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ONE

# Story of Pop

THE FIRST  
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS

**TOM JONES:** From Pontypridd to Las Vegas

**MOTOWN:** The Early Years

**THE KINKS:** Straight British Rock

**PLUS:** Death Discs, Love Is All You Need & More

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The Beatles gave it an impetus by including a couple of numbers on their second album. They publically announced that some of its groups were among their favourites. But the first tour of Britain was a failure and the great successes were still to come in the States. The creation of a black superstar stable was getting truly established and the cause of all the fuss was, of course, Motown.

The Motown story is quite extraordinary. One man with a vision and an unerring ear for spotting talent either vocal, instrumental or songwriting – set up a small operation in the unlikely location of Detroit, and within a few years had established it as one of the world's major recording companies. The Supremes, Four Tops and many others, spurred by unique material from writers like Holland-Dozier-Holland and Smokey Robinson, were to bring a new image to black music. Just as Epstein had knocked the rough edges off the Beatles and polished them to a smooth perfection, so did Berry Gordy streamline black artists and make them presentable to the widest possible white audience. In ways his methods paralleled the processes of the Fifties, but with the major difference that the basic blackness of the music was retained. The extraordinary story of Motown starts in this issue.

Strangely reminiscent of it was the way in which an earthy young Welshman with a voice full of soul and a sexuality reminiscent of Presley was groomed into style to dominate the hallowed preserves of American night-clubs and gambling hotels. Tom Jones modelled himself on the smoothest stateside entertainers, toned down his overt displays and stormed the bastions. Both indicated the way the music of the early Sixties was heading, away from the kids, along the path Presley had trodden, and into established showbiz.

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\*Correction: Article 'Mr Soul' in Issue 13, written by Tony Cummings, not Roger St Pierre as printed.

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

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PROFILE: 1963–73

## THE KINKS: Suburban Lads Make Good

From 'Louie Louie' to 'Celluloid Heroes' by way of 'The Village Green Preservation Society' and 'Lola' is a strange journey for any group, let alone one with the unlikely name of the Kinks.

A further irony is that for a group whose material is so defiantly English, critical success came first in America, despite the fact that, apart from an abortive tour in 1965, they didn't perform there until late in 1969. One result of their American reputation is that a lot of Kinks' material is only available in America. So are the Kinks



SKR



SKR

a recording group rather than a performing group? In part yes, though their live performances do have a certain charm.

The reason for the long interval between tours in the States was a ban by the American Federation of Musicians on the Kinks for 'unprofessional conduct'. By all accounts the standards of their American tours since then haven't been noticeably any higher: the much repeated – and reported – highlight of their '71 tour was an apparently drunk Ray Davies giving up even attempting to remember the words of songs he'd written, in order to concentrate on falling over as many amplifiers as possible.

But if the Kinks' reputation isn't based upon their live performances (unless you want to take 'the Kinks-ought-to-be-sloppy-performers' line) their recordings show a marked contrast. John Mendelsohn, an American critic, has acclaimed Ray Davies' 'unique comic/humanist vision', while his colleague Ken Emerson points out that 'from the beginning in 1963, the Kinks have relied on the most worn out rock & roll clichés.' Two critics who obviously disagree. But no, for Emerson ends up by pointing out that their albums include some of the most consistently earthy numbers in rock music.

### Leader Of The Kinks

At the centre of this mass of contradictions is Ray Davies – songwriter, singer and leader of the Kinks – the man whose obsessions have charted the course the Kinks have followed since the days when they were the Ravens, a well-dressed, if musically inept R&B group on the deb circuit in 1963. The Kinks' career is as strange as their reputation. Like a lot of the R&B groups, they started out at art school playing a mixture of Sonny Terry and Chuck Berry-type numbers. Their first record, a very Beatles-influenced version of Little Richard's 'Long Tall Sally' failed miserably, as did their second, 'You Do Something To Me'. However, their third single, 'You Really Got Me', marked the beginning of Ray Davies' songwriting career and the Kinks' prominence in the British (and world) charts for a couple of years.

The Kinks, it seemed, had it made. If only Mick Avory, Peter Quaife, Dave Davies and brother Ray could keep cool and churn out those chunka-chunka-chunk songs, everything would be alright. However, after seven hits from the same mould – as Ray laconically put it, 'Those three chords are part of my life, G, F, Bb; G, F, Bb' – the Kinks, and Ray in particular wanted to develop.

In 1966 came the first indication of the group's change of direction. At a time when the rest of the world was glorying in the idea of 'Swinging London', and Britain was smugly recognizing her lead in fashion and pop music, the Kinks with 'Well Respected Man' and 'Dedicated Follower Of Fashion' chose to question the whole giddy scene.

