

THE
RADIO
ONE

Story of Pop

THE FIRST
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS



PART 16

25p
EVERY THURSDAY

BOB DYLAN: Images are a Changin'
THE BAND: Big Sound from Big Pink
L.A.: freeways to Music
PLUS: Shock Rock, Love Generation, Protest & more



Dylan is one of perhaps only three true giants to have emerged from the history of pop music. The other two, naturally, are Presley and the Beatles. To make comparisons as to their relative importance and influence would be invidious and futile; each contributed enormously in their own area.

Dylan, however, very nearly single-handed gave rock a meaningful voice; he brought a new literacy to songwriting, created new forms. He influenced the Beatles just as they influenced everyone else, and after him the face of the music had changed: its conventions had changed, its purpose had changed, its effectiveness as a medium for message had changed. Rightly, then, he is a superstar, and it is as such that we treat him this issue as well as analysing his post-electric songwriting. We look too at his band, the Band, who with him suffered the boos and cat-calls of a public slow to realise that electrification and sincerity need not be incompatible, and that to be a poet didn't limit you to the sole use of acoustic guitar.

While Dylan was breaking new ground and smashing old barriers in the East, other writers and groups were working steadily on the West Coast forging ahead in the tracks beaten by the Beach Boys. The result was that within a few years, in the middle of the decade, the focus shifted yet again from London to Los Angeles as a centre for creative and commercial music. And, in a separate article, we see that others were at work experimenting with old forms, breaking out of pop conventions by using shock and outrage. The rise of 'shock rock' through extraordinary men like Frank Zappa – who bent every and any musical form to his eclectic purpose – and Captain Beefheart who puzzled and worried listeners unused to such musical surrealism, makes for fascinating and exciting reading.

The struggle of the Blacks continued and was reflected in their music, but white youth was changing, shying away from violence and towards flowers and beads and love and drugs – and from them was to come yet another shift in the quick-changing tastes and fast-developing sophistication of the '60s.

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Shock Rock

Alice is such an American name, and if you didn't know better you could well be excused for thinking that Alice Cooper was a '50s-style crooner or perhaps a long blonde-haired folk singer. But Alice Cooper is certainly neither. This is how he described his music in *Hooka*, a Texas underground magazine: 'It's third generation rock theatre-shock rock, which is very valid. 16, 17 and 18-year-old kids don't want to hear jazz . . . they want to hear rock. And they want a sex image – an anti-

heroic image'. There you have Alice.

That's what Alice represents, although there's nothing new about the anti-heroic sex image whose tradition in rock goes back to Presley, through the best of his British imitators like Billy Fury, to other anti-establishment figures like Mick Jagger and Jim Morrison. But 'shock rock', if it is to mean anything, implies more than just a youthful or sexy challenge to the social structure and to authority, otherwise almost all rock music comes within its bounds.

'Shock rock' is the use of theatrics to directly involve the audience. This seemed a natural progression to produce a new

sort of reaction, since as rock & roll became more complex, it was no longer merely something to dance to. Consequently, performances were expanded by the use of light shows, films, visual effects and props, and this new dimension gradually developed during the '60s: Jimi Hendrix, with his climactic guitar-burning ritual, the Who's guitar-smashing extravaganzas, and Arthur Brown's flaming headgear have all been examples of this phenomenon in operation. Alice Cooper, the Stooges, with the irrepressible Iggy Pop, or even David Bowie have pushed this theatricality to further limits. But some of the forerunners deserve closer attention.

The major assault in the '60s came from two quite distinct American groups: the Mothers of Invention, from LA, and the Fugs from New York's lower East Side. Frank Zappa, the moving spirit and guiding light of the Mothers, had got his first band together whilst still at high school in Lancaster and one variation of this band, the Omens, even included Don Van Vliet, or Captain Beefheart as he came to be



Graeme Marsh

known. After the Omens, Frank Zappa found himself with a new group of musicians who, like himself, were bored with playing 'Louie Louie' every night. They became the Mothers – in preference to Captain Glasspack and His Magic Mufflers, which they were at one time going to call the group.

'Teenage Stardom'

The group then proceeded to get themselves hired and fired throughout LA's bars and clubs until Herb Cohen, then managing comedian and satirist Lenny Bruce, took them under his wing. He got them into the hipper LA clubs like the Trip and the Whiskey, where someone from MGM saw the group's obvious commercial potential (?), and signed them up. Since then, as Zappa himself puts it, "it was upward and onward to teenage stardom."

At this early stage in the group's career they had not yet developed the use of theatrical effects, or 'atrocities' as they came to be known, but musically at least their first album was something of a breakthrough. It's arguably the first concept album, at least a year before 'Sgt. Pepper', and containing all Zappa's trademarks. It's a typical collage of sound, comprising nostalgia for '50s rock & roll, beautiful orchestral passages which suddenly break into avant-garde jazz in completely undanceable tempos, speeded up vocal tapes, and imaginative use of percussion.

This and the subsequent albums are like chapters in a book; a master-work conceived by Frank Zappa. The chapters are not just musical statements, but also his own observations on society. His main targets are middle-class plasticity and hypocrisy, attacked through his favourite themes – high school, sexual values and conformity. He was also quick to recognise the conformity of the hippies and flower power generation, whom he took to task in the group's third album 'We're Only In It For The Money', the cover of which is such a brilliant parody of the Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper'. His next two projects were diversions from the theme of the previous albums. The ballet, 'Lumpy Gravy', and his affectionate satire of '50s vocal groups, 'Cruisin' With Reuben And The Jets'.

These two albums were released during the Mothers' extended stay in New York, staying in Greenwich Village and performing a sort of revue called *Absolutely Free*, also the title of their second album. It was here that the group's atrocities were developed, almost by accident. Zappa had always believed that the group's image and presentation should reflect the content of the songs, but the reaction by a group of US Marines who were invited up on stage to demonstrate their treatment of a Vietnamese baby, in the form of a large doll, made Zappa realise the enormous potential of visual aids. The Marines tore the doll to pieces, and thereafter the Mothers employed a number of such aids – a favourite one being a huge

stuffed giraffe with a hose running between its rear legs. When Ray Collins, the vocalist with the group, massaged its tail it would stiffen and shoot out whipped cream all over the front rows of the audience.

This particular prop recalls the Bonzo Dog Band, who made use of a number of contraptions designed and built by one of their members, Roger Ruskin Spear (who later created the Giant Kinetic Wardrobe, a team of trained robots). With a series of explosions and flashes these various props would shoot foam, bubbles and feathers over the stage and audience. The Bonzos were the nearest equivalent in Britain to the Mothers, combining nostalgia for rock & roll with comedy and satire that had its serious aspects as well – when they managed to take themselves seriously for long enough.

Zappa, however, on his return from New York, released perhaps the group's major work, and certainly his most significant work as a composer, the double-album, 'Uncle Meat'. This was originally to be titled 'No Commercial Potential', but became the soundtrack to *Uncle Meat* – an unfinished film. Its theme was pretty shocking too, one of Reuben and the Jets versus a collection of mutants, whose brains extended down through their noses. These superbrains were forever set on dastardly deeds like stealing hub caps from Chevys, and other exploits aimed at world domination. The music itself is brilliantly constructed, the usual collage with plenty of *déjà vu* from his previous work and 20th Century music generally.

Guiding Light

The group's subsequent work has never seemed to reach these same heights, and the stage presentation has since become far less theatrical and with less emphasis on social/political observations. Since 'Uncle Meat', Zappa's main preoccupations have appeared to be with that favourite taboo subject – sex, and with the trials and tribulations of life on the road. The culmination of this was in the film and soundtrack *200 Motels*. It cannot be denied that Frank Zappa, both musician and performer, has guided pop music in style and technique in a way that few others can claim to have done. Of all these facets 'shock rock' is but one – but one that, in the glittering, camp rock scene of the '70s, has gone a long way to determining where the money lies, if not the originality.

It's far more difficult to assess the importance of the Fugs. The group went to far greater extremes to violate what was socially acceptable in American society, and in doing so set themselves out on a limb in a way that the Mothers never did. The Fugs' approach was so direct, and they said and did things in the early '60s that most other groups, even in the '70s, would only hint at. Theirs was such an honest and as such 'clean' approach, that it almost seemed as if they were purging themselves for society's perversions. The



core of the group were Ed Sanders, Ken Weaver and Tuli Kupferberg, Sanders and Kupferberg being poets and in fact survivors of the Beat Era.

The Fugs weren't musicians or singers in the usual sense of the word, but they got together over the years with an assortment of musicians like Peter Stampfel and Steve Weber of the Holy Modal Rounders, guitarists Ken Pine and Vinny Leary, as well as other poets like Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso. The Rounders themselves might even be described as dabbling in 'shock rock' during one phase of their career, which produced the album 'The Moray Eels Eat The Holy Modal Rounders'. Elektra Records' President Jac Holzman likened this to the theatre of the absurd of Samuel Beckett – a form of aural theatre. The Rounders, like the Fugs, were part of the Greenwich Village scene, the Fugs living almost permanently on MacDougal Street.

Their shock treatment was never really through props and effects, although their



Kobal Collection

act was illustrated by routines, movements and gestures best left undescribed: it was, however, their pacifism and their explicit treatment of subjects like sex and drugs that gained them their notoriety. Titles like 'New Amphetamine Shriek', 'I Couldn't Get High', 'Coca Cola Douche', 'Group Grope' and 'Kill For Peace' speak for themselves. This attitude, combined with their frequent use of obscenity both on stage and on record (only Country Joe's 'Fish Cheer' has achieved any comparable reaction), has caused them to be likened to Lenny Bruce or novelist Henry Miller, and when it became fashionable to be seen as weird and freaky a few years later they were rightly seen as mentors.

There is little doubt that if 'shock rock' is an acceptable term then it is applicable to the Fugs; but it's also useful to look at an artist who doesn't really fall into this category, although one might at first think so. He is Captain Beefheart. Certainly a fairly stunning, and to some even 'shocking' personality, the Captain is also

regarded as a genius by many others.

His first album, 'Safe As Milk', was first-rate R&B/Blues styled music, but sparking with originality in songs like 'Electricity' and 'Drop Out Boogie', and embellished by the Captain's remarkable vocal range, to make it the rock classic that it has since become. His second album, 'Strictly Personal', was a natural development of the first, but producer Bob Krasnow got hold of the tapes, added phasing and other acid rock effects to put it into a more contemporary perspective, and thereby detracted from Beefheart's concept.

Then, of course, the cover of the album – with references to '500mgs', unearthly photographs of the group on the inner spread, and tracks like 'Ah Feel Like Ahcid' – also lead most people to the inevitable assumption that here was an acid rock album. But in a number of interviews the Captain has denied taking acid, or has not denied it by evading the question (which he's very good at doing), but he's never admitted to it.

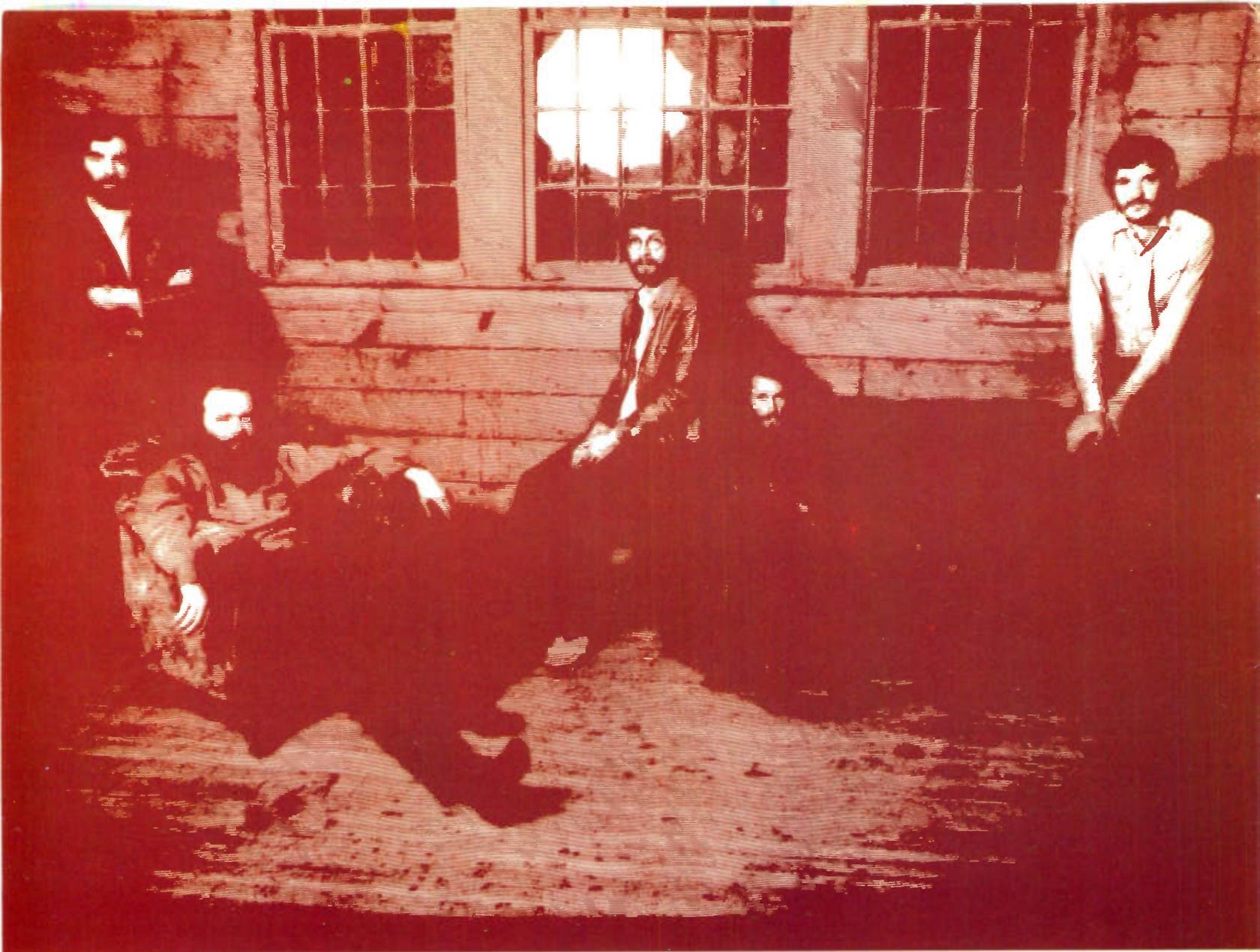
Most of those who are outraged by Captain Beefheart, or indeed those who claim he's a genius, make their judgement from the next two albums which he unleashed on the world. 'Trout Mask Replica' and 'Lick My Decals Off, Baby'. With these he joined Frank Zappa's roster of freaks on his Straight label – along with other such notables as Wild Man Fischer, the GTO's (Girls Together Outrageously – who include in their ranks the infamous Cynthia Plaster Caster), and even those boys in make-up, Alice Cooper.

Sell Out Tours

The music on 'Trout Mask Replica' and 'Decals' was unusual, full of avant-garde jazz licks and complicated timings and demanding much of the listener, while Beefheart's free verse lyrics were even more fluent though some say obscene. The Captain's group, his Magic Band, are as weird a bunch of inspired musicians as rock has produced; and with names like Ed Marimba, Zoot Horn Rollo, Winged Eel Fingerling and Antenae Jimmy Siemens, they were inevitably dismissed as a bunch of freaks by those who didn't find their music immediately pleasurable. Since these two albums, however the Captain has moved back towards more blues-based music on the less freaky and commercially successful albums 'Spotlight Kid' and 'Clear Spot'. Not surprisingly perhaps, this shift coincides with the Captain going back on the road, to sell-out European tours in 1972 and '73.

But the road is where shock rock was created, for the road is a battle for the audience's attention – especially if a band is bottom of the bill and the audience is more concerned with chatting to friends and getting ready for the star attraction than listening to unknowns. In this situation how does an averagely competent rock band mark itself out from all the others? Alice Cooper had played for seven years without breaking through, and it was mostly the change to a shocking theatrical act that cut them out from the herd, and gave the music press something different to write about. The appeal of shock rock to the mass media is all important – Iggy Pop would never rate whole page articles in the pop press on the strength of his music alone. Of course, many musicians genuinely believe that their shock tactics and massive theatrical effects open their audience's minds to new and important ideas. But how many groups have shocked only in order to make money, or to cover up a dearth of talent?

Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart used shock tactics to make audiences sit up and notice the very real contributions they had to make. But when the law of diminishing returns leaves us with virtually unshockable audiences, only those musicians with something original and substantial to say will be able to produce the real shock in rock – that shock of direct emotional communication, which can send tingles down your spine or change your whole view of life.



Capitol

PROFILE: 1959-73

The Band

Big Sound from Big Pink

"I can't believe that people are so gullible to accept what they accept in art and in music. Nowadays they're playing jock-strap and feedback, and they knock them out . . . I think it's up to the individual to get himself to the place where he doesn't have to be that taken in by anything. Now people are saying, let's hear the truth; we haven't heard it in a long long time."

(Robbie Robertson, *Time* interview, 1970)

1968 was an important year. It was the year of the May Events in Paris; the year of the Chicago Democratic Convention; the year, in Britain, of the massive October 27th Vietnam demonstration in the streets of London. It was the year of 'Beggars Banquet', the summer of 'Street Fighting Man' and the Doors' 'Waiting For The Sun' album . . . including their frightening 'Five To One'; the time of 'Electric Ladyland', 'Cheap Thrills', and the Cream's 'Wheels On Fire'.

