grace, despite such fine albums as 'A Salty Dog', until they had a hit with 'Conquistador', a tune from their first



Pictorial Press

A Welsh band called Love Sculpture, from L. to R. : John Williams on bass; lead guitarist Dave Edmonds and Bob Jones on drums.

album, recorded with the Canadian Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Their album with the orchestra was hailed as a major achievement. Possibly one reason why they succeeded where many bands came to grief was because they never tried to escape from the short song format. All the same, one wonders how long they can keep going on the classical sound; there are signs of musical dead-end on their album 'Grand Hotel'.

If Procol Harum seem to be losing impetus, another strain of classical influence goes from strength to strength. Keith Emerson hit on a magic formula in 1968 when he and the other members of the Nice were playing solo spots as the backing band for P. I. Arnold, an American soul singer who lived in Britain for some time. It was the old formula of bopping the classics but with more than a dash of jazz and theatricals, not to mention intensely high volume. Their big numbers were 'Rondo' and 'America', which was a combination of Bernstein's song from 'West Side Story' and Dvořák's 'New World'. Emerson, with a strict classical training background, had a startling gift for playing improvisations. Most organists had previously revered Jimmy Smith, a jazz player, but Emerson showed a whole new path for keyboard players.

When he split from the original Nice — who had gone on to record Sibelius' 'Karelia Suite' the 'Three Bridges Suite',

and a 'Symphony For Group And Orchestra' which included 'Brandenburger', an excerpt from Bach's 'Brandenburg Concertos' (which was credited as a group composition) — Emerson continued on the same path with Emerson, Lake and Palmer.

Even in the early days, distinctly unclassical stagemanship characterised the Nice. Regular as clockwork, Emerson would pull a dagger out of his buckskin boot and stab his organ, push it over and leap about in true Screaming Lord Sutch fashion.

A Dose Of The Spectacular

ELP have as one of their most popular numbers a re-working of Mussorgsky's 'Pictures At An Exhibition', and are high practitioners of art rock now, leavened for middle-of-the-road audiences with a good dose of the spectacular. In the process they've lost the spontaneous feel of the Nice; and other bands, such as Yes and Genesis, have come to share ELP's penchant for the enormous.

Procol Harum and ELP are two of the more lively popular bands to draw from the classics, but at the top end of the spectrum come the musicians who perhaps come closest to bridging the gap between rock and the classics. When Zappa lamented the poor quality of most attempts to fuse the two forms, he added that he saw his own work as moving towards con-

temporary serious composers, and it's in the realm of the avant-garde that the divisions start to get really blurred. Zappa calls some of his work 'electric chamber music', and though much of it appeals to rock fans, it bears strong resemblance to work by modern composers.

You could hardly call it pop, though the definition of rock has expanded enough to include Zappa's music and that of Terry Riley, the Soft Machine and various disciples of Schoenberg, Erik Satie, Cornelius Cardew, John Cage and other modern composers who use tape loops, random structure, improvisation and electronic sound.

The Soft Machine appeared at London's Proms in 1970, the first rock band to do so — if you really can call them rockers — and Robert Wyatt, who was their drummer at the time told *Frend* magazine:

"We're still part of the European concert group tradition, but using bits of information that others don't know about, such as the rock rhythm techniques of Sly and the Family Stone. Yea, we're contemporary classical musicians."

Nowadays the Soft Machine tend more towards jazz, but then modern jazz is in itself a nebulous term. It's hard to categorise such music — it's all more or less experimental, exploring uncharted territory whether you call it rock, jazz or whatever. Certainly it's a good deal more scholarly than 'Nut Rocker'.

POP FILE

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

BOBBY RYDELL was one of the 'Philadelphia School' of singers promoted in the wake of Presley's success. Recording for Cameo, he had hits with 'Wild One' (1960), 'Sway' (1961) and 'Forget Him' (1963).