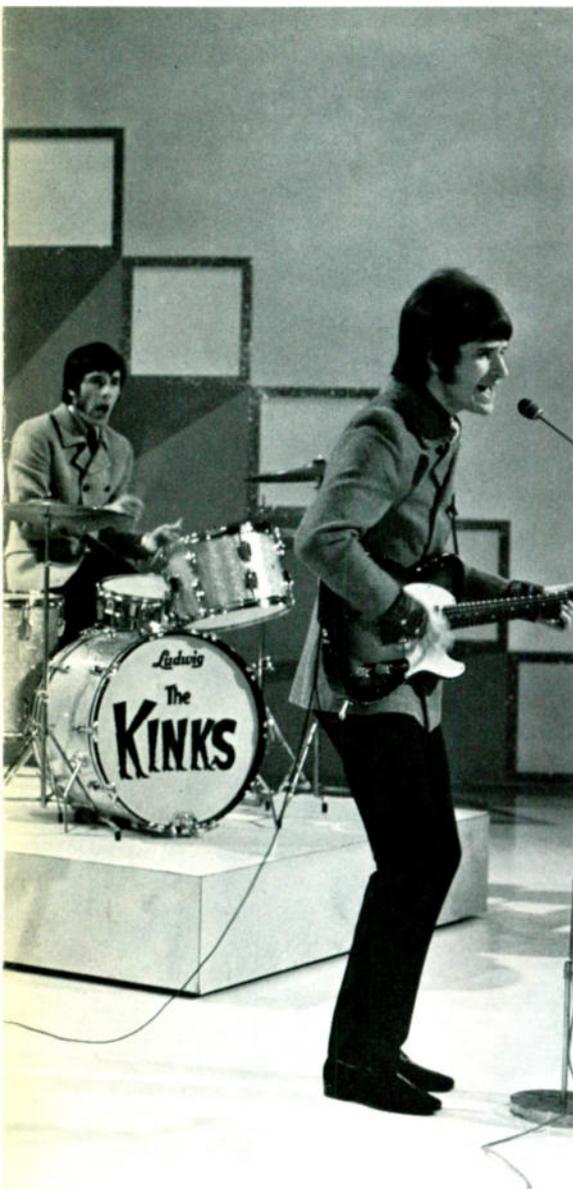
Amazing though they were at the time, these songs, and others, like 'House In The



Syndication International



SKR



The '68 line-up of the Kinks, above, from left to right, Pete Quaife, Dave Davies, Mick Avory and Ray Davies, looks a lot different from their recent line-up on the left.

Country', 'Session Man' and 'Exclusive Residence For Sale' (from 'Face To Face', their first concept album) can in retrospect be seen only as transitional. They showed that Ray Davies was quite sure of what he *didn't* like but, as yet, in a superficial and negative way. It wasn't until 'Sunny Afternoon', 'Dead End Street' and the glorious 'Waterloo Sunset' of May, 1967, that Ray Davies began to examine the world around him in depth.

For a while the change in direction seemed a smart move, the hits kept coming, although at a slower rate. But 'Days', a hit in September 1968, was to mark the group's end as consistent hitmakers. In part the reason was that Ray Davies was into other projects as well. 'Face To Face', 'Live At Kelvin Hall' and 'Something Else' (not released in Britain), the three albums of the period '66-'68, found the Kinks still writing three-minute songs, but they were no longer purely aimed at specific audiences, either

in the Hit Parade or the underground, as the live album demonstrated. It consisted not of lengthy solos by the group but of one long 30-minute scream of applause by the audience, over which the Kinks could barely be heard. And it wasn't an accident, as the note 'produced under the musical direction of Ray Davies' made clear.

Also around this time Davies was writing music for the film *The Virgin Soldiers* and as the Kinks were no longer performing very frequently, Ray's brother Dave decided to branch out on his own as well. His first single, 'Death Of A Clown' (on which he was backed by the Kinks) was a successful no. 3 in Britain. He planned a solo album but when the follow-up singles flopped, as did the Kinks' of this period, the album was scrapped.

### 'Something Else'

By late '68, despite their absence from the charts for some time, the Kinks had amassed a lot of material similar to the 'Something Else' album. It wasn't released at the time because their recording company was still primarily interested in singles; the theory being that if they couldn't sell singles they certainly couldn't sell albums.

The songs on 'Face To Face' and 'Something Else' had mostly been topical. On '(The Kinks Are) The Village Green Preservation Society', their next album, Ray Davies began his long, nostalgic look back at a make-believe, Edwardian Britain when life was comfortable – if you were middle class that is. 'Village Green' was a combination of a search for personal security in the past and a suggestion that all was peace and paradise around the village greens of England. Its follow-up, 'Arthur (Or The Decline Of The British Empire)' was again a look back, but this time the past was seen not as a haven but as a burden on the present, like the bric-a-brac that fills the houses – the 'Shangri Las' – of the nation.

Having summed up the pressures of the past, the Kinks next moved to a description of their own situation as pop stars in 'Lola Versus The Powermen And The Moneygo-round'. This album was produced when the group were preparing to leave the Pye label and their old managers. The old theme of 'why are they doing this to me?' reappears but is more objective. There is a much broader view of people's problems in 'Lola' than in 'I'm Not Like Everybody Else' for instance which tended to be very personal. The songs paint complex and more ambiguous pictures, like 'Lola' of whom Ray finally sings 'I'm glad I'm a man and so is Lola'. Just quite what that means belongs in the mind of the listener. In career terms, however, the album and its hit single marked a new lease of life for the group.

The Kinks' last album for Pye was a soundtrack for the film *Percy*, but it was very much of a stop-gap and hardly met up to the group's usual standards. It wasn't until 'Muswell Hillbillies', the group's first RCA album that they moved forward again.

By this time John Dalton had replaced Peter Quaife, and John Gosling had joined on piano. The group's sound was by now much fuller but their lyrics continued to focus on social problems. Whereas 'Arthur' had been about the burdens of the past; 'Muswell Hillbillies' was about the burdens of the present. The villains were the property developers and 'The People In Gray' who Davies accuses of destroying working-class values; the only defence left being traditional – 'whatever the situation . . . have a cuppa tea'. He sings hopefully and (very ambiguously) to the possibility of retreating into fantasies of living 'In Oklahoma USA with Shirley Jones and Gordon McRae'.

'Everybody In Showbiz', the latest Kinks' album to date is an uneasy marriage of the themes of the 'Lola' album and 'Muswell Hillbillies'. It deals with a pop group's life on the road for the most part, but only in 'Celluloid Heroes' do the lyrics get a lift from the drudgery of the situation, into an escapist look at a fantasy world with a need for some kind of release from monotony and routine. A quote from the album: 'If life's for living, what's living for?'