It was the year in which the frenetic energies of 1967 raced away into uncharted and unknown territories: the year

in which acid consolidated its arrival of the year before. The lines were being drawn: 'Your ballroom days are over' . . . 'We are the people your parents warned you against' . . . 'They've got the guns but we've got the numbers' . . . 'I think the time is right for violent revolution' . . . 'Everywhere I hear the sound of marching, charging feet, boy'.

It was at this emotionally charged moment that the Band arrived. Their first album, 'Music From Big Pink', was released in the States in June 1968 - a month after the May Events and a couple of months before 'Street Fighting Man'. The Band themselves though, had been playing for a number of years: four of them had been brought up in Canada, and they had played together as far back as 1959. They had acted as the backing group for Canadian rock & roll singer Ronnie Hawkins, and had been known as the Hawks - Robbie Robertson, the lead guitarist of the group, had distinguished himself on many of Ronnie's rock records, in particular with a high-powered solo on 'Who Do You Love?' (1963). Levon Helm, the only American in the group, had sung a few times with Ronnie, and some of his early efforts had found their way on to recordings - usually blues standards like

Bobby Bland's 'Further On Up The Road' and Muddy Waters' '19 Years Old'.

On tracks like these, we have the Band in embryo – Helm's rough, brutally honest vocals accentuated by his raunchy drumming, Robertson's precise but exciting guitar sound, and Rick Danko's Motown bass lines. Ronnie Hawkins has always known how to pick sidemen, and the group sounded like a good one.

Good as they were, however, their sound was neither original nor truly creative. They were – as they would be the first to admit – their master's voice, and it wasn't until they broke with Ronnie and toured the southern states of the US; as Levon and the Hawks, that things began to happen. On tour they tightened up their sound considerably, and gained the confidence they could never have got as Ronnie's group – they even released a couple of singles, the most famous being 'Stones That I Throw', which was a landmark if only as a Robbie Robertson composition. Nevertheless, the records didn't sell and they still seemed to be getting nowhere fast. Levon Helm said: "We just played joints, just swinging and grooving the best we could. But after a while it got to be a drag. It was just reproduction. We'd do rhythm and blues like someone else because that's what the audience wanted to hear. But when you do that, you end up just being a house band. You either do that or you go home."

Quirk Of Fortune

By some amazing quirk of fortune however, their music received just the jolt it needed when they were spotted by Bob Dylan in the summer of 1965. Dylan, shortly after the release of his rock & roll debut album 'Bringing It All Back Home', was looking for a rock group to back him on live appearances. Quite how he knew of the Hawks is one of the great mysteries of rock – but his choice was a magnificent one. Dylan contacted the Hawks when they were playing in Atlanta City and, if we can believe them, they hadn't really heard much of his musical career. "We'd heard of him," admitted Robbie Robertson, "but we weren't into that kind of music, and I really didn't know who he was or that he was *that* famous." Nevertheless, a few months later, they were immersed in his kind of music and played behind him through the Fall of 1965 and until his motorbike smash in the summer of 1966.

Dylan provided the key to the Hawks' growth. Over the years they had become superb musicians technically, but on the ideas level their potential had been stultified by their situation: they had been expected to play traditional rock wherever they performed, and this continual repetition had put a stopper on any creative developments in their music. Dylan, though, would not tolerate this kind of stagnancy – his own career had been full of movement, full of a restless search for something quite indefinable. The effect on the Hawks was traumatic, with Robbie Robertson in particular being shaken out of

his preconceptions by the continual state of musical flux that for Dylan was almost normal. "Dylan brought us into a whole new thing," Robbie said, "and I guess he got something from us."

Fruitful Years

The understanding that built up between Dylan and the Hawks was truly astonishing, as anyone who has heard them play together will attest to. It's one of the tragedies of rock that they made so few recordings together. Officially, we have only odd tracks from 'Blonde On Blonde' ('One Of Us Must Know'), the live version of 'Just Like Tom Thumbs Blues', released as the 'B' side to the 'I Want You' single, and the occasional live recording released on the 'Self Portrait' album ('The Mighty Quinn', 'Like A Rolling Stone', 'She Belongs To Me' and 'Minstrel Boy'). The two most fruitful periods of their collaboration – the tours of 1965 and 1966, and the time of Dylan's recluse in 1967 – are simply ignored. We know that recordings were made due to the explosion of bootleg releases in 1969 and 1970, but – as of 1973 – it would appear that CBS have no plans to make the tracks legally available.

The Hawks stayed with Dylan throughout 1967, and it wasn't until the summer of 1968 that their first solo album was finally released. 'Music From Big Pink' was a massive, personal statement, and the influence of Dylan on their music is apparent in practically every line of every song. The album opened, appropriately enough, with a song jointly written by bassist Rick Danko and Bob Dylan – 'Tears Of Rage', a number written during the Haight-Ashbury happenings of 1967:

*'We carried you in our arms
On Independence Day,
And now you'd throw us all aside
And put us on our way . . .'*

The lyrics, presumably written by Dylan, were not just unusual in that summer of 1968 – they were a positive insult. The Hawks, now called the Band from Big Pink, launched straight into a head-on collision with the prevailing rock hegemony. While others were singing the praises of the imminent war of the generations, 'Big Pink' began with a picture from the other side of the conflict:

*'Tears of rage, tears of grief,
Why must I always be the thief?'*

'Music From Big Pink' acted, together with Dylan's 'John Wesley Harding', as a brake on the psychedelic momentum of 1967 and 1968 – they were both conscious acts of disassociation. 'Big Pink' played down electronics – you could hardly hear the wah-wah at all – and Robbie sought out the group's problems by looking into the past, searching among the forgotten areas of pop music. 'Strap yourself to a tree with roots' Dylan had sung, and Robbie agreed: "Your roots,"

he has said, "really are everything that has ever impressed you." It was this approach from the group, this tendency to eclecticism, that marked out 'Big Pink' as something special. The vocals, as an example, covered every conceivable influence from the soul-tinged bluesy sound of Richard Manuel on 'Tears Of Rage' and 'Lonesome Susie', to the raucous country sounds of Levon Helm on 'The Weight', taking in Rick Danko's great straight-pop vocals on 'Caledonia Mission' and 'In A Station' on the way.

But even this sort of catalogue leaves half the story unsaid, for the most remarkable achievement of the vocal sound of 'Big Pink' is the incredible ease with which the group manages to fuse all of these different influences together. This cohesion is brilliantly demonstrated on 'We Can Talk About It Now', where all three of the band's singers appear to be singing lead. The result is not the confusion you might expect, but a beautifully natural sound, with the harmonies emerging quite effortlessly and spontaneously. It was an amazing vocal sound to be confronted with in 1968, and even the best of the 'progressivists' like Clapton and Hendrix seemed to pall beside it.

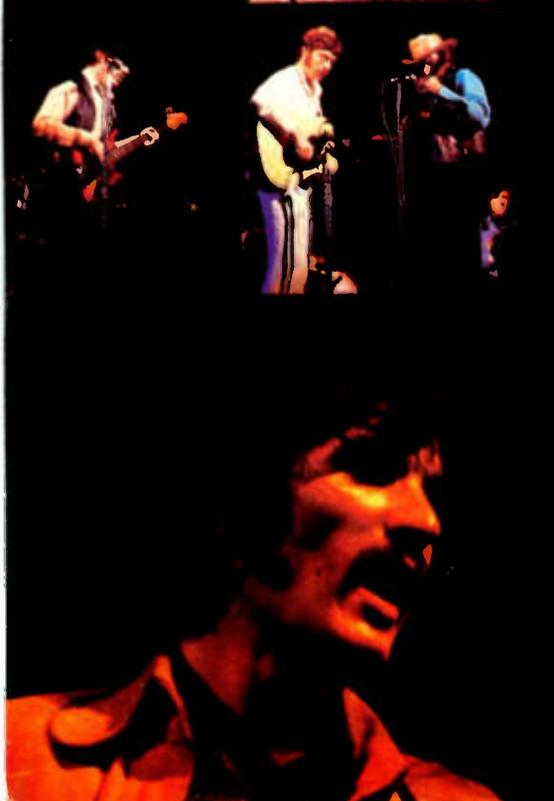
'Jock-strap And Feedback'

Instrumentally, Robbie Robertson's guitar playing was a complete rebuff to the 'jock-strap and feedback' sounds of the late '60s – its total lack of showmanship was quite out of place in the heyday of Cream and Jeff Beck. The piano/organ combination was not new, but its use by the Band was – Garth Hudson's organ was a Lowrey, and his sound added a cathedral quality to the Band's music, which merged in distinctively with Richard Manuel's rock piano. But, most important, was the Band's insistence on the *song* being the central hook-point of the music – everything else, including Robertson's complete mastery of his guitar, was secondary.

The Band's instrumental sound was *illustrative*, it created a mood in which the essence of the song could be adequately portrayed. It was an important lesson that they had picked up from Dylan. But if 'Big Pink' was a great album, it must be said that their follow-up, simply called 'The Band', was even greater. Dylan had dominated the first album, with even the group's own songs like 'The Weight' and 'Chest Fever' very much dependent on his inspiration. But the second album was Robertson's.

Robbie quite suddenly emerged as a writer of major stature, with his lyrics revealing enormous hidden depths of wit, compassion and astuteness. 'The Band' is a musical merry-go-round of the US, an exploration of its moods and quirks, its legacies and attitudes. Most of the songs are written from the standpoint of the poor working-class Southerner, and one of them, 'The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down' has since become established as a Southern classic. On the album, this song acts as a superb vehicle for the

First column from top to bottom: Garth Hudson. The Band at Woodstock. Rick Danko. Second column from top to bottom: Robbie Robertson. Richard Manuel. Levon Helm. The Band during a performance at the Woodstock festival.



voice of Levon Helm, for whom it had been written. Levon is the Southerner in the group, and the passions of the song and his treatment of it are the highlight of any concert given by the group.

'Dixie' might well remain the most famous of the album's songs, but none of the others fall short of this standard. Some are wryly funny and human ('Jawbone', 'Up On Cripple Creek'), some are devastatingly nostalgic and homely ('Rockin' Chair', 'When You Awake') and others are notable for their incisive intelligence ('King Harvest Has Surely Come', 'Look Out Cleveland'). And, right through the heart of the album, there is the stabbing economy of Robertson's guitar, the majestic, universal touch of Garth's organ, and the wistfulness of Richard Manuel's piano.

'Stage Fright', their third album, was patchy by comparison. The strength remains in certain songs, and odd moments of the record seize the imagination like their earlier work. 'All La Glory' – a characteristically sweet lullaby – and 'The Rumour' come over as well as anything they had done before, but much of the material sounds rather rushed and annoyingly messy. The group's sound had lost none of its impact, but Robbie's songs seemed to have suffered. This feeling – which remained just that on 'Stage Fright' – was confirmed by the release of 'Cahoots' in 1971. On 'Cahoots', Robertson's material sounds almost contrived, with none of the natural, easy flow of the songs from 'The Band'. It sounds, in a phrase, as if he's trying too hard, and the weakness of the material is underlined by the arrangements Robertson decided upon: they are clever, they are tight, but they are a far cry from the primitive ease of 'We Can Talk About It Now' and 'Across The Great Divide'.

Moondog Magic

Quite why this happened is anybody's guess. It may well be that the demands of the recording industry had put too much of a strain on Robertson, and the release of the live album in 1972, 'Rock Of Ages' was, in the negative sense, an admission of this failing. There had by then been no new songs from Robbie since 'Cahoots' two years before.

And then, in autumn 1973 – along with news of their New Year tour of the States with Dylan – came the Band's next album, 'Moondog Matinee'. While not dispelling any doubts about their ability to come up with new material on a par with their second album, the Band had here presented a musical *tour de force* featuring such rock & roll classics as 'Mystery Train', 'Aint Got No Home' and 'The Great Pretender' – as well as an hilariously funny version of the 'Third Man Theme'.

The Band's handling of material – any material – has seldom if ever been better, and if they can still come up with music like that, if they can still go out on the road with Dylan after eight years, then there's little doubting that the Band can ever be written off anyone's list of 'rock greats'.

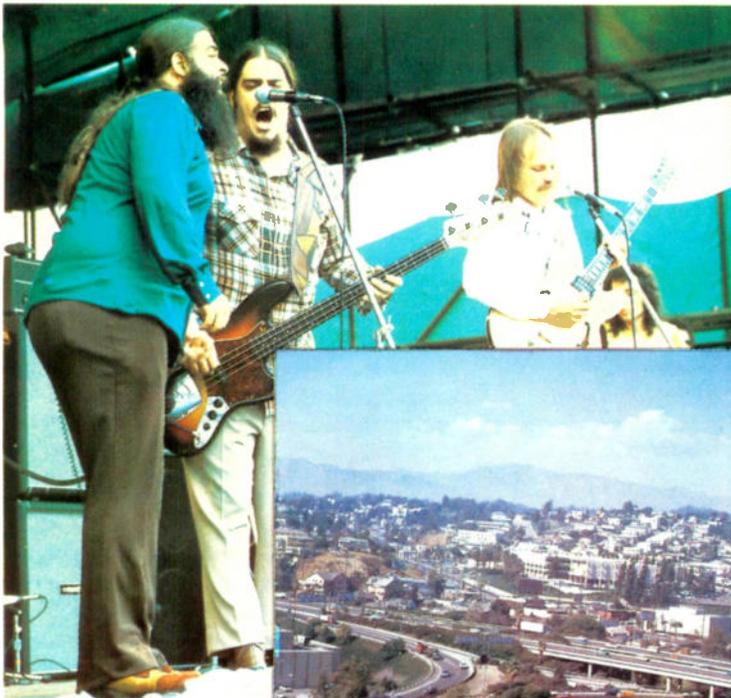
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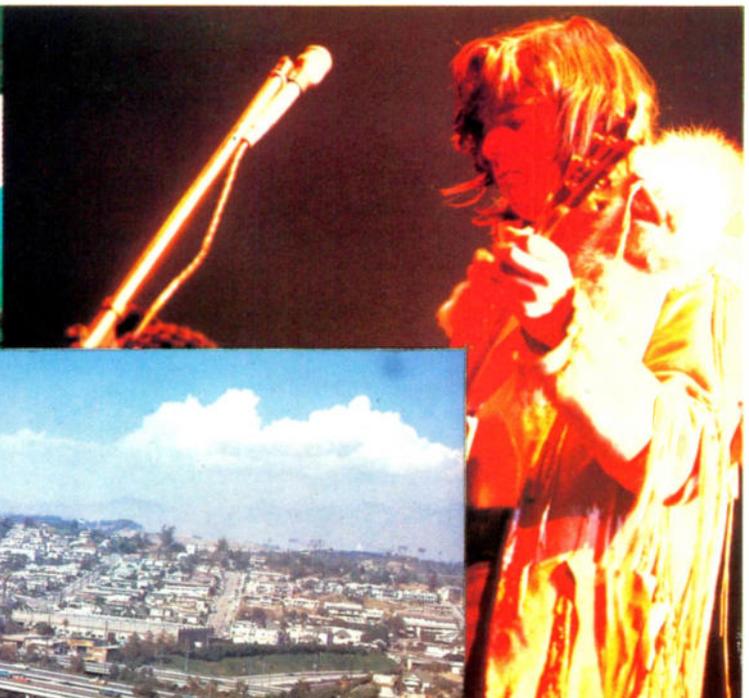
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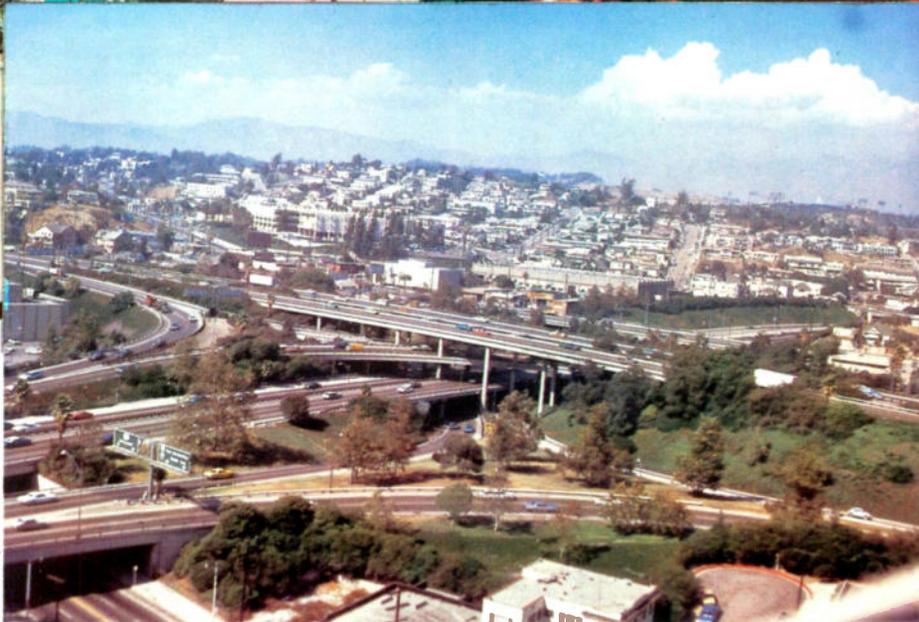
Joe Stevens



Redferns



London Features



Barnabys

POP INFLUENCES: '60s-'70s

L.A. Music

Greater Los Angeles' 10 million inhabitants live in what must have been one of the most comfortable spots on earth . . . until *they* arrived. Now the abundant sunshine filters through the diesel fumes and the mediterranean plain is awash with concrete freeways and gigantic shopping complexes. One of the world's highest suicide rates holds hands with the stars walking down Hollywood Boulevard. Kerouac, crouching in his railroad yard in *Dharma Bums*, wrote, 'the smog was heavy, my eyes weeping from it, the sun was hot, the air stank, a regular hell is LA'.

