

THE
RADIO
ONE

Story of Pop

THE FIRST
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS



JIMI HENDRIX: Electric Artist
SAN FRANCISCO: Love'n' Peaceville
STEVIE WONDER: A Star at Twelve
PLUS: Small Faces, Acid Rock, Ray Davies & More

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One of the most notable aspects of the British rock boom of the early '60s was the startling upsurge of working-class creativity that went along with it. Kids who a few years before had put a broom handle into a tea chest and strung it to create a crude double bass now turned out much of the best work around. Skiffle had undoubtedly been an introduction to music for thousands who would normally have considered it the sole province of their wealthier age peers, and the do-it-yourself nature of the music had proved that music-making didn't necessarily require you to be able to sight-read or even understand chord structures – all you needed was a flair, a reasonably good ear and enthusiasm. Such young hopefuls graduated from improvised instruments to electric guitars and, once they had exhausted the repertoire of rock standards and other oldies, tried their hands at writing their own material.

The result was a fantastic period of musical and lyrical breakthrough with groups like the Who, Small Faces and Kinks writing for and about their contemporaries. And this trend and these people are spotlighted through the issue. The Small Faces were real Mods playing to an audience of Mods, unfortunately they had too many hit singles to be taken seriously by the pop press. In Ray Davies, the Kinks had probably the most 'English' rock songwriter to emerge from the post-Beatles era. Back in the birthplace of rock & roll, the Hippies of San Francisco were preparing the next revolution in music – acid rock. Black music was less prominent than it had previously been but that was not to say it was dead . . . just dormant. In clubs and basements the Mods were listening to the little-known new sounds and particularly to Motown. Stevie Wonder was pre-dating the teenybop idols, and soon a black American was almost literally to set London and then the world alight – Jimi Hendrix. In this extraordinary milieu experimentation was rife and one manifestation was drug usage. This was to have further effect later in the story.

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The Sound- Of The Mods

In the summer of 1965 a single called 'Whatcha Gonna Do About It' came out by an unknown band called the Small Faces. If you were a Mod, you didn't have to see them to know that they were Mods too. 'Whatcha Gonna Do About It' had all the brash pillhead swagger of East End boys 'up West' for a Saturday night at the Flamingo club.

It was as clear as a peanut suit or a plum leather coat where they were at: chewing gum, hunching and swaying their shoulders — blocked up to their eyeballs. It was like a private code. Their name was too. So they were short, but 'Faces' didn't mean what was above their collars. A 'Face' was something special, more than just a snappy dresser: he was Mister Super Cool, knew what the scene was — knew it all.

Now, because 'Whatcha Gonna Do About It' was released several months after the Who's 'I Can't Explain' and the Who looked as if *they* were Mods, most people assumed that the Small Faces

were merely imitators, cashing in on a trendy image.

The Who, in fact, were the ones manipulated into the image, for they were just ordinary London lads before they were sent out for a French crewcut and a John Stephen outfit. The Small Faces were Mods before they formed the band. Their image was left to themselves. Onstage they wore the clothes they wore every day and brushed their hair the way they always did. Every night half their audience looked the same. No manager would break up a relationship like that.

'Whatcha Gonna Do About It' reached no. 14 in the charts, but they picked up a lot of fans along the way so that their next release, 'Sha La La La Lee', an altogether less clannish and thus more universally popular number, made the Top Three. On the strength of their early success the band's organist, Jimmy Winstone, left to form his own group and Ian McLagan took his place. To begin with McLagan wasn't one of the boys — he was groomed. Ronnie Lane had always been the ace Mod, the 'Face'; Kenny Jones and Steve Marriott followed him — it was the same in every bunch that hung out together. McLagan fitted in fine, however, even

though the band's manager, Don Arden, thought he should wear dark glasses to conceal the way he squinted, when he was tired. He was small too.

So far the Small Faces' hits hadn't been written by the band. Seeing them on stage, in fact, was something different from hearing them on record. Mods had been responsible, in no small way, for the growth in popularity of black music in the mid-'60s. They went to black clubs, danced to black music, and if they could, played black music. That's how the Small Faces got together; as Steve Marriott describes it:

'The common denominator was all digging that kind of music and copying it, which is what we were doing in our own way, because we loved it, because it was the best source of inspiration we had. The influences were so good and the music we had around was so healthy — Stax, Tamla, Atlantic, so many good imports.'

Then, just like Jagger and Richard, Pete Townshend, and Ray Davies, who had all started out in bands imitating the black American sound, Marriott and Lane discovered they could write their own songs. Their first efforts were derivative (of the pop tradition as well as R&B) though successful — 'Hey Girl', the first single they wrote, made no. 10, the next, 'All Or Nothing' got to no. 1, and 'My Mind's Eye' (cribbed from a christmas carol) reached no. 4. By 1967, they got around to writing what they knew about. 'Here Comes The Nice' was a drug song, however, because of the Small Faces' neat image and Top 10 status, few people looked for sinister meanings in words like 'nice' and 'speed'. So every week on Top

Of The Pops they did a commercial for 'the man'. According to Marriott:

'We did it to be rebellious, to see what we could get away with. A couple of times we were sussed and banned; the BBC banned a record called 'I Can't Make It', which was maybe the most inoffensive thing we did.'

'Here Comes The Nice' was in the charts when Scott MacKenzie came on barefoot singing about San Francisco and wearing flowers in your hair, and suddenly it was the Summer of Love. Kaftans, bells and beads were in – and so were certain drugs. The fact that drugs were closely associated with 'the underground' struck a lot of Mods as an amusing irony.

They decided to send up the whole scene, and Marriott and Lane composed a parody of a love/high/Summer song so brilliant that no one knew it was a joke. 'Itchycoo Park' was built on a question and answer structure – the questions being asked by an innocent and answered by someone who had been high already.

Besides the initial notion of implicitly comparing a park in Ilford, London, with Haight-Ashbury, the giveaways were an exaggerated enunciation of the innocent's remarks and the songs deliberate clichés, which extended beyond the use of hippies' catch-phrases.

Not only was 'Itchycoo Park' one of the band's biggest British hits, but it was also the record that made them in the States. However, what sounds like a good break struck the Small Faces as something very different, as Steve Marriott explains:

'Things like that were cut for albums, but a very keen record executive would see them as commercial singles and that's why they were released. In fact it did our morale a lot of harm. We wanted them to be album tracks: so as to say it's a funny song or a gimmicky song, but it's just a facet of an album. When it's put out as a single and it's a hit, there are loads of drawbacks. You're

supposed to do it every night on stage, and, in some countries where they've never heard of you and you get one record out – like 'Itchycoo Park' in the States – they think that's all you do.'

Eight months after 'Itchycoo Park' it happened again, when they recorded 'Lazy Sunday' as a track for their 'Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake' album. It was a more obvious joke than 'Itchycoo Park', and Marriott exaggerated his East End accent into outrageous cockney to sing about the problems of a 'raver', who doesn't get on with his neighbours: On 'Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake' it made sense, because it was in keeping with the album.

'I sang it the way I did because it was creasing everybody up in the studio, but to take that joke out of context can be a screw-up. And then the joke backfires on you.'

The joke did indeed backfire – another hit (it made no. 2) to sustain their unwanted identity as a singles band, and an album denied serious critical attention. 'Ogden's Nut Gone Flake' was, in fact, an interesting album – a mixture of funny songs, love songs, and weirdness (mainly on the album's second side, composed of a sequence of songs linked by a nonsense narrative from Stanley Unwin.) The songs emphasised the effectiveness of Marriott and Lane's writing partnership, which, although it did not involve a straight words/music relationship, depended nevertheless upon their closeness:

'It was just that we were around each other more than anything else, it wasn't that we'd consciously sit down and write a song together. We maybe did that once. It was just that one's influence on the other was so strong that we'd write for each other. Ronnie wanted to knock me out with his songs and I wanted to knock him out with mine. My trip was mainly humour and the odd love song, Ronnie's songs were usually deeper.'

Firmly in the hit parade, there was little left for the band to enjoy. On stage, they could get their kicks being screamed at, but even that didn't last. Standing out front on one-nighters, Marriott could sense a change:

'The Small Faces' whole scene on stage was being screamed at. The louder the screams, the bigger you knew you were. When the screaming began to die down a little bit, we began to feel very insecure.'

The music press didn't help either:

'Categorization had just begun to happen in a big way – teenybopper, weenybopper, underground; it's all so much bullshit, but people are gullible and they'll believe it, and groups are gullible and they'll believe it. We only had to be called a teenybopper band a few times to feel totally insecure.'

The Small Faces began to lose their swagger. Their last hit single 'The Universal' released in July 1968, was unusually lonely and unassured. Apart from some overdubbed instrumental, it was virtually an acoustic solo performance by Marriott – the front man who was going to get hurt more than the other members of the group when they crashed.

Marriott could see exactly what was happening:

'I knew that when the Small Faces began to do a nose-dive, the one person in front of that nose-dive would be me, because I was the pin-up boy. The public always turn against the leader of a particular band and the leader drags the rest of the guys down with him. I didn't know what I was going to do. I just knew that it wasn't working out.'

So he quit. What happened next was the greatest irony of the Small Faces' career, for subsequently they achieved the kind of status they had been looking for, when Marriott formed Humble Pie, and McLaglen, Lane and Jones teamed up with Ron Wood and Rod Stewart as the Faces.



SKR

ROCK: '65-'70

Acid Rock

All attempts at categorisation are bound to be at best inadequate and at worst downright wrong, especially if it's music you're trying to pigeon-hole. Music at its greatest makes nonsense of hastily-applied critical labels which are most often journalistic or promotional rather than valid attempts to signify a radical and quixotic art-form.

Acid Rock (a most elusive and indefinable label) has had an enormous influence on music's rapid acceleration towards maturity. It's more an attitude than a specific style of music – like the acid experience itself which shows how familiar things can be approached from an infinite range of standpoints, while at the same time providing no instant hard-and-fast answers – because of course there are only alternatives, and no absolutes. So, in the mid-'60s, musicians began to look for something more important than the three-minute pop song, and began to experiment with certain psychedelic, 'mind-expanding' chemicals . . . 'drugs' to society at large. 'Society', however was at the time not deeply involved in topics concerned with the expansion of human consciousness, and 'acid rock' gave birth to an 'underground'.

Acid rock was born in a garage in San Francisco – that much we know – and it never, in any pure form, spread very much further than the west coast of the States. But where did it really come from? Did it simply materialise in the all-night jamming of a bunch of blues-crazed California kids called the Warlocks, transformed by the psychedelic lunacies of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters and Owsley's Electric Kool-Aid into the Grateful Dead? Or did it draw inspiration from the irrepressible rising star of Bob Dylan – newly electrified. Albums like 'Bringing It All Back Home' and 'Highway 61 Revisited' and, in 1966, the double-album 'Blonde On Blonde', were so novel that they must have fired the imagination of every young musician who heard them.

City Music

One such was Roger McGuinn. His Los Angeles band, the Byrds, was the first commercially and artistically successful pop group to use Dylan's brand of devastatingly witty City music. The Byrds went for the obvious Dylan songs, and sold a lot of singles. However, instead of becoming a disastrously glib emulation of Dylan, as they might well have done, the material they used raised the band to new inventive heights. Despite the usual external pressures and internal disagreements, they were developing as writers and musicians of major importance, producing songs like '50', 'Eight Miles High', 'Mr. Spaceman' and 'So You Wanna Be A Rock 'n Roll Star'. The Byrds couldn't really be called acid rock, but they *were* a central part of the whole musical revolution that was inextricably involved with the widespread use of lysergic acid diethylamide . . . and in those terms, part of the acid rock movement.

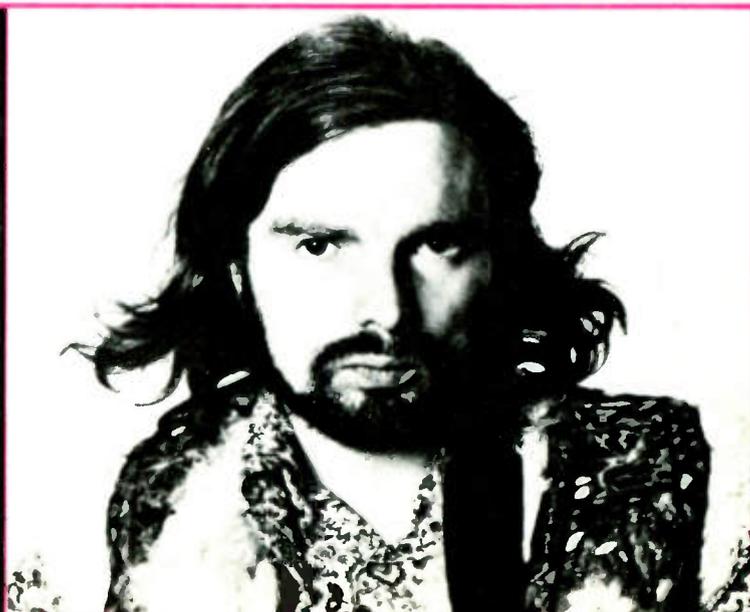
In San Francisco things were really humming, but it was still a strictly local scene. None of the bands gigging in the Bay Area had achieved national promi-

ence, and the West Coast industry was still firmly centred on Los Angeles – home of the Mamas and Papas, the Lovin' Spoonful, Harpers Bizarre, the Turtles and others. It was all very sunny and Californian and post-surf, but it was somehow still gutless and disposable. The sudden switch of focus to San Francisco that happened in mid-'67 was largely media-orientated and media-exploited. Thus the meteoric rise of flower power under commercial pressure, and its equally sudden obsolescence. It's simply a case of labels, but what had happened in San Francisco was the emergence of a genuinely new and alternative life-style with a music all its own. Though in many ways a fashion, it did not fade away.

The Grateful Dead weren't the only great acid band. 1966 had already seen the release of 'Surrealistic Pillow', the second album by Marty Balin's Jefferson Airplane, and the first with Grace Slick. The British version of 'Pillow' was hacked about to include material from the first album 'Tales Of', which hadn't been released – at that time, but the tracks which were left out were the most significant in terms of what was about to break – notably the legendary 'White Rabbit', in which Alice was indulging in much the same 'magic potions' as modern American youth.

Just as the Dead were travelling deeper and deeper into inner space, the Airplane's style was to concentrate on the succinct, specific form of the pop song, and to expand it in terms of harmony and instrumental complexity as well as verbal imagery. On 'After Bathing At Baxter's' (1967), the songs were fused into suites to suggest a multi-faceted approach to a unified experience: the nature of acid consciousness was articulated for perhaps the first time. Whereas the Dead *orchestrated* people's trips by creating a cosmic sound-voyage, a light-show for their ears, the Airplane on 'Baxters' actually *explained* what was happening in the best way that

Left: Pink Floyd the original British Acid Rock group. Right: Ex-leader of Irish group Them, Van Morrison.



Redfern

Warner Bros



the Airplane knew how on 12" of plastic.

Bill Graham's legendary Fill more West played a major part in the emergence of San Francisco as a musical force in the mid-'60s. He had a Fillmore East too, in New York, but that was a regular concert theatre with seats where 'everybody' has played at one time or another. But the West was just an ordinary dance hall, looking just like a local youth club with no seats and a little old platform at one end for the band. That kind of intimacy was ideal for the music that acid was helping on its way; and even if the band was more or less conventional few of the kids in the stadium would be.

There was Big Brother and the Holding Company with Janis in full throat – fast 'n nasty, zap comic music ('underground' comix started in S.E. at around that time for much the same reasons). 'Cheap Thrills' was recorded at the Fillmore West, so were bits of the Airplane's 'Bless Its Pointed Little Head', the Dead's 'Anthem Of The Sun', and the epic 'Live/Dead'. There was Steve Miller too, with Boz Scaggs on guitar, and there was the Iron Butterfly and Moby Grape whose heavy/wierdness image was at the time a bit too artificial to convince the hard-core enthusiasts.

Acid Freak

The Doors, Spirit, and Love were all L.A. bands. So too was Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, who followed their very fine first album (on which Ry Cooder played) with some genuine rhythm, blues and crazed wierdness called 'Strictly Personal'. From there the Captain progressed to a double-album called 'Trout Mask Replica' that was so wierd it still stands as a major indicator of a latter-day acid freak.

Acid rock, and the popularised image of the peace lovin' hippie reached its ideological and – more noticeably of course – its commercial peak at the Woodstock Festival in the summer of 1969. British bands like Ten Years After and the Who went down well, and a second generation of West Coast music was born with Crosby, Stills and Nash and Santana. Hendrix wrapped it all up with his 'Star Strangled Banner' and the hauntingly beautiful 'Purple Haze' and walked off. So, two short years after Monterey, he was the Crown Prince of acid rock.

But the mood was changing, and US politics had done a lot to intervene: since the 1967 summer of love there had been Chicago, Kent State, the assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and unrelenting war in Vietnam. As the hippies grew angry some rock stars like Country Joe McDonald managed to keep it all in perspective; others, like Steppenwolf and Detroit's MC5, built their image on it; and some like Kantner and Slick let

Top: an acid rock concert poster. Below: Quicksilver Messenger Service and the Steve Miller Band, whose main strength was Miller's 'Claptonesque' guitar work.

it go straight to their very stoned heads.

The Airplane were declaiming revolution and escape at the expense of the music; the Dead were finding harmonic alternatives to relentless psychic exploration. The beautiful 'Workingman's Dead' (1970) includes a song called 'New Speedway Boogie', about events at the Altamont concert of 1970 where Hell's Angels killed a black man who was going to shoot Mick Jagger.