In 'Celluloid Heroes' he describes 'the fantasy world of celluloid heroes and villains who never really die', and at the same time he reminds us that 'Everybody's a dreamer, everybody's a star, and everybody's in movies, it doesn't matter who you are'. As usual the song is very ambiguous; Ray Davies both describes the need for fantasy that entertainment provides for all of us and at the same time suggests that we are all stars in our own right, or could be if we could discover what living is all about and put that into practice.

These later albums which oscillate between bitterness and bitchiness, attempt to contextualise the situation in which Ray Davies sees the Kinks and their audience. However, they fail to come over as much as the earlier singles 'You Really Got Me' and 'All Of The Day And All Of The Night' and the mellow songs of the 'Waterloo Sunset' period.

### Melodramatic Performances

Like John Lennon, Ray Davies has a need for his audience to identify with his pain. Thus the Kinks' live performances (and even their records at times) are often rather melodramatic. There's an over-riding feeling that the audience is expected to adore and admire, regardless of the performance given. This image is a difficult one to sustain and the Kinks, as they are now, are not an easy group to like or respect. But our memories serve us well and it's easy to remember them for their great songs, and in his own way, Ray Davies lists with Lennon and Townshend, as an equally important critic of past, present and future who still manages to inject a bitter-sweet humour into the Kinks' music. The group has always been more of a vehicle for Ray Davies than anything else, but the Kinks have carved themselves a niche as the most 'English' of rock bands.



POP: '67-'70

# Love Is All You Need

In the summer of 1967 a sort of funeral festival took place in San Francisco as the city's first hippies, seeing the way things were going, called a ceremony to mark 'The Death of the Hippie'. Already, and it was really only a few years old, the spirit had started to go out of the hippie movement, and it was time to move on.

What had started as a close community movement, a genuine seed of hope for the way an alternative society might develop, had grown and distorted too fast. Publicity had attracted a teenage multitude from all over the States, attracted by the prospect of a free, stoned life together. With them though, came the prospect of easy money for opportunists, pushers and established big business.

Frank Zappa of the Mothers of Invention was among the first to publicly declare himself against what he saw as a mass delusion. 'Flower power sucks,' he'd tell the audience at concerts. The Beatles had just released the euphoric 'Sgt. Pepper', and following it the Mothers' 'We're Only In It For The Money' was a wickedly accurate parody, a slap in the face with tracks like 'Hey Punk!' . . . 'Hey punk, where you goin' with that flower in your hand? Goin' to San Francisco to join a psychedelic band . . . 'Gonna play my bongos in the dirt!'

## Commercial Hippiedom

By 1967, *Time* magazine was running features about the colourful, happy hippies; businesses were selling replica Haight St. and Ashbury St. street signs – the real ones had long gone, as souvenirs; head shops, selling all the paraphernalia of hippiedom – roach clips, water pipes, decorated cigarette papers – were mushrooming in every city. In San Francisco dopers were turning from acid and grass to anything that dealers had. Heroin, which gave higher profits, was appearing, and the speed epidemic was spreading. Canned Heat, a blues band from Los Angeles, issued warnings in songs like 'Amphetamine Annie', and Robert Crumb drew anti-speed *Mr. Natural* cartoons. 'Speed kills!' became a catchphrase.

As hepatitis, squalor, undernourishment

and commercial exploitation set in, it seemed as if one consumer dream – as sold to their parents – had been replaced by another for the hippies. The more dedicated of the older hippies took to the hills to start communes, following the example of their ancestors who'd struck out from the Eastern cities in search of a more honest life in unspoiled California. The music, however, lived on.

San Francisco replaced the Liverpool of a few years before as the centre of a new movement. Ken Kesey, an author whose writing linked the ideals of the West Coast Beat Generation of a decade before with the newer hopes of psychedelia, did much to establish the San Francisco sound when he brought along the Grateful Dead (then the Warlocks) to play electric music at his LSD parties ('Acid Tests') . . . documented by Tom Wolfe in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

## Improvisation

Three main strains combined, with LSD as the catalyst, to produce the San Francisco sound. The bands around at the time were for the most part strikingly individual, but all drew heavily on blues, with a tradition of improvisation; folk, which tended to be altruistic and not commercially-orientated; and Beatle-style pop, which gave tunes, harmonies and structure.

Not only was the music of these bands new; so was the way they got out of the old club/ballroom/college scene by playing free festivals – often for the Diggers, a group who took it on themselves to provide free food and clothes for the destitute, stoned flocks in the overcrowded Haight-Ashbury. A few ballrooms in San Francisco became the focal points of new bands like the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother, and the Charlatans.

Psychedelic happenings were staged regularly at the Fillmore, Avalon, Winterland and Carousel, but one problem of the new life-style came up early on: the promoters, notably Bill Graham, were accused of exploiting the underground. At the same time, however, they were reliable organisers who worked hard for the music and allowed it to flourish in the best possible conditions. Unlike many hippie ventures, they *did* work.

But if 1967 was the year of 'The Death of the Hippie' for the founders of the movement, for the rest of the world it was the

'flower power' year, the hippie summer. In New York, London, and Los Angeles, thousands were turning on to peace and love. Badge makers, poster sellers, kaftan importers and, of course, the record companies, scrambled for a slice. Hippies, after all, were mostly middle-class kids used to having what they wanted, and they usually had money to spend.

The record companies were taken by surprise at the sudden blossoming of West Coast music, but by 1967 they'd recovered enough to put most of the bands under contract.