And yet the comfort is still there. LA has the reputation of being a both relaxing and creative environment. Many of its musicians have said that they couldn't write or live anywhere else. LA is the ultimate urban achievement with all that that implies for good and bad. Business-

wise it's certainly the place to be. The movie, TV, and music businesses have grown up together and filled the city with people dedicated to the financial success of art. Everyone in the music business comes to LA because more acts are discovered there, and because more records are cut there than in most of the rest of the world put together.

The movie/TV connection has left LA with a musical tradition of attention to topicality, and a devotion to production craftsmanship. In the early '60s these concerns were being lavished on the surf-in/hot-rod records of the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, and hundreds of lesser-known groups. The sound was immaculately smooth and sunny, conjuring across the nation an image of paradise on Malibu Beach. But by 1965, surf-in wasn't as topical as Vietnam, and elsewhere the music was getting 'serious' via the Beatles and Dylan. The Byrds' achievement was to synthesise these two and LA into a new mainstream, known as folk-rock.

The Byrds are dealt with at length elsewhere in this history. They brought together folk and rock, East and West

coast, and in particular the new phenomenon of the dope and sunshine politics of love, descendants of the beats and precursors of the hippies. It was a new blend and a dynamic one. In early 1965 they started playing the clubs in LA, particularly Ciro's. In April, former surf-writer Terry Melcher took McGuinn and the old LA session crew into the studio to cut Dylan's 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. Folk-rock was born, and boomed.

In the autumn of 1965, John and Michelle Phillips, Cass Elliot and Denny Doherty, arrived in LA as folkie exiles from Greenwich Village. They ran into Barry McGuire, who that summer had hit the jackpot with the classically crass 'Eve Of Destruction', and he in turn introduced them to his producer Lou Adler, a friend of Brian Wilson and former producer of Jan and Dean and Johnny Rivers. Adler recognised their potential, but knowing that folk, as such, wouldn't make it, he recruited the LA session-men - Osborn, Ketchel, Blaine, Glen Campbell - to back the group on sessions. As Jerry Hopkins wrote, 'it was simple, obvious, but it produced the unique Mamas and Papas

sound – California beat meeting Greenwich Village Melody, as perfect a marriage of styles as the Byrds had produced earlier’.

Their first hit, and a huge one, was ‘California Dreamin’’. It was the new LA sound – the careful interweaving of vocal harmonies with a sunshine beat, the joy of a generation literally on the move, and the power of their dream set against the reality outside. The singer laments winter in New York, thinking that if he was in LA he could go out for a walk in the sun. This wishful thinking is turned by the joy of the melody and performance into something ultimately stronger than the reality.

Two Sides Of The Coin

The contest between hope and reality is where LA rock tended to begin and end. But Phillips is a gifted writer, and hidden amongst the joy of ‘California Dreamin’’ is another edge:

*‘I dropped into a church
I passed along the way
You know the preacher loves the cold
He knows I’m gonna stay...*

The reality and the hope (the cold and the church) are two sides of the same coin. How to lose one without the other?

Through 1965–67 the group had a string of hits – ‘Monday Monday’, ‘Creeque Alley’, ‘Dedicated To The One I Love’ – all of which followed roughly the same formula, a joyous sound with a cautionary gentle sting. But eventually the Mamas and Papas became so involved with the Flower Power movement that they faded with it. Their importance was in tying together pop and folk into something of more than merely immediate value. When the ‘political life’ of the music of 1965–67 split into factions, in LA and elsewhere, the music and its audience did also. The group’s last hit record, ‘Safe In My Garden’, was a sign of the times. A far more muted sound, verging on the beautiful melancholy to come from the likes of Neil Young and Van Morrison in 1968–69, it looked back on recent riots on the Strip a little sadder and a little wiser. Perhaps their best record, it was their smallest hit. The Mamas and Papas had been left in a vacuum – too sweet for the heavies, too heavy for the sweets.

While the Mamas and Papas were happy ‘dreaming’, a new group appeared on the Strip. Led by two former UCLA (University of California, LA) film students, Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek, the Doors represented a harder side to LA rock. It was still smooth, but it was also raw and theatrical. Morrison himself was almost an American Jagger, black leather and sex, exaggerated to the brink of parody.

The crucial thing about the Doors’ music was the ‘political’ drive behind it. More than any other LA group, and with more subtlety than any of the Frisco groups to come, they spoke for the new consciousness and the need to ‘break on through’, to ‘learn to forget’. Morrison himself wrote poetic lyrics, and was an admirer of Artaud’s

‘Theatre of Cruelty’. This was best exemplified in the two long tracks that closed their first two albums. ‘The End’ was a coherent exploration of breaking on through. Dark and convulsive, studded with images of a world on the edge, its spoken oedipal section – ‘kill the father, rape the mother’ – went somewhat beyond the clichés of ‘doing one’s own thing’ currently in fashion. The ‘end’ was two-edged, the joy of breaking through and the pain of wrenching out one’s ego:

*‘This is the end, beautiful friend
This is the end, my only friend, the end
The end of laughter and soft lies
The end of nights we tried to die’*

‘When The Music’s Over’ was one of the first songs to explicitly identify the new rock as a means to something else. Music was a special friend, until the end. And that end – ‘We want the world and we want it ... NOW’.

In The Name Of Love

In one of the Byrds’ early audiences at Ciro’s was Arthur Lee. Recently he said, ‘I saw the Byrds and they really flipped me out because their music really hit my heart. Up until I heard the Byrds, everything was rhythm & blues. And they were doing their own material, and it sounded like the music I wrote on my own, you know what I mean?’. Lee went away and formed a group called the Grass Roots, and started to play the clubs. Discovering that another group had somehow got first rights on the name, he soon changed it to Love.

In the meantime the Elektra record company was busy looking for a folk-rock act to shake loose their folk-purist reputation. Jac Holzman, the head of the label, saw Love at Bido Lito’s in the early summer of 1965, and eventually signed them up. Their first two records in 1966, ‘Love’ and ‘De Capo’, featured a strange mutation of the Byrds and R&B, as if the rough edges of the latter had been smoothed out by the style of the former. It was the third record though, ‘Forever Changes’, which became a classic. Beautiful flowing sounds of acoustic strumming, muted electric leads, velvet brass and gently sweeping strings – all topped by lyrics that dealt in nihilistic despair. R&B was as absent from the music as folk-rock was from the words. In its rampant schizophrenia, this album stands out as ‘Classic’ LA.

Folk-rock had taken from Dylan the romantic expressionism of ‘Mr. Tambourine Man’. Lee, though, took the closing options and claustrophobia of ‘It’s Alright Ma’. On the ‘Forever Changes’ cover Lee stands with a mocking ‘how do you feel?’ look on his face, holding the two halves of a broken vase full of dead flowers.

*‘You think you’re happy
And you are happy
That’s what you’re happy for’*

Lee’s lyrical technique was often to play

on words, twisting them around until the emptiness beneath is exposed.

He consistently uses titles to give songs a completely new reference point, for example calling a gentle song about humming birds and girls with pigtails, ‘The Good Humour Man He Sees Everything Like This’. Lastly, he plays endlessly on the theme of time so loved by the surrealist tradition. ‘Time time time ...’ he sings, keeping time.

Love broke away from the LA tradition of performing badly outside LA by the simple expedient of not moving more than three miles from their old horror movie set/house outside Hollywood. There they reportedly consumed large quantities of drugs and threw the telephone across the room when it rang. After ‘Forever Changes’ they recorded another album which was apparently too awful to release, and then they split. Lee continues to this day, turning out less mellow music with much the same surreal lyrics. But the blend of ‘Forever Changes’ has never since been repeated, the blend that somehow typified LA – the smooth ride into nowhere under the name of Love.

The number of musicians passing through LA in 1965–67 was immense. Two of them, together with two actors, were turned into the Monkees for a TV series. Their records were hugely successful, threatening at one point to raise the sought-after spectre of Beatlemania. In their conception and musical essence they differed little from more recent LA/TV creations like *The Partridge Family*, but in the style of their TV shows they were remarkably different. Apeing the Beatle films, the shows were surrealism for the teenybopper, and way ahead of their time.

Heavier groups too, like Steppenwolf, Clear Light, and Iron Butterfly, were all touched by LA’s mellow politicism, as were the rock/blues groups like Canned Heat and Spirit.

Chimes And Harmonies

Meanwhile the folkies tended toward rhythm, just as the rockers tended toward melody. Crosby produced the first record by the lady now arguably LA’s brightest star, Joni Mitchell. On that record Stephen Stills played bass. His own group, the Buffalo Springfield, had arrived rather late on the LA scene, and perhaps for that reason summed it up as well as anyone. *Crawdaddy* editor Paul Williams, writing about them once said: ‘there’s love in their music – not the driving evangelical love of the Airplane, but a straight forward take-it-or-leave-it love, all yours if you want it and will share in it’. Electric virtuosity was reduced to a minimum, guitars chimed rather than cut, and soft harmonies were more frequent than the lusty howl.

Of those who’d been in LA before it all happened, the old session crews backed the folk-rockers just as they’d backed the surfers before. Some of them, like Glen Campbell and Leon Russell, eventually became big stars on their own. The

photo/Electra



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Pictorial Press

Above: Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda in a scene from the film, *Easy Rider*. Centre: the very beautiful Jim Morrison.

premiere group of the Surf Era were as much a part of the new scene as they had been of the old one. Brian Wilson devoted himself to being a genius, pitched a tent in his living room, created 'Pet Sounds' and 'Good Vibrations', and brought a new intricacy to the Beach Boys' harmonising and a new beauty to rock music.

And of course many other acts had emerged in the folk-rock mainstream – the Turtles, Kaleidoscope, Harpers Bizarre, Spanky and our Gang – all appearing at the larger ballrooms like the Cheetah, Kaleidoscope and Shrine Exposition, and at the smaller clubs like the Troubador, Ash Grove, Golden Bear, and Whiskey A Go Go. David Gates, now of 'Bread' fame, was connected with Randy Newman, Van Dyke Parks and Jack Nitzsche, with producer Lenny Waronker, and with the huge Metric Music publishing house. Duane Allman was playing with a group called Hourglass. And the lovable madmen, from Kim Fowley to Captain Beefheart via Tiny Tim and Frank Zappa, were alternately making the scene and breaking it up. It all hung together in a unifying LA style and stance. Someone once told the then folk singer Tim Buckley that he was like a character out of a Scott Fitzgerald novel. "There's a lot of us about," he said.

The music scene of 1965–67 reflected and was reflected by the social changes accompanying it. Drugs were available in quantity and everyone wore beads. In LA, as elsewhere, head shops proliferated, and along with the underground press and clubs changed hands and names with great frequency.

But in late 1966 and early '67 the LA police (the 'Heat') moved in. Demonstrators were hauled away in the paddy wagons, and full-scale riots erupted several times. The police moved in on the head shops and clubs, prosecuting on the slightest pretext. Outside LA the long hot summers of '66 and '67 led inexorably through the Battle of Chicago to the election of Nixon as President; and in LA Robert Kennedy was shot dead in June 1968.

The music of thoughtful hope emanating from LA was more likely to be affected by



Pictorial Press

all this than the music of half-blind hope blaring out of San Francisco. Two LA songs which investigated the Strip riots were indicative of the change coming over the music there. Stephen Stills' 'For What It's Worth' asked all the right sort of questions, without posing any facile answers. Demonstrating was just 'a field-day for the Heat'. And paranoia was no way to love. But it was in the general sound that this record in some way marked a turning-point. Its smoothness was more ominous than relaxed. Hope with a tinge of caution was giving way to resignation with a touch of hope. The balance was shifting.

Getting out, as Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper found in *Easy Rider*, was not so easy. The movie, from the setting to the music, summed up the state of the LA scene. It didn't have a happy ending. By 1968 flower power was virtually dead, and the focus had moved conclusively away to San Francisco. LA music split anew into compartments, with a new

Above: The Doors line-up, from left to right, Ray Manzarek, Jim Morrison, Bobby Krieger and John Densmore.

mainstream to show for the previous years. The Mamas and Papas and Love faded away, the Doors marked time up to the crowning blow of Jim Morrison's death. The Byrds and the Springfield split into new Byrds, Poco, Burrito Brothers, CSN&Y, Loggins and Messina, ad apparently infinitum.

The new input was, logically enough in the ultimate city, country music. Gene Clark left the Byrds early, and led the way with the Gosdin Brothers and then Doug Dillard of the Dillards. The Byrds, with country freak Gram Parsons replacing Dave Crosby, followed. Then Hillman and Parsons left the Byrds to form the Burritos and take it all a stage further on.

On the other side of the divide, the same old session-crew were backing a new generation of singer/songwriters in the acoustic revival that started around 1970. Lou Adler was in the act again with Carole King. Waronker was producing Gordon Lightfoot; Randy Newman and Van Dyke Parks were making their own records. Various Byrds and Buffaloes were becoming superstars with the new acoustic/electric 'gotta-get-down-to-it-but-it's-hard' mainstream – living in Laurel and Topanga Canyons and insisting that they were only musicians.

By 1970, the coincidence of seriousness and melody, which had sold LA records everywhere had disappeared. No one outstanding has appeared since, most of the big names on the 1965–67 scene are still the big names now, older and perhaps playing a little wearily with the tradition they created. Gene Clark, with as good a claim as anyone to have started the ball rolling, recently wrote a song, 'LA Freeway', that echoes the 'Mr. Tambourine Man' of 1965, but with a sad desperation that was never in the early Byrds. The words, though, would have been as apposite then as they are now:

*'If I can just get off of that LA freeway
Without getting killed or caught
Down the road in a cloud of smoke
For some land that I ain't bought, bought,
bought
If I can just get off of that LA freeway . . .'*

Protest goes Pop

*'How does it feel . . .
To be without a home
To be on your own
A complete unknown . . .
Like a rolling stone'*

When Bob Dylan's 'Like A Rolling Stone' appeared in the summer of 1965, it came at a time when not only Dylan's songs were turning from the *political* approach of much of his earlier work, but when the commercial music scene was at last waking up to the possibilities of 'protest' as a selling point . . . especially as then, in the wake of 'Bringing It All Back Home' and the new 'Highway 61 Revisited', the protest was not specifically about certain political issues, but a general manifestation of teenage dissatisfaction.

The 'political' protest singers were in the main serious folk singers, the 'folkniks' who were spawned in Greenwich Village in the early '60s – like Phil Ochs, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan himself, and a few commercial extensions of this – notably the New Christie Minstrels (in the clean-cut college folk tradition), the Kingston Trio (they had a hit as early as 1958 with 'Tom Dooley'), and Peter, Paul and Mary, who smashed world-wide in 1963 with Dylan's 'Blowin' In The Wind'.

Against The System

None except Dylan though was likely to ever appeal to the mass teenage market, for only Dylan *wanted* to be a rock idol. So it was in the songs of Dylan that the two developments occurred that produced Protest Pop . . . the adding of an electric rock group backing, and the de-politicising of the lyrics from positive statements of a liberal/left stance on the Bomb, racism and other issues, to generalised outcries against 'the system' and pleas for the emerging teenage sub-culture, loaded with references to hitch-hikers, motor cycles, long hair and (in an important departure from the conventions of previous 'teenage rebel' pop) drugs.

The first group to emerge with a real style based on the fusion of folk and rock (or folk-rock as it was soon dubbed) were the Byrds. For Americans in 1965, they had an outrageous image – long hair, sullen looks, the whole cool bit – and although their harmony voicing was a lot smoother than the original, the Byrds' first single – a cover of Dylan's 'Mr. Tambourine Man' – was significant in that

it *formalised* (for a teenage market) the idea of a rock group doing 'folk' material, and material that was (apparently) drug oriented at that:

*'Take me on a trip
Upon your magic swirling ship
My senses have been stripped
My hands can't feel to grip'*

More significant still was the fact that it sold a million. But the impact of 'Bringing It All Back Home' (which included 'Mr. Tambourine Man') in the spring of 1965 went far beyond just the Byrds – the album, and Dylan's *single* from it – 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' – affected the *entire* record industry. Suddenly Bob Dylan, and 'protest/folk' was a *commercial* proposition – and if the *original* could appeal to a large chunk of the teenage market, then a bit of watering-down (a process the industry was expert at) should soon attract the rest.

And what *did* attract the rest? Initially, a lovin', smilin' couple of all-American hippies by the name of Sonny and Cher. Their image was everything parents complained about – he with Beatle-plus mop top, fur waistcoats and crazy-stripe pants; she with straight black hair – Red Indian style – and gaudy pattern trousers, and beads . . . lots of them. Their message was strictly moon-and-June romance spiced with a '50s line in 'why don't they understand us', but all done with a fashionable folk-rock sound, and somehow hitting just the level of protest that even the least rebellious of teenagers could identify with.