But acid, and the mood of the late '60s had in fact left behind a lot that was positive. Expanded music had given birth in late 1969 to the Allman Brothers Band, a Southern band playing good-time boogie with two lead guitars and no-holds barred, who went on, in March 1970, to play one of the most devastating concerts ever recorded at the Fillmore East. Neil Young's second album, 'Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere' (1969), contained some extended guitar-play between Young and Danny Whitten of Crazy Horse, and when Young joined CSN the live double-album 'Four Way Street' included two memorably long versions of 'Southern Man' and 'Carry On' in which Young traded licks with Stephen Stills. Duane Allman sat in on the sessions for Eric Clapton's 'Layla', and their two guitars lifted the double-album to dizzy heights. Everybody was so busy weeping at the funeral of rock music that it took them the first few years of the '70s to start buying it again.

In Britain, where Dylan's magnificent 'Blonde On Blonde' and the Stones' 'Satiric Majesties' had gone virtually unnoticed, a popular musical awareness of acid only began with 'Sgt. Pepper' – hailed by the 'serious' rock critics as 'a masterpiece'. Nevertheless, the Beatles did a lot to wake up the moribund British pop scene (which they'd done so much to establish), with their satiric counterparts the Rolling Stones scarcely a yardbird behind them. Neither of these two albums was acid rock in any direct sense – though 'Sgt. Pepper' was plausibly acid *pop*, and John Lennon undoubtedly expanded *his* consciousness and wrote some nicely-barbed lyrics and tongue-in-cheek satire. British rock around the acid period was increasingly heavy – largely in response to the huge success of Cream. The inexorable Who, the rise of Led Zeppelin and Jethro Tull, the battle of the greatest guitarist involving Alvin Lee, Jeff Beck and Clapton, and, of course the curious popularity of the Moody Blues was all in the air; but none of these seems to qualify as acid rock.

Pink Floyd probably came as close as any British group to being an acid rock band, and they certainly attracted a good following among active acid consumers of the time. The Floyd made some memorably astral music, notably on 'Saucerful Of Secrets', and some of it appeared again live on 'Ummagumma', which was also padded out with some rather freaky sound-effect gimmickry. The Soft Machine might be bracketed here with the Floyd, and the two groups have continued to share concerts together into

the '70s. Avant-garde and mildly intellectual as it was, this sort of music was still a long way from the West Coast and the sunshine and frisbees of the Californian acid rock scene.

So where is or was British acid music? Well, Traffic was a 1967 flower power band ('Coloured Rain', 'Hole In My Shoe' etc) and they've since gone on and off with, and finally without Dave Mason, to become a consistently excellent band using a tight but flexible rhythm section as the basis for the extended instrumental genius of Winwood (keyboards and guitar) and Chris Wood (horns and reeds). The live 'Welcome To The Canteen' (1971, with Mason) comprised a brilliantly assured reworking of six old favourites, including a definitive 10-minute 'Mr. Fantasy'.

Negro Blues

But much of what was profitably going on in Britain during 1967–'69 had little to connect it with West Coast acid rock. Similarly in the States, the popularisation of negro blues which acid began with (or on top of) was giving way to a rediscovery of white American country music. Even by 1968, when Dylan recovered from his bike smash to cut 'John Wesley Harding', his old back-up group the Band had begun to play original music with a deep American consciousness, and Gram Parsons had joined McGuinn's Byrds to record 'Sweetheart Of The Rodeo' down in Nashville.

And so the blues merged with country, and an America that was worth remembering and understanding was discovered by the disillusioned Woodstock Nation. A popular art-form rich in social history and a code of values worth affirming in these troubled times had recognised itself. White rock music had found a home. And acid rock – whatever it was in the first place – had been the springboard for this new insight. It had moved a lot of people, shaken up a lot of heads, and cleared the ground for a fresh new step.

Spirit, one of the first jazz-rock bands.



PINBALL WIZARD

*Ever since I was a young boy
I played the silver ball;
From Soho down to Brighton
I must have played 'em all
But I ain't seen nothin' like him
In any amusement hall.
That deaf, dumb and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball.
He's a pinball wizard there has to be a
twist,
A pinball wizard, got such a supple wrist
How do you think he does it?
What makes him so good?
He stands like a statue,
Becomes part of the machine,
Feelin' all the bumpers,
Always playin' clean,
Plays by intuition, the digit counters fall
That deaf, dumb and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball.*

*He's a pinball wizard there has to be a
twist,
A pinball wizard, got such a supple wrist
How do you think he does it?
What makes him so good?
Ain't got no distractions,
Can't hear no buzzes and bells,
Don't see no lights a-flashin'
Plays by sense of smell,
Always get a replay
Never seen him fall.
That deaf, dumb and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball.
I thought I was the Bally table king.
But I just handed my pinball crown to him.
He's been on my fav'rite table,
He can beat my best,
His disciples lead him in
And he just does the rest.
He's got crazy flippin' fingers,
Never seen him fall.
That deaf, dumb and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball.*

*'Pinball Wizard'
and 'Substitute'
C. Fabulous Music*

THE MUSIC: LYRICS

Talking 'bout my generation

SUBSTITUTE

*You think we look pretty good together
You think my shoes are made of leather.
But I'm a substitute for another guy
I look pretty tall but my heels are high.
The simple things you see are all
complicated
I look pretty young but I'm just back dated
Yeah it's a substitute
Lies for fact I can see right
Through your plastic mac.
I look all white but my dad was black
My fine looking suit is really made out
of sack.
I was born with a plastic spoon in my
mouth
Northside of my town faces
East and the Eastside faces South.
And now you dare to look me in the eye.
But crocodile tears are what you cry.
If it's a genuine problem you won't try
To work it out at all just pass it by,
Pass it by it's a substitute
Me for him like coke for gin.
Substitute you for my mum at least I get
my washing done.*

'Substitute' and 'Pinball Wizard' are, musically at least, pure rock but they deal, lyrically, with quite extraordinary subjects. 'Substitute' is a progression from Pete Townshend's own earlier 'My Generation' in that it talks about the same people but it shows a great deal more insight.

Tommy too is working class and by any standards, an extraordinary hero. 'Pinball Wizard' came as the hit tune out of 'Tommy' and shows Townshend's grasp of his class's entertainments and aspirations. The Mods, that idolised the Who, used to ride to the coast and, in particular, Brighton on weekends; pinball machines were the symbol of their misspent youth – as pool halls had been for their fathers – and the lyrics show how firmly Townshend understands the skills and mystique involved in playing 'the silver ball' well.

Peter Owen





Rex Features

S.I.

S.K.R.

BLACK MUSIC: '62-74

The Boy Wonder

Despite the enormous influence of their music on the development of (white) pop, black American artists have for many years come up against an endless series of racial barriers blocking their general acceptance and classing most of their work as mere 'jungle music'.

So, when black singers did start breaking through to white audiences, all they lost was their original ethnic following. Chuck Berry had to write a country-styled song, 'Maybellene', in order to hit the pop charts; and with the passing years fewer black faces were to be seen at concerts of people like Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino and Ray Charles.

But the '70s have seen very rapid change. Now, ironically, despite the current trend in black music for songs of black consciousness and heavy political meaning to largely replace the old 'love-lost-and-won' stereotype; rhythm and blues, or 'soul' as it is now generally known, has won universal acceptance. In fact soul music now commands something like 30% of the US pop singles chart, and not much less than that in Britain.

Indeed, the very term 'soul' seems to have lost meaning amid all the changes, with artists like Stevie Wonder, Ike and

Tina Turner, Marvin Gaye and Billy Preston now accepted as rock superstars playing to a largely white audience. It was of course the fantastically successful Tamla Motown sound of the '60s that paved the way for this new acceptance, and Motown weren't far from the truth when they used the phrase 'the sound of young America' in their advertising.

Stevie Wonder was very much a product of the Motown machine, which churned out patiently groomed artists and commercially astute records with almost the same regularity as the neighbouring Detroit automobile plants churned out cars. It was Motown who proved that black artists could not only be highly respected performers, but actually have a star entertainer appeal to white audiences. And in this vein it was Wonder, launched in 1962 as a black sub-teen idol, who broke the ice.

Black American Consumers

Previously, black artists had been judged only on the quality of their latest record (as they still are by black American consumers), and it didn't matter how pretty the artist was so long as he (or she) couldn't sing – then no amount of hype could get them anywhere. This factor led to a remarkable consistency in soul music.

While there have been many run-of-the-mill soul records, there have been few that could be criticised for lacking professionalism or musicianship. All this worked both in favour of and against aspiring black stars. Primarily, though, if they had talent then they could get hit records – no matter how ugly or old they were.

Thus, in Britain in the '60s, black middle-aged bluesmen like John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson II became the darlings of the Mod movement; while in the States and Britain too it sure didn't matter that Otis Redding and James Brown weren't exactly the best-looking men born. The point was that so long as they were turning out such great records the kids didn't want to fall in love with their singers, they were happy just to dig what was in the grooves.

All of this put the black artist of the '60s at an advantage over his white rivals, for whom teen sex-appeal was everything, with a lead singer over 22 almost spelling doom for the group. This situation was, thankfully, changed in the '70s, when the music became the most important factor and oldies-but-goodies like 40-plus Alexis Korner found no trouble in making hits.

So while blacks found it hard to become sex symbol idols to white teens – who constituted by far the largest section of the record-buying public – they could at least be assured of a longer, if not quite so fanfared career. But though their parents might scoff, black American kids *did* hunger for idols of their own, and their demands reached a zenith with the emergence of the Jackson Five in the '70s. Those same demands though had started

out way back in 1962 with Stevie Wonder.

Blind since birth, Stevie Wonder – real name Stephen Judkins – was born in Saginaw, Michigan on May 13th, 1950. When he was three, Stevie's family moved to Detroit and the youngster soon became an adept musician, playing harmonica, organ, bongos and drums. Stevie played with the White family's children, and Ronnie White also happened to be a member of the Miracles, at that time the top Motown act. Impressed by the youngster's musicianship, Ronnie took him to Motown founder Berry Gordy Jr., who was astute enough to recognize Stevie's latent talent and marketing potential. Commercially speaking in fact, Wonder had a lot going for him. He was only 12, which made him cute; he was blind, which, while a tragic fact, could only help his appeal to the mums and dads as well as the kids; and most important of all he really could lay down an exciting and different sound. Wonder was no Little Laurie London, no Osmond Brother of the early '60s: he didn't just *look* right, he *was* right.

Initially, Gordy groomed him as a sort of junior version of Ray Charles, calling him Little Stevie Wonder and cutting a 'Tribute To Uncle Ray' album. With his third record, the pounding, exciting 'Fingertips' – a record that stands entirely on its own, neither Wonder nor anyone else ever having done anything like it since – the 12-year-old 'Boy genius', as Gordy rather presumptively dubbed him, hit the no. 1 slot in the American charts. The record had been recorded live during a show at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, which accounted for much of its infectious, immediate excitement. Even at this early stage of his career though, Wonder was a master showman. Unable due to his handicap, to dance around the stage like his contemporaries, Wonder would bob and sway over his keyboards, one ear

cocked as if listening for musical notes out of the sky, then shuffle over to the drums or bongos for a stunning display of virtuosity.

In 1965 the Motown Sound was just beginning to make an impression in Britain, and a package-tour was organised including all the label's top acts. It was somewhat premature, playing to half-empty houses, but as a promotional venture it was invaluable, and Stevie Wonder proved to be one of its most impressive acts. With his 1967 recordings of 'A Place In The Sun' and 'I Was Made To Love Her', Wonder's style took a new turn. Gone was the brash, strident R&B. His voice was starting to mature from its earlier high pitch, and he was now into somewhat lush ballads which, while broadening his appeal towards the pop mainstream, tended to be less soulful.

Link With The Label

In 1971, Wonder, who had now dropped the 'Little' tag, though still only just out of his teens, began to exert stronger control over his own career. His contract with Motown ended, Wonder was now able to do exactly what he wanted in musical terms, instead of being manipulated by the Motown production team as before. The finished tapes were then leased back to Motown, thus maintaining his link with the label. The first result was the prophetic 'Where I'm Coming From' album, which showed a whole new turn in Wonder's creative direction. Already, with 'We Can Work It Out', he had come up with one of the few versions of Beatle songs to better the original, and now he showed that while he still sure had some soul, it was the potential of rock which really interested him.

Touring with the Rolling Stones helped him break through barriers of classification that had dismissed him as a 'soul man'

of restricted appeal and musical dimension. He played on recording sessions with Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton and Steve Stills among others (Beck recording his 'Superstition'), and became engrossed in experimentation with the Moog synthesizer, the clavinet and other electronic keyboard instruments. Such was his dexterity that he could almost make the synthesizer sing, and his stage acts became even more brilliant as he almost seemed to make his machine sing. Producing other artists, notably his now estranged wife Syreeta Wright, also took up more and more of his attention. Here too he showed that R&B, once in grave danger of drowning in a sea of sock-it-to-me clichés had far from exhausted its potential. But it was with the release of the critically and publicly acclaimed 'Music Of My Mind' album in 1972 that Wonder really clinched things. It had soul in plenty, but wasn't soul – it had rock too but wasn't rock – the brew was, quite simply, Stevie Wonder.

Following through with 'Talking Book' and 'Innervisions', Wonder became one of the first black artists to move himself away from being a singles' performer, to working chiefly in on albums. For a decade, black music had appeared consistently in the best-selling pop singles listings. Now Wonder and his contemporaries, most notably Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye, Isaac Hayes, Bobby Womack and Billy Preston, fought clear of the limitations of the single to establish themselves consistently in the album charts.

Where Motown recordings had been specifically engineered to make them ideal for playing on cheap portables and juke-boxes, R&B has at last come of age and assumed its rightful place not as a separate, purely ethnic art form, but as an integral and vital part of the rock scene.

Stevie Wonder with Soul stars Martha and the Vandellas.





John Lennon

L.F.I.

POP: 1963–74

Working Class Heroes

In his 'the dream is over' days, John Lennon, reflecting on his career as a 'pop star', described himself as a 'working-class hero', someone who made it from the bottom to the top and yet was still trapped inside his success. The Beatles weren't the only 'working-class heroes'; their success led large numbers of groups to follow the golden road of rock in search of wealth, fame and freedom.

It would be very much easier – especially for sociologists – if notions like 'class' and 'rock' could be linked directly and simply. Of course, certain links can be made: for instance, reggae's white audience in Britain has, until very recently, been predominantly working-class, just as in general 'progressive' music has had a middle-class audience. Similarly, on the basis of interviews and questionnaires it could be established that certain groups have a particular class audience. But what such information would reveal about the group in question and its music is another matter.

Nonetheless, if we look at the careers of groups like the Troggs, the Who and Slade, there seems some cause to see them as working-class heroes rather than just as rock stars. This isn't because their origins (or those of their audience) are necessarily working-class in any sociological sense. The reasons are different in each specific case – the Troggs' blatant sexuality, the Who's ferocious attachment to *their* audience, the Mods – but all share a quality of disturbance.

'My Generation'

A quick comparison of the crudeness of the Troggs' 'Wild Thing' with the slight *double entendre* of Gerry and the Pacemakers' 'I Like It'; the bitterness and bravado of 'My Generation' with Cliff Richards' song of praise for 'The Young Ones'; or the explicitness of Slade's boot stomping 'Cum On Feel The Noize' with the gentility of the Shadows' 'Foot Tapper', makes fairly clear which records are disturbing. In the States this quality has generally been seen in regional terms: the greasy, evil Southern rock & rollers of the '50s and the Detroit of the MC5 in the '60s. In Britain, however, where 'class' is

the national concern, anything disturbing, especially if it isn't 'intellectual', is associated with the nether-world of the working classes.

The success of Slade (and Gary Glitter to some extent) in the '70s has marked a resurgence of working-class heroes, but in the post-Beatles, pre-progressive period of 1963–'67 a series of groups arose that in their different ways stirred up the relatively calm waters of mainstream pop. The first of these was the Kinks, who, after a couple of flops, got to no. 1 with 'You Really Got Me' in August 1964. The Kinks claimed to be an R&B group, but they were more like a Bizarre R&B group. (Bizarre was an alternative Superman who had the best of intentions, but did everything wrong).

Discovered playing to exclusive audiences, wearing effeminate hunting jackets and frills, they seemed to be pure pop fakery until, with 'You Really Got Me' and 'All Day And All The Night', they demonstrated the aptness of their name. Very quickly, however, it became apparent that Ray Davies' songs – the driving force behind the group – were far more calculated than 'You Really Got Me' suggested. By the time of 'Arthur' and 'The Village

Green Preservation Society' however, the group's name had come to seem awkward in relation to their material. Even 'Lola', which seemed at first to be a return to the territory of Kinkdom, is a far more reflective song than any of their early singles.

In these early songs a basic proposition was made – usually about sexual love – and amplified by a thudding beat and a piece of two-chord dramatics. The effect, at a time when English teachers in Schools and Colleges were talking about 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' in terms of the Beatles and the conventions of courtly love poetry, was shattering.

Like the Kinks, the Who, who surfaced in 1965, would eventually develop from mere presentation of their audience's values and fears, to reflection upon those values. But whereas the Kinks turned to examinations of their own situation in the music industry, and to the social changes in Britain in the 20th Century, the Who's close attachment to their audience in 1965 and '66 was never shattered. Indeed it became Townshend's subject matter, firstly 'Tommy', and later in 'Quadrophenia'. But back in 1965, 'I Can't Explain', 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere' and 'My Generation' were anthems for the Mods to sing along (and fight along) with. And it wasn't only through Townshend's words that the Who expressed their delight in all things Mod. Produced by Shel Talmy as an imitation Kinks, by the time of their second record, 'Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere', the Who had discovered feedback, the sound of their generation.