MITCH RYDER was one of the few people to run a '50s-style rock group successfully in the States in the '60s. Originally known as Billy Lee and the Rivas, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels split in 1966 and Mitch went solo. The group never did anything in Britain.

DOUG SAHM emerged from Texas with a country rock band called the Sir Douglas Quintet in the mid-'60s. They had a big hit single with 'She's About A Mover' in 1965, followed by several less-successful US hits and a well-received album. Doug then



moved up to San Francisco, changed his view of things, and re-emerged in the '70s as Doug Sahm and his Band, produced by Jerry Wexler and featuring Bob Dylan on his most successful album, 'Doug Sahm & Band', in 1973.

BUFFY ST. MARIE, a Cree Indian, came to prominence in the early '60s with her protest songs 'The Universal Soldier' and 'My Country 'Tis Of Thy People You're Dying', which relates the white man's atrocities against the Red Indians. Other well-known recordings include 'I'm Gonna Be A Country Girl Again' and 'Circle Game'.



SAM AND DAVE (Samuel Moore and David Prater) made some excellent soul recordings with Stax in the '60s, including 'You Don't Know Like I Know', 'Hold On I'm Coming', and 'Soul Sister Brown Sugar'. They broke up in 1970, but reformed in 1973.

TOMMY SANDS was signed by Capitol Records in 1957 as they searched for another Elvis. Despite his million-seller 'Teen-age Crush' and some film parts, Tommy didn't make the grade, but continued to record into the '60s.

SANTANA were formed by Mexican singer and guitarist Carlos Santana when he arrived in San Francisco in 1967. From the start the band combined rock with latin american rhythms, and after appearing in *Woodstock* became a big name. After three albums Carlos split the band in 1970, made a solo album, and became a devotee of Guru Sri Chinmoy along with John McLaughlin.



SAVOY BROWN are just another blues band in Britain, but have had a massive following in the States since 1968. The group combines its own numbers with blues and soul classics and has been led by guitarist Kim Simmonds throughout. Other members at present are: Dave Walker (vocals), Paul Raymond (keyboards), Andy Pyle (bass) and Dave Bidwell (drums). Past members include: Chris Youlden, Andy Sylvester and Roger Earl.

MIKE SARNE had a couple of novelty hits in Britain in 1962 with 'Come Outside' and 'Will I What?'. He is now an actor and director.

PETER SARSTEDT, brother of Eden Kane (a British early '60s singer), had a sudden and massive hit with his song 'Where Do



Donald

Donald

Redferns

J.K.A.

You Go To, My Lovely?' in 1969. He followed it with 'Frozen Orange Juice' but although he maintained a following for his smooth, sophisto folk songs, he never regained his initial popularity. He is now singing with his two brothers (left to right: page 615: Rick (Eden Kane), Peter and Clive).

THE SCAFFOLD were formed in 1965 by Liverpool poet Roger McGough, Mike McGear (Paul McCartney's brother), and ex-GPO engineer John Gorman. As a revue, satire and poetry act they have built up a big reputation through appearances at art festivals, theatre clubs and TV, and released their fourth album,

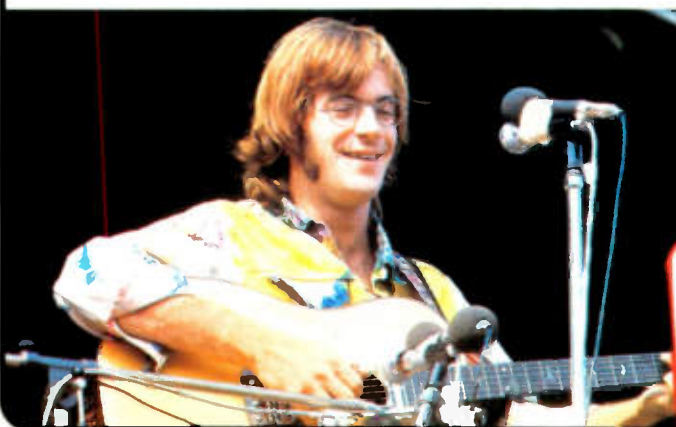


'Fresh Liver', in 1973. In 1967 they had a Christmas novelty hit with 'Thank U Very Much', and repeated this in 1968 with 'Lily The Pink'.