Sonny Bono had spent years in the record industry, as a writer (his name appeared on the flip side of Larry Williams' 'Bony Moronie', as the composer of 'You Bug Me Baby' back in 1958) and as a producer, working for some time with Phil Spector. The influence of Spector shows through on the records he made with his wife Cher, first for Reprise ('Baby Don't Go') then Atlantic – 'Just You' and the marvellous 'I Got You Babe'. 'I Got You Babe' was certainly one of the most commercial records of the whole protest/rock period, although the protest was muted to say the least . . . protest as bubblegum/high school pop.

*'So don't let them say your hair's too long
I don't care with you I can't go wrong . . .'
'They say our love won't pay the rent
Before it's earned . . . it's always spent'*

It was the first (and biggest) of a series of hits by the pair . . . 'But You're Mine', 'What Now My Love', 'Little Man' – all getting further away from any suggestion of even the feeblest 'protest'. In addition, they made various sides solo – Cher's included the beautifully atmospheric 'Bang Bang', and Sonny's most memorable excursion was the hilarious 'Laugh At Me'. Another 'protest' about how misunderstood he was, 'Laugh At Me' reaffirmed that long hair or weird clothes didn't stop him sharing all the values of adult (middle-class) America regarding love and religion:

*'Why do they care
About the clothes I wear
Get their kicks makin' fun . . .
. . . Laugh at me
And I'll cry for you
And I'll pray for you
Do all the things
the man upstairs
Says to do . . .'*

As the genuine movement behind folk-protest rock moved towards flower power and psychedelia, Sonny and Cher found themselves more and more out of tune with the youth culture they pretended to represent – especially regarding Sonny's puritanical attitude towards drugs – and inevitably they have developed into very establishment showbiz stars with their own Hollywood TV show. But in 1965, the sight of them gazing into each others eyes on *Ready Steady Go!* was pure protest to many a teeny, and besides they made some fine records.

'Eve Of Destruction'

Lou Adler of Dunhill records decided the Dylan sound was the thing to cultivate around the same time as Sonny Bono, but his approach was rather different. He is said to have given P. F. Sloan, one of his leading songwriters, a copy of 'Highway 61' and told him to listen to it and come back with some protest songs. Among the songs he wrote at this time was the ultimate in pop-protest, a song that had a go at everything – 'Eve Of Destruction'. Sung by an ex-New Christy Minstrel, Barry McGuire, the song lacked any conviction whatsoever, was publicised in the States by pictures of McGuire emerging from fall-out shelters, was plugged incessantly in England on the pirate stations, and sold millions. It was still the autumn of 1965, only a matter of months since 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' hit the charts, and here was the record that put a stop to 'protest' being taken seriously any more:

*'You don't believe in war, what's that gun
you're totin',
Even the Jordan River is overflowing . . .
If the button's pushed, no one to save . . .
. . . marches alone can't bring integration
While human respect is disintegratin . . .
Think of all the hate there is in Red China
Then look at the situation in Alabama'*

Sung in McGuire's loud, gravelly, 'sincere' voice, 'Eve Of Destruction' was a parody of protest in true Tin Pan Alley style.

A 'reply' record was inevitable, and one came from the team of Madera/White who were, around the close of 1965, churning out hits for Len ('1-2-3') Barry. 'Dawn Of Correction' aped the tune, construction and delivery of the Sloan number and was sung by what appeared to be a session outfit, the Spokesmen, and drew predictable right-wing conclusions to protest songs in general:

*'The western world has a dedication
To keep the world from Red domination
Be thankful our country allows
demonstrations
You heard of the Peace Corps organisation'*

P. F. Sloan didn't stop at 'Eve Of Destruction' – amongst the dozen or so instant protest anthems he wrote for Adler was 'Sins Of The Family', a number he decided to record himself – and here again the writing and delivery of the lines was sub-Dylan, with 'stream-of-consciousness' lyrics over 'folk/rock' backing:

*'The high IQs who condemned them
knew
It was the product of poor morality...
... such a sad environment, a bug-ridden
tenement...
... Daddy was out buying liquor, but the
stone's been cast and blood is thicker
than water,
And the sins of the family fall on the
daughter'*

He appeared on British TV in the 'instant protest kit' of shades, Dylan-cap, Sonny Bono-style loud shirt – the lot. The conventions of pop protest were now firmly established, in music and dress.

The nearest Britain ever got to producing its home-grown pop-protester was the first appearance of Donovan in 1965. Again television was the vehicle for an instant image-job (one he subsequently had to work hard to live down), and Donovan appeared complete with denim jacket, jeans and denim cap, harmonica-harness resting on a battered guitar that bore the legend – 'This Machine Kills'. (Years before, Woody Guthrie's instrument read 'This Machine Kills Fascists'). But Don was trying hard, and between straightforward folksy ditties such as 'Catch The Wind' and 'Colours' he'd occasionally come up with a bit of your protest – the best was probably 'Universal Soldier' – and the fact that he didn't make a big thing out of the fact that it was a 'protest' song made it all the more convincing.

Protest Accepted

So, by the end of 1965, protest was 'in' as an accepted genre in commercial records, with all the conventions (usually culled from Dylan) described earlier. Scores of singles appeared, usually one-offs by artists jumping on the protest band-



Sonny and Cher and Country Joe, performing at Monterey.



wagon. Gordon Lightfoot came up with a cover of Dylan's 'Just Like Tom Thumbs Blues', complete with Herb Alpert-style trumpets (incidentally, Lightfoot was responsible for a very early piece of 'politico' pop in 1963: the chorus of 'Negotiations' pleading 'Lets get together for negotiations, and have a little summit talk', to an arrangement that could have been written for Connie Francis). Even Bobby Darin appeared with tambourines, harmonica and drug-lyrics in the aptly-named 1966 'Me and Mr Hohner' – indeed Mr Hohner must have smiled at the harmonica boom that protest was responsible for – and lines like...

*'That's a cute moustache
Have you got any hash'*

... were an indication of how what would later be termed 'alternative lifestyles' were already being served up as normal fare for the pop public. Phil Spector was never far from the action – 'Home Of The Brave' featured Bonnie and the Treasures, the Jody Miller version was a minor hit in England, and was another haircut-and-clothes piece:

*'Schoolboard says he can't come to
school no more
Unless he wears his hair like he wore it
before
The PTA and all of the mothers
Say he ought to look like the others
(chorus) Home of the brave, home of the
free
Why can't they let him be what he wants
to be'*

By the middle of 1966, Protest itself was dead as a pop phenomenon – the band-wagon had come to a halt, long hair and freaky clothes were becoming accepted at all levels, and only the serious old-school folkies were still singing politics. English Decca released (on a lease from Elektra) a track off a Judy Collins album – a Dylan song, 'I'll Keep It With Mine' – hoping it would make the charts... it didn't. Eric Andersen, an old buddy of Dylan from the Greenwich Village days, released an album early in 1966 – 'Bout Changes and Things' – of folk/rock material, done solo... a year or so later he released an album of the same numbers,

this time with a backing group. And another ex-member of the same Village clan, Phil Ochs, came up with 'Outside Of A Small Circle Of Friends' in 1967:

*'Sweating in the ghetto
With the coloured and the poor'*

But this had been the area of product singing all along, the 'folkniks' who had started it all, as a subject matter for commercial pop music, politics and protest (at least of this post-'Highway 61 variety') lasted through the latter half of 1965 and into 1966... and that was it.

New Groups

But that isn't quite the end of the story. The protest boom had two important effects on the development of rock music, both immediately and in the long term. The immediate products were two groups who didn't actually fall into the category of protest/rock at all – the Mamas and Papas and the Lovin' Spoonful. The Mamas and Papas were Lou Adler's follow-up, on his Dunhill label, to P. F. Sloan and his whole protest 'factory'. They were graduates of the West Village folk scene – John Phillips, Michelle Gilliam, Denny Doherty and Cass Elliott – and the records they made through 1966 were a foretaste of the San Francisco sound to emerge in '67. 'California Dreamin' and 'Monday Monday' were the perfect conclusion to the folk/rock saga. The other development group-wise were the Lovin' Spoonful, a New York outfit who stayed in New York and followed folk and protest with their own brand of good-time music, a happy mixture of folk/rock and jug band sounds that also heralded looser things to come – 'Do You Believe In Magic' and 'Summer In The City' seeming at the time like celebrations of the 'new generation', foretastes of Love and Peace in 1967.

The long term effects of protest in rock were the acceptance on the part of a large section of the teenage public of the 'poetic' in pop (mainly through the popularisation of Bob Dylan) and the development of pop as a vehicle for ideas, independent of the machinations of the music industry. These two factors were crucial in the subsequent phases of West Coast rock, flower power and psychedelia.

Talking 'bout my generation

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

*Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown
And accept it that soon
You'll be drenched to the bone.
If your time to you
Is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin'
Or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'.*

*Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin
And there's no tellin' who
That it's namin'.
For the loser now
Will be later to win
For the times they are a-changin'.*

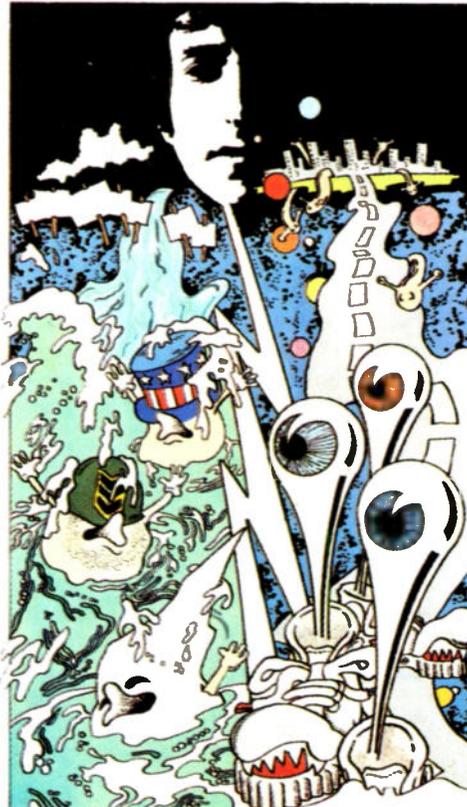
*Come senators, congressmen
Please heed the call
Don't stand in the doorway
Don't block up the hall
For he that gets hurt
Will be he who has stalled
There's a battle outside
And it's ragin'.
It'll soon shake your windows
And rattle your walls
For the times they are a-changin'.*

*Come mothers and fathers
Throughout the land
And don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command
Your old road is
Rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one
If you can't lend your hand
For the times they are a-changin'.*

*The line it is drawn
The curse it is cast
The slow one now
Will later be fast
As the present now
Will later be past
The order is
Rapidly fadin'.
And the first one now
Will later be last
For the times they are a-changin'.*

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Mick Wells

'The Times They Are A-Changin'' came out in early 1964, and the mood of the song captured a generation. Full of biblical and mystical images of wheels, curses, doorways, roads, and the notion of 'the meek inheriting the earth' ('The loser now/Will be later to win'), the song shows Dylan trying to sort out right and wrong with all the heroic innocence of youth pitted against society, the old, and the narrowness of reality as it appears. By 'Positively 4th Street', though – during the new, 'electric' Dylan period of late 1965 – his own and the world's failings have become much the same.

What is perhaps the most self-pitying song on plastic is overlaid with crazy, driving hurdy-gurdy music, and loaded to the hilt with remorse and vitriolic bitterness – seemingly directed at a love lost, but in the last two verses turned around and around in a torment of self-awareness that persisted until 'Blonde On Blonde' and Dylan's motorbike crash of 1966.

As Dylan wrote on the sleeve notes to his 'Bringing It All Back Home' album: 'A poem is like a naked person . . . and some people call me a poet'.

POSITIVELY 4TH STREET

*You got a lotta nerve
To say you are my friend
When I was down
You just stood there grinning*

*You got a lotta nerve
to say you got a helping hand to lend
You just want to be on
The side that's winning*

*You say I let you down
You know it's not like that
If you're so hurt
Why then don't you show it*

*You say you lost your faith
But that's not where it's at
You had no faith to lose
And you know it*

*I know the reason
That you talk behind my back
I used to be among the crowd
You're in with*

*Do you take me for such a fool
To think I'd make contact
With the one who tries to hide
What he don't know to begin with*

*You see me on the street
You always act surprised
You say, 'How are you?' 'Good luck'
But you don't mean it*

*When you know as well as me
You'd rather see me paralyzed
Why don't you just come out once
And scream it*

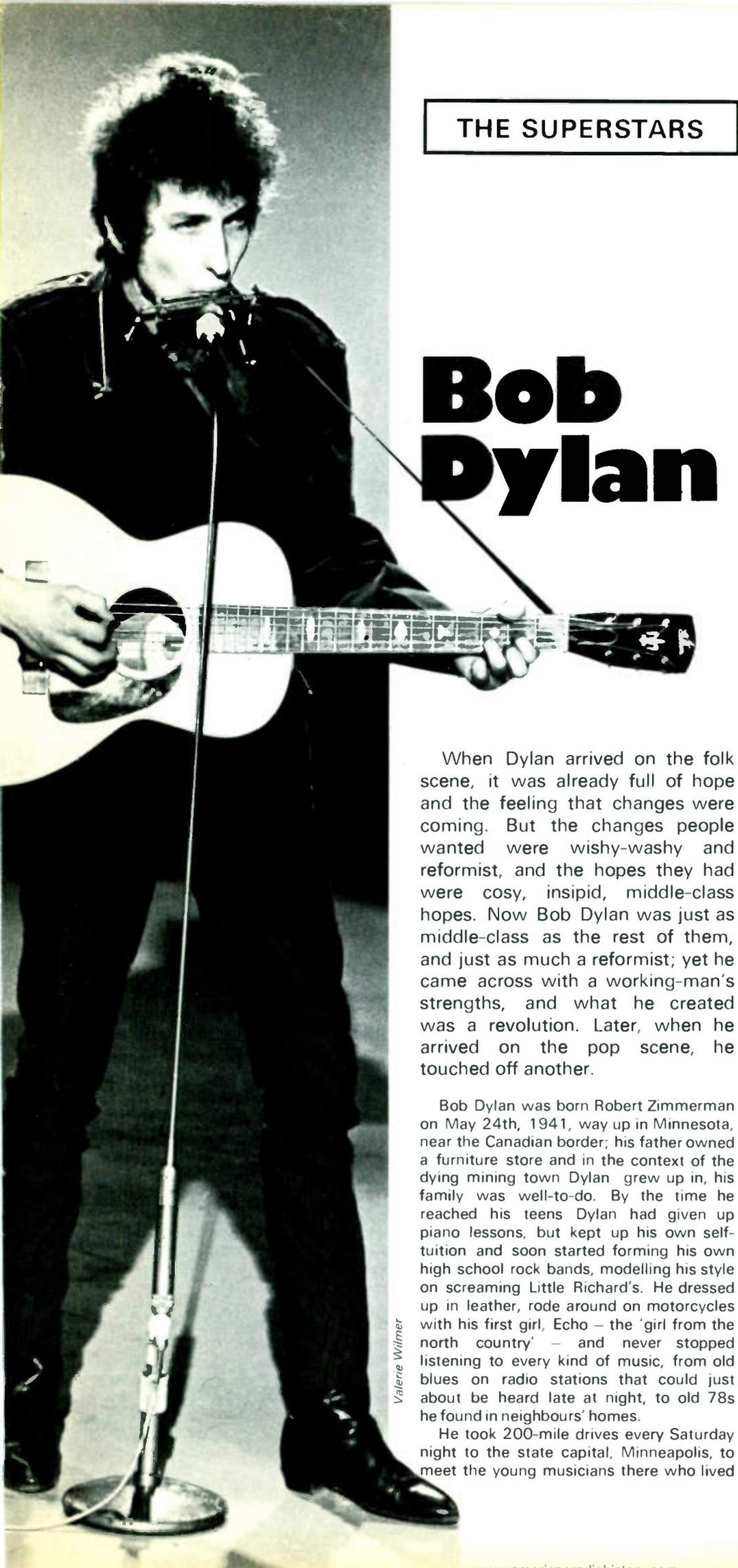
*No, I do not feel that good
When I see the heartbreaks you embrace
If I was a master thief
Perhaps I'd rob them*

*And now I know you're dissatisfied
With your position and your place
Don't you understand
It's not my problem*

*I wish that for just one time
You could stand inside my shoes
And just for that one moment
I could be you*

*Yes, I wish that for just one time
You could stand inside my shoes
You'd know what a drag it is
To see you*

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THE SUPERSTARS

Bob Dylan

When Dylan arrived on the folk scene, it was already full of hope and the feeling that changes were coming. But the changes people wanted were wishy-washy and reformist, and the hopes they had were cosy, insipid, middle-class hopes. Now Bob Dylan was just as middle-class as the rest of them, and just as much a reformist; yet he came across with a working-man's strengths, and what he created was a revolution. Later, when he arrived on the pop scene, he touched off another.

Bob Dylan was born Robert Zimmerman on May 24th, 1941, way up in Minnesota, near the Canadian border; his father owned a furniture store and in the context of the dying mining town Dylan grew up in, his family was well-to-do. By the time he reached his teens Dylan had given up piano lessons, but kept up his own self-tuition and soon started forming his own high school rock bands, modelling his style on screaming Little Richard's. He dressed up in leather, rode around on motorcycles with his first girl, Echo – the 'girl from the north country' – and never stopped listening to every kind of music, from old blues on radio stations that could just about be heard late at night, to old 78s he found in neighbours' homes.