Unfortunately, from the companies' point of view, most bands had neither the inclination nor capacity to turn out hit singles. They could sell a lot of albums, but as casual listeners didn't usually buy albums after one hearing, West Coast rock seemed likely to remain a minority taste within the bounds of its live circuit. Marty Arbunich, a San Francisco writer, said at the time: "For these bands, live performances come first, then albums, and commercial success is considered relatively immaterial." The Airplane, though, did well with singles of 'White Rabbit' (dedicated to Owsley, the Acid King, who also designed the Dead's equipment) and 'Somebody To Love', but they were really the only underground hit singles . . . and anyhow had little to do with flower power. Moby Grape tried harder than the other bands to get a hit single, and indeed released their first five on the same day . . . none caught on. (In 1969 the band implied, on the sleeve note to 'Moby Grape '69', that they'd been through the hype/success trip, and were from then going to concentrate purely on the music.)

It was largely Britain, rather than the West Coast, which provided hit singles for the flower years. Donovan was among the first to embrace the new style, towards the end of 1966, with 'Sunshine Superman'/'The Trip', followed early in 1967 by the harder rock beat of 'Mellow Yellow'. His songs, if not his neo-Dylan image, caught the flower power mood exactly, and Donovan – who sometimes played his guitar cross-legged and wore flowers and beads – became the archetypal flower child, and enormously popular in the States. His album, 'A Gift From A Flower To A Garden', had one section devoted to children's songs, and a presentation box with an infra-red photo of the singer on it – producing an effect of sweetness and light, touched by gentle mysticism.

## Country Cottage

Traffic, too, were in at the first. Their second single, a Dave Mason composition entitled 'Hole In My Shoe' had childish nonsense-lyrics, a spoken middle piece by a small girl, and the sound of a sitar twanging away throughout. Traffic were notable also for being the first British band to get it together in a country cottage, a fashion which grew as bands who'd earned enough money retired from the gruelling life of one-nighters.

Two more surprising converts from



A.P. Photos

John and George sitting on the bank of the Ganges during their trip to India.

British beery blues to flowers were Eric Burdon and Zoot Money. Zoot Money had previously led a boisterous, jazzy R&B group called the Big Roll Band, but in 1967 he re-emerged in flowing robes with the group renamed Dantalion's Chariot. In the same year Eric Burdon, who had been the be-jeaned lead singer in the Animals, took to appearing in white kaftan and beads with the New Animals, and had hits – particularly in the States – with 'San Franciscan Nights', 'Monterey' and 'Good Times' (a song in which he renounced his old, sinful life as a blueser: 'When I think of all the good times that I wasted/Having good times' . . . he sang).

A change seemed to be coming over most of the British bands who'd started out a few years previously. Even the Stones, who were in and out of the courts on drug charges, released a single in summer '67, 'We Love You'/'Dandelion'. It wasn't one of their most successful, and they didn't toy with flower power afterwards; the single was rather more sardonic than straight, naive flower power. And on top of it all, the elder statesmen of the movement were the Beatles. Their summer '67 single was 'All You Need Is Love'. At the time, along with Donovan, the Beach Boys, Mia Farrow and other celebrities, they were experimenting with Transcendental Meditation at the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's retreat in India. (The Maharishi, too, brought out an album on Liberty.)

Along with the records by established figures, who were coming to be accepted practically as Gurus as well as musicians, the companies were releasing singles with many of the trappings of flower power, while at the same time having wider commercial appeal. Comparatively sophisticated bands like the Beach Boys ('Good Vibrations') and the Mamas and the Papas ('California Dreamin'') came to be the main voices of commercial flower power music. They had a gentle, euphoric sound, and inspired the two most typical attempts of

the straight music business to cash in on the new style.

The biggest hit – it was a worldwide best-seller – was Scott MacKenzie's bland, catchy 'San Francisco'. The lyric advised that if you were going there, you should be sure to wear a flower in your hair. A smooth, professional job, it obviously wasn't hippies who put it to the top of the charts. In the late '60s they considered singles to be plastic relics of the bad old days of 'give the public what it wants' showbiz. 'San Francisco', a million-seller, stayed in the British Top 20 for 14 weeks, after which little more was heard of Scott MacKenzie. In the typical 'pop' style of topical hit records, the singer was less important than the sound and the subject matter. Flower power had, with this record, been turned into pure pop, and absorbed into the mainstream.

### One-Hit Wonders

The British equivalent to McKenzie's hit had the same sort of bland, catchy tune – in this case enlivened with some clear, clean Beach Boys-style harmonies. Again, the title – 'Let's Go To San Francisco' – left no room for confusion, and neither did the name of the group. Incredibly, they were called the Flowerpot Men, after two puppet characters on a children's TV show. The record was a big hit but, just like Scott McKenzie, the group was never heard of again.

Such point-blank commercialisations of what was a sincere hope for a better world may have dismayed the more conscientious hippies, who were, in any case, not quite the same breed as the flower children, though the media were usually happy to lump the real thing with the fashion as if it were the same. As it happened, the flower children were hardly to be seen by the time summer 1968 came along. Colourful, complicated clothes were gradually discarded in favour of more general-purpose freak apparel – jeans and denim

jackets – and though the life-style didn't change too drastically, public displays of flowerdom and the constant use of the words 'nice' and 'beautiful' grew scarcer.

As far as the music was concerned, flower power had never been more than one form of the rebellion that had characterised rock & roll right from the beginning. Underground music was brought to the general market by flower power, and improvised blues/rock – growing heavier all the time as amplifiers grew bigger – remained the dominant sound well into the '70s.