SCREAMING LORD SUTCH based his act on Screaming Jay Hawkins, and presented his horror show around the British clubs of the late '50s and early '60s, when he was the furthest-out thing around. Always a likely lad, he stood for Parliament in 1964 for his National Teenage Party. Richie Blackmore, John Bonham, and Jimmy Page are among the many name musicians who have worked with him, though sometimes for not more than one night!

THE SEARCHERS were one of the successful Mersey groups in the wake of the Beatles and the Hollies. From 1963 to 1966 they had 10 British hits (including three no. 1s), but never really made it in the States. Their best-known recordings include 'Sweets For My Sweet', 'Needles And Pins', 'Don't Throw Your Love Away', 'When You Walk In The Room', 'Goodbye My Love' and 'Take Me For What I'm Worth'. They played a hybrid of rock, country and commercialised folk, and were as good live as on record – and no doubt still are.

JOHN SEBASTIAN was born in New York in 1946, and began singing in the clubs of Greenwich Village in the early '60s. After working as a session-guitarist and harmonica player for Elektra, he formed the Lovin' Spoonful in 1964 and wrote many songs for them including 'Daydream', 'Summer In The City', 'Younger Girl' and 'Do You Believe In Magic?' The band split in 1968, and John established himself as a solo singer with his appearance in the *Woodstock* film. He has made three solo albums for Reprise.



NEIL SEDAKA was born in Brooklyn, New York City, on March 13, 1939 and won a scholarship to the Juillard Music School to study as a classical pianist. He teamed up with Howard Greenfield and wrote many hit songs for other artists (including 'Stupid Cupid' for Connie Francis) and then began singing himself. He wrote most of his own hits including his first 'The Diary' in 1959, 'Oh Carol', 'King Of Clowns', 'Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen', 'Breaking Up Is Hard To Do', and 'Calendar Girl'. In the mid-sixties he concentrated on songwriting but began singing again in 1971 and has had success with 'That's Where The Music Takes Me' and 'Standing On The Inside'.

PETE SEEGER was born on May 3, 1919 and dropped out of Harvard University in 1938 to hobo round the States, under the influence of Woody Guthrie. He worked with Alan Lomax on the Library Of Congress collection of folk material and after the War formed the Weavers folk group and in 1951 had a huge hit with Leadbelly's 'Goodnight Irene'. He was blacklisted from TV during the McCarthy era and refused to testify at the UnAmerican Activities Committee. In the sixties he was closely involved with the civil rights movement and wrote its anthem 'We Shall Overcome', as well as 'If I Had A Hammer', 'Little Boxes' and 'Where Have All The Flowers Gone'.

THE SEEKERS were a commercialised 'folk' group that sang happy and healthy ditties with great success in the mid sixties including 'I'll Never Find Another You', 'World Of Our Own', 'Georgy Girl' and 'Morningtown Ride'.



NEW SEEKERS, formed in 1969, they had their first hit with 'Never Ending Song Of Love' which reached the UK no. 1 in July 1971. The line-up then was Eve Graham, Marty Kristian, Lyn Paul, Paul Layton and Peter Doyle. In January 1972 they made the UK's first million seller for three years with 'I'd Like To Teach The World To Sing'. Other hits include 'Beg Steal And Borrow', 'Circles' and 'You Won't Find Another Fool Like Me'.



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The Doors: By far and away the most successful of all the West Coast underground bands during the '60s, they were hailed universally as important and significant in 1967, but by 1969 they had become slightly embarrassing.

BLACK MUSIC

James Brown: The King Of Soul, with 83 consecutive hits to his name, he still makes over 300 personal appearances every year – the hardest working man in show business – Mr Dynamite.