He took 200-mile drives every Saturday night to the state capital, Minneapolis, to meet the young musicians there who lived

a freer kind of life than his home town allowed him. He moved to the city in 1959 to attend Minnesota University – but he soon dropped out, and into the beatnik area of town where he started calling himself Dylan and playing folk guitar instead of rock piano. He wasn't very good, but he was ambitious. He was 'sopping up influences like a sponge' (as the *New York Times* folk critic noted later), and soon set off to conquer New York City.

And conquer it he did. When he arrived he made straight for the folk heart of the city, Greenwich Village; slept on people's floors; met all the big-name people, from the dying Woody Guthrie to Pete Seeger and Rambling Jack Elliott and the younger crowd – singers Dave Van Ronk and Dick Farina; and started playing and singing wherever and whenever he could. His talent had meanwhile improved staggeringly, and he quickly made an impression as a performer. He won an enviable accolade from Guthrie himself, who said: "Pete Seeger's a singer of folk songs. Jack Elliott's a singer of folk songs. But Bobby Dylan's a folk-singer. Oh, Christ he's a folk-singer all right." By September 1961, Dylan had even got himself a rave review, unheard of before, in the *New York Times*. That review aroused the jealousy of many of the others on the folk scene, and it was increased not long after when Dylan landed a record contract with Columbia Records (CBS).

By this time Dylan had started writing his own material, and this was what clinched it all, so that he emerged not just as an unusually talented young singer but as an astonishing, original artist.

Ooka Dooka Dicka Dee

Dylan's songs really shook people up. There were tender, sensitive ballads, like his tribute to Guthrie, 'Song To Woody'; there were sharp, biting satire songs like 'Talkin' New York', 'Talkin' Bear Mountain Picnic Massacre Blues'; and most important, there were the protest songs – a seemingly endless stream of strong, rasping, imaginative attacks on Big Business America and the society it produced – with its poverty in the midst of wealth, its fanatical anti-communism, its vicious racism, and its perpetual war-mongering. "We all felt it", said Joan Baez, "but Dylan can say it."

And he said it, as critic Robert Shelton told his *New York Times* readers, with 'not a cliché in any of these topics, which lesser folk composers tend to turn into hollow slogans'. It wasn't only other singers and the critics who felt this uniqueness: Harry Jackson, the artist and sculptor, said: "He's so goddamned real, it's unbelievable."

What Dylan himself said was simple and to the point: "I don't have to be anybody like those guys up on Broadway that're always writin' about, 'I'm hot for you and you're hot for me – ooka dooka dicka dee.' There's other things in the world besides love and sex that're important too. People shouldn't turn their

Valerie Wilmer



Top/Camera Press, London Features

Pictorial Press

Above. Top from left to right: Maybe pondering the 'Blonde On Blonde' album; Pre-electric in 1965; Backstage at the Isle of Wight. Bottom: The King and Queen of Folk in 1965; Shades of 1966, not long before the crash. Opposite page. Top from left to right: Dylan at the Isle of Wight; Bangla Desh concert. Bottom: 1973, plays Alias in Sam Peckinpah's film, *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid*.

backs on 'em just because they ain't pretty to look at."

That was the heart of the matter. It was bound to break through and hit a bigger audience than Greenwich Village, and in 1963 it did. One of Dylan's most noticed songs, 'Blowin' In The Wind', had been widely recorded by others, and Peter, Paul and Mary, a pretty-pretty group that could make the pop charts, had long been plugging Dylan as America's most important young composer whenever they appeared in concert. In July 1963, they headed the bill at the famous Newport Folk Festival, along with Pete Seeger and

many of the other big names from the folk world. Dylan appeared too, very much lower down on the bill – but by the end of the three-day event, Dylan was the undisputed star, closing the whole show by singing 'Blowin' In The Wind' with all the Big Names singing along in the chorus behind him.

The pop world, however, went on regardless, still cocooned in its own safe make-believe world where nothing nastier than losing your date or dropping your hot-dog ever happened. It wasn't to last much longer.

Early in 1964, CBS released 'The Times

They Are A-Changin'', Dylan's anthem for the new, socially-aware generation, as a single; it got played on pop radio stations, and the pop fans who had only vaguely heard of Dylan and who were in a frenzy of wet knickers and hysteria over the Beatles, sat up and took notice. To pop-trained ears, Dylan's record was a real shock. The voice made everyone else's sound as smooth as Frank Sinatra's; the man's timing and phrasing were just not the way things were supposed to be, and the words . . . !: senators, congressmen, floods, battles ragin' – the times certainly were a-changin'.



London Features



Top, Rex Features

MGM/EMM

*'Mothers and fathers throughout the land
Don't criticise what you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters are beyond
your command . . .'*

That, in fact – though it had never been put so bluntly before – was what the original message of rock & roll was supposed to have been. And then when you heard the record again and again, and got beyond that, and overcame the culture-shock of hearing a voice and a simple guitar/harmonica accompaniment like that, then the rest of the song made sense too.

But by the time pop fans were adjusting themselves to that, Dylan was moving on – fast. In August 1964 he came out with the 'Another Side Of Bob Dylan' album, which shook a lot of the folk fans rigid. Why? Because Dylan seemed to have deserted politics and protest. True, the album included another anthem, 'Chimes Of Freedom', but it was mostly filled with personal songs – love songs – and it also included 'My Back Pages', a song that showed a new Dylan; a new Dylan who was actually lamming into the old Dylan for the protest songs and describing them as 'lies that life was black and

white'. It had an almost singalong chorus:

*'Ah! but I was so much older then,
I'm younger than that now.'*

Talk about being ahead of everyone – Dylan was about three jumps ahead. The pop fans were only just waking up to the fact that you could sing songs that were thoughtful and critical of the society around you; the folk fans were quaking in their duffel coats at this sudden about-turn from their spokesman-idol; and on top of that, Dylan's new *personal* songs were about to set off two further explosions.

First, Dylan had reappeared, the month before the album came out, at the Newport Folk Festival, and had sung there a magnificent, beautiful and lengthy song which celebrated freedom of the spirit in general, but which in particular celebrated the effects of drug trips: 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. A drug song! Of course, the old blues singers had had repertoires soaked in narcotic imagery – but this was different: this was getting through to a mass audience . . . explosion number one.

Number two was set off by those other personal songs, the love songs, on the 'Another Side Of Bob Dylan' album. These were far from being the love songs that pop records provided. In pop, it was 'She Loves You', 'I Wanna Hold Your Hand', or it was 'You're So Fine You Gotta Be Mine'; or it was 'I Cried A Million Tears Cos You Left Me Blue'. In other words, boy always wanted to own girl; love had to last forever and was the ultimate achievement in life; and if you didn't have eternal love you died of a broken heart.

Plastic Goo Of Pop

Dylan's love songs simply said look, let's cut out the hype and get down to reality: nobody owns anybody – and shouldn't want to or try to; love needn't last forever, rarely does, and it's a waste of energy trying to make it happen; and people do have other aims besides being someone's eternal love. If all that seems basic and pretty obvious today, that simply demonstrates how enormous Dylan's influence has been – because at the time Dylan first came out and said it, it was like a great blast of fresh air and honesty blowing a hole in all the plastic goo of pop romance. Back then, the Beatles' lyrics, like everybody else's, were still inside this old pop straitjacket – still saying that to be somebody's life-long lover was the peak of ambition; but Dylan, with that simple guitar and harmonica backing and that remorselessly steady down-to-earth beat, was singing 'All I Really Want To Do Is Baby Be Friends With You' and:

*"You say you're lookin' for someone
Who'll pick you up each time you fall . . .
A lover for your life an' nothing more –
It aint me, babe . . ."*

(*'It Ain't Me, Babe'*)

A lover for your life and nothing more! Again, after the shock, it made sense. It touched a chord – it expressed, as Dylan had done before, what people were feeling but unable to express.

The people who wanted to just churn out bubblegum music carried on, of course – they ignored all the changes Bob Dylan was introducing, though as time went on and Dylan's impact got through even to the 14-year-olds that the pop business had always assumed were stupid, the bubblegum brigade had to find younger and younger audiences. But everyone who wanted to improve the quality and honesty of their music caught on to what Dylan was declaring. The Beatles started thinking

about their lyrics, instead of just their chord sequences. It began to happen – a real revolution in pop.

At this point in time, however, despite the enormous impact that Dylan was having on the pop world, his own career still seemed set in the folk mould, at least in the sense that he was a solo performer using only acoustic guitar and harmonica. But changes here were coming too.

Return To Rock

When the 'Another Side Of' album had been recorded, Dylan had amazed producer Tom Wilson by using a piano in the studio and revealing his ability as a pianist: Dylan had never told anyone he could play keyboards. Yet rock piano, as we've noted, was actually how he'd begun in the music world, and rock music wasn't as foreign to him as the folk fans assumed.

He very soon returned to it. He'd been knocked out by hearing the Animals' recording of 'House Of The Rising Sun', a song he'd done himself on his very first album. "My God," Dylan told a friend when he came back to New York in 1964 from some concerts in Britain, "ya oughta hear what's going down over there. Eric Burdon . . . he's doing 'House Of The Rising Sun' in rock. Rock! It's just wild!" Later, when Dylan was sent an advance copy of the Byrds' 'Mr. Tambourine Man', that clinched it. He decided to move.

By the time he toured Britain again in May 1965, in greater triumph than ever before, Dylan had another album out, 'Bringing It All Back Home', which had one side of the solo acoustic Dylan, one side of new rock-group Dylan. From that side of the album, CBS released the song 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' as a single, and while Dylan was touring the country, giving what were to be among his last solo performances, this amazing rock record was hitting the British Top 10.

Dylan had given his imprimatur to this mixing of folk and rock, and the famous 'folk-rock' label was stuck onto it. It was a misleading term however, because what Dylan had done was to marry rock not to old folk songs or his own earlier love songs, as the Animals and the Byrds had done; Dylan had married rock to new, urban poetry with harsh, effervescent lyrics and moods that fitted the electricity in the music.

Few people caught on to what he had done at that time. Dylan returned to the States, and in July appeared once again at the Newport Folk Festival – this time carrying his electric guitar and backed by part of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. He was booed off the stage. If the non-protest solo album 'Another Side Of' had been seen as a betrayal by some of Dylan's audience, this new stuff was nothing less than blasphemy. There were still, back then in 1965, an awful lot of college kids, as well as older folk-music followers, who regarded pop music as just a commercial rip-off which could have no real value.

And for a while – if you went by what happened in the charts – it looked as if

those people were right: because the first effect of Dylan 'going electric' was a sudden Protest Craze. It seemed as if every group in Britain and America suddenly decided to cash in on the new fashion for anti-war songs, anti-anti-long-hair songs, anti-everything songs.

As usual, Dylan was miles away. Not only was he totally uninterested in Protest, but his new rock music was genuinely new. His old stuff bored him stiff, despite how much other non-rip-off artists were learning from it, and he was getting into a more prolific, creative phase of composing than ever, despite the boos and despite all the abuses which Tin Pan Alley was churning out. In August, just one month after Newport, he released an incredible new album, 'Highway 61 Revisited', which contained the epic 12-minute 'Desolation Row', the astonishing 'Ballad Of A Thin Man', and, among much else of real originality and power, the masterpiece 'Like A Rolling Stone'.

Dylan was jubilant – and the fact that he could feel jubilant in the face of the howls and boos of his old audience and the general non-comprehension of a newer pop audience, illustrates another of his pioneering battles: alone in the music world, he had the resilience and integrity to stick to what he believed in doing regardless of public opinion. That was absolutely the opposite of the usual showbiz maxim, 'Give The Public What It Wants, Son', which everyone else bowed down to, right from Bing Crosby to the Beatles.

First Breakthrough

It was obvious to Dylan that what he was doing was right, and important, and he could only hope that once again, as with all his innovations of the past, people would eventually catch on.

They did; 'Like A Rolling Stone' was perhaps the first breakthrough. It was so plainly a major accomplishment, it so obviously opened the door for rock music to realise unlimited new potential, that at least some of those previously hostile did begin to see that rock could be used for communicating reality instead of just grinding out unreal artifacts whose only purpose was to make money.

Dylan was working hard. He launched into a massive international tour, this time taking a rock group with him culled from Levon and the Hawks, who had been back-up band for Ronnie Hawkins, an Arkansas singer who'd found relative fame and fortune in Canada in the early '60s. The tour went all over the States, to a very mixed reception, and in 1966 it took in Australia, then Scandinavia, then Eire, Britain, France, and Britain again. Dylan got a vicious hammering from the press in Australia, and hoped for a better time in the UK. He didn't get it. People walked out of every concert he did, from Liverpool to Sheffield, to Birmingham, to Bristol – everywhere. At the first of his two Albert Hall concerts in London it was the same. Dylan flew from London to Paris and played

at the Olympia Theatre there on his birthday, May 24th. The French, alone, loved his new music; but from the Olympia, it was back to the Albert Hall and the same old barrage of hostility.

Judas!

'Judas!' someone screamed out at him just before the last number. Dylan stepped up to the microphone for almost the first time in the 1½-hour show, and said "I don't believe you!" The opening notes of the last song came thundering out of the amps, and then Dylan added, shouting, "You're a liar!" . . . then crashed into the opening of the song – it was 'Like A Rolling Stone' – hurling the words at the audience:

*'How does it feel? How does it feel?
To be on your own . . .'*

It was an incredible atmosphere, and an incredible achievement. There was Dylan on his own, in total conflict with large sections of his audience, but with the power of conviction never wavering that it was *them* who were wrong, *them* who were behind the times.

The month after that, with Dylan back in the States, his next album, 'Blonde On Blonde', was issued – and yet again, it established that Dylan was light years ahead of the field. It was an ornate concept-album, an all-embracing world of its own, flowing with surrealist chaos and turmoil, yet soaked in a breathtaking poetic vision and an enfolding sensuality. It showed up very clearly indeed just how right Dylan had been all along, and just how far the Beatles, the Stones and the rest had been left behind.

As they listened, keeled over, and began to pick themselves up to start following this incredible artist into yet further new pastures, there came the news that with a further 67 concert dates to fulfil (an indication of how hard Dylan's manager, Albert Grossman – since dumped – was driving him) Dylan had crashed badly on his motorcycle in upstate New York, and was in hospital with a broken neck.

Death rumours abounded, and matching them even more gruesome rumours of the damage a wrecked but still alive Bob Dylan had sustained. The rumours were not damped down by the long, long silence that ensued from Dylan himself. The accident happened in July 1966, and it was not until January 1968 that Dylan re-appeared. He came back to appear at a Woody Guthrie Memorial Concert at Carnegie Hall; and later in the same month a new album was released, 'John Wesley Harding'.

What had happened on the rock scene in the intervening period was a massive pick-up on all that Dylan had previously been pioneering and asserting. Rock broke up clearly into two factions – the bubble-gum brigade, and The Rest: and The Rest was full of new names, new talent, new directions. The label 'progressive music' emerged – and at first it was accurate

enough. For an awful lot of people, the pennies had, at long last, dropped. There were a thousand offshoots from the harsh new urban rock-poetry that Dylan had produced with 'Highway 61 Revisited', from the druggy surrealist achievement of 'Blonde On Blonde', and from the unflinchingly honest love songs that Dylan had earlier hurled in the face of all the Tin Pan Alley clichés. Commercial fads like the Protest Craze were as dead as the Twist. A lot of people were really trying to achieve music and artistry of real significance, and there was no longer any question of college audiences being able to feel that pop was all beneath them. In short, there was an exciting and at first genuinely exploratory rushing in through all the doors that Dylan had opened. Perhaps in particular, the Beatles finally got there, with the 'Sgt. Pepper' album.

But as usual, fame and money and the process of becoming cut off from all ordinary life soon came wading in to drown much of this new real progress in hype and nonsense; and by the end of 1967, though no one would admit it, the brave new world of 'progressive' music was getting tatty and cliché-ridden and pretentious.

Dylan's comeback album punctured it all. 'John Wesley Harding' was a direct challenge to the whole ornate superstructure: it was a devastatingly simple album both musically and lyrically, and though it was far from simple it was remorselessly pared-down. Far from abounding in the druggy, impressionistic self-indulgences that were currently in fashion, 'John Wesley Harding' didn't have a single word more than necessary, and the insistent economy of the songs was matched by a new, thin, urgent voice from Dylan as performer.

Pure Country

Once again, Dylan had unilaterally taken a fresh direction – and again, once taken, the falsehoods and cul-de-sacs of the rest of the music scene were laid bare. Perhaps most challenging of all, the last two songs on the album were pure country music, unadulterated by any clever-cleverness, or 'progressive' gimmicks.

Country music! Nothing, then, could have been less hip, or seemed to make so little sense. Country music was a complete contradiction of all the radicalism, all the trendiness, and all the complexity that everyone was trying to include in their music. Yet once more . . . they followed. The back-to-the-roots, back-to-simplicity movement was well under way, if tentatively, when Dylan came along in 1969 with the album that was to crystallise it all, 'Nashville Skyline'. A totally country album – even a duet with Johnny Cash – and for Dylan, another about-face. Now he could sing, as if it now could be simple and honest and not just gooey pop-romance, lines like:

*'It's love and love alone
It makes the world go round . . .'*



Dylan taking a break during his British tour, when he filmed *Don't Look Back*.