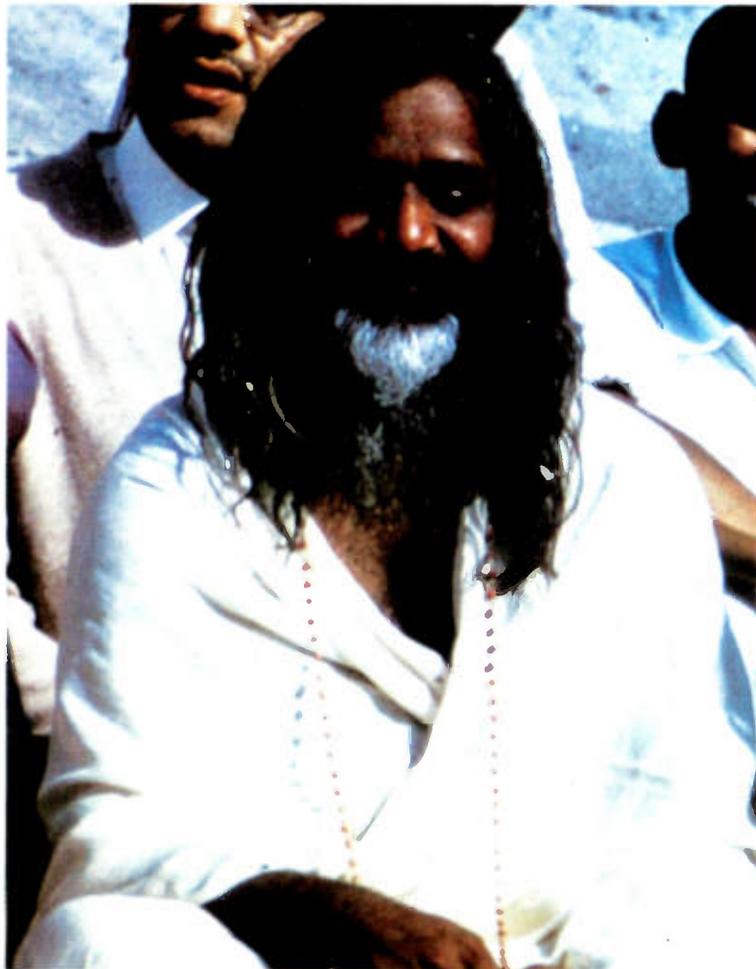
Perhaps the most lasting effects of flower power were the new, wildly improbable names that groups chose. Eric Clapton went against the trend when he formed Derek and the Dominos. Out-and-out commercial bands often took their lead from such American bands as the Strawberry Alarm Clock (who had a hit in the flower summer with 'Apples, Peaches And Pumpkin Pie' – which was hardly psychedelic – and the Lemon Pipers (who did well with 'Green Tambourine').

Perhaps the epitome of the flower power movement was a foursome called the Fool: two men and two girls who dressed like spaced-out medieval pages. They were responsible for the 'psychedelic' design painted on the Beatles' Apple shop in Baker Street, London; the cover for the Incredible String Band's '5000 Spirits' album; and they managed to make an album as well, which Graham Nash produced for Mercury. The songs on the album were a wild, random rag-bag of drug romanticism, anti-materialism and quasi-poetic wanderings sung in childlike harmony over a soft rock backing. Looking back on it, it now seems remarkable that the record was ever released, as both the technical and musical quality was low, but then criticism was something to be indulged in only by old, grey, bourgeois minds.

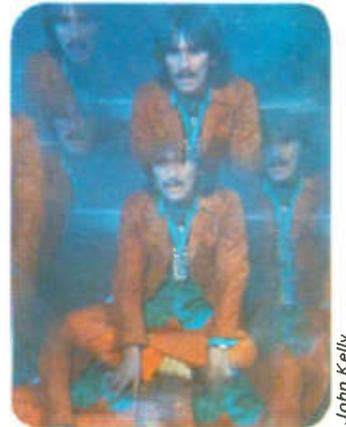
As it happened, flower power was probably the most exclusively bourgeois manifestation of pop since the war. Working-class kids thought it was silly and had no time for it or the hippies. Skinheads in Britain regularly picked on peace-loving hippies, and they certainly didn't buy the records because what they wanted was something a little more meaty. You couldn't do any snappy dancing to flower music. Stoned freaks would maybe do a little 'idiot dancing' down at London Clubs like the UFO and Middle Earth, but most people found it more comfortable to just ride along on the sounds.

The '70s seem to have changed the whole emphasis back again. Since the heady days of the late '60s, rock has again become much more physical, and groups like Slade are concerned with getting everybody up and going – old-style rock sold better than love 'n' peace.

Looking back, one of the oddest things about flower power was that, despite the inordinate amount of publicity and fuss it caused, there weren't more than a dozen hits and precious few really good bands to come out of it.



Whose idea was it to go to India? Probably George's because he was into the Indian influences at that time. So they went and stayed with the Maharishi, the whole gang and more. Why did they leave? Because the Maharishi seemed to think more about the ladies, especially Mia Farrow, than cosmic consciousness. But George stuck with the philosophy.



John Kelly



All pics Pictorial Press

**NEXT WEEK IN POP:** Honest to Goodness Pop.



EMI



Record Mirror

**BLACK MUSIC: '50s-'70s**

# MOTOWN: The Early Years

The beginnings of all great legends are usually shrouded in mystery and obscurity, and it is an invariable rule that the greater the subsequent fame and public acclaim, the greater the tendency to exaggerate and embellish these origins.

Thus all rags-to-riches success stories perpetuate a Cinderella-like fable that becomes increasingly distorted with each re-telling. Such a fate overtook Tamla-Motown when people slowly started to recognise them, and it certainly did them no harm.