Ex Child-Actor

From the East End of London, the Small Faces were in many ways an even more genuinely Mod group than the Who. Even though their first records, 'Whatcha Gonna Do About It' and 'Sha La La Lee', were pop production numbers from Kenny Lynch's house of hits, the Small Faces were themselves genuine Mods – as any photo of the group testifies. The Who sang about the Mod experience: the Small Faces lived it. Steve Marriott was an ex child-actor who could hardly play guitar when the group was formed; yet despite everything – including Decca's attempts to promote them as a pop act – in live performance, on record, and on the then sensational TV programme *Ready, Steady Go*, they produced music aimed aggressively at people who looked like themselves.

Eventually, like the Kinks and the Beatles, the Small Faces were to retreat into 'Englishness' – to the extent of having Professor Stanley Unwin (a TV folk-show favourite) as a narrator on one side of their 'Ogden's Nut Gone Flake' album. But before then, and before the days when 'drugs' meant marijuana and LSD, with 'Here Comes The Nice' (ie. the pusher) which amazingly wasn't banned, and 'In My Mind' and 'Itchycoo Park', they became Britain's foremost drug band . . . singing, of course, about amphetamine,



G. Mankowitz

The Troggs, one of the original guitar, bass and drums group, but the Who were the real heavies.

the Mod 'stay awake all weekend' drug.

If the Small Faces' subject material of drugs and the Mod life marked their attachment to their audience, the Troggs, who had a huge hit on both sides of the Atlantic with 'Wild Thing' in 1966, had no idea of playing to an audience. In many ways they were completely out of time – Chris Britten, the lead guitarist, at one point threatened to quit the group because as a pop star he was naturally thought to take drugs. Led by Reg Preseley (he changed his name from Ball) they were one of the countless groups playing up and down Britain – Andover, Hampshire, in their case – who came to London in search of the 'Big Break'.

Their career was, to say the least, bizarre. On the one hand there were the records that were banned all over the world as being too suggestive – 'I Can't Control Myself', for example, was banned in the States (where its 'B' side was 'Gonna Make You'!) The single still made no. 2 in Britain, but in direct contrast there

was the group's choice of album material which veered between totally inept versions of 'Louie Louie' and other Kingsmen fave raves, and self-penned compositions like 'Little Red Donkey' and 'Butterflies And Bees' . . . !

In part, because of this amazing mix of naïveté and brazen sexuality – 'It only takes a night to find your way around' (a line from 'Seventeen') – they produced with little talent a string of memorable hits: 'Wild Thing', 'With A Girl Like You', 'I Can't Control Myself', 'Anyway That You Want Me', 'Give It To Me', 'Night Of The Long Grass' and 'Love Is All Around'. Their main asset was Reg Preseley ('the sexy one with the soft centre' as a sleeve note described him), whose voice, though limited, was equally adept at sounding sincere ('Love Is All Around'), menacingly mysterious ('Night Of The Long Grass'), lustful ('I Can't Control Myself') or just desperate ('Give It To Me').

In contrast to the Stones, who were self-consciously rebels, the Troggs presented



Joseph Stevens



SKR

Top: Noddy Holder the singer from Slade, Britain's foremost 'working-class Heroes'.
Above: The Move from industrial Birmingham.

themselves as entertainers. Accordingly, when the hits stopped coming in 1967, they had nowhere to go. They just continued playing 'Wild Thing' on the cabaret circuit and in Europe – wherever, in fact, there was a paying audience. Finally, in 1973, time in the shape of David Bowie (whose album, 'Pin Ups' contains a selection of songs from the British group scene of 1963–'67) caught up with the Troggs and put them, complete with 'Wild Thing', on his US TV show.

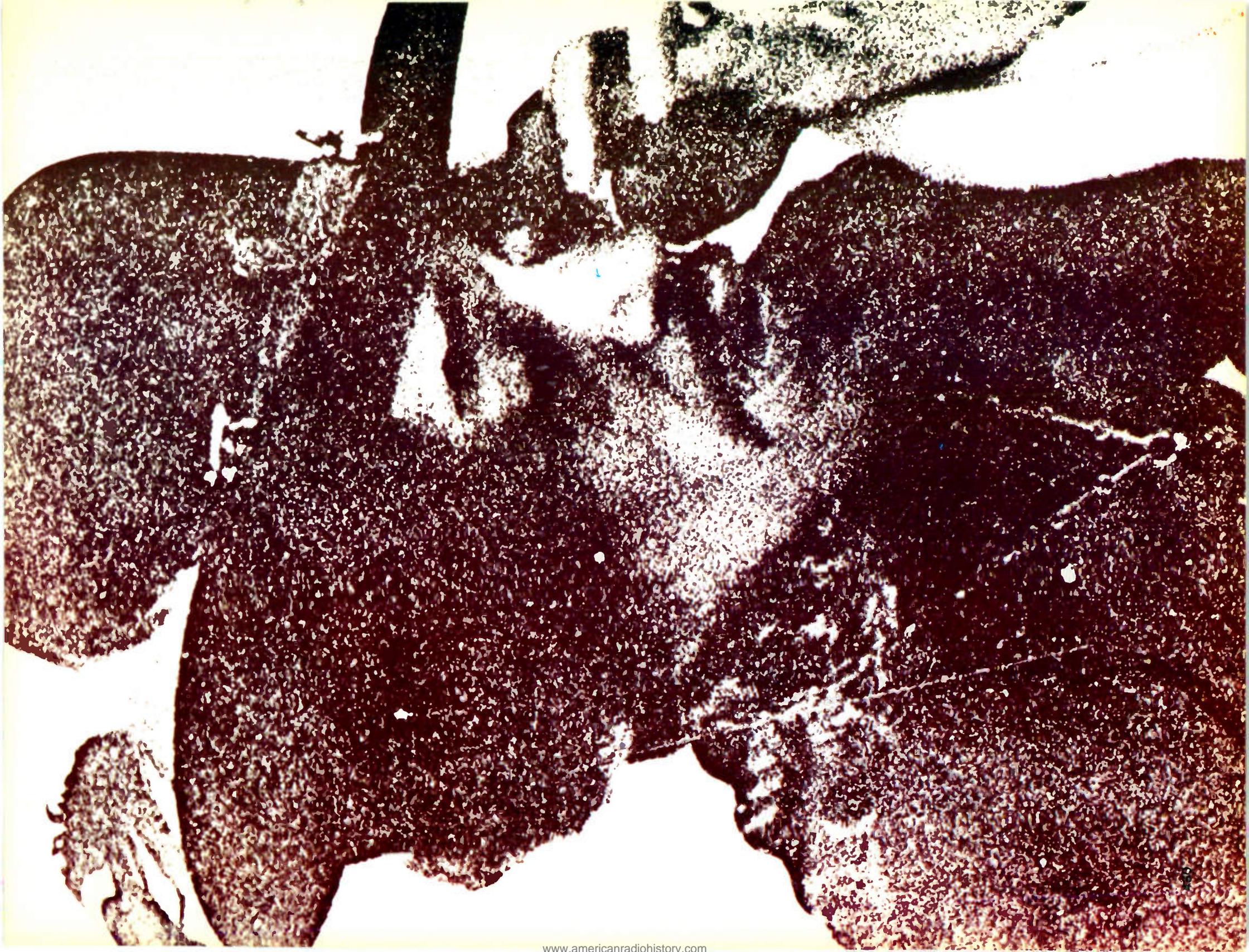
But by 1968 the group scene as initiated by the Beatles was on the verge of collapse: bubblegum groups had largely replaced beat groups, and the (temporary, as it transpired) demise of the single in 1967 and '68 pointed the way to the coming explosion of underground and progressive groups. In the short period before the two scenes had emerged as opposites, the Move chopped themselves up a few TV sets and found the road to chart success. In one way they linked the Beat Boom and the underground: a Birmingham group, composed mostly of ex-members of Carl Wayne and the Vikings – a band that surfaced briefly in the regional Beat Boom of the early '60s with a couple of imitation Beatles numbers – the Move found instant favour with the London 'underground' audience in 1967.

Harold Wilson

Their image was one of violence and cynicism – Tony Secunda advertised one of their records by means of a photo of the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in bed with his secretary. Unsure whether they were an underground group or not, the Move's records veered between drug songs ('Night Of Fear', 'Flowers In The Rain') and pop songs ('Blackberry Way', 'Curly'). Significantly, real success only came to Roy Wood (of Wizzard) and Jeff Lynne (of the ELO) after the underground had faded away and the single (pop) *versus* album (progressive) dichotomy had disappeared.

Nasty, viscious, lewd (and titilating), an assault on the sons and daughters of the fair isle, the Move, the Troggs, the Who, the Kinks and the Small Faces were all in their different ways manifestations of the power of rock & roll to shock and disturb as well as entertain. Of course, they weren't the only ones: Van Morrison's Them, whose 'Here Comes The Night' became an instant cult record, are another example of a group whose effect was far greater than its chart success would suggest.

In the very different world of the '70s, Alice Cooper and David Bowie have anaethetised and made minor the shocks, say, that the Troggs might ever have offered an audience. The Sweet are after all 'family entertainment', and Marc Bolan has made a teenybopper killing with the endless repetition of even more basic riffs than those of 'Wild Thing'. Only Slade in the '70s hark back to the traditions of the Who and the Kinks; and hence the irony of Bowie's 'the workers are on strike 'cos Lennon's on sale again'.



whom Chandler saw quite a lot at the time. Chas was totally convinced later that evening, when Jimi played 'Hey Joe' – a song that Chas was already planning to record when he found the right person.

Jimi Hendrix and Chas Chandler arrived in London in September 1966 – a London ruled by the Beatles, the Stones, the Who and the newly formed Cream – not an easy place to make your mark in unless you were special, very special. Jimi was taken round to Zoot Money's house, which was always full of musicians, to jam for a while and get to feel at home. Two weeks later, Noel Reading came up from Folkstone to Chandler's Garrard Street office, to audition for Eric Burdon's new band, and Chas lent him a bass to see how he worked out with Jimi. A little later, Mitch Mitchell was thrown out of Georgie Fame's band and Chas asked him to play drums with Jimi. At the first get-together, they played for four hours non-stop – the Jimi Hendrix Experience was born.

Chas Chandler took their recording of 'Hey Joe' to Decca but they turned it down . . . 'I don't think he's got anything', said the man. However, Kit Lambert (the Who's manager) saw Jimi at the Scotch of St. James club and was determined to have Jimi on his new label, Track. As Track didn't start until March 1967, the first single came out on Polydor. The group's first booking also turned up via the London club scene – Johnny Halliday saw Jimi jamming with Brian Auger at Blaises and asked if Jimi could provide the support band for his next tour of France.

Last Bass Guitar

On his return, things were fairly slow for Hendrix in Britain and Chas Chandler's money was running low. Chas sold six bass guitars to pay for a reception at the Bag 'O Nails and invited some promoters he knew. The result was a £25 booking as support group to the New Animals. For the second gig at the Chalk Farm Roundhouse, Jimi had had his guitar stolen, so Chandler sold his last bass to get Jimi a replacement. Two days later 'Hey Joe' climbed into the UK singles chart . . . 'We did it by the skin of our teeth', said Chandler.

'Hey Joe' launched the Experience onto a quick tour of London's top clubs, ('Purple Haze') was written in the dressing-room at the Upper Cut, in the East End). Then came national exposure on a 'package' tour with the Walker Brothers, Cat Stevens and Engelbert Humperdinck. Chandler knew that the Walker Brothers, who were the big sex idols at the time, were going to split after the tour, so the Experience worked out a very sexy act to 'cop all their reputation'. Jimi's upstaging of the big stars was not taken quietly, as Chandler recalled:

'There was a lot of ill feeling backstage, and they would screw up the lights, or put the house lights up on the audience during his act. It was quite a tour. There were no barriers in pop then, no pseudo hippies. It was all entertainment and a great tour for the audiences.'

Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch



Then came the Monterey Pop Festival. Paul McCartney who had been helping to organise the festival had said that it wouldn't be a real festival without Jimi, and Brian Jones flew over specially to introduce him to the American audience. The Experience looked and sounded light years ahead of the competition and it took 30 minutes to quieten the audience down when Jimi had finished – waving his burning guitar above his head as a sacrifice to the occasion. On the strength of this Bill Graham booked the Experience for the Fillmore West to play with the Jefferson Airplane. Chas Chandler:

'We played the Fillmore and Bill Graham gave us \$2,000 each as a bonus when the Airplane cried off the rest of the gigs after our first night. Bill also gave us antique engraved watches. Bill has had a lot of mud thrown at him, but he's a gas.'

Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch

In the meantime, Chandler's partner Mike Jeffery had signed the Experience for a tour of the States with the Monkeys. This was not appreciated by Chandler and the rest of the group. Jimi died a death in front of the Monkey's 12-year-old audience, so promoter Dick Clark and Chandler dreamed up the story that the Daughters Of The American Revolution had waged a campaign to get Jimi banned for his obscene act. Jimi did several more gigs in the States; saw 'Are You Experienced' go up the American charts, and returned to England.

No Burning Guitars

While 1967 was Jimi's year with four singles and two albums in the British charts and two albums in the American charts, 1968 saw the first signs of that all was not well with the Experience. On tour in the States, Jimi was blowing amplifiers and walking off stage after only four numbers. Gone too was the dramatic showmanship – no dancing or burning guitars. Jimi was becoming bored with his image. Back in 1967 Jeff Beck had said:

'Jimi's only trouble will come when he wants to get himself off the nail he has hung himself on. The public will want something different, and Jimi has so established himself in one bag that he'll find it difficult to get anyone to accept him in another.'

(New Musical Express)

And that's what happened. Jimi found audiences ready to cheer him even if he played badly – provided he threw himself around a bit and smashed a guitar. Quite a spot for a musician who wants to retain some self respect to find himself in. Jimi Hendrix was already a very lonely man, even those who knew him for years never felt that they really *knew* him. As Chas Chandler said in Chris Welch's book *Jimi Hendrix*:

'Jimi lived with me for two years and I would never presume to say I knew him. Nobody knew him. He never seemed to confide in anybody'.

Now he was cut off from his audience and rigours of touring were taking their

Redfern

toll. There were a few violent incidents with girls that were suitably hushed up and, on a three day tour of Sweden in 1968, Hendrix was jailed for smashing up a hotel room. But the music was still there, on record at least. 'Are You Experienced' and 'Axis: Bold As Love' still stand almost untouched by the passage of time. When they were released in 1967 they were so far ahead of the field, so different and strange that the rock & roll industry was just stunned at first. This was obviously the next craze/direction but no one had the faintest idea how to play it, for Jimi was doing things on the guitar that just seemed impossible. He would hold two strings feeding back while he played a melody line on the others and sang at the same time. His years on the road backing Little Richard and the rest had given him a firm mastery of rock & roll, blues and R&B; Jimi was a brilliant guitarist without any electronic gimmickry. Given his head and musicians who could keep up with him, Jimi stretched his equipment to the limits, exploring every possibility that his guitar and amplifier could offer. Above all else, Jimi was an inventive flowing musician who put more ideas into a two minute guitar solo than most rock bands used in a whole album.

Dangerous But Desirable

He was also a much better songwriter than he was ever given credit for, largely because not many people saw the songs as anything more than pegs on which to hang that amazing guitar-work. 'Are You Experienced' contains some very strong songs, from the opening track 'Foxy Lady', which has Hendrix playing up his role as a dangerous but desirable sexual threat; through 'Manic Depression', one of the best pieces of heavy rock ever recorded; and 'Love Or Confusion' which has a stunningly fluid guitar solo; to the strange alienated world of 'I Don't Live Today'.

*'Will I live tomorrow?
Well I just can't say
But I know for sure
I don't live today'*

Jimi's lyrics often had this air of defiant but dejected loneliness about them. On 'Axis: Bold As Love', side one ends with 'If Six Was Nine' (a reference to the Chinese Oracle, the *I Ching* or *Book Of Changes*).

*'If the mountains fall in the sea
Let it be, it ain't me
Got my own world to live through
And I ain't gonna talk to you'*

Then, spoken over the long freak-out ending, Jimi makes one of the many references he made to his death:

*'I'm the one who's got to die when it's
time for me to die - so let me live my
life the way I want to.'*

'Axis' is probably the most poetic album that Hendrix made, and the guitar work throughout is particularly fluid and lyrical.

The guitar introduction to 'Little Wing' is a work of pure genius, as is Jimi's playing on 'Castles Made Of Sand'. 'Up From The Skies' features some beautifully laid-back wah-wah guitar and some strangely off-hand 'social comment' type lyrics:

*'I heard some you got your families
Living in cages dark and cold
Some just stay there and dust away
Past the age of old.'*

High Point of Experience

1968 saw the last album from the Experience as such - 'Electric Ladyland'. This double-album was not so well received by the rock critics and was dismissed as a collection of 'over indulgent blowing sessions'. In reality, 'Ladyland' was the high point of Jimi's recording career, but at the time people were looking for something more flashy and dramatic. As the Melody Maker's Chris Welch admits in his biography of Jimi Hendrix:

'Hearing the album again after an interval of a few years, it sounds infinitely better than it did on release to ears thirsting for a new 'Hey Joe' or 'Foxy Lady.'