What Dylan was doing, however, was much more than another re-sculpturing of our music. By re-alerting our generation to the strengths of country music – a music that registered with ordinary Americans, good and bad, whose lives were traditional at base, changed more by technology than by post-adolescent radical ideas – Dylan was also dismantling his own myth.

His long silence, enforced by the motorcycle crash and the need to recuperate, cool down and sort himself out, had left Dylan with a very clear and pessimistic feeling that when people followed him it was at best unproductive, and at worst just the compulsion to be hip – and that people demanded that he take on his shoulders the crippling weight of deciding their life-styles and futures and philosophies for them. For Dylan had become not merely a superstar in the usual sense – not merely a celebrity of special magic, style and success, like an Elvis Presley or a Rod Stewart – but, for thousands upon countless thousands of people, a full-time *Messiah*.

Shedding The Messiah Role

It was too much to ask. There was no way that Dylan could take all that on any longer. When he'd been out of it all, right through half of 1966 and all of 1967, it hadn't eased off one bit. Quite the contrary – the intensity of fervour with which people looked towards Dylan for answers and leadership had increased in his absence. So it was obvious that shedding the Messiah role had to be done another way.

'Nashville Skyline' was a start: With this album there would be many people who wouldn't be able to accept that kind of music and the kind of political stance that it suggested. It seemed on the surface that here was either a deliberate move towards the reactionary redneck politics associated with country music audiences,



Joseph Stevens

Mr. Zimmerman (Dylan's late Dad) talking to John Sebastian and trying to find out what has happened to Dylan after the bike crash.

or else a stepping back from politics as politics altogether, in favour of a simple countryman's let-it-be position.

A lot of people didn't accept it; and when, four months later, Dylan appeared at the Isle of Wight Festival, where 200,000 people spent three days waiting in the mud for their Moses to finally come down from the Mount, he disappointed them again. Gone without trace was the bone-thin, mystic/revolutionary genius. In his place was a rich-looking, chubby-faced man in a well-tailored suit, saying 'Thank you, thank you very much' between numbers, and singing both the new bland songs and the old songs in a maddeningly bland new way. And he sang only for an hour. And he reportedly walked off with £35,000.

Topping that, months later, came the double-album 'Self Portrait'. 'What is this shit?', Greil Marcus began his *Rolling Stone* review. The old familiar howls and boos were ringing around Dylan's ears once again, and 'Self Portrait' seemed designed to provoke them — full, as it was, of songs like 'Blue Moon', violin orchestrations, and the whole paraphernalia of Tin Pan Alley show-biz.

'New Morning'

Since then Dylan has done a lot more, and CBS have released, in December, 1973, what many people consider to be a third volume of 'Self-Portrait' — 'Dylan'. At the Concert For Bangla Desh in August 1971, he sang 'Blowing In The Wind' and 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' for the first time in seven years, and earned a 20-minute ovation. He got rid of Albert Grossman. He moved back to live in Greenwich Village. He put out a single protesting the killing of George Jackson, the black revolutionary and political prisoner. He recorded again with Happy Traum, a folk-artist friend from his early Village life. And he issued, not long after 'Self Portrait', another album, 'New Morning', which was hailed as a return to the fold by the critics. 'We've got Bob Dylan back again', Ralph Gleason proclaimed triumphantly in *Rolling Stone*.

Yet for every one of those things, Dylan

did something that contradicted any general conclusions people could draw. He appeared on a glossy TV show with Johnny Cash; he was rumoured to be buying property stock in New York City, and also rumoured to be giving money and support to reactionary Zionist-extremist organisations. He played again as a session musician, contributing mediocre harmonica riffs to various mediocre albums by lesser artists. He did an interview in *Rolling Stone* which had him pretending that he'd never really achieved anything, wasn't interested, and couldn't even remember what songs albums like 'Highway 61 Revisited' had contained. And from October 1970 until August 1973, he produced no new album apart from an oldies compilation called 'More Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits': a far longer and more deliberate 'silence' than the one brought on by the motorcycle crash. Moreover, what came, in August 1973, was just the soundtrack album for the Sam Peckinpah Western *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid*. The album was largely filled with undistinguished instrumental tracks, three different and seemingly off-hand versions of the same vocal song, and one other track, the hit single 'Knocking On Heaven's Door' which, though it was a staggeringly good pop performance, was hardly more significant or pioneering than a Neil Sedaka composition.

And then, in autumn 1973, came the staggering news that Dylan was to embark on a mammoth tour of North America... with the Band. If there is one thing that Dylan has demonstrated time and time again, it is his unpredictability. Despite seeming to have stopped in his tracks since 1969/70, his re-emergence in the New Year of '74 puts an entirely new perspective on the previous four years. For someone who has taken music through more changes than any other individual alive today; who has taken superstardom into a new dimension, where audiences demand the artist's soul — nothing less, Dylan's battle for survival against all the impossible responsibilities that go with that situation has shown exactly how the music business works when it gets hold of an artist as profound and original as Mr. Zimmerman.



BACK TRACK

1941: Born May 24th, Minnesota.
 1960: Arrived in Greenwich Village.
 1961: Session work for Harry Belafonte (!), Carolyn Hester, Big Joe Williams. Signed to CBS by John Hammond.
 1962: March: 'Bob Dylan' album.
 1963: January: First British TV appearance, in play, *Madhouse on Castle Street*. May: 'Freewheelin' Bob Dylan' album. July: Newport Folk Festival.
 1964: January: 'The Times They Are A-Changin'' album. Takes guest-spots on Joan Baez US concerts. August: 'Another Side Of Bob Dylan' album.
 1965: March: 'Bringing It All Back Home' album; Baez walks out on him. July: booted off stage at Newport for appearing with electric guitar and rock band. August: 'Highway 61 Revisited' album. November: marries in secret.
 1966: Tours USA, Scandinavia, Australia, Paris, Dublin and Britain with the band that became the Band. Booned, especially in Britain. June: 'Blonde On Blonde' double-album. July: crashed motorcycle, broke neck-vertebrae.
 1967: Silence: no appearances, no record; but cut famous 'Acetate' with the Band up in Woodstock.
 1968: January: comeback appearance at Woody Guthrie Memorial Concert, with the Band. 'John Wesley Harding' album.
 1969: April: 'Nashville Skyline' album. August: refuses to appear at Woodstock Festival; appears for one hour, for £35,000, at Isle of Wight Festival.
 1970: June: 'Self-Portrait' double-album, attracts derision from hip world. October: 'New Morning' album.
 1971: 'Watching The River Flow' single makes charts. August: appears at Concert For Bangla Desh. October: 'George Jackson' 'protest song' single. November: 'More Greatest Hits' album, and six years late, publication of novel *Tarantula* — which becomes best-seller.
 1973: Returns to session work for Doug Sahn, Steve Goodman and Roger McGuinn. Acts in, and writes soundtrack for, Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid*. October: 'Knocking On Heaven's Door' single. Dylan no longer under contract to CBS. December: 'Dylan' album issued by CBS — regarded as third volume of 'Self-Portrait'.
 1974: Jan/Feb tour of States with the Band. First tour in eight years.

The Love Generation



Washington Star News Photo

Historians will probably write 1967 off as the year of the Six Day War in the Middle East, but, to anyone in Britain or the States under the age of 30, 1967 was the year of Flower Power. The Beatles topped the charts with 'All You Need Is Love'. A classic one-hit wonder, called Scott McKenzie, urged us all to go to San Francisco and wear some flowers in our hair. Suddenly the streets of London were overflowing with ecstatically stoned teenagers decked out in kaftans, badges, beads and bells. The air was heavy with the scent of joss-sticks and joints.

Overcome by heady optimism, a whole generation adopted a 'new' philosophy with all the enthusiasm of a horde of lemmings rushing to the sea. Suddenly the 20th Century had plunged into the psychedelic era with a vengeance, and the Love Generation (as the devotees of Flower Power soon came to be known) were ready, willing and able to celebrate the dawning of the New Age. It was, Scott McKenzie assured us profoundly, 'a new way of living'.

Individual Freedom

Unfortunately it turned out to be nothing of the sort. The life-style of the Love Generation (otherwise known as 'heads', 'freaks' or 'hippies') was remarkably similar to the life-style pioneered in the '50s by the Beatniks. There was the same emphasis on individual freedom, particularly sexual freedom and the freedom to make use of drugs – and the same desperate desire to establish an identity

as a social sub-culture that was detached from bourgeois society (and yet, paradoxically, completely contained *within* the capitalist structure and totally dependent on it). But there were some important differences between the Beatniks and the Hippies.

One was purely quantitative – the hippie movement rapidly managed to achieve a degree of popularity with the young that would have exceeded the wildest dreams of the most messianic of the beat prophets. While the Beats were essentially isolated groups of individuals, the hippies rapidly established themselves as a genuine mass movement with a simplistic but cohesive philosophy and a relatively sophisticated private communications system to reinforce their group solidarity.

Another vital difference was the hippies' widespread use of hallucinogenic drugs, both the comparatively mild cannabis (alias 'marijuana', 'dope', 'pot', 'grass', 'hemp' and 'hashish') and the infinitely more powerful Lysergic Acid Diethylamide-25, better known as 'LSD' or simply 'acid'. The Beats had been using hallucinogens 15 years earlier, but only as a part of a very catholic programme of total drug abuse, which had led them equally readily to amphetamines ('speed') and addictive drugs like heroin and morphine. Less overtly self-destructive than their predecessors, the hippies generally condemned the use of the addictive opiate drugs, and relied heavily on the acid experience to establish the theory of psychedelic consciousness that was the foundation of the hippies' identity and unity as a social group.

Scott McKenzie may have been wrong about the 'new way of living', but he was right at least about San Francisco. In 1967, San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury quarter was the acknowledged centre of the hippie universe – a space-age Mecca

where the Love Generation's Utopian fantasies were first conceptualised and acted out. San Francisco had a long tradition of tolerance towards Bohemians and eccentrics of all sorts. In the '50s it had been a favourite beatnik haunt and, when the movement had fizzled out in the early '60s, beat novelist Ken Kesey had decided to settle there. Kesey had been one of the first people to realise the enormous possibilities of acid and, by 1965, he had collected a group of like-minded acid explorers all dedicated to the theory of going 'further'. Known collectively as the Merry Pranksters, the group, led by Kesey and mythic beat hero Neal Cassady (the model for Dean Moriarty in Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*), piled into a day-glo painted school-bus loaded with acid, cine cameras and sound equipment, and set off to put middle-class America to the acid test. So successful were their expeditions that they decided to experiment back in San Francisco, with a series of large parties where the guests were unknowingly given orangeade liberally spiked with LSD. The devastating effects of the 'Acid Tests' encouraged the Pranksters, now working with Augustus Owsley Stanley III (the genius who pioneered the mass production of acid) and Owsley's proteges, a rock band called the Grateful Dead, to move on to bigger and better things.

In January 1966, they staged the Trips Festival, the first big public acid spectacle, at San Francisco's Longshoremen's Hall. The Dead's acid rock sound combined with strobes, black lights, tapes and films to produce a hallucinatory atmosphere that distorted even the perceptions of the few people there who weren't out of their skulls on acid. There was little the police or other authorities could do about it – because acid at that time was still legal.

The Trips Festival signalled the beginning



Pictorial Press, rest Transworld

of an incredible succession of mixed-media events that were to become central to the hippie way of life. Within a year the changes that had been spawned in San Francisco had spread to New York and London and the whole crazy roadshow of the hippie movement was well and truly on the move.

'Acid Rock'

First and foremost it was rock & roll music that spread the news. The Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper' album, released in June 1967, was the most obvious indication of the new directions that were now being explored, but the first album by a newcomer called Jimi Hendrix and the gradual appearance in Britain of records by American West Coast bands such as the Doors, Love, Country Joe and the Fish, the Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Buffalo Springfield, the Steve Miller Band, Steppenwolf, Iron Butterfly, the Mothers of Invention and the Grateful Dead themselves, all clearly showed that 'acid rock' (with its weird time signatures and electronic effects aimed at reproducing the perceptual distortions of the acid experience) had arrived in a big way.

Helped and inspired by the success of 'Sgt. Pepper', Hendrix and the West Coast bands, other groups such as the Pink Floyd, the Soft Machine and the Crazy

World of Arthur Brown, suddenly achieved enormous popularity in Britain – all of them attempting in some way to capture the dream-like reality of the acid trip. Musicologists became obsessed with spotting drug references in songs, and mediocre bands had only to include a few key words like 'high' or 'trip' in their lyrics to ensure at least the temporary success of their records.

The relatively trivial controversy about drug songs was soon replaced by the more important controversy about the actual use of drugs. In February 1967, Rolling Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richard were arrested for possession of drugs after a police raid on Richard's Sussex home. In June of the same year they were tried and convicted. Richard was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and Jagger to three months. Many people were shocked by the savagery of the sentences. *The Times* ran an editorial condemning the court's action and, within a month, a group of celebrities ranging from the Beatles to Kenneth Tynan and R. D. Laing had taken a full-page advertisement in *The Times* calling for the legalisation of the use of cannabis. Weeks later Lord Chief Justice Parker quashed Richard's conviction on appeal and commuted Jagger's sentence to a conditional discharge. The decision was seen at the time as a major victory for the Love Generation's way of life, though it later turned out to be nothing

more than the first of a seemingly endless series of drug prosecutions of rock stars and other hippie celebrities, many of which went against the defendants.

Drugs and the new-style rock music, along with a generalised anti-authoritarian stance and a rather indiscriminate adoption of all the trappings of the mystic East, became established as the emblems of the Love Generation. However if the Love Generation was ever to become anything more positive than a large number of people mumbling about peace and love and reaming their brains out with acid, dope and rock music, the movement had not only to continue to exist but, more important, it had to be seen to exist. The first important development towards the setting up of some sort of viable 'Alternative Society' was the emergence of the Underground Press.

Psychedelia had already made its mark on the communications industry, most notably in music, radio and the mushrooming poster business, but it was the appearance in Britain of publications such as the *International Times*, *Oz*, *Gandalf's Garden* and, later, *Frendz*; and in the States of papers like the *East Village Other*, the *Avatar*, the *Berkeley Barb* and the *Los Angeles Free Press* that first gave the hippie movement some real chance of defining and disseminating its philosophies. All the papers relied heavily on the use of psychedelic graphic styles to attract the



Associated Press

Opposite page: Hippies relax in the mud; two alternative ways of living – leaving the cities for the solitude of the city; singer Scott McKenzie. Above: Dr Timothy Leary – prophet of love.

young and discourage the old and, in line with the then fashionable adherence to the ideas of Marshall McLuhan, tended to be fairly aggressively anti-literate and, though the best of the Underground writers (in Britain Richard Neville, Australian founder and editor of *Oz*) were brilliant, the Underground papers were probably most effective in their use of adult comic strips to propagate their ideas. The work of the American cartoonists Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton (creator of the immortal *Fat Freddy and the Furry Freak Brothers*) and of Edward Baker in Britain was enormously influential. Some of the comics were reprinted in literally hundreds of the Underground papers that were affiliated to the Underground Press Syndicate – probably the only hippie organisation to make any real attempts to solve the problem of the capitalist control of the means of production in our society.

Unfortunately, to produce any radical alteration in the social structure, the hippies had to come up with something more tangible than music, style, or their own communications network. The commune movement, with its emphasis on self-sufficient groups, attempted to solve the problems of living with capitalism by pretending that technological society

didn't exist; and retreated into a Utopian communal life-style that was a means of avoiding, rather than coping with, the unwelcome pressures of external society. With all its escapist overtones the commune movement resembled a poor man's attempts to solve his problems by making himself rich and moving upwards and outwards away from the poverty of his class. Essentially it was an 'I'm all right, Jack' individual solution to what were, after all, social as much as individual problems.

The Festivals

There were still times when the hippie movement did manage to look as if it really was going to get something together. These few occasions, the hippies' finest hours, can be summed up in a handful of names – Monterey, Woodstock, the Isle of Wight, Hyde Park, Bath and Glastonbury – in short, the festivals. These often week-long gatherings of vast numbers of young people (half a million at Woodstock, a quarter of a million at the first Isle of Wight festival) epitomised the best and the worst aspects of the Love Generation. At best, the festivals represented a fundamental and uncompromising rejection by the young of the traditional middle-class carrots of careers, wives, children, homes, security and financial success, that were dangled in front of their noses to encourage them to conform to the accepted ambitions of their society. At worst the festivals clearly demonstrated the Love Generation's total failure to organise and act to produce long-term alternatives to the middle-class society they wished to reject.

In 1965, Bob Dylan, in his infinite wisdom, laid down the immortal lines 'Don't follow leaders/Watch the parking meters'. The hippies foolishly ignored both pieces of advice. They collected leaders the way some people collect stamps. Gurus like the Beatles' Maharishi, acid academics like Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, youth spokesmen like Richard Neville, DJs like John Peel and Jeff Dexter, and, above all, musicians like Lennon, Jagger, Hendrix and Dylan himself – all were readily absorbed in the hippies' unremitting search for the Man with the Word. This was no reflection on many of the people who found themselves catapulted into positions of leadership by the hippies' ruthless drive to find other people to do their decision-making for them. At his trial Jagger made it fairly clear that he resented the assumption that his opinions and attitudes had far-reaching social implications merely because they were widely publicised and he himself was much imitated. Few of the remnants of the hippie movement today would regard underground DJ John Peel with anything but respect for his continued humility and integrity, when placed in a position of leadership that he obviously neither sought nor wanted. But the hippies needed leaders to imitate, and norms to conform to as pathetically and as desperately as any

of the Norman Normals of straight society.