ROCK

Glitter Rock: When rock musicians got serious, a part of the audience got restless for something more exciting – the result has been a deluge of flash and glitter . . . not all of it gold.

POP CULTURE

Rock Theatre: Often written, conceived, managed and produced by middle-aged men for a middle-aged market, using young people and 'polite' rock to give the shows a hip veneer, sometimes it has produced something vital and valid.

MUSIC

The Girls: The 'weaker' sex and pop music from Carole King, Joan Baez, Janis Joplin and Joni Mitchell to Sandy Denny, Maggie Bell and Suzi Quatro.

THE SUPERSTARS

The Four Tops: Formed in 1953, they signed with the infant Motown label in 1963 and grew to international stardom with pop classics like 'Baby I Need Your Loving' and 'Reach Out I'll Be There'.

POP INFLUENCES

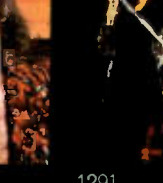
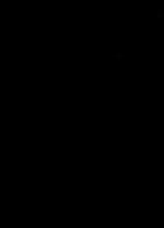
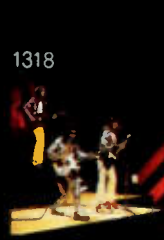
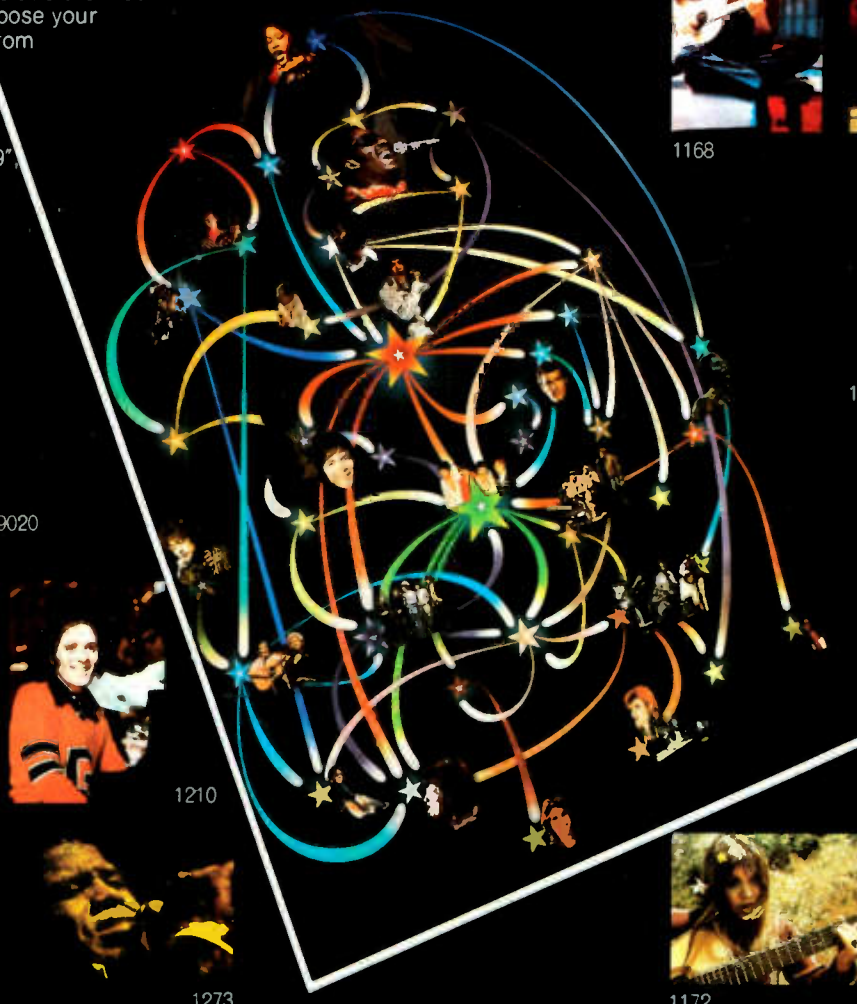
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