It's hard to think of an album as broad, witty and 'strong as 'Electric Ladyland' receiving a luke-warm response but that's what happened. This response was probably influenced by the performances the Experience were giving on stage at the time - they had never exactly been over-rehearsed but now they looked like three strangers playing together, and Mitch Mitchell was beginning to take drum solos on every number. Rows developed in the studio, and Chas Chandler decided that he was wasting his time:

'There were so many people hanging around him, (Hendrix) he couldn't be himself. We had an argument about it, and he said, "OK, no more." Then someone would turn up at the studio with a bag of goodies and pour some more down his throat. Mike Jeffery turned up at the studio as well and stuck his oar in. Things began to deteriorate. And there was a big row about the cover which Mike said was a piece of crap.'

'There was a dreadful atmosphere in the studio, which was full of hangers-on. We did six tracks for the 'Electric Ladyland' album, and nobody was ready to compromise anymore. All I was doing was sitting there collecting a percentage. So I said, "Let's call it a day."

(Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch)

Despite this, 'Ladyland' is probably the most successful, in musical terms, double album ever released, full of amazing guitar work and Jimi's vividly colourful lyrics:

*'I'm not the only soul
To be accused of hit and run
Tyre tracks across your back
I can see you've had your fun'*

(Cross-town Traffic)

And the bluesy but menacing 'Voodoo Chile' - a long studio jam with Jimi playing a heavily echoed guitar against Steve Winwood's Hammond organ:

*'Well the night I was born
I swear the moon turned a fire-red
Well my poor mother cried out
'Lord the gipsy was right''*

There is a second version with just Reading and Mitchell ('Voodoo Chile: A Slight Return') which has Jimi playing wah-wah guitar as strong as the lyrics:

*'Well, I'm standing next to a mountain
Chop it down with the edge of my hand'*

After 'Electric Ladyland', the Experience broke up as such, when Noel Reading left to devote more time to his own Band, Fat Matress. For Jimi's appearance at Woodstock, Noel was replaced by Billy Cox, whom Hendrix had played with in his army days. They did two numbers and walked off stage because Jimi felt 'it's not coming together' - something that happened several times in the next year or so.

Black Power

There were no further albums until 'Band Of Gypsies' in 1970. Jimi spent most of 1969 hiding out in New York with some friends; flirting briefly with the Black Power Movement. The 'Band Of Gypsies' had Buddy Miles on drums and Billy Cox on bass. The album, recorded 'live' at the Fillmore East in New York is strangely flat and boring, and Jimi rarely gets into full flight. He would not have released it but he 'owed the record company an album'. Buddy Miles wasn't quite right for the band and when Jimi returned to Britain in August 1970, Mitch Mitchell was behind the drums again. At the third Isle of Wight festival Jimi was not at his very best, having just flown from a party in New York to celebrate the opening of the Electric Ladyland recording studios - yet he did manage to show a little of his old fire, in spite of the under-rehearsed band. They then embarked on a European tour but Billy Cox became ill so they returned to Britain. In September, Jimi gave an optimistic interview to the Melody Maker:

'I've turned full circle - I'm right back where I started. I've given this era of music everything, but I still sound the same. My music's the same, and I can't think of anything new to add to it in its present state.'

'When the last American tour finished, I just wanted to go away and forget everything. I just wanted to record and see if I could write something. Then I started thinking. Thinking about the future. Thinking that this era of music, sparked off by the Beatles, had come to an end. Something new has to come and Jimi Hendrix will be there.'

But Jimi Hendrix died on September 18th, 1970. That Friday morning his girl-

THE SUPERSTARS

Jimi Hendrix Bold As Love

Had Jimi Hendrix died two years earlier he would have gone down as the greatest star in the rock & roll galaxy. The timing of his death was as tragic and wasteful as his death itself. In 1970, people were saying that Jimi was over the hill, and he never got a chance to prove them wrong. Had he died on the way up the hill, imagination, myth and fact would have turned that hill into the Mount Everest of Rock. For, in those early years, Jimi Hendrix was just about perfect - as rock stars go. As it was, Jimi spent two years spoiling the picture and then broke the frame.

In his time he eclipsed both Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger, and made everyone else look old-fashioned. He single-handedly changed the actual *sound* of rock & roll, opening up an entirely new field of music for the guitar, and then almost exhausted the possibilities of that field before he died. On stage he looked amazing, full of that threatening sexuality that suits rock & roll best, and the music... well Jimi summed it up himself in 'Voodoo Chile':

*'I have a humming bird and it plays so loud
You'd think that you're losing your mind'*

Jimi Hendrix was born in Seattle, Washington, on November 27th, 1942, as James Marshall Hendrix; His mother, Lucille, who was of Indian descent, didn't get on too well with his father, James Allen Hendrix, so Jimi was frequently sent off to stay with his grandmother, a full blooded Cherokee, in Canada. Lucille died when Jimi was 10, just about the same time as Jimi first showed an interest in playing the guitar. This strained home background was to leave its mark on Hendrix, who found it difficult to make real friends and trust people throughout his life. Jimi had a brother, Leon, five years younger, who also plays guitar, and two step-sisters from his father's second marriage.



Top: The Jimi Hendrix Experience, including Hendrix, Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell. Below: Hendrix and the Isley Brothers with whom Hendrix recorded.

His father bought him his first guitar when he was 11. Jimi learned so fast that his father sold his sax to buy him an electric guitar a year later. Because his father didn't earn very much as a gardener, Jimi left school at 16 - although the story goes that he was thrown out for holding a white girl's hand in class. He played in some teenage rock & roll bands, copying the Coasters amongst others - his first gig was at a National Guard armoury, for which the group got 35 cents each.

In 1963, Jimi joined the Army. He volunteered 'to get it over with', but typically he chose the paratroops, making 25 jumps before injuring an ankle on the 26th, when he was discharged. It was during this 14 month stint in the army that Jimi met Billy Cox who was later to replace Noel Reading on bass.

After the army, Jimi worked for a vast number of black R&B bands touring the States. Amongst others he backed Little Richard, the Isley Brothers, Wilson Pickett, Ike and Tina Turner and Joey Dee and the Starlighters. Little Richard put Jimi's back up by refusing to let Jimi wear a brightly coloured shirt. Jimi jumped from band to band pretty fast, hopping one tour into town and another one out. The discipline was a little too heavy for him too - a \$50 fine for missing a step in the routine or a chord change - and the musicians often

got fired when the band leader owed them too much money.

In 1964, Jimi went to New York's Greenwich Village, where he recorded with the Isley Brothers and Lonnie Youngblood. Then in 1965, after recording with Curtis Knight he formed his first band - Jimmy James and the Blue Flames. While he was playing at the Café Wha, Jimi was seen by the white blues singer, John Hammond Jnr, who moved Jimi to the classier Café A Go Go and played with him there for a month. It was here that Jimi was first seen by the stars of the day, Bob Dylan, the Beatles and the Stones among them, and the word started to spread round - as far as Chas Chandler.

Chandler had been the bass player with the original Animals, who, in 1966 were breaking up, and Chandler had decided to become a record producer and manager - not too many people gave much for his chances. Keith Richard's girlfriend, Linda Keith, told Chandler about this 'great guitar player' in the 'Village', and took Chas to see him at the Café Wha. They talked together and Chandler was impressed enough to be ready to take Jimi back to England before he heard him play. Hendrix wasn't so sure and asked a lot of questions about English equipment and musicians, but the clinch came with a promise of a meeting with Eric Clapton,

THE SUPERSTARS

Jimi Hendrix Bold As Love

Had Jimi Hendrix died two years earlier he would have gone down as the greatest star in the rock & roll galaxy. The timing of his death was as tragic and wasteful as his death itself. In 1970, people were saying that Jimi was over the hill, and he never got a chance to prove them wrong. Had he died on the way up the hill, imagination, myth and fact would have turned that hill into the Mount Everest of Rock. For, in those early years, Jimi Hendrix was just about perfect – as rock stars go. As it was, Jimi spent two years spoiling the picture and then broke the frame.

In his time he eclipsed both Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger, and made everyone else look old-fashioned. He single-handedly changed the actual *sound* of rock & roll, opening up an entirely new field of music for the guitar, and then almost exhausted the possibilities of that field before he died. On stage he looked amazing, full of that threatening sexuality that suits rock & roll best, and the music . . . well Jimi summed it up himself in 'Voodoo Chile':

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You'd think that you're losing your mind'*

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G. Mankowitz

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whom Chandler saw quite a lot at the time. Chas was totally convinced later that evening, when Jimi played 'Hey Joe' – a song that Chas was already planning to record when he found the right person.

Jimi Hendrix and Chas Chandler arrived in London in September 1966 – a London ruled by the Beatles, the Stones, the Who and the newly formed Cream – not an easy place to make your mark in unless you were special, very special. Jimi was taken round to Zoot Money's house, which was always full of musicians, to jam for a while and get to feel at home. Two weeks later, Noel Reading came up from Folkstone to Chandler's Garrard Street office, to audition for Eric Burdon's new band, and Chas lent him a bass to see how he worked out with Jimi. A little later, Mitch Mitchell was thrown out of Georgie Fame's band and Chas asked him to play drums with Jimi. At the first get-together, they played for four hours non-stop – the Jimi Hendrix Experience was born.

Chas Chandler took their recording of 'Hey Joe' to Decca but they turned it down . . . 'I don't think he's got anything', said the man. However, Kit Lambert (the Who's manager) saw Jimi at the Scotch of St. James club and was determined to have Jimi on his new label, Track. As Track didn't start until March 1967, the first single came out on Polydor. The group's first booking also turned up via the London club scene – Johnny Halliday saw Jimi jamming with Brian Auger at Blaises and asked if Jimi could provide the support band for his next tour of France.

Last Bass Guitar

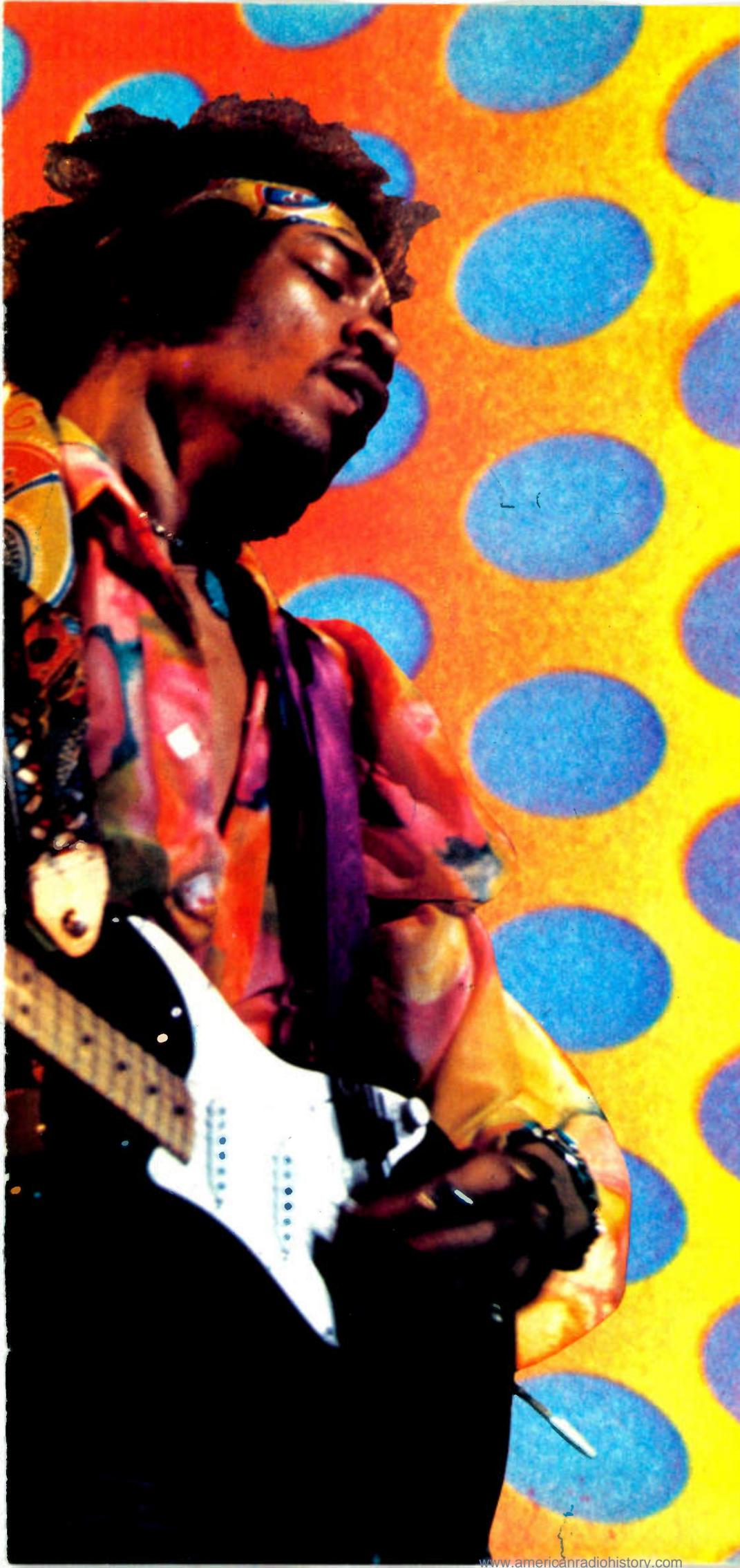
On his return, things were fairly slow for Hendrix in Britain and Chas Chandler's money was running low. Chas sold six bass guitars to pay for a reception at the Bag 'O Nails and invited some promoters he knew. The result was a £25 booking as support group to the New Animals. For the second gig at the Chalk Farm Roundhouse, Jimi had had his guitar stolen, so Chandler sold his last bass to get Jimi a replacement. Two days later 'Hey Joe' climbed into the UK singles chart . . . 'We did it by the skin of our teeth', said Chandler.

'Hey Joe' launched the Experience onto a quick tour of London's top clubs, ('Purple Haze') was written in the dressing-room at the Upper Cut, in the East End). Then came national exposure on a 'package' tour with the Walker Brothers, Cat Stevens and Engelbert Humperdinck. Chandler knew that the Walker Brothers, who were the big sex idols at the time, were going to split after the tour, so the Experience worked out a very sexy act to 'cop all their reputation'. Jimi's upstaging of the big stars was not taken quietly, as Chandler recalled:

'There was a lot of ill feeling backstage, and they would screw up the lights, or put the house lights up on the audience during his act. It was quite a tour. There were no barriers in pop then, no pseudo hippies. It was all entertainment and a great tour for the audiences.'

Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch





Then came the Monterey Pop Festival. Paul McCartney who had been helping to organise the festival had said that it wouldn't be a real festival without Jimi, and Brian Jones flew over specially to introduce him to the American audience. The Experience looked and sounded light years ahead of the competition and it took 30 minutes to quieten the audience down when Jimi had finished – waving his burning guitar above his head as a sacrifice to the occasion. On the strength of this Bill Graham booked the Experience for the Fillmore West to play with the Jefferson Airplane. Chas Chandler:

'We played the Fillmore and Bill Graham gave us \$2,000 each as a bonus when the Airplane cried off the rest of the gigs after our first night. Bill also gave us antique engraved watches. Bill has had a lot of mud thrown at him, but he's a gas.'

(Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch)

In the meantime, Chandler's partner Mike Jeffery had signed the Experience for a tour of the States with the Monkeys. This was not appreciated by Chandler and the rest of the group. Jimi died a death in front of the Monkey's 12-year-old audience, so promoter Dick Clark and Chandler dreamed up the story that the Daughters Of The American Revolution had waged a campaign to get Jimi banned for his obscene act. Jimi did several more gigs in the States; saw 'Are You Experienced' go up the American charts, and returned to England.

No Burning Guitars

While 1967 was Jimi's year with four singles and two albums in the British charts and two albums in the American charts, 1968 saw the first signs of that all was not well with the Experience. On tour in the States, Jimi was blowing amplifiers and walking off stage after only four numbers. Gone too was the dramatic showmanship – no dancing or burning guitars. Jimi was becoming bored with his image. Back in 1967 Jeff Beck had said:

'Jimi's only trouble will come when he wants to get himself off the nail he has hung himself on. The public will want something different, and Jimi has so established himself in one bag that he'll find it difficult to get anyone to accept him in another.'

(New Musical Express)

And that's what happened. Jimi found audiences ready to cheer him even if he played badly – provided he threw himself around a bit and smashed a guitar. Quite a spot for a musician who wants to retain some self respect to find himself in. Jimi Hendrix was already a very lonely man, even those who knew him for years never felt that they really *knew* him. As Chas Chandler said in Chris Welch's book *Jimi Hendrix*:

'Jimi lived with me for two years and I would never presume to say I knew him. Nobody knew him. He never seemed to confide in anybody.'

Now he was cut off from his audience and rigours of touring were taking their

toll. There were a few violent incidents with girls that were suitably hushed up and, on a three day tour of Sweden in 1968, Hendrix was jailed for smashing up a hotel room. But the music was still there, on record at least. 'Are You Experienced' and 'Axis: Bold As Love' still stand almost untouched by the passage of time. When they were released in 1967 they were so far ahead of the field, so different and strange that the rock & roll industry was just stunned at first. This was obviously the next craze/direction but no one had the faintest idea how to play it, for Jimi was doing things on the guitar that just seemed impossible. He would hold two strings feeding back while he played a melody line on the others and sang at the same time. His years on the road backing Little Richard and the rest had given him a firm mastery of rock & roll, blues and R&B; Jimi was a brilliant guitarist without any electronic gimmickry. Given his head and musicians who could keep up with him, Jimi stretched his equipment to the limits, exploring every possibility that his guitar and amplifier could offer. Above all else, Jimi was an inventive flowing musician who put more ideas into a two minute guitar solo than most rock bands used in a whole album.