Even more important was their failure to 'watch the parking meters'. Apart from a child-like fascination with electric guitars, stereos, tape recorders and strobes, the hippies affected a complete lack of interest in all things mechanical, and the most important piece of machinery that they ignored was the machinery of society itself. Because some of the American hippie leaders had paid a few dues in the Berkeley riots, the Free Speech Movement and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, and because the British hippie movement included quite a few ageing left-overs from Ban-the-Bomb, there were a lot of frantic attempts by baffled newspapermen and sociologists after the Paris student riots of 1968, to show that the hippie movement contained not only the culturally disaffected but also the most radical left-wing elements among the young.

True, pacifism was one of the basic tenets of the hippie faith, but pacifism – admirable though it is – is hardly a very sophisticated political concept. On the contrary, most hippies were either highly distrustful or blissfully ignorant of hard left-wing attitudes, and any alliance between the hippies and the student radicals of the late '60s was both temporary and extremely uneasy.

Mystic Trappings

It's no accident that the Love Generation has been succeeded by a swing to the political right, both in Britain and the States. The hippies just didn't cut it as a revolutionary force. Underneath all those mystic trappings the hippies were just another enormous group of consumers who happened to be buying gramophone records, stereos and drugs instead of cars, televisions, deep freezes and houses. They never represented any real threat to the status quo on either side of the Atlantic.

By the end of the '60s, the hipper hippies were beginning to realise that if they kept on smoking a lot of dope and dropping a lot of acid they would simply end up very stoned indeed – no more and no less. The whole scene gradually turned sour. The killings at the Stones' Altamont concert in 1969, and the later excesses of Charley Manson, showed a lot of people that acid wasn't necessarily the wonder drug it was cracked up to be. LSD, the problem-solving psychedelic, eventually left quite a few people in advanced states of psychotic breakdown, and countless thousands found themselves wandering aimlessly, badly frightened and savagely disillusioned, through an alien world that they still didn't control.

Superficially, many of the trappings of the Love Generation are still with us. Men wear their hair a lot longer now, casual, colourful clothes have become socially acceptable, and dope smoking is pretty widespread. But record companies are still getting richer selling teenagers songs about revolution . . .

The Black Struggle Part 2

In the 1950s, black Americans began to take many small but symbolically significant steps along the road, the very long road, towards the destruction of segregation. The '50s was a time of integration. The decade began with the attempts of black freedom riders to break the colour line on the buses by riding in the front seats which were strictly reserved for whites. In 1954, black children attempted to enter white schools in Little Rock, Arkansas; while from 1955 to 1956 a protracted bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, was led by the Rev. Martin Luther King.

This campaign made him into a national figure and forced the company to abandon its racist policies. Martin Luther King was an advocate not of black power but of racial harmony, but his actions in Montgomery were an important step along the road to black power all the same – for they reminded black people that to obtain their rights they would have to fight for them; that it would be quite futile to sit back and wait until white culture was ready to distribute justice out of the kindness of its own heart, or to imagine that rights for the black man were simply there for the asking, because they were written into the American constitution.

The fears aroused in the South by the renewed mood of black militancy were an important factor in the reception of rock & roll, which from 1954 to 1956 passed from being the underground music of black people to the very centre of American popular music, becoming a focus of rebellion for white teenagers.

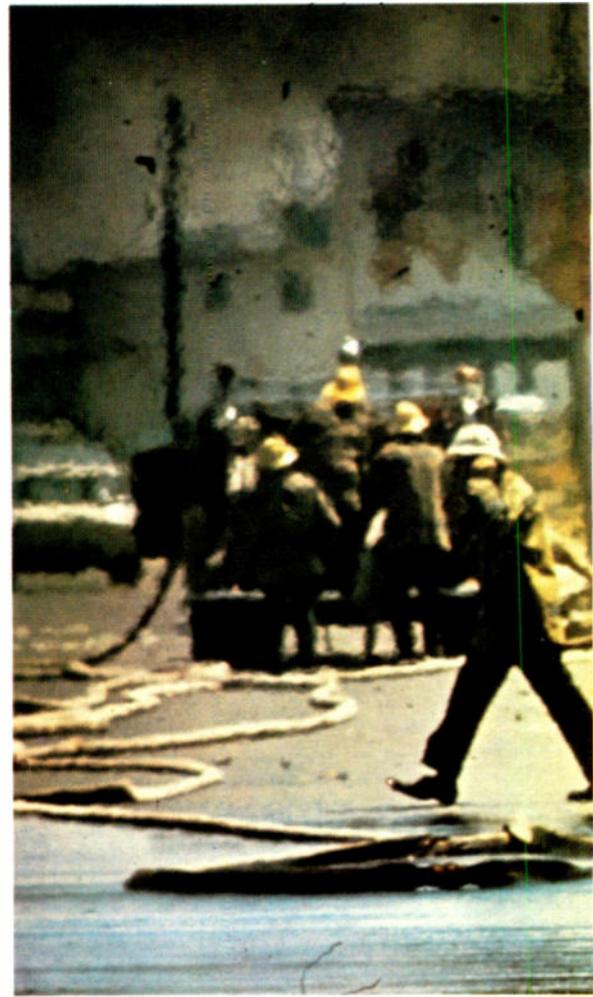
Musically speaking rock & roll was a far less significant phenomenon than has often been suggested, but its social and cultural significance was enormous. Rock & roll was attractive precisely because it was taboo, precisely because it seemed imbued with the sexuality and spirit of the black man – the figure that haunted the white Southerner, honest citizen and member of the K.K.K. There can be little doubt that the adverse publicity which rock & roll received from adult America greatly helped it in its attempt to win the affection of American youth. At this period

American culture was so uniform and so monolithic that it could absorb almost anything. But rock & roll proved very difficult to absorb: its crudeness, its violence, its harshness, the inarticulate and sometimes obvious lyrics stuck out like a sore thumb in the world of Doris Day and Mitzi Gaynor. What rock & roll indicated, as far as white youth culture was concerned, was a shift to very much earlier courting and dating patterns. In the final analysis the 'sophisticated' lyrics of the songwriters of the '30s were based on the fact that people could not afford to get married and had to postpone marriage as long as possible. Then young lovers were typically people in their late '20s. Now, the adolescent, the teenager, product of a more affluent age, was calling for music that reflected his own experiences – that could deal with the high school romance, problems 'at the hop', even troubles with parents.

'High School Music'

Black music could acknowledge the heartbreak, the anxiety, frustration and desperation engendered by love in a way that the bland music of official America never could. Rock & roll, then, was a portent, but it was also rather a superficial phenomenon, an eclectic mixture of performers and styles, both black and white. It occurred at a time when neither black music nor White America was really ready, and its collapse into 'high school music' dominated by synthetic white teenage stars was virtually inevitable.

Behind rock & roll lay a vast and rapidly developing hinterland of black music, the harsh and strongly rhythmic music of rhythm & blues. The sources of R&B were in Chicago and the Mid-West. On the one hand the Kansas City blues shouting of Joe Turner and of Jimmy Rushing with Count Basie; on the other the stomping, violent, heavily accented, urban blues of Chicago – associated initially with Muddy Waters and Elmore James – which lead to a host of important figures like Chuck Berry, B. B. King, Buddy Guy and Junior Wells. These traditions were quite distinct and never really merged; but both featured a laid back, fragmented style of vocalising, a concern with power and energy for its own sake and an avoidance of expressive shading. It was in Chicago above all that the vital tradition of black music was



TimeLife

handed on in its rawest, most refined form.

The two leading record companies based in Chicago were Mercury and Chess. Chess was the leading specialist in the field of black music, but the more white-orientated Mercury was also important because it had a number of black artists under contract who it tried to present to a white audience. These included the Platters, the leading group of the rock & roll period, R&B bands led by Buddy Johnson, Illinois Jacquet and Red Prysock, vocalists such as Sarah Vaughan and Brook Benton. Current legends, linked to the kudos of the Atlantic label, would have it that black singers and musicians learned their soul at the feet of the Ertegun Brothers, who frustrated all their efforts to go commercial. But Atlantic was only a part of the soul scene. Mercury, which was trying to be commercial, played a significant role in the development of black music through their attempts to popularise Dinah Washington.

Dinah Washington is a major figure in the history of both black music and popular music, who has never received the recognition she deserves because she does not fit into any one category. As Atlantic did subsequently with Ray Charles, Mercury tried to present her to a jazz audience by recording her with jazz musicians, but they found her insufficiently sophisticated. For a pop context her singing reeked too much of the blues, while for blues devotees her work was far too commercial. Yet Dinah was a true



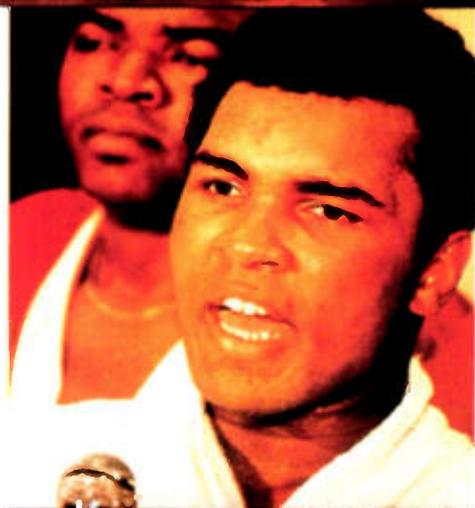
giant: she brought to every song she ever sang a massive power and self-confidence, reminiscent of Bessie Smith; a 'cry' in her voice that spoke of the pain, anguish and joy of being black; great sincerity and directness; the ability to dramatise a song and command the listener's attention. In a word – she had *soul*. Dinah Washington worked in the field of popular music but her example had a great influence on young black musicians. For she showed that all musical barriers could be broken down. 'Soul' was a quality of being, something you had within you, a transformative power which could find expression and meaning in even the most banal materials.

Backbeat Ballads

Dinah Washington, a child of Chicago's South Side, was much tougher, and knew so much more about life than the songs she sang – and her performances expressed *that*, not the message of the song. But Dinah at Mercury also pioneered many things that were to be important in popular music. She was one of the first to sing ballads with a backbeat, probably the first black singer of any note to sing country & western material (with Hank Williams 'Cold, Cold Heart'), with Brook Benton the source of the 'good loving' dialogues of Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell. In the fervour of Dinah Washington, Sam Cooke and Ray Charles, black music

found a new identity in *soul*: but this identity was paradoxically forged in the broader context of popular music, not exclusively in music aimed at the black ghetto.

Of the three great black northern cities, Chicago was the centre of the blues, Philadelphia featured jazz, while Detroit, also with a strong jazz contingent, became, through its strong church traditions the centre of the gospel-influenced music that was Motown. Thus, despite the melancholy of Smokey Robinson, Motown music showed its ancestry in the fact that it was happy, joyful music – the sound of 'Dancing In The Street', 'Please, Mr. Postman', 'Do You Love Me?', 'Where Did Our Love Go?' – a music that was closely connected to dance, and which banished depression and the blues with a clapping of hands and a shake of the tambourine. This mood of optimism also had a social basis. With the inauguration of John F. Kennedy and an administration pledged to do far more in the field of equality and civil rights, there was a new sense of hope – it seemed that the '60s might usher in a decade of real social and economic progress for the black American. The '60s began with a student-led movement to desegregate lunch counters and widened into a more general struggle to get black people the vote, especially in Southern States, where a wide variety of ploys had been used to keep them off the electoral rolls.



Keystone Press



Donald

Top: The December '69 Watts race riots of Los Angeles. Centre: Muhammed Ali, he chose jail to avoid the draft. Bottom: Richard Roundtree from the film *Shaft*.

Associated Press



Popperfoto



Associated Press



Associated Press



The great march on Washington in 1963 led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But this cautious optimism was shattered by the assassination of two black leaders, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, and of the two Kennedys, who had seemed the only politicians capable of swinging the States away from an ugly and intensifying racialism – presented in the media as a wholly justifiable ‘backlash’ against the outrageous demands of black leaders. Under Johnson, black leaders asked that the cheques written out by Kennedy-style liberalism be honoured, but the funds allocated only served to highlight the magnitude of the problem.

Black Panthers

1966 was, in all respects, a crucial turning point for the black movement in America. In that year the Black Panther party was founded in Oakland, California, and Stokely Carmichael coined the slogan of ‘Black Power’. The failure of the anti-poverty programme and the struggle in the black community over control of funds precipitated a crisis – a crisis in which the moderate spokesmen of the black bourgeoisie found their support dwindling as they were challenged by a new generation of militant black leaders. The emphasis now was not on integration but on separatism: on black people controlling their own programmes; running their own education in a way which reflected the black experience and black aspirations. It became hard to see why black people had ever wanted integration at all.

There was a new concern with black identity. Girls and men proudly wore natural Afro hairstyles instead of aping the ideals of white culture; while the Stax-Volt soul explosion of 1966 gave black people renewed pride and self-confidence in their own music. The new soul was strong, dynamic and uninhibited. Otis Redding’s smash hit ‘Respect’ emphasised not only the respect that Otis wanted from his girl, but the respect which the black man no longer hoped for, but demanded as of right from white society. Black music in the late ‘60s laid a greater emphasis on the separateness of the black experience. Black Americans recognised that they were on their own, and showed a much clearer awareness of the obstacles in the way. The difference in mood was reflected in two songs of Curtis Mayfield. The first, ‘People Get Ready’ shows a gospel influenced optimism; the second, ‘Move On Up’, though also encouraging, is more sardonic, in its call to ‘Take nothing less, than the second best’.

The simmering black discontent that had been generated by the betrayals and disappointments of the early ‘60s erupted

From top to bottom: Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, who was assassinated. President John F. Kennedy, was also an assassination victim. Angela Davis and Black Panther leader, Eldridge Cleaver.

in violence in Watts in 1965; in Newark and Detroit in 1967. The causes were little different from those that held sway in Harlem in 1935 – the black American still felt he had a right to the same standard of living as anybody else and was tired of being exploited and cheated by white businesses. White Americans reciprocated by blaming crime and lawlessness on blacks and by electing Richard Nixon as President.

The leaders of Black America are no longer respectable. Men such as George Jackson, Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver have all spent their time in jail and it is there, rather than in integrated schools, that they have fought their way to an education and to an understanding of the nature of American society. For Black Americans in the ghetto, life is an endless sequence of pointless hassles, designed to intimidate and to keep the black man in his place.

In George Jackson there was a new spirit of determination, a refusal to compromise in or out of prison, to control the factors affecting his own life. There was a cold and rigorous logic born of bitter experience that made him the truest embodiment of Cleaver’s ‘soul on ice’. Yet Jackson, despite a crushing series of experiences, beginning with a one-year-to-life sentence for petty theft, ending with his tolerated murder within the prison system, held on to a desperate optimism:

‘My faith in life holds still to the principle that we men of color will soon make a harmonious world out of this chaotic travesty of fact.’

The Vietnam war and its aftermath moved the black struggle off America’s front pages. In the ghetto it has been a period of marking time. While the black movies that followed *Shaft* have appealed to a mood of black fantasy and escapism, they have at least for the first time shown black men as stars in their own right.

Hostile White World

Traditionally, black popular music has avoided social themes and has shied away from the hostile white world. It has created for black Americans a separate world of black experience that is honest about facts, but always comforting and reassuring. Black music has not avoided the sentimental or the picturesque in songs like ‘Patches’, ‘Cloud Nine’ or ‘Ghetto Child’. Black music has been like the boy described in ‘Black Rage’, who, in over three months, had ‘never directly mentioned white people’, but who one day ‘stared long and hard at his fist’ and said, ‘I want to hit a white man’. The black experience has been made more tolerable because many of its most unbearable features have been repressed. But artists like Marvin Gaye in ‘What’s Goin’ On’ and Curtis Mayfield in ‘Back To The World’, have tried to talk more openly about the poverty, deprivation and futility of the ghetto and slum – in doing so they have kept faith with the tradition of black music and the black experience, to *tell the truth*.



THE MUSIC: '60s-'70s

Self Destruction & Self Renewal

"I'm not Bob Dylan," the great man once remarked to his most noted critic, A. J. Weberman. "I'm not Bob Dylan you are."

In retrospect the truth of this remark has become more and more apparent, for Dylan has suffered throughout his career from being labelled and categorised – from being expected to fulfil a certain role and perform a certain type of song. He's been asked continually and remorselessly to act out the fantasy of being 'Bob Dylan' – whoever that person was or is. We, his audience, have defined that role, and we his audience have felt let down or uplifted when he has at particular times either betrayed or confirmed those expectations.

The clues are there as early as 1964, and in 'Another Side Of Bob Dylan' it already seems that Dylan felt himself trapped by his own image – the image of the idealistic young folk-singer with a song or two to warm the hearts of lefties the world over. With amazing insight he warns the girl in 'To Ramona':

*'From fixtures and forces and friends,
Your sorrow does stem,
That hype you and type you,
Making you feel
That you must be exactly like them'*

'they'll hype you and type you' . . . the line has a distinct poignancy about it, and the album as a whole is full of such self-questioning. The answers came really with the release of 'Bringing It All Back Home' in 1965, an album which was to shatter the world of pop and shatter the preconceptions which many people then had about Dylan.