Very few people are in a position to know how Tamla-Motown managed the mammoth task of competing with the colossal American record industry and, in the struggle, was able to grow in stature from a tiny recording studio to a multi-million dollar showbiz complex. But that's what happened, and since everybody loves a winner, when the jackpot is hit, we all tend to forget that fate, good luck, and a

little help from our friends may also have played their part. In the recording world, having a great record to sell is only part of the story – or otherwise all those superb recordings that should have been hits but weren't, would not just be sad memories – and Tamla-Motown was quick to take advantage of the long overdue changes that were taking place in America and other parts of the world.

At the time that Tamla-Motown was established, a gradual shift in attitudes was coming about in the USA; a change that had begun in the early days of rock & roll. At that time the American music charts were divided into a straight pop chart and a rhythm & blues chart. In effect this was merely a euphemism for dividing the record markets into two – the white market, and the black market. At one time there was very little overlap between the two and, to this day, it is true that black buyers tend to prefer recordings made by fellow black recording artists. But since black Americans only constitute one tenth of the population, this market, although useful for getting a record off the ground,

did not in itself represent hefty sales or rich pickings. What any company had to crack – if it was in fact going to hit the Big Time – was the white audience, and since the two styles of music they seemed to enjoy were quite different, it appeared to be an impossible hurdle. Tamla-Motown more than anybody else managed to make black music acceptable to white ears. But not without a little help from their friends . . .

The President and founder of the Motown Record Corporation was Berry Gordy Jnr., a remarkable black American who, in his mid-30s, had already known both success and failure. Show business and hard work were not new to him, for he had opened a record shop that went bankrupt, and had dabbled in boxing, song-writing and the daily grind of working on a car assembly line in Detroit's world famous car plants. He had also seen how successful the record industry could be when he was connected with Chess-Checker Records in Chicago. It was in fact through his sister Anna (who later married Marvin Gaye) that Gordy acquired his first substantial hit, and although it was not their



*Syndication International*

**Opposite page: Berry Gordy Jnr., founder of Motown Records and Mary Wells. Above: The Supremes ten years ago, manage to look older than they do now.**

first record, enough people thought it was to establish it, and the Tamla-Motown company, as a force to be reckoned with. 'Money' by Barrett Strong was issued in 1960, and transferring en route from the Anna label to Tamla, it became a smash hit in the R&B market. In those days the term 'soul' was limited to describing ultra-slow and heavy records by black artists (the sort that invariably sell less than 200 copies should somebody be foolhardy enough to issue them in Britain!), and in Britain the market for R&B records was miniscule at that time. 'Money' was issued in Britain on the London label, and like so many great records that label, was doomed to instant obscurity. As time was to show however, at least one copy of this record found its way into the collection of some young guys in Liverpool.

Gordy had made firm friends with Smokey Robinson and the Miracles way back in Chicago, and 'Money' was in fact recorded in the Chess-Checker studios there. The Miracles were the first of a procession of black artists and groups to be signed by the infant corporation, and the company's labels soon proliferated to embrace, amongst others, Tamla, Motown, Gordy, VIP and Soul (which had been registered to market gospel recordings, but later proved a most fortuitous acquisition when after a few years 'soul' became the word that displaced 'R&B'). A simple house was acquired on West Grand Boulevard, and this soon expanded

to include two neighbouring houses, and it was just a matter of time before the hits started rolling.

At about the same time as these hives of creative and artistic activity were getting into top gear in the States, a phenomenon that was later dubbed 'The Liverpool Sound' was slowly beginning to emerge in Britain. Only the dedicated R&B fan knew that very few of the songs these groups were recording were original, most of them being indifferent copies of black American originals, but since most record buyers in Britain had little chance to get to know and love the real thing, the artists suddenly found they were riding the crest of a wave of success. The fact that they were doing so on the backs of Black America didn't worry them for an instant, and, as for Black America . . . well, they were used to being over-ridden.

In the States too, changes were slowly coming about that enabled the black dollar to become more powerful, and with the growing momentum of the Civil Rights movement, black was slowly emerging to be seen not only as beautiful, but as exciting and dynamic too. The white rock scene in America had reached a static stage, and only black records seemed to be saying anything that could relate to those times. In Britain every American hit seemed to be 'covered' with disheartening regularity by home-grown copy-cats who took full advantage of the fact that a British recording always had an odds-on

chance of being broadcast in preference to an American one. The Beatles were just around the corner.

In the States however, Motown was rapidly increasing its share of the market, and their records were selling fast. The Miracles almost made no. 1 with their recording of 'Shop Around', and at last the Marvelettes brought home the company's first no. 1 disc with their incredible 'Please Mr. Postman'. Stevie Wonder was just 12 years of age when he signed with them, and his live recording of 'Fingertips' became the first record ever to top both the Hot 100 and the R&B charts simultaneously.

A young and sensual-looking beauty by the name of Mary Wells soon began to emerge as the top star at Motown, and with records like 'Bye, Bye Baby', 'You Beat Me To The Punch', and the immaculate 'Two Lovers', she began to collect fans all around the world. The Contours too had hit pay-dirt with 'Do You Love Me', and although the record was a big hit for a group in Britain as well, at least Gordy had had enough business acumen to ensure that most of the songs his company recorded were also published by their own Jobete Music Publishing wing, and so they collected at least some financial reward when others had hits with their inspirations.