Dangerous But Desirable

He was also a much better songwriter than he was ever given credit for, largely because not many people saw the songs as anything more than pegs on which to hang that amazing guitar-work. 'Are You Experienced' contains some very strong songs, from the opening track 'Foxy Lady', which has Hendrix playing up his role as a dangerous but desirable sexual threat; through 'Manic Depression', one of the best pieces of heavy rock ever recorded; and 'Love Or Confusion' which has a stunningly fluid guitar solo; to the strange alienated world of 'I Don't Live Today'.

*'Will I live tomorrow?
Well I just can't say
But I know for sure
I don't live today'*

Jimi's lyrics often had this air of defiant but dejected loneliness about them. On 'Axis: Bold As Love', side one ends with 'If Six Was Nine' (a reference to the Chinese Oracle, the *I Ching* or *Book Of Changes*).

*'If the mountains fall in the sea
Let it be, it ain't me
Got my own world to live through
And I ain't gonna talk to you'*

Then, spoken over the long freak-out ending, Jimi makes one of the many references he made to his death:

*'I'm the one who's got to die when it's
time for me to die – so let me live my
life the way I want to.'*

'Axis' is probably the most poetic album that Hendrix made, and the guitar work throughout is particularly fluid and lyrical.

The guitar introduction to 'Little Wing' is a work of pure genius, as is Jimi's playing on 'Castles Made Of Sand'. 'Up From The Skies' features some beautifully laid-back wah-wah guitar and some strangely off-hand 'social comment' type lyrics:

*'I heard some you got your families
Living in cages dark and cold
Some just stay there and dust away
Past the age of old.'*

High Point of Experience

1968 saw the last album from the Experience as such – 'Electric Ladyland'. This double-album was not so well received by the rock critics and was dismissed as a collection of 'over indulgent blowing sessions'. In reality, 'Ladyland' was the high point of Jimi's recording career, but at the time people were looking for something more flashy and dramatic. As the Melody Maker's Chris Welch admits in his biography of Jimi Hendrix:

'Hearing the album again after an interval of a few years, it sounds infinitely better than it did on release to ears thirsting for a new 'Hey Joe' or 'Foxy Lady.'

It's hard to think of an album as broad, witty and strong as 'Electric Ladyland' receiving a luke-warm response but that's what happened. This response was probably influenced by the performances the Experience were giving on stage at the time – they had never exactly been over-rehearsed but now they looked like three strangers playing together, and Mitch Mitchell was beginning to take drum solos on every number. Rows developed in the studio, and Chas Chandler decided that he was wasting his time:

'There were so many people hanging around him, (Hendrix) he couldn't be himself. We had an argument about it, and he said, "OK, no more." Then someone would turn up at the studio with a bag of goodies and pour some more down his throat. Mike Jeffery turned up at the studio as well and stuck his oar in. Things began to deteriorate. And there was a big row about the cover which Mike said was a piece of crap.'

'There was a dreadful atmosphere in the studio, which was full of hangers-on. We did six tracks for the 'Electric Ladyland' album, and nobody was ready to compromise anymore. All I was doing was sitting there collecting a percentage. So I said, "Let's call it a day."

(Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch)

Despite this, 'Ladyland' is probably the most successful, in musical terms, double album ever released, full of amazing guitar work and Jimi's vividly colourful lyrics:

*'I'm not the only soul
To be accused of hit and run
Tyre tracks across your back
I can see you've had your fun'*

(Cross-town Traffic)

And the bluesy but menacing 'Voodoo Chile' – a long studio jam with Jimi playing a heavily echoed guitar against Steve Winwood's Hammond organ:

*'Well the night I was born
I swear the moon turned a fire-red
Well my poor mother cried out
'Lord the gipsy was right''*

There is a second version with just Reading and Mitchell ('Voodoo Chile: A Slight Return') which has Jimi playing wah-wah guitar as strong as the lyrics:

*'Well, I'm standing next to a mountain
Chop it down with the edge of my hand'*

After 'Electric Ladyland', the Experience broke up as such, when Noel Reading left to devote more time to his own Band, Fat Matress. For Jimi's appearance at Woodstock, Noel was replaced by Billy Cox, whom Hendrix had played with in his army days. They did two numbers and walked off stage because Jimi felt 'it's not coming together' – something that happened several times in the next year or so.

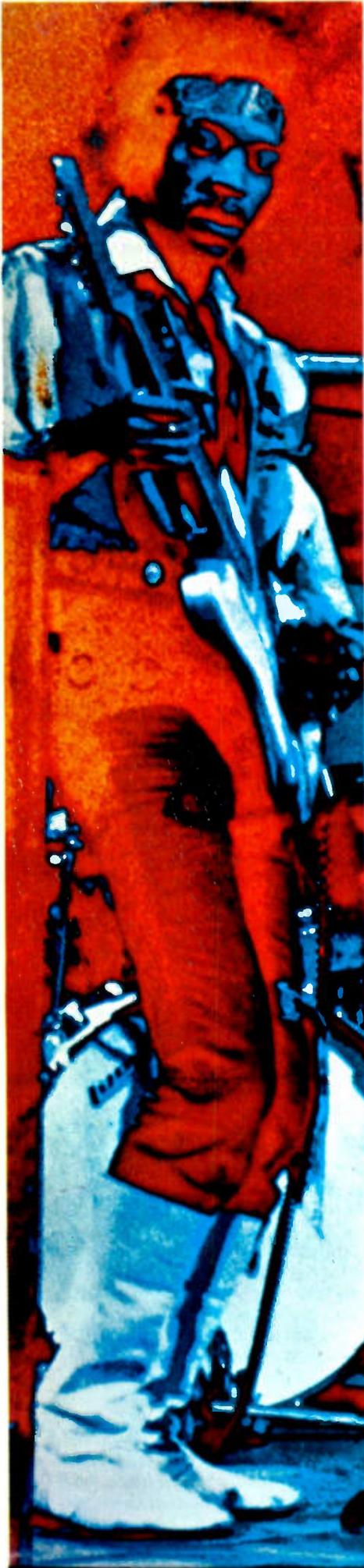
Black Power

There were no further albums until 'Band Of Gypsies' in 1970. Jimi spent most of 1969 hiding out in New York with some friends; flirting briefly with the Black Power Movement. The 'Band Of Gypsies' had Buddy Miles on drums and Billy Cox on bass. The album, recorded 'live' at the Fillmore East in New York is strangely flat and boring, and Jimi rarely gets into full flight. He would not have released it but he 'owed the record company an album'. Buddy Miles wasn't quite right for the band and when Jimi returned to Britain in August 1970, Mitch Mitchell was behind the drums again. At the third Isle of Wight festival Jimi was not at his very best, having just flown from a party in New York to celebrate the opening of the Electric Ladyland recording studios – yet he did manage to show a little of his old fire, in spite of the under-rehearsed band. They then embarked on a European tour but Billy Cox became ill so they returned to Britain. In September, Jimi gave an optimistic interview to the Melody Maker:

'I've turned full circle – I'm right back where I started. I've given this era of music everything, but I still sound the same. My music's the same, and I can't think of anything new to add to it in its present state.'

'When the last American tour finished, I just wanted to go away and forget everything. I just wanted to record and see if I could write something. Then I started thinking. Thinking about the future. Thinking that this era of music, sparked off by the Beatles, had come to an end. Something new has to come and Jimi Hendrix will be there.'

But Jimi Hendrix died on September 18th, 1970. That Friday morning his girl-



Mike Hope

friend, Monika Danneman, left Jimi sleeping to get some cigarettes. When she returned, Jimi had been sick in his sleep. She couldn't wake him and realised that he had taken some sleeping tablets. She phoned for an ambulance:

'The men said he was okay and sat him in the ambulance. I found out later they should have laid him down flat to breathe. But they put him on a chair with his head back. He did not die from the sleeping tablets because he had not taken enough to be an overdose. It was not fatal. The reason he died was because he couldn't get air. He suffocated on his own vomit.'

Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch

The Coroner recorded an open verdict and said that there was no evidence to show that Hendrix intended to commit suicide, 'The question why he took so many sleeping tablets cannot be safely answered'. Apart from Eric Burdon, most of those who knew or worked with Jimi felt that his death was a tragic accident. Chas Chandler:

'I don't believe for one minute he killed himself. That was out of the question. But something had to happen and there was no way of stopping it. You just get a feeling sometimes. It was as if the last couple of years had prepared us for it. It was like the message I'd been waiting for.'

Jimi Hendrix by Chris Welch

Last Of The Giants

Jimi Hendrix left behind several filmed performances and his records. The best of the films is *Jimi Plays Berkley* – a beautifully shot record of an entire show when Jimi was at his very best, musically and visually, moving at that intense emotional pitch that only he seemed to be able to sustain over a whole act. Second best is the Warner Brother's documentary *Jimi Hendrix* which contains some unique footage of Jimi playing a 12-string acoustic guitar.

'Cry Of Love' was released after Jimi's death and is an indecisive album, certainly nowhere as good as the first three, 'Are You Experienced', 'Axis: Bold As Love' and 'Electric Ladyland'. 'War Heroes' is merely a collection of odd bits and pieces they had lying around the studio.

It seems strange that such a major figure in rock & roll should receive such shabby 'cash-in' treatment from his record company after his death. The only memorial album worthy of the name was issued by accident before he died – someone decided to issue an album called 'Historic Performances', with one side Jimi Hendrix and the other Otis Redding, live at Monterey – both artists subsequently died.

Be that as it may, when Don McClean wrote a song about the Altamont festival he got one thing wrong – the day the music died was Friday, the 18th of September. Jimi Hendrix may well be the last of the giant rock heroes, for rock has now become too safe, too socially acceptable, and too diverse, to fall under the spell of just one man again.



BACK TRACK

Born in Seattle, Washington, on November 27th, 1942.

1964: 'Jimi Hendrix and the Isley Brothers' album recorded in New York, (Buddah). Also 'Jimi Hendrix and Lonnie Youngblood' album, (Platinum).

1965: 'Jimi Hendrix and Curtis Knight' album recorded in New York, (London).

1966: Comes to England with Chas Chandler in September. Forms the Jimi Hendrix Experience with Noel Reading (bass) and Mitch Mitchell (drums).

1967: January: 'Hey Joe' makes the British charts. March: 'Purple Haze'. May: 'The Wind Cries Mary' and 'Are You Experienced' album. June: Monterey Pop Festival. September: 'The Burning Of The Midnight Lamp'. November: 'Axis: Bold As Love' album.

1968: January: Three day tour of Sweden. Jimi jailed for wrecking hotel room – fined all his earnings in Sweden. March: Tour of USA. May: 'Electric Ladyland' double album. July: Noel Reading leaves the Experience. November: the Experience officially disbanded, 'All Along The Watchtower' released in Britain.

1969: February: Concert at the Albert Hall in London with Mitchell and Reading filmed and recorded (album – 'Experience: Original Soundtrack' on Ember label). June: Woodstock Festival.

1970: January: 'Band Of Gipsies' recorded live at the Fillmore East – Buddy Miles, drums; Billy Cox, bass. August: Isle Of Wight Festival, with Cox and Mitchell. European tour abandoned because Cox becomes ill. September 18th. Jimi Hendrix dies.

1971: 'Cry Of Love' album.

1972: 'War Heroes' album.

1973: 'Jimi Hendrix' double album of live recordings from the Warner Brothers' film of the same name.

SKF



POP CULTURE: '60s-'70s

From Skins to Teenys

April 1969 was dominated by two records – 'Get Back' by the Beatles and 'The Israelites' by Desmond Dekker. The juxtaposition of these two consecutive chart-toppers marked the end of the '60s Teen Dream: for while both records were bought, in the main, by young people, they were nevertheless bought by two completely different sections of the youth market. The mid-'60s Utopia, which had allegedly knocked the stuffing out of class-divided teenagers, was rudely shattered, and 'fragmentation' had arrived on the pop scene.

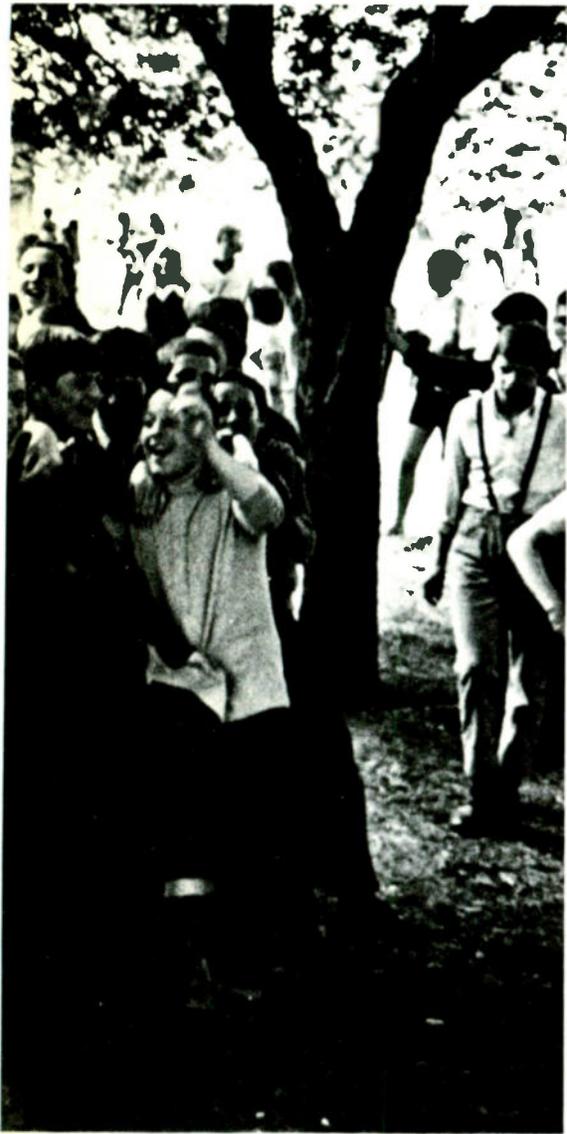
The writing had been on the wall for
466

two or three years. Bernard Davies, writing in a British weekly magazine at the time noticed, whilst sitting with a group of kids in a Northern pub watching *Top Of The Pops* on TV, that those on the screen bore no resemblance to those he was sitting with. 'Young people', he concluded, 'are not mostly angry and assertive, but apathetic and inactive . . . far from challenging the world around them, they seem personally and socially incarcerated; their talents are consistently underrated, their visions constricted, their personal modes of expression stifled'. At the time he wrote this, the best-selling record in Britain was 'Something In The Air' by Thunderclap Newman: the message of this song ('We've got to get it together sooner or later, because the revolution's here') was, by the time it was released, a

ludicrous anachronism. The dream, as John Lennon realised a year later, was over.

What had happened? Why was it that in 1965 simply every kid bought the Beatles and the Stones records, and yet four years later the culture was as rigidly divided as it had ever been?

The answer is complex: it had something to do with students, it had something to do with hippies, and it had something to do with dope. From 1966 onwards, the major groups switched their focal point from London to the American West Coast – 'where it was at' was no longer Swinging London, but San Francisco. 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and 'We Love You' marked the time of the move. Rock had become introspective, intellectual, dope-oriented, mystical and – the cruncher



Roger Morton

— *incomprehensible* to a large part of the old Beatles/Stones fan club audience. There was no messing about with 'She Loves You' or, in a different way, 'Satisfaction', but in their place what was anyone to make of:

*'Living is easy with eyes closed
Misunderstanding all you see . . .'*

The feeling of revulsion was slow to build up, but it did so relentlessly and persistently through 1968 and the early part of 1969. Rock & roll, the young people's music, was becoming university music, leaving behind it the old Mod audience of the mid-'60s: the gaps were getting to be quite unbridgeable. Gradually, the symbols of the new, heavier rock were becoming objects of hatred — and these symbols were the hippie image of long hair, kaftans, mysticism, pacifism and intellectualism.

The divisions that were opening up were the old class divisions: 'Jimmy', age 17 from Bethnal Green in East London, talked to a reporter from the pop press and was asked about hippies: 'I hate hairies . . . it's all that talk about love and peace and all those clothes. They're flash. I mean, I work for my pay so I pay for them on the dole. Most of them have posh

accents and they all went to public school anyway'. Jimmy identified himself as a Skinhead — the Skinheads were the first positive reaction on the part of working-class kids to the middle-class takeover of rock & roll, a music that a few years earlier had seemingly wiped out such old-fashioned class divisions.

Realistic Problems

And, in a way, even though his generalisations are a little hazy, Jimmy and his mates were right. It was all very well sitting on some university campus smoking dope and being together and spreading the word around the student body, but it completely missed the point as far as the young working-class kids were concerned. Their problems were glaringly realistic, rooted in deprived home environments and boring jobs to look forward to. They still felt the tensions of a divided society, and these tensions were not met by dreaming about panaceas like Woodstock, or listening to sensitive dirges from Leonard Cohen and Joni Mitchell. Their problems were simply dismissed, and relegated to the realms of the 'uncool'.

It was time to make their presence felt, and they did so in 1969. Chris Welch, writing in the pop press, was one of the first writers to notice the new phenomenon, even if his standpoint was unsympathetic:

'It is a curious thing that whenever . . . a pillar of our Bewildered Society wants to cast stones . . . they instantly start burbling about LONG-HAIRED louts/yobs/hippies/students etc. . . . Yet anybody who has ventured on the streets . . . will instinctively know that they have nothing to fear from the long-haired youth who merely wants to turn on in peace to his favourite band and chick. The sight of cropped heads and the sound of heavy boots entering the midnight Wimpy bar or dance hall is the real cause for sinking feelings in the pit of the stomach'.