As is obvious from Toby Thompson's book on the early years of Dylan in Hibbing, Minnesota, Bob had always loved the sound of rock & roll, and especially the work of Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley. But it wasn't until the impact of the Beatles and the Stones on the States that he realised he himself could use the rock & roll sound grafted on to his own intellectualised lyrics.

'Bringing It All Back Home' then refers to bringing back home the spirit of rock & roll which had been taken up in Britain, and the album opens with as sharp a rocker this side of Chuck Berry. 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' is in fact modelled on a Chuck Berry song, the whole construction of the number being

directly imitative of Berry's 'Too Much Monkey Business'. It's as much a tribute to Berry as the Stones' first album, and the lyrical content of 'Homesick Blues', though more sophisticated perhaps than Chuck Berry's songs, nevertheless remains surprisingly faithful. Berry's 'Same thing everyday, gettin' up going to school/No use in me complainin' my objections over-ruled', becomes:

*'Please her, please him, buy gifts
Don't steal, don't lift
Twenty years of schoolin'
And they put you on the day shift.'*

And Dylan sounded so *happy* on this album! The rock side jumps along at one hell of a pace; even though some of the songs leave a lot to be desired, the promise was there, and that was perhaps the brightest thing about 'Bringing It All Back Home'. Dylan had shifted gear: on the liner notes to the album he says, jumbled up in a maze of surrealistic images: 'i have given up at making any attempt at perfection/the fact that the white house is filled with leaders that've never been to the apollo theater amazes me . . . i would rather model harmonica holders than discuss aztec anthropology/english literature or history of the united nations. i accept chaos.'

Given Up Perfection

He had 'given up perfection', which is what he had, in effect, warned Ramona about on the previous album. He had given up the dreams of the political movement, whose philosophy was based on what he called 'lies that life is black and white'. He had given it up because he wished to attack the country's culture on another level – he became, willy-nilly, the leader of a massed cultural onslaught.

He accepted the terms of chaos, and his life, as a result of this acceptance, became increasingly chaotic and dangerous. In essence, he began following the guidelines laid down by Norman Mailer (even though he was highly discredited by this time) in his piece, *The White Negro*. Dylan began to act out the whole gamut of fantasies of the previously repressed middle-class college mind. It nearly killed him, but it made him produce the greatest rock & roll music of the '60s.

'Bringing It All Back Home' was quickly followed by his two best rock albums, 'Highway 61 Revisited' (1965) and 'Blonde On Blonde' (1966). That neither of these albums have dated in the slightest is perhaps the greatest tribute that could be paid to them. On both, Dylan extended the premises laid down on the rock side of 'Bringing It All Back Home' to their logical and fullest conclusions. His choice of musicians was absolutely superb – first of all the members of Ronnie Hawkins' old band, the Hawks, and secondly the link-up between ex-Royal Teens star Al Kooper and the brightest of the country musicians – Jerry Kennedy, Joe South, Charlie McCoy and Kenny Buttrey.

Dylan's newly found concentration on sound, and on the fusion of country music, folk music and rock & roll, did not affect the power of his lyrics – if anything the freedom he found with a rock group backing him gave him more and more possibilities to extend his lyrical imagination. The sharpness of the old Dylan was never better extended than on the bitter 'Ballad Of A Thin Man', a riotous lampoon of the intellectual critic ('some thing is happening, but you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?'), and that tortured allegory on the US, 'Desolation Row'. Similarly, there are no better examples of the gentle savagery that Dylan can adopt than on 'Just Like A Woman' and 'Visions Of Johanna' from the 'Blonde On Blonde' double-album. There's much on these tracks to give the listener clues as to Dylan's change of heart from the years before:

*'Now, little boy lost, he takes himself so seriously
He brags of his misery, he likes to live dangerously . . .
He's sure got a lot of gall
To be so useless and all . . .'*

(*'Visions Of Johanna'*)

And, Bob Dylan was never funnier than on some of these rock tracks:

*'I see you got your brand new leopard
skin pill-box hat
You must tell me how your head feels
under something like that'*

(*'Leopard Skin Pill-box Hat'*)

The humour of Dylan is something that we ought to remember him for: it was an ingredient conspicuously lacking from the rock & roll of the post Chuck Berry period, and it was perhaps Dylan's emphasis on fun and rip-roaring laughter that made the new acceptance of the humorous side of Chuck Berry so much more possible in the mid-'60s. Between them, they've been responsible for the wittiest rock songs and greatest musical laughs of all time.

In the summer of '66, five or six weeks after the Albert Hall concerts, Bob had a motorbike smash which nearly killed him. He used the period of his physical convalescence as a time of spiritual renewal, and the world was not to hear from him again until early in 1968.

'The Basement Tapes'

He did make music, though, and made it with the Hawks – who by this time were calling themselves the Band from Big Pink (a large house they lived in and made music in near Woodstock, NY.). The songs found their way across the world and became known as 'the basement tapes', the only clues available of Dylan during the traumatic 1967. And the clues were shattering: Bob was going through problems:

*'Now it's all been done before,
It's all been written in the book,
But when there's too much of nothing,
Nobody should look.'*

And the song's chorus:

*'Say hello to Valerie
Say hello to Vivian
Send them all my salary
On the waters of oblivion'*

(*'Too Much Of Nothing'*)

There was a real sense of an agonising self-appraisal in these strange songs that filtered through the world, plus an equally strong sense from the listener that he shouldn't really be listening at all ('nobody should look') – they were, in the words of an earlier song, 'too personal a tale'. They were also, and very clearly in 'Wheels On Fire', the words of a man *working through* his own breakdown:

*'This wheel's on fire,
Rolling down the road,
Best notify my next of kin,
This wheel shall explode!'*

Dylan's never been the same man since. He 'accepted chaos' in 1965, but by 1967

he had to choose between chaos, wading to an inevitable explosion, and order. He opted for the latter, and his next album, 'John Wesley Harding' (1968) was the first proof given of the change. John Wesley Harding, the hero of the album, was 'never known to hurt an honest man', and was 'always known to lend a helping hand' – opposed to the simple rightness of the man was the old Dylan, the man who 'did not trust his brothers and carried them to blame/which led me to my fatal doom to wander off in shame', the man who 'dreamt he was among the ones who put (St. Augustine) to death'. It was a nervous album, a tentative move forwards, to personal collection. 'The key' Dylan wrote on the liner notes, 'is Frank', and the album was just that.

The positive side to the philosophy of the 'John Wesley Harding' album was taken to its logical end in the beautiful 'Nashville Skyline' album of 1969. His tortured imagery of 1966 was replaced by simple, homely truths ('Love is all there is/It makes the world go round') and the sound of the album – 'Dylan Country' – was its perfect complement.

But, since that time Dylan has seemingly moved further and further away from songwriting. It seems no longer to be the central passion in his life, the driving force. 'Self Portrait' (1970) is merely an inspired collection of old favourites which at times reaches the same heights as some of the 'Nashville Skyline' album, but mostly does not; and 'New Morning' (1970), his last genuine collection of songs, appears as a series of beautifully sung and rather gentle promises to do better next time.

Dylan seems to have chosen, touring apart, to behave like a family man who sometimes writes music. Sometimes the songs are great (like the 1973 single 'Knockin' On Heaven's Door'), but they're never the sort of song than can expose the nerves, the fears and the spirit of the man. Maybe one day he'll go back to it all, but one senses that the 1966 experiences were quite enough for any one man to live through. All we can say, really, is thanks.

Bob Dylan with George Harrison at the Bangla Desh concert.



Donald/Rank

POP FILE

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

KETTY LESTER sang about 'Love Letters ... straight from your heart', a slow, haunting song with an incredible piano part. It made no. 4 in 1962.

GARY LEWIS AND THE PLAYBOYS had a number of US hits in 1966-67 with straightforward commercial rockers, devoid of the then fashionable psychedelic pretensions. 'She's Just My Style', 'Green Grass' and 'Everybody Loves A Clown' were hits for Gary, son of comedian Jerry Lewis.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT was voted Canada's top folk-singer in 1966, and has since built up a world-wide following with his light, folk-country sound featuring a small drumless group behind him. Bob Dylan, who recorded Lightfoot's 'Early Morning Rain', as has Judy Collins, said that Gordon's sound inspired the 'John Wesley Harding' sound. Like Dylan of old, Lightfoot is managed by Albert Grossman. He had a big hit in 1971 with 'If You Could Read My Mind'.



Donald

BOB LIND sang his own song, 'Elusive Butterfly', into the charts in 1966. This wistful number, with its lyric, 'I wandered through the canyons of my mind', started a small vogue for light, introspective songs around that time.

LITTLE WALTER (real name Walter Jacobs) played blues harp on Muddy Waters' records during the 1950s and made some excellent cuts under his own name including 'Juke', 'Sad Hours' and 'Blues With A Feeling'. His style of amplified playing has been the inspiration for most blues harpists since, including Paul Butterfield and Jack Bruce. He died in 1968 at the age of 38.

JERRY LORDAN wrote a number of hits for Cliff Richard and other British artists in the late '50s and early '60s, and enjoyed a hit himself in 1960 with 'Who Could Be Bluer?'

LOVE emerged from Los Angeles early in 1966, one of the first groups to show what was to come from the West Coast. One of the few groups from there to equal the hard, driving sound of British groups like the Yardbirds, Love released three albums up to November 1967. The line-up was Arthur Lee (guitar, vocals), Bryan MacLean (vocals, guitar), Ken Forssi (bass) and Alban



Donald

'Snoopy' Pfisterer (drums). The three albums 'Love', 'Da Capo' and 'Forever Changes' made the group very popular, but it was two years before a fourth album, 'Four Sail' appeared, and by then only Arthur Lee remained from the original group. Love was the name, but rumour has it that forces far removed from that were involved in the demise of the group that in 1967 had seemed destined for much bigger things.

LOVE AFFAIR headed a new wave of British teeny groups in 1968 when they made no. 1 with 'Everlasting Love'. The band's line-up was Steve Ellis (vocals), Rex Brayley (guitar), Morgan Fisher (organ), Mick Jackson (bass) and Maurice Bacon (drums), but there was great controversy when it was revealed that only the vocals were actually done by the group, the rest of the recorded sound coming from session musicians. Despite the suggestion that the band was conning the public, they went on to score more hits including 'A Day Without Love', 'One Road', 'Rainbow Valley' and 'Bringing On Back The Good Times'.

LULU was born Marie Laurie in Glasgow, and first made a name for herself in 1964 with a British hit version of the Isley Brothers' 'Shout', accompanied by her group, the Luvvers. She belted out more hits including 'The Boat That I Row', 'Me The Peaceful Heart', 'I'm A Tiger' and 'Boom Bang-a-Bang'; appeared in the film *To Sir With Love*; and established herself as a middle-of-the-

Donald



road singer with her own TV show. She is married to Bee Gee Maurice Gibb.

FRANKIE LYMON, born in Detroit, was just 13 when he and his group the Teenagers had a hit with 'Why Do Fools Fall In Love?' in 1956. Finding themselves overnight sensations, the group left school and started singing full-time. Subsequent hits included 'I Promise To Remember', 'I'm Not A Juvenile Delinquent' and 'Teenage Love'. By the age of 18, however, Frankie Lymon has seen success come and go, and he went into nightclub singing. He died in 1968 of a drug overdose.

MANFRED MANN, born in South Africa, started a group, the Mann-Hugg Blues Brothers, in Britain in 1963. As Manfred Mann they made the charts early in 1964 with their third single '5-4-3-2-1', which was adopted as the theme music for the TV rock programme *Ready, Steady Go!* The line-up of Manfred Mann (keyboards), Paul Jones (vocals, harmonica), Mike Hugg (drums), Mike Vickers (sax, guitar), and Tom McGuinness (bass) became one of the top British groups in the early '60s R&B boom, but their records (including 'Hubble Bubble Toil And Trouble', 'Doo Wah Diddy Diddy', 'Oh No Not My Baby', 'If You Gotta Go' and 'Pretty Flamingo') tended to move away from their jazz and blues roots. After Mike Vickers and Paul Jones left in 1966, singer Mike d'Abo joined and the band continued to turn out hit after hit including 'Just Like A Woman', 'Semi-Detached Suburban Mr. Jones', 'The Mighty Quinn' and 'My Name's Jack'.



SKR

Manfred Mann, however, wanted to become accepted as more than the originator of a hit-making machine, and formed a new band, Manfred Mann Chapter Three, which played an interesting kind of slow, heavy rock featuring a brass section. In 1971 Manfred formed his Earthband, which giggered successfully but didn't sell records. Then, in 1973, he found himself back in the charts with 'Joybringer', an adaptation from Holst's 'Planet Suite'.

THE MARCELS produced one classic record, in 1961. A full pop high school version of the old standard 'Blue Moon', they murdered it, went 'a-bom-i-dom-dom, a-dang-i-dang-dang, a-ding-dum-dum Blue Moon', and the result was fantastic.

MARMALADE, a Scottish group, made their name through a residency at London's Marquee Club which they followed with their first hit single on CBS in 1968, the Beatles song 'Ob-la-di Ob-la-da'. They had two more middle-of-the-road pop successes with 'Wait For Me Mary Anne', and 'Lovin' Things' before signing with Decca, where they continued their formula success with songs such as 'Rainbow', 'Raindancer', 'Back On The Road' and 'My Little One', and the more original 'Reflections Of My Life', their biggest hit. The group (Pat Fairley, six-string



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bass; Junior Campbell, lead guitar; Dean Ford, lead vocals; Graham Knight, four-string bass; Alan Whitehead, drums) now records for EMI.

MARTHA AND THE VANDELLAS (originally Martha Reeves, Rosalind Ashford and Annette Sterling) started singing together at their Detroit high school as the Del Phis. In 1962 Martha was working as a secretary at Tamla-Motown when a vocal backing-group was suddenly needed for a Marvin Gaye session. Martha volunteered, and she and her friends began as a result to work regularly in the studios as backing vocalists. In 1963 they had their first hit in their own right 'Come And Get These Memories', followed by 'Heatwave', 'Dancing In The Street', 'Nowhere To Run', 'Jimmy Mack', 'Honey Chile' and



C. Walter

'Love Bug Leave My Heart Alone'. Betty Kelly replaced Annette, and was herself replaced by Martha's sister Lois. They continue to score hits with re-releases of their old numbers, the early ones of which still stand as classic Motown recordings.

C. Walter

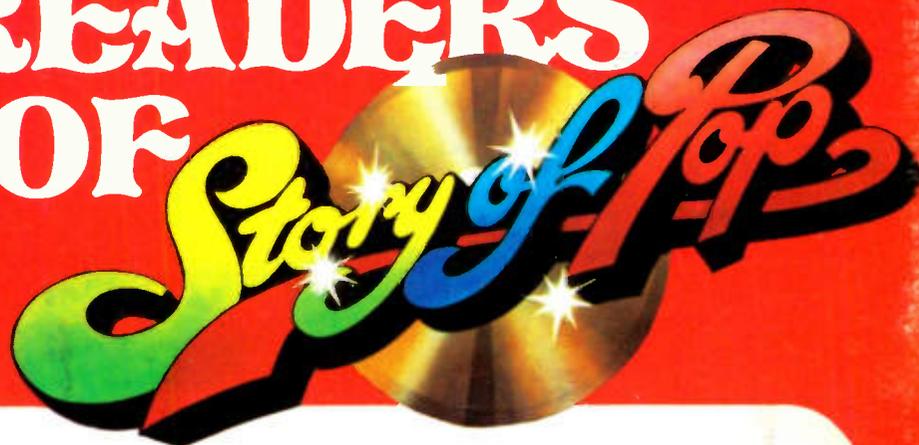
DEAN MARTIN, actor-singer friend of Frank Sinatra, first made the charts in 1955 with 'The Naughty Lady Of Shady Lane', and up to 1958 also scored with 'Memories Are Made Of This' (no. 1 in USA and UK, 1956), 'Return To Me' and 'Volare'. In 1964 he revived the old Sinatra hit 'Everybody Loves Somebody', and in 1969 found success with his version of 'Gentle On My Mind'.



POP FILE

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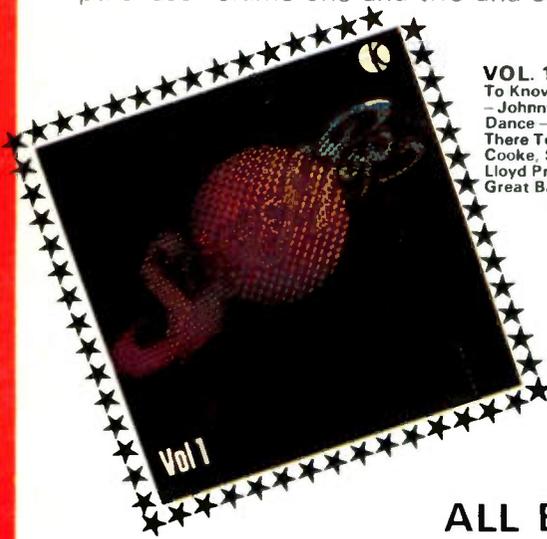
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