Despite all their American successes however, the market for Motown records in Britain looked hopeless. After only releasing a few records, London Records lost the British rights to Fontana – whose marketing policy was equally lack-lustre – and after a few timid sorties to sell this distinct sound they too abandoned them, and Tamla-Motown were without an outlet in Britain. R&B fans were reduced to importing what they could direct from the States (a much more difficult task in those days than it is now), and this dire situation prevailed for far too long. Then, as a result of a personal visit to Britain by Berry Gordy Jnr., the company signed with the UK Oriole label. The records were issued more frequently then, but the problem was that they were too far ahead of their time for a market that had been satiated and brainwashed with middle-of-the-road schmaltz, but their influence on dedicated R&B fans and local musicians was immense.

### Massive Promotion Campaign

Now that the records were at least available to British fans, what was needed was a massive promotional campaign to sell both the distinct Motown Sound and the many artists who contributed towards making it, and nobody could have claimed to have had a more dedicated and devoted fan-following from the general public. Though only a minority in the general pop spectrum, these fans seethed with burning injustice whenever they heard white plagiarists make use of the ideas and inspirations of others, and these same stolen creations hailed by DJs who should have known better but seldom did!



Associated Newspapers

From left to right, front row: Supremes, Florence, Mary, Diana. The Vandellas, Betty, Rosalind, and Martha. Second row: The Temptations, David Davis, David English, Otis Williams, Paul Williams, Eddie Kendricks and Pete Moore of the Miracles. Back row: The Miracles, Smokey Robinson, Bobby Robinson and Ronnie White.

After about a year with Oriole, Motown then changed their British outlet to the Stateside label, and were full of optimism that this might produce those much needed hits. As many had expected and predicted, the first British hit ever for Motown came via Mary Wells and her recording of 'My Guy'. The jinx had been broken at least, but one hit does not a summer make, and worse still, just as Ms. Wells was riding a crest of popularity, she announced that she had no intention of renewing her contract now that she was 21, and the company immediately vetoed her follow-up recording – a little number entitled 'Where Did Our Love Go?'

There were several contenders to be considered for the throne that Mary left vacant: Brenda Holloway (although she was not much liked in the company), Kim Weston, and Martha, of Martha & the Vandellas; but it was a previously little-known group called the Supremes that was destined to become the hottest property that Motown had ever had before or since. They had already had about seven singles issued in the States, a minor hit with 'Let Me Go The Right Way', and a substantial hit with 'When The Lovelight Starts Shining Thru His Eyes', but this success was largely confined to America's black market. To begin with they had been four in number, but one soon dropped out, and they spent much of their time as back-up group for more well-known acts.

It was the abandoned Mary Wells

follow-up that was the vehicle to sustain the winning momentum and acceptance for the Motown Sound in Britain; and 'Where Did Our Love Go' became a colossal hit. Still the coveted no. 1 slot eluded the company, but the Supremes' follow-up, 'Baby Love' (a song written by the gifted Holland, Dozier and Holland team specifically aimed at making no. 1 in Britain) did the trick in September, 1964.

### Motown Revue

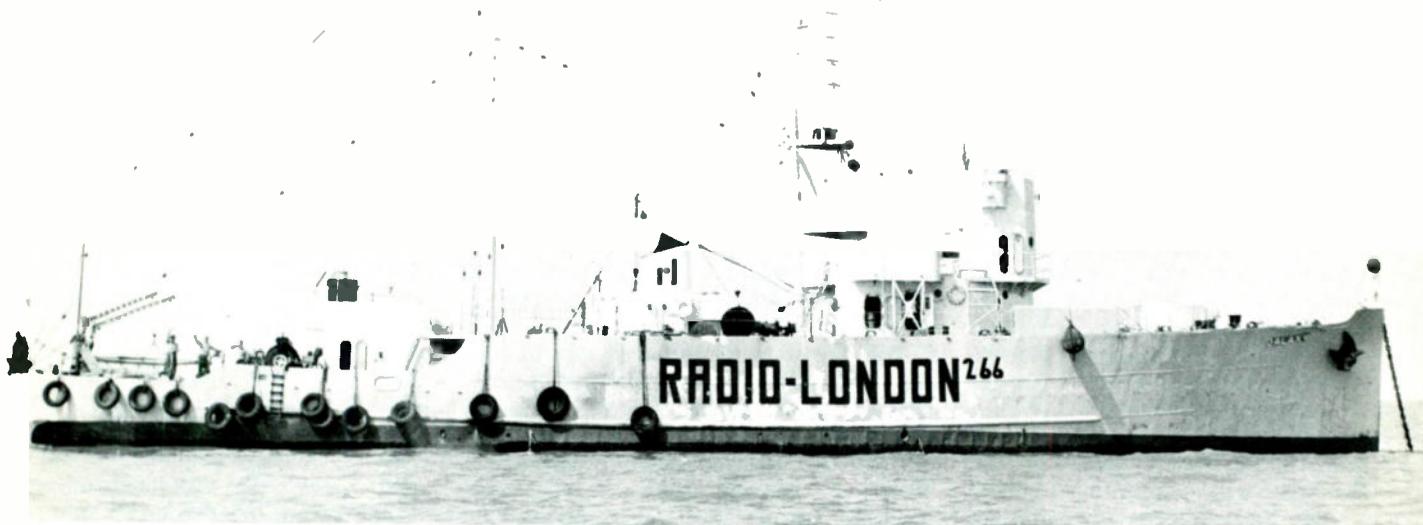
Changes in the style of life experienced by the young record devotees of Britain also worked in the company's favour. The 'pirate' radio stations, in their determination to show their power and influence by making some records hits which weren't even on the playlists of other radio stations, leaned heavily on R&B records, and slowly the word 'soul' was heard more and more. The success of releases on the Stateside label also encouraged the company to get their own logo on which to release their records in Britain, and this was launched to coincide with a tour of the legendary Motown Revue. In one package on this tour British audiences had the chance of seeing the Miracles, Stevie Wonder, the Earl Van Dyke Band, Martha & the Vandellas, the Supremes and the Temptations!