Welch identified the new breed as 'Mods', which wasn't a bad description in the pre-'Skinhead' days, for, no doubt about it, their origins were the same as the Mods of 1963–64. But, whereas the Mod had been at one with rock music, his younger brother or sister was left out in the cold. The cropped hair and the turned up Levis, the braces and the Dr. Martens steel-capped boots became the obligatory uniform for the 1969 version of the Mod — a uniform that was quite clearly a reaction against 'hippy gear'.

The hairstyle gave the kids their new name — 'Skinhead' — and the boots the new message — 'aggro' — an abbreviation of aggravation. The braces, though no doubt unconsciously, marked them out as a working-class group. In every way, their image and their attitudes were in direct opposition to the middle-class student drop-out, who filled the scapegoat role in the early Skinhead days as the rocker had filled it for their elder brothers. Musically, the Skinheads had next to nowhere to turn. Like the Mods they

wanted music to dance to, or to 'clomp' to: they had no room for the liberated free-expressionism of the hippies' 'dancing'. Dave Hill, of Slade, noted: 'Skinheads don't move their feet when they dance, they stamp them up and down and make one helluva racket. The more noise they can make, the better.'

Putting it crudely, the Skinheads wanted to be noticed, and this involved noise, brashness, violence and bover. Motown was the only mainstream pop that had any appeal, and the 'Chartbuster' albums were snapped up by the Skins. But Motown's identity wasn't as clearly defined as they wanted their music to be — they thus latched themselves onto Reggae, the updated version of Ska and Blue Beat pioneered by the Rastafarians in Kingston, Jamaica. 'The Israelites', the first major Reggae seller, was an obvious Rastafarian record, with its vision of Babylon and the lost people trapped within its boundary.

Blue Beat had enjoyed a short burst of popularity with the Mods in 1964, but the much greater success of Reggae with the Skins was probably due to the increasing liaison between young West Indians — especially in Birmingham and certain London districts — and the young whites. In many of the Skinhead gangs, West Indians were prime movers: all racism was channelled into the anti-Pakistani area — where there was virtually no integration.

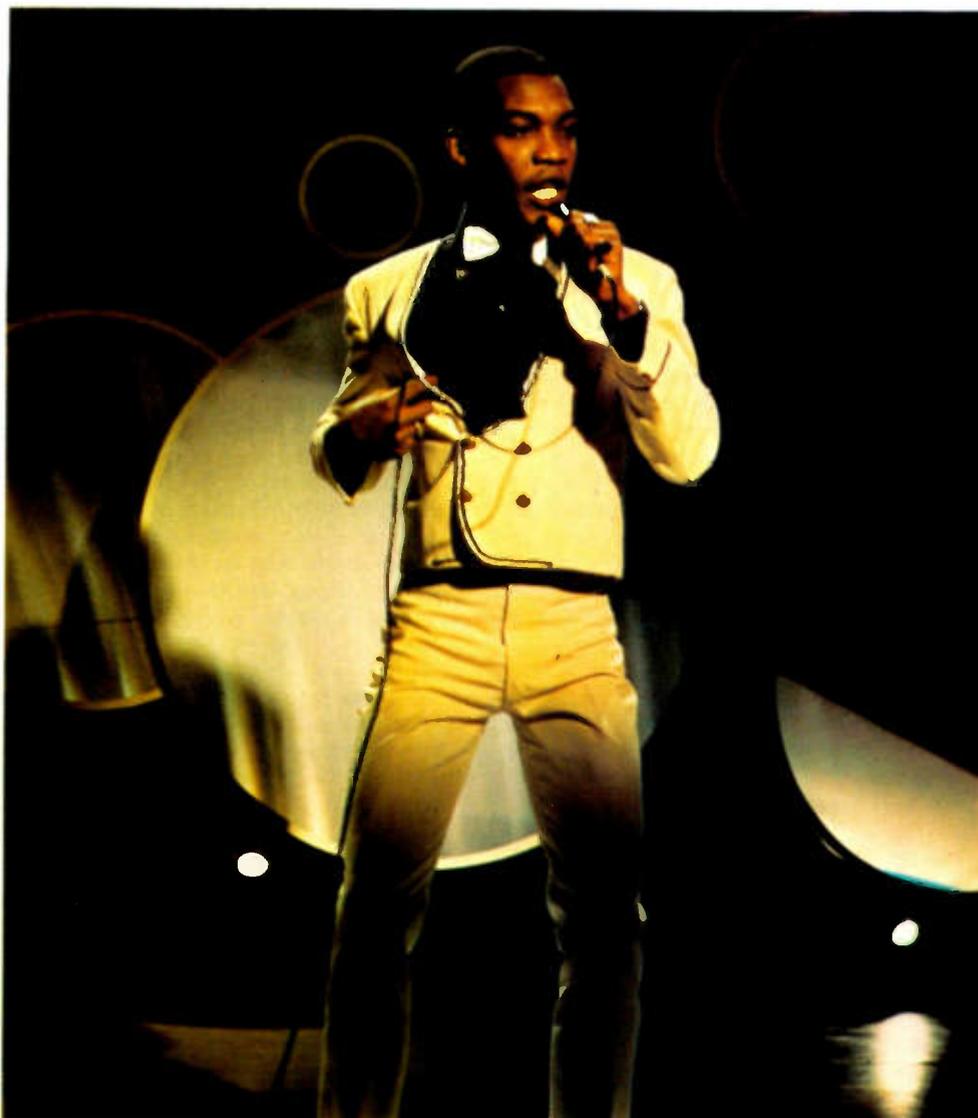
British Groups

There was, of course, the additional factor that no British groups were catering for their musical needs, whereas the Mods had had the Stones, the Animals and the Beatles in the early days, and the Small Faces and the Who later on.

Reggae, then, served the purpose, but it was still very distanced from the Skins — after all, it was basically West Indian music. The Skins/Reggae combination was crucial for the development of rock for it meant, ultimately, that the Skins became alienated from rock. Even well into the '70s, only Slade have maintained any real Skinhead connections, and even they were forced to change their appearance radically in order to gain acceptance as a rock & roll band. The net result was a net loss for rock, since the Skins have thrown up just the one major rock group, whereas the Mods produced dozens.

In a way, the position of London has had a major influence on all of this. The Mod looked up to London, it was the centre of his world. The Skinhead, on the other hand, reacted against what London had become, and the Stones' Hyde Park concert in 1969 became a prime target for the Skins simply because it represented a hippy stronghold. Of course there were Skins in London, but the Skinhead phenomenon was far more diversified than the world of the Mods. Noddy Holder, Slade's lead singer, had this to say:

'People back home (Walsall, in the Midlands) gave us the Skinhead thing because we were living at home and London was far removed from us. All



Reggae was definitely the sound the skinheads got off on, and Desmond Dekker was the first real reggae sound to hit the British charts.

our mates were dressed like that and they didn't want to see us come on stage in velvet suits. They wanted to see us dressed how they were dressed and playing what they wanted to hear."

Noddy didn't know what was going on in London, and his mates didn't even care about what was going on there – the '64 Mod would have been thunderstruck, all the Faces having made their way to the Capital.

The provincialism of the Skins was emphasised by something else: rock had been the heart of the Mods' world, with all the major fashion changes coming from it – but, for the Skins, their fathers' pastime of football was far more important. Their passions were wrapped up in the game, and, when they switched from boots and braces to the smoother Crombies and Trevira suits in the winter of 1970–71, it was obligatory for the Skin to show his allegiance by having the badge of his local team sewn on to his jacket.

This intense local patriotism was taken down as far as street level: Noddy Holder, whilst being a fan of his local football club, Wolverhampton Wanderers, was also a member of the Beachdale Gang, restricted to those living on one particular housing

estate in Walsall. This pattern was repeated nationwide – in Grimsby, Yorkshire, as another example, the local populace was intrigued by the painting of BHM on so many walls around the football ground area. The letters, it later transpired, referred to the Beacon Hill Mob. These area gangs gathered together for the specific purpose of defending their territory, and woe betide any stray groups of aliens who happened upon somebody else's land. The wars, for a year or more, were total.

Small Clubs

All of this petty gangsterism would seem to have little connection with the world of pop, and yet its ultimate effects have been traumatic. The Skins' divorce from the pop world coincided with the drought of live appearances in small clubs, that area which had been the especial domain of the Mods. In many ways, the position regarding live appearances afterwards reverted to the pre-Beatles situation. For the non-progressive fan, and this takes in most working-class kids from 12 to 16, the only live connection with pop then became the large cinema or hall. Just as Cliff

Richards and the Shadows had toured this circuit in the early '60s, so too did Slade and David Bowie in the early '70s. The wheel, so badly buckled by the emergence of the Mod groups in the mid-'60s, had gone full circle.

All this has led directly to the creation of the teenyboppers. Girls from 10 or 11, to 15 or 16, have always provided the backbone of pop's audience, ever since Elvis displaced the film stars as an idol in 1957. In the British Beat Boom of the mid-'60s the nature of this idolatry was changed: true, the Beatles were heroes in the traditional sense, but their successors – the Stones, the Who, the Yardbirds and the Small Faces clearly weren't. And the nature of the Beatles as 'stars' changed during their first two or three years at the top. They changed the idea of 'stardom' by being so clearly 'ordinary' and, through their club performances, obtainable in more ways than one. This closeness led to the obvious realisation that the 'stars' were just like the kids at school – no better, no worse, just pretty good musicians.

Spiritually Fat

But, since 1968–'69, this circuit has been broken. The old stars grew spiritually fat after their American successes, and the new stars – in all likelihood due to the Skins break with rock – have simply not emerged to fill their places in the local clubs. Again, Slade are the only exception to this argument – other top-sellers of the '70s have been refugees from the previous generation, in particular Marc Bolan and David Bowie.

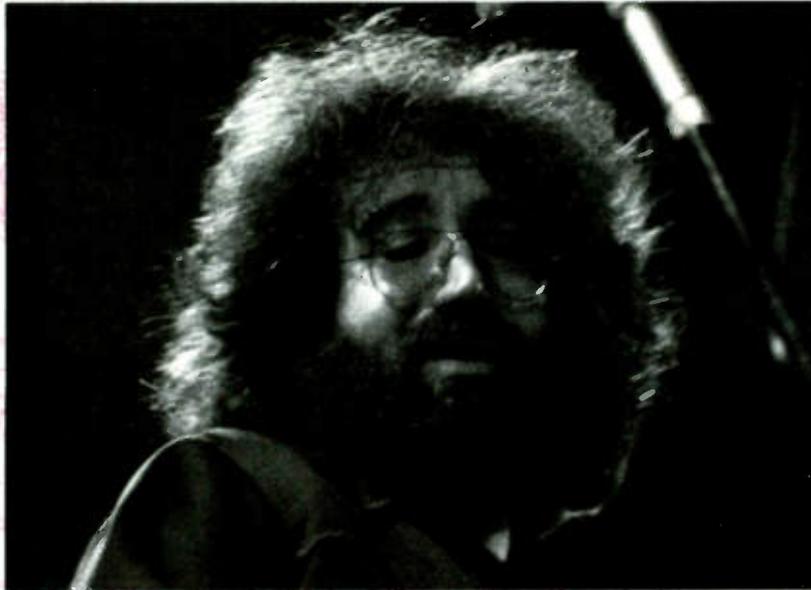
And so there is an action-replay generation of young girls mooning over distant stars, retreating into the womb of the teenage idol, preferably remote and unattainable, necessarily pretty-looking and young, hopefully innocent and good to his Mom.

These new, conformist people then, who attract the name teeny or weenybopper in the media, simply love the glamour of it all. They dream of Donny Osmond, who's 14; or they swap pix of David Cassidy, who's 23, but looks 14.

In a way it's all very sad. Ask them about the Beatles, and they just about remember; ask them about the Stones and they shudder like their mothers shudder; ask them about Dylan and they'll tell you something about the kids T.V. programme the *Magic Roundabout* with its puppet-character Dillon.

The mind goes back to poor old John Lennon fighting the revolution in New York. In 1972, he gave a concert there: he walked on stage, and announced, cheerfully optimistic as ever: "OK, so flower power failed, well then, let's start again..."

Ask the teenyweeny about flower power, and the answer most probably comes as a pretty blank look. And as for John Lennon, well he's just some nutter who sleeps a lot. "A pretty face," John sang, "may last a year or two."



Chris Walters

POP INFLUENCES: '65-70

San Francisco

On October 16th, 1965 in San Francisco, a group of people calling themselves the Family Dogg organised a dance-concert as 'A Tribute To Doctor Strange'. Among the groups who appeared were the Great Society, the Jefferson Airplane and the Charlatans. A poster advertising the dance was designed by Marty Balin, then leader of Jefferson Airplane. A couple of months later, on December 10th, Bill Graham organised another dance-concert as a benefit for the San Francisco Mime Troupe at the Fillmore auditorium. The San Francisco dance hall scene was starting to happen.

For almost two years the scene evolved, isolated from the media until, in the middle of the 'Summer of Love' in 1967, San Francisco and psychedelic music became front page news. Suddenly, San Francisco, whose only previous musical claim to fame had been as the place where Tony Bennett left his heart, was being called 'America's Liverpool' as the Bay Area groups and the psychedelic sound stormed the nations' single and album charts. But San Francisco was more than just another Liverpool. Psychedelia was to San Francisco what Mersey Beat had been to Liverpool, but – in San Franciscan eyes at least – psychedelia entailed more than just a different kind of music. The psychedelic trappings of the scene, the drugs, the posters, the light shows and of course the music could be, (and were after 1967) reproduced anywhere. Even the attempts to change the presentation of music that San

Francisco represented in its stress on community and the need for a bond between performer and audience rather than a barrier, could be duplicated elsewhere.

What made San Francisco unique was a combination of simple things, like good weather, and more complex things like the particular social mix that evolved in the Bay Area. Nonetheless, however easy it was to reproduce the trappings of the scene, the world still wanted to come and see for itself. The message, from Eric Burdon and Donovan through to Scott McKenzie and the Flowerpot Men, was 'Let's Go To San Francisco'. The Beatles had to leave Liverpool to make it big; not the San Franciscan groups – the Airplane and the Dead still live in the Bay Area – in 1966 and '67 the record companies came looking for them. More than anything it was this influx of 'foreigners' – the record companies and hippies – that ended the heyday of the San Franciscan scene. The foreigners didn't affect the weather, but they did change the San Francisco audience.

San Francisco had always been a cosmopolitan city, and as such a haven for harrassed easterners. The '50s saw a growing number of the 'Beat Generation' – Kerouac, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti – making the city a regular port of call, and so by 1960 there was the beginnings of a beat community in the city centred around Ferlinghetti's City Lights bookshop. At the same time the students of the Bay Area's universities and colleges – especially at Berkeley just across the bay from San Francisco – were emerging from the silent '50s and beginning to object to the way their small societies were run. The high point of this limited conflict with university authorities was the Free Speech

movement of 1964, but soon, with the escalation of the Vietnam War, protest spilled over into the society at large.

Unlike Los Angeles to the south, where record companies proliferated and anyone who wanted to rock & roll had an even chance of getting a record contract – San Francisco was isolated from the record industry. So if you wanted to make music you either went south or just rehearsed and rehearsed. Thus in 1965, the folk and blues groups, turned on to rock by the Beatles, Dylan and the Byrds, had no immediate access to the industry. Similarly, despite the growing numbers of students and beats, who by 1965 had established themselves in the Haight-Ashbury district and were starting to call themselves hippies, now interested in rock, San Francisco's fledgling groups had no audience outside that of the coffee bars.

The Family Dogg and Bill Graham rapidly changed that. At those early dances the constituents of the scene, the hippies, the students and the bands, came together for the first time and recognised themselves not as separate groups but as a community. Ralph J. Gleason's description of the Mime Troupe benefit makes clear the shared concerns of that community and its difference from the usual rock dance or concert.

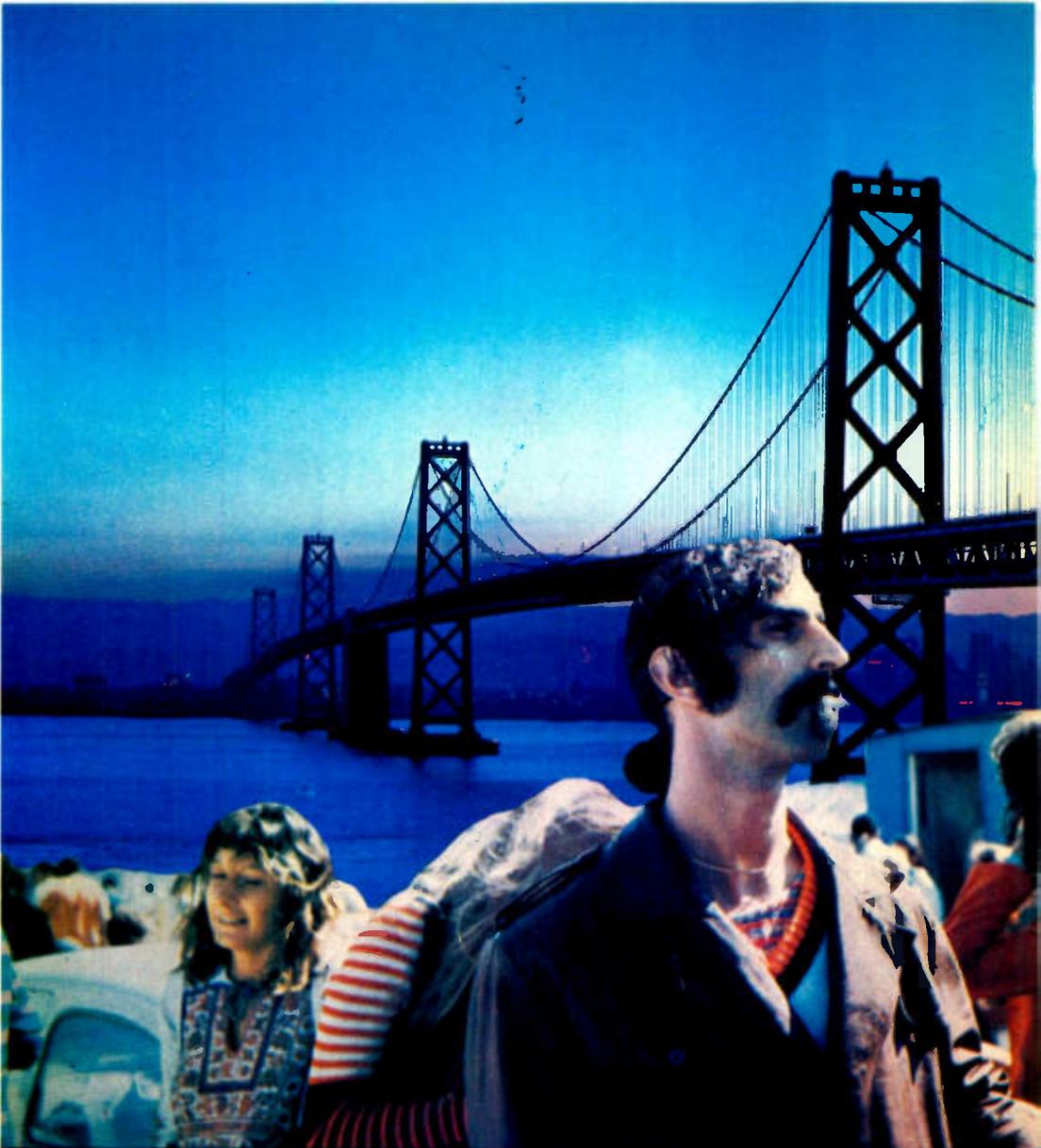
'Inside a most remarkable assemblage of humanity was leaping, jumping, dancing, frigging, fragging and frugging on the dance floor to the music of the half-dozen rock bands – the Mystery Trend, the Great Society, the Jefferson Airplane, the VIPs, the Gentlemen's Band, the Warlocks and others. The costumes were free-form, Goodwill-cum-Sherwood Forest. Slim young ladies with their faces painted à la *Harper's Bazaar* in cats-and-dogs lines, granny dresses topped with

huge feathers, white levis with decals of mystic design; bell-bottoms split up the side. The combinations were seemingly limitless. At each end of the huge hall there was a three-foot-high sign saying 'LOVE'. Over the bar there was another saying 'NO BOOZE', while the volunteer bartenders served soft drinks. Alongside the regular bar was a series of tables selling apples . . .

Equally significant was the fact that the dances were organised from within the community for the community. In January 1967, Ken Kesey publically introduced the element that was to hold the concept of the dances together: LSD. Kesey, an ex-beat living off the royalties of his best-seller novel, *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, and leader of the Merry Pranksters, organised the Trips Festivals at which LSD, still legal then, was given out in Kool-Aid and sugar cubes to members of the audience, who were then left to 'do their thing'. The Trips Festivals, like legal LSD, didn't last long, but in many ways they set the format for the future dances. For during these festivals, the music, as often as not provided by the Warlocks, as the Grateful Dead were then called, became just part of the experience, something that in conjunction with the strobe lights and films, extended and recreated the psychedelic experience that was central to the Trips Festival. Whether or not you were given LSD you were certainly given an impression of it.

Early Dances

After the Trips Festivals the dances quickly settled down into a pattern: the Family Dogg, with Chet Helms at the wheel, organised dances at the Avalon Ballroom, and Bill Graham became full-time master of ceremonies at the Fillmore Auditorium. Their early dances were much more amateur than the later ones, when the light-shows and the posters had been fully developed. The scene was still fairly local, though by 1966 there was a vast number of groups playing at the dances. From Chicago came Paul Butterfield and Steve Miller and their blues bands, from L.A. came regular visits from Love and Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, while from Texas came Janis Joplin and the Sir Douglas Quintet – 'Lawd I'm Just A Country Boy In This Great Big Freaky City' was Doug Sahm's comment on the scene. But the Majority of the groups were local: Country Joe and the Fish, Quicksilver Messenger Service, the Sons Of Champlin, Big Brother and the Holding Company, the New Delhi River Band, Frumious Bandersnatch, Notes From The Underground, etc – according to Gleason there were about 500 local bands regularly playing in the Bay Area by 1968, most of them with equally strange names. If the groups' names weren't explicit enough, the names of the light-shows and the organisations that ran the dances made clear their conception of the scene: the North American Ibex Alchemical Company, Head Lights, Holy See, Pacific Grass and





Redfern/Transworld

Chris Walter

Electric (light-shows); the Northern California Psychedelic Cattleman's Association, the Love Conspiracy Commune (dance organisations).

The musical influences were mostly folk and blues, hence the large audiences for Paul Butterfield and his Chicago blues outfit, but these were always inflected with the psychedelic experience. The aim, as the title of Country Joe and the Fish's first album puts it, was to create 'Electric Music For The Mind And Body'. Though in the case of the Charlatans, the first of the San Franciscan bands to sign a record contract, it was more a matter of style than music – and it was on style that they foundered when Kama Sutra vetoed their album design and advertising material. As a result the Charlatans never issued an album, and finally folded leaving only Dan Hicks to give a flavour of the band when he went solo as Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.

The Charlatans had nonetheless caught the interest of the record industry and later in 1966, RCA made the first big signing: the Jefferson Airplane, at the then outrageous price of \$25,000. A co-operative band from the start, the Airplane was involved in every aspect of making music, from designing posters through to living together and putting on dances. On their first album, 'Jefferson Airplane Takes Off' – which featured their original girl singer, Signe Tölne – they were still very much 'Lovin' Spoonful' folksy. But when Grace Slick (from the Great Society) replaced Signe, bringing her much stronger voice, the group's sound became more flexible and experimental. 'Somebody To Love' and 'White Rabbit' quickly became San Franciscan anthems (and national chart successes), but it was the electronic experimentation in the extended instrumental passages of songs like '3/4 Of A Mile In 10 Seconds', 'Ballad Of You', and 'Me And Pooneil' on which their Bay Area reputation was built.

The Airplane managed the transition from dance hall to studio – it wasn't until much later, after Marty Balin left, that the group dropped all discipline, musical or political. But for the Grateful Dead the transition was much harder to make. The interests of Jerry Garcia ('Captain Trips'), Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Bill Kreutzmann and 'Pigpen' McKernan were varied to say the least, encompassing jazz, jugband music and solid R&B, but on stage they were the epitome of the San Francisco sound, a band that jammed. Often their performances, and certainly their first two albums, were spotty; it wasn't until 'Live Dead' in 1970 that they produced the first in what was to be a string of masterpieces. By then the songs, 'Dark Star', 'St. Stephen' and 'The Eleven' particularly, had been perfected as set pieces for *melodic* improvisation. More than any other group,

Top: The Golden Gate bridge, San Francisco. **Frank Zappa** strolling through a San Francisco festival crowd. **Left:** the band who started life as the Warlocks, the Grateful Dead in concert.

the Dead still maintain the dance-concert vision of performance that San Francisco represented in its heyday – a vision of music in which to participate by listening or dancing.

Like the Dead, the Quicksilver Messenger Service, led by the twin guitars of Jerry Cippolina and Gary Duncan, were instrumentally orientated, though from the narrower base of Bo Diddley rhythms. 'Happy Trails', their second album, saw them at their best, not much for their 'Who Do You Love Suite' which took up the whole of side one, but for the shorter songs on which Cippolina's metallic guitar interjections over the Bo Diddley riffs created a distinctive sound. Successful though they were, Quicksilver also demonstrated what was to become a norm for San Francisco bands after 1968: first Gary Duncan left and then Cippolina folded the group to start another, Copperhead, which then immediately folded too.

Political Tone

Country Joe and the Fish were a Berkeley band. Berkeley, with its university campus and radical tradition slap bang in the middle of the town, inflected a more political tone to the general Bay Area ethos – its paper was the *Barb* as opposed to San Francisco's *Oracle*. Accordingly Country Joe's political songs, 'Superbird' and 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixing-To-Die' for example, were more pointed and wittier than the Airplanes'. The group seemed happier playing in Berkeley, in the park or on the campus, for *their* people, and when the first album came out Berkeley responded in kind: every shop along Telegraph Avenue, even the ice-cream parlours, had their album on sale. This directness continued through to their dope songs, 'Section 43', 'Bass Strings' and the notorious 'Acid Commercial' dealt honestly, if somewhat romantically, with dope and its effects; attempting with words and music to both comment on drug experiences and recreate the mood of them. The cover of their second album, 'Feel Like I'm Fixing To Die', which showed the members of the group dressed as, among other things, a magician, a comic bishop and a Mexican revolutionary, aptly sums up the contradictions in the band. It came as no surprise that they split up and that Country Joe returned to his past as protest folk singer.

If Country Joe and the Fish were the most reflective of the Bay Area's groups, Big Brother and the Holding Company, with Janis Joplin as the featured vocalist, were the most dramatic. Although badly recorded, their first album, 'Big Brother And The Holding Company' showed the group at its San Franciscan best – before Janis Joplin was sucked into the 'greatest white blues singer' trap that finally destroyed both the group and herself. Never really an experimental group as such, Big Brother's virtues lay more in the excitement line as Janis wailed out 'Call On Me', 'Down On Me' and 'All Is Loneliness' against the band's solid backing.

By the end of 1966, after a record

company sweep through the city, all the above-mentioned bands had secured record contracts. The next wave was after the Monterey Pop Festival, which demonstrated that a San Franciscan band could be expected to sell as many as 50,000 copies of an album in the Bay Area alone. Throughout the year the scene exploded in San Francisco. January 14th saw the 'Human Be-In', when the tribes gathered in really large numbers for the first time, as 20,000 people came together in Golden Gate Park . . . the first step on the road to Woodstock and Altamont had been taken. The free festivals continued all the year in honour of Summer Solstices, community parks and anything that was an excuse to get together. The dances

continued, but not quite in the same spirit: Bill Graham was by now making more money selling the posters and postcards advertising the dances than at the dances themselves! This interest in the posters even led to an exhibition by the best-known poster artists – Rick Griffin, Stanley Mouse, Victor Moscoso, Al Kelley and Wes Wilson. Naturally it was called 'Joint Show'.

Also in 1967 came the FM revolution, when Tom Donahue, a well-known San Francisco DJ, started KMPX and quickly turned it into the most successful FM station in the States. The original underground radio station, KMPX (and later KSAN when, after a strike the whole staff of KMPZ moved there) played album tracks

and tapes sent in to them by groups. It was this policy that finally gave Creedence Clearwater their first hit when KSAN played their tape of 'Suzie Q' into the charts before the record was even released. The epitome of the KMPZ operation though was its response to the release of 'Sgt. Pepper': the station just played the album over and over for a day. A similar revolution in rock journalism followed in the autumn when Jan Wenner founded *Rolling Stone*, which took for its starting point a defence – as if it was needed in 1967 – of San Francisco and what it stood for.

Hippie Paradise

But just what it did stand for was becoming increasingly obscure. 1967 saw a lot of activity in the city but, beneath the surface, things were slowing down and turning sour: Haight-Ashbury was developing from hippie paradise to a narcotics jungle, and the Fillmore was just another concert hall in Bill Graham's promotions empire. The beginning of the end came in the autumn, when the hippies staged a 'Death of the Hippies' ritual and started leaving the city for communes in the country. The scene survived on the surface; it had to – by now there was too much money invested in it. 'By the mid-'70s, rock music will be San Francisco's fourth-largest industry', prophesied the vice-president of the Bank of California. At the same time, it was becoming clear that what was good for business wasn't necessarily good for the groups: CBS, in search of success for Moby Grape, simultaneously released 5 singles and an album, and destroyed the group with its hype.

One of the last '70s outposts of the spirit of San Francisco as it was in the guns and flowers days of '67 and '68 is to be found in the person of Country Joe McDonald. Still touring to a tight schedule, still putting out albums that cut new ground, Country Joe has carried on where the rest of California and the Hippie Dream left off, somewhere around Woodstock.

Country Joe's 1973 line-up included two girls – one of them Dorothy Moskowitz, who played keyboards with United States of America. His lyrics, always biting and to the point in an American political context, have broadened in scope to include a real feeling for the game of roles that is constantly played out, on, and by the male and female in a world that seems to thrive on absurd distinction and prejudice.

New groups still appeared, like *It's A Beautiful Day*, Creedence Clearwater (which had been there all the time but like the Flamin' Groovies refused to play psychedelic music), Santana, etc, but they were very different from the first generation of San Franciscan groups, especially in outlook. Slowly the scene wound down and the dance halls closed until, as of the present time, San Francisco has become more of a recording centre than a performing centre. The dream was over.

Below, *It's a Beautiful Day*, famous for David LaFlamme who played violin.



CBS

Ray Davies: The Muswell Hillbilly

On the evidence of their first record, the Kinks weren't much to reckon with. The record companies in 1964 were signing any group, it seemed, with long hair and a general R&B flavour to their music. And Pye, who didn't have much in the way of groups since the Searchers, had come up with this North London group singing 'Long Tall Sally'. It was a hard number to sing, and a lot of groups had tried it before them.

The Kinks' version wasn't very successful, but their first appearances on TV – especially on *Ready Steady Go!* – set them apart from the current run of groups, who dressed in jeans or super-mod Cardin suits with gingham, tab-collar shirts and boots. The Kinks wore hunting jackets and Regency frills and lace, and had a very English feel to them. They didn't seem to be taking even their music seriously – certainly other bands on the show looked naïve in the face of their self-mockery. After 'Long Tall Sally', the group wasted no more records on other people's songs and Ray Davies started their career as a chart band with one of the most extraordinary feats of songwriting yet seen in pop – the importance of which wasn't to emerge for some time.

The first Davies song to make the charts was 'You Really Got Me', a no. 1 and a million-seller in the summer of 1964. It was the first of six straight Top 10 hits in the incredibly short space of one year: 'You Really Got Me', 'All Day And All Of The Night', 'Tired Of Waiting For You', 'Everybody's Gonna Be Happy', 'Set Me Free' and 'See My Friends'.

Pete Townshend has said that he'd never have been able to write anything good if he hadn't had a group like the Who to play the songs. The reverse seemed true in the case of the Kinks. Judging by their performance on 'Long Tall Sally', they just about knew their way round their instruments provided it was a simple song and, for a lead singer, Ray's voice was very weak indeed. As a band, they wouldn't have much of a chance without Ray. As it was, he turned their shortcomings to advantage with astounding



perception and skill. The band couldn't play much. Right, make the song as technically simple as possible. 'You Really Got Me' was utterly basic, and devastatingly effective. Structured around two chords, they played it jagged and rough with a thudding beat behind, and created a surge of sheer power, tension and simplicity, that the pop world hadn't heard before. Brilliantly using his limited resources, the voice and lyrics came through as half-aggressive, half-nervous, above the violence of the music, creating the picture

of two forces at work – the singer, hardly able to keep control, above the primeval, emotional earthquake of the music.

'All Day And All Of The Night' was less of an upheaval. Davies extended the riff, losing some of the power, to fit a less intense story line – by now the singer is sufficiently in control of his emotions to feel his own power as he says: 'I believe that you and me last forever'. But it's the same style, relying on the tension between voice and backing for effect.

The third hit single, 'Tired Of Waiting

LFI

For You', was a further relaxation of love's first flush. By now the singer is somewhat disenchanted, and his mixed feelings are brought out with precision and economy by the words and music. Davies is beginning to stretch his wings, making room for variations of vocal style — there's a beautifully ethereal chorus line: 'It's your life and you can do what you want', before the band returns to the main melody. 'Set Me Free', again has the distinctive Kinks guitar riff, but this time it's falling away. As is the love affair: the title is a direct reversal of the line in 'You Really Got Me' . . . 'don't ever set me free'. The girl has started to go around with other boys, it's time to pull out.

In 'See My Friends', she's gone. Probably Davies' most accomplished song in the series, the overall feeling of haunting melancholy is only relieved by an unexpected rise to a major chord when he thinks of going to see his friends. There's a note of hope, but immediately the key falls down again to the minor on the line 'way across the river'.

What Davies did in that first burst of hits was to write, in effect, the first pop opera. He did it in an old-fashioned manner, too — as Dickens, Conan Doyle and others wrote novels in the form of magazine serials, an episode a week — he'd written an episode every two months, adding up to a complete story.

The second phase of his songwriting began in 1966 when, with 'Dedicated Follower Of Fashion', he turned his gaze away from his own emotional life and started writing about other people. There had been little of a really English flavour to emerge from the British rock renaissance of the mid-'60s — the influences had been almost entirely American — and still less had there been much in the way of humour; but this song combined both. A boisterous, highly perceptive dig at the fashionable inhabitants of swinging London, it was new to rock, but a direct revival of the music-hall songs of Albert Chevalier and George Formby.

It was Ray's first success at satire; at putting the ordinary bloke's opinions to music, and though played by a young rock & roll band, the subject matter would have meant as much to a man of 60. At a time when pop was getting intellectual, when psychedelia and notions of musical progression were growing, Ray had opted for good old British common sense. He wasn't using any long words and he wasn't trying to outrage his parents, but the song rang true and there wasn't a superfluous word or note in it.

The 'B'-side of his next single, 'I'm Not Like Everybody Else', seemed true as far as he and his contemporaries in pop were concerned. While they were leading the supposed youth revolution and getting stoned, he was digging deeper into his roots with songs like 'Sunny Afternoon' and 'Dead End Street', painted like pictures. 'Sunny Afternoon' spoke of the troubles of the rich pop star — losing his girl and meeting the tax-man who took all his money and left him in his stately home

— in a convincing but satirical way.

During 1966 Ray wrote only three singles for the group, and turned his attention to albums. 'Face To Face', which wasn't very successful (his record company never promoted Kinks albums satisfactorily and seemed to want only hit singles) was a well-rounded mixture of character portraits, satire, social criticism and songs dealing with emotional turmoil.

'Face To Face' was followed by a live album and then, in 1967, by a little-played album of rare quality — 'Something Else By The Kinks'. By this time Ray's brother Dave, lead guitarist in the group, had started writing singles — he had a big hit with 'Death Of A Clown' — and Ray, though not yet writing what came unfortunately to be known as concept albums, created a unified LP of ten songs (plus two of Dave's) that gave the fullest expression to date of his and the group's potential. Each song was a story on its own. In 'David Watts', Ray looks back and wishes he could have been as good as this teenage god, the traditional school-captain figure of Victorian public-school morality tales. 'Harry Rag', ostensibly a novelty song about cigarettes has a disturbing undertone of despair, 'Two Sisters' told of jealousy, and 'Tin Soldier Man' has a look at a lover of regimentation and order, meanwhile the side two's songs are more wistful and resigned, as the titles suggest: 'Afternoon Tea', 'End Of The Season' and 'Waterloo Sunset'. An extraordinary richness of subject matter, then, and the tunes are as memorable as the stories. As always, they're simple and speak directly, straight to the heart, with enough wit and invention to avoid becoming depressing. The tunes are usually jaunty, invariably catchy.

'Village Green Preservation Society' had more of an overt theme. Continuing the train of thought from 'Waterloo Sunset', the album is a kick against progress, dehumanisation, bureaucracy and the rat-race. Other bands were busy creating fantasy worlds pushing the twin saviours, rock & roll and drug mysticism. Characteristically, Ray Davies spoke directly about what he didn't like and made his only retreat in his songs towards a generalised nostalgia. As he says on the title song, he wants to keep village greens, Donald Duck, vaudeville, variety, Desperate Dan, strawberry jam, draught beer, little shops, china cups, virginity, billiards and down with office blocks and skyscrapers. 'Picture Book' talks of souvenir photos. 'Johnny Thunder' is a motorbike man who didn't want to end up like all the rest of his friends, and on 'The Last Of The Steam Powered Trains', Ray says he feels like 'the last of the good old renegades' but wonders if he lives in a museum. And meanwhile, the 'Big Sky' looks down on it all and is too big to be messed up by the sight of all these people pushing other people around. The song ends: 'One day we'll be free.' As usual, the tunes are short, and there's nothing so technically advanced that any group couldn't learn to play. Ray, with a limited

format at his disposal, continued to write a stream of songs, each one different enough to stand as a successful work on its own; each one perfectly tailored to the Kinks.

'Arthur' was Ray's first attempt at the pop opera concept. Subtitled 'The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire', it was based on the ingenious idea of portraying one man — Arthur — as the last and most typical product of the Empire. It wasn't a success, and went largely unnoticed while Pete Townshend's more fanciful 'Tommy' was put on in the New York Metropolitan Opera House and hailed as the first major work to be produced by rock composers.

Again, the fault was with the record company who never realised what a worthwhile writer and group they had in Ray and the Kinks and allowed them to drift out of view.

'Lola', which followed, and apart from Ray's soundtrack to the film *Percy*, was the group's last product for the Pye label, wasn't such a triumph artistically. In effect it was the autobiography of the group, tell us of the workings of the pop industry with satire, anger, humour and depth, but the songs generally were short on melody by Kinks' standards. The single 'Lola', however, was a big hit — the first the group had made for some time. There was a certain amount of controversy over the lyrics — Ray had to change the line Coca-Cola to cherry cola — and people wondered mistakenly whether the lyrics dealt with transvesticism. Also from the album, the mock-calypto 'Apeman' was a hit, and a fair way of saying goodbye to Pye.

The first album for RCA, 'Muswell Hillbillies', showed Ray still at work on the same obsessions as before. 'Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Blues', — a nasty and widespread disease today was put to an oompah Dixieland beat. Along with it came other expressions of the ills of modern-day life — alcohol, the compulsion to lose weight, property developers and general chaos and complication.

'Everybody's Showbiz' has Ray looking at life on the road as rock & roll star, celebrating good food — 'Hot Potatoes' — and condemning bad food in motorway catts. In 'Sitting In My Hotel' he wonders what his old friends would think of him now, cushioned and alienated by the job he's doing. This double album's last new song — is perhaps the most moving thing he's written, 'Celluloid Heroes'.

While, generally, the Kinks have lost some of their individual sound as they've grown in size and proficiency, this one song is as real and deep and warm as anything they've recorded. Ray may have lost some of his sense of direction in music but here he's letting all of it out. 'Everybody's a dreamer, everybody's a star, everybody's in movies, it doesn't matter who you are', it opens, and there's not a harsh word in it, just a rich, rolling sadness. It's as deep and wide a song as any pop writer's created, the end to the biggest soap opera in the world, and as real a picture of anyone's star fantasies ever written.

POP FILE

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

GEORGE MARTIN was working for EMI Records' Parlophone label as a producer when, in 1962, he heard the demo tapes of a group called the Beatles. Up to then Martin's main claim to fame was as producer of Peter Sellers' comedy albums, but he played an important part in developing the Beatles' recorded sound. As the Beatles' music grew more complex his role became even bigger, for the group would never have made records like 'Strawberry Fields', 'All You Need Is Love' and 'Sgt. Pepper' without George Martin to arrange, orchestrate and transform their wishes into recorded sound. Martin also produces Cilla Black, and now owns his own recording studio, AIR London.



THE MARVELETTES (Gladys Horton, Katherine Anderson and Wanda Rogers) signed with Motown Records in 1961 as a result of their performance in a talent contest at their Detroit high school. Their first recording, 'Please Mr. Postman', was a big US hit in 1961 and the song became popular again when recorded by the Beatles. Other US hits included 'Beechwood 4-5789', 'You're My Remedy' and 'Too Many Fish In The Sea', while 'When You're Young And In Love' took them into the UK charts in 1967. Until the early '70s the group was touring as part of the Motown Revue, but has since disbanded.

CURTIS MAYFIELD was born in Chicago in June, 1942. With his friend Jerry Butler, Curtis joined a group called the Roosters in 1956. The other members were Sam Gooden and Arthur and Richard Brooks. They changed their name to the Impressions, and their first recording, 'For Your Precious Love', made the US R&B charts. Butler then left the group and Curtis worked as his guitar player for two years before the Impressions reformed with Fred Cash (who had been in the original Roosters) and scored with Curtis' 'Gypsy Woman'. Other Mayfield hits followed including 'Amen', 'I'm So Proud', 'Keep On Pushin', 'People Get Ready', 'Choice Of Colours' and 'This Is My Country'. Most of these songs had a political message for black America, and drew on Curtis' gospel roots in their inspirational character. In 1970 Curtis left the Impressions to concentrate on songwriting, production, and his Chicago record company, Curtom. He released a solo album, 'Curtis', and followed it with 'Curtis Live' and



'Roots' before releasing 'Superfly' in 1972. Curtis wrote, arranged and performed the soundtrack of the film as well as appearing in it, and it has given his career a great new boost. The 'Superfly' album won him a Gold Disc three weeks after release, and successful singles from the album include 'Superfly' and 'Freddie's Dead' - a warning against the dangers of drug addiction.

THE McCOYS (Randy and Rick Zehringer, Randy Hobbs and Bobbie Peterson) made it to no. 1 in the States in 1965 with the Bert Berns song 'Hang On Sloopy', a classic piece of synthetic pop about a girl that everyone was putting down 'cause she lived on the wrong side of town. The group never repeated that success, but attracted some acclaim in 1968 with a very different sound - the jazz-influenced 'Resurrection'.

COUNTRY JOE McDONALD was born on January 1st, 1942, in El Monte, California. Shades of his future political activism were present in his first song, written for a friend's campaign to become President of his high school. After four years in the US Navy, he spent a year at college and then moved to Berkeley, where he began singing on the campus and in local folk clubs. He formed Country Joe and the Fish with guitarist Barry Melton in 1967, and their first performances were at college demonstrations, where Joe's anti-Vietnam War song 'Fixin' To Die became popular.

Country Joe and the Fish released their first Vanguard album in the same year, and followed it in 1968 with 'Fixin' To Die'. One of the few electric groups to sing social comment and protest songs in the era of peace and flower power, the Fish's popularity spread through the growing political youth movement of the USA. Through his appearance in *Woodstock*, including his 'Give us an F' chant, he became well known in Europe too. In 1969 the group recorded their sixth and last album, 'C. J. Fish', before Joe went solo and released his 'Thinking Of Woody Guthrie' album in 1969. He has followed this with the albums 'Tonight I'm Singing Just For You', 'Hold On It's Coming', and 'Incredible Live'; as well as lecturing on US campuses and appearing in films including the 'psychedelic Western' *Zachariah*, and a film about American involvement in Chilean affairs.

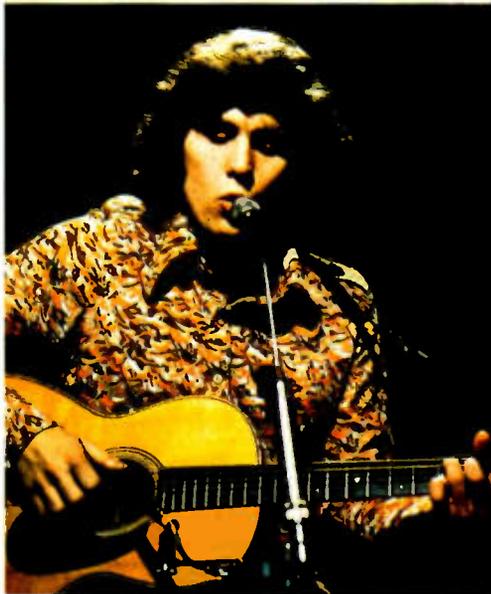
CATHY McGOWAN was comper of the British TV rock show *Ready Steady Go!* which ran in the early '60s and regularly featured performances by the Stones, Who, Yardbirds, Animals, Manfred Mann, Pretty Things and other groups of the time. Cathy, with her amateurish approach, was an important element in the show's appeal, and she was into the music, setting the then fashionable Mod clothing style for many girls who could easily identify with her as she blushed while talking to the groups.

BARRY McGUIRE was a Los Angeles music hustler who came on like a protest singer in 1965 with his UK and US hit 'Eve Of Destruction', a classic case of the music business picking up on a trend, disarming it of its dangerous features, and re-selling it as a harmless and pointless product. Earlier, McGuire had been involved with the initial promotion of the Mamas and Papas, and he returned to that line of business after his hit.

SCOTT MCKENZIE sang in the year of flower power, 1967: 'If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear a flower in your hair.' 'San Francisco' was a massive hit, and the first overt commercialisation of the hippie scene. It had a catchy melody,

but once kaftans and beads became dated so did Scott McKenzie – who joined the ranks of rock's lost one-hit wonders.

DON McLEAN was born into a comfortable suburban home in New Rochelle, New York. In 1963, at the age of 15, he began playing local clubs, and a couple of years later was playing throughout New York State. Initially moved by the records of Buddy Holly to start playing guitar, Don moved away from rock into folk circles, and by 1968 was established on that scene. Pete Seeger invited him aboard the sloop *Clearwater* for its anti-pollution voyage along the Hudson River, and Don edited a book that tells the story of the trip and prints some of the songs the singers sang. At the end of 1970 his song 'American Pie', an account of his musical and spiritual development from Buddy Holly to Bob Dylan (also his comment on the current rock scene), became an enormous international hit. He followed this with the quiet 'Vincent', a song about Vincent Van Gogh that was more typical of his material. Since then Don has continued to record for United Artists and play concerts and TV shows.



SKR

CLYDE McPHATTER was born on November 15th, 1933, in Durham, North Carolina, the son of a baptist preacher. His family moved to New York, and at the age of 14 he formed his first vocal group, the Mount Lebanon Singers. In 1950 he joined the black vocal group Billy Ward's Dominos and had a number of hits including 'These Foolish Things' and 'Harbour Lights'. In 1953 Clyde left to form his own group, the Drifters, and their first recording, 'Money Honey', was a hit, but in 1954 he joined the USAF on national service. During this period he did some recording, and then launched his solo career in February 1956 with 'Seven Days'. In 1958 he released his million seller, 'Seven Days'. In 1958 he released his million seller, 'A Lover's Question'. In 1959 he left Atlantic Records for MGM and switched to Mercury in 1960, where he scored with 'Lover Please' in 1962.

MELANIE was born Melanie Safka in New York City on February 3rd, 1947. She went to drama college but after two months in the theatre she decided to sing for a living. After playing some

small bars in New York she went for an audition for a bit part in a play but walked into the wrong office and ended up singing to record producer Peter Shekeryk who became her husband and manager. She signed to Buddah and released her first album 'Born To Be' in 1968. She followed this with 'Affectionately Melanie' (1969), and 'Candles In The Rain' (1970), before signing to the Neighbourhood label for whom she has recorded 'Gather Me' (1971) and 'Garden In The City' (1971). She has a powerful shriek of a voice that you either love or loathe, and which has made her versions of Dylan's 'Mr Tambourine Man' and the Stones' 'Ruby Tuesday' very much her own. In her own songs she often comes over as the little girl lost in the big cramping city, and in the case of her biggest single success 'Brand New Key' – about a girl and her roller skates – just as a little girl.

THE MERSEYBEATS scored three UK hits in 1964 with 'I Think Of You', 'Don't Turn Around' and 'Wishin' n' Hopin''. They were the softest-sounding of the Mersey groups, but they displayed taste and style that was notably lacking among most of their contemporaries. Later they became a vocal group with instrumental backing and re-named themselves the Merseys, and made no. 4 in 1966 with 'Sorrow', recently revived by David Bowie.

STEVE MILLER was born in Wisconsin and raised in Texas, where at the age of 12 he formed his first group the Marksmen Combo. After studying literature at the University of Copenhagen, he moved to Chicago where he played the clubs with Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker and Junior Wells. In 1966 he moved to San Francisco where he formed the Steve Miller Band, which



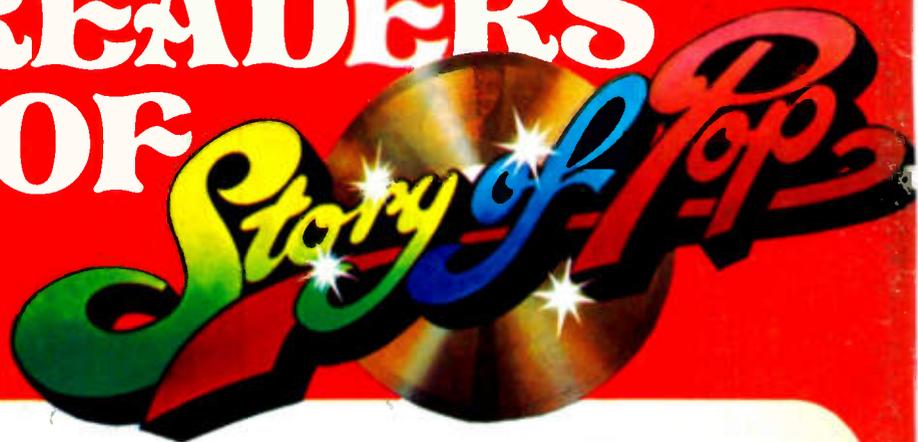
C. Walters

backed Chuck Berry on his 'Fillmore Live' album. The band made a deep enough impression at the Monterey Festival to be signed by Capitol for whom they recorded 'Children Of The Future' (1968) and the immaculate 'Sailor' (1969) and established themselves as the very best of tasteful stoned-out rock amongst a large minority audience. Among their seven other Capitol albums are 'Brave New World', 'Rock Love', 'Anthology' and 'The Joker'.

THE MINDBENDERS originally known as Wayne Fontana and the Mindbenders, hit the UK charts in 1964-5 with 'Um Um Um Um Um Um' and 'Game Of Love'. Then Wayne split to go solo and the group continued as the Mindbenders (Eric Stewart, Paul Hancox, James O'Neal and Graham Gouldman). They had their biggest hit and best record with 'A Groovy Kind Of Love' (1966) but despite their follow up 'Ashes To Ashes' they couldn't keep in the top grade and retired to the climes of Northern Variety.

POP FILE

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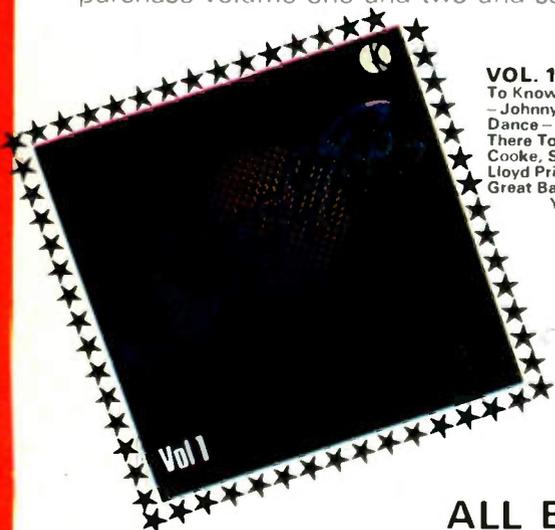
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