To everyone's amazement however, the public stayed away in droves, and, apart from packed houses in London and

Manchester, the show was very poorly attended. In one house at Cardiff, there were even more people on stage than sitting in the audience! But, although the public were not yet ready for them, the media was, and they received maximum publicity and TV exposure.

From then on goodwill and publicity seemed to come from all directions. The Beatles, who were building their own following, never hesitated to berate the British public for their indifference to such brilliant creative talent as represented by the Motown Record Corporation, and by way of tribute, included many Motown songs in their early albums – the sales of which were in time to become so phenomenal that the royalties from these tracks often provided Motown with more money than the originals. It was sadly evident that the real big-time money was to be found in the white market, and it was the people who were buying records by the Beatles in such quantity that had to be reached.

It was this realisation that caused Motown to begin slowly divesting itself of its image as a 'black' company, and in realising what lay ahead, they also knew that the music itself would have to be slightly modified to be acceptable to the mass market. The R&B era of the company was over, and for the second phase of their development, Motown underwent a gradual change as they aimed solely and steadfastly at 'pop' fame and fortune.



Sport &amp; General Press Agency

# Pop On The Airwaves

The radio, or as it is still referred to by the older generation, the wireless, has really been the primary medium to spread the word of pop.

At the same time there seems to have been less said about it than about either TV or films. This is partially because it has only one dimension – sound – and has had no real need to develop a visual equivalent to pop music, only to relay it. Yet perhaps more important is the way it has been used by the pop generation. Its main characteristic is the fact that it has become a kind of mobile-pop.

This could never have happened without the development of the transistor radio. The old 'wireless' – that old-fashioned, heavy object, filled with acid batteries – would have been absolutely useless to pop. It was very much a family object, but the invention and subsequent mass production of the transistor radio changed all that. It evolved at the same time as pop, a perfect illustration of the chicken-or-the-egg rule which crops up with such amazing consistency in the pop culture.

Of all the media, radio has been persistent in isolating the pop spirit, in admitting it to exist as a separate entity. This is a comparatively recent development in Britain; in Lord Reith's day it would never have been countenanced, but with the division of sound radio first into Light, Home and Third, and of course later into Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4, the structure was there even if the use to which it was put was a reflection of pop as the corporation would like it to be, rather than what it was.

Up until rock & roll, in broadcasting,

as in everything else, popular music, whether played by DJs or dance bands, was aimed at a comparatively mature audience. Edmundo Ross was the prototype of the immediate post-war years. It is sometimes forgotten, however, that an alternative to the BBC was in existence well before the war. Radio Luxembourg, especially on Sunday, provided that alternative, and while no doubt decorous enough by present standards, it appeared quite adventurous in those far-off days, particularly as it included advertisements.

As a commercial station, it was without doubt the first true pop programme, and the model for pirate radio when it came along in 1964. Yet Luxembourg too was slow in understanding the pop revolution of the mid-'50s. It aimed itself at a consumer audience, and it took some time for the realisation to sink in that the new consumers were teenagers. It was the record boom that altered all that. The record companies started buying air-space on Radio Luxembourg and suddenly its musical output began to alter drastically.

## Pop Audience

The BBC, however, was as usual late in recognising the change in musical trends, and during the mid-'50s it was catering for what it believed to be its pop audience, with programmes such as *Forces Favourites*, *Housewives Choice*, and one of the first DJ shows, Jack Payne's *Off The Record*. All these programmes left little room for the ever increasing interest in rock & roll and skiffle.

In October 1958, British listeners were given the first radio programme devoted entirely to pop music. The programme, *Saturday Club*. Two hours of records, live

groups and interviews which, for over 11 years, faithfully interpreted pop – in its own way. For all but the last two of those 11 years, its MC was Brian Matthew, who was to become one of Britain's top five 'hip' DJs.

Who were the other presenters of Auntie BBC's pop family? Well, there was David Jacobs. He had a beautiful speaking voice and a ready smile, but wouldn't stand for any nonsense. Pete Murray, the smooth-talking DJ and of course everyone liked the Australian DJ Alan Freeman. He had such a jolly voice . . . 'Hello pop-pickers', he'd say. On the other hand everyone was a little bit doubtful when a newcomer came down from the North. Jimmy Savile did look a bit odd with his funny clothes and dyed hair. He was very flamboyant but the kids could identify with him more than they could with the rest of the family, so he passed. Those then were Auntie's front men who played the music.

The enormous pop explosion in 1963–64 made very little difference to the BBC's approach, it was just that there was more of it. Trad, as in the clubs, dwindled slowly away and the groups took over. On the Light Programme every lunchtime there was a solid hour of live pop music played by a dance band who were able to reproduce the records of the period, in many cases featuring two or three vocalists who could not only sing but mimic. Occasionally the actual groups appeared 'live' on this lunchtime fiasco, and the carefully arranged screaming from the invited audience was supposed to add an air of authenticity. This continued because the BBC thought they had the whole thing sewn up. But alas!

In April 1964, the first pirate radio ship came on the air, and the demise of the

BBC's pop itinerary slowly grew on the horizon. The pirate fleet led by Caroline and London, acted as a focus for two separate brands of discontent. On the one hand they aroused the political enthusiasm of those who resented Harold Wilson, while on the other hand they won the loyalty of the young Mods who rejected the paternalism of the BBC. The pirate ships, by a mixture of cheek and legal loopholes, held out for almost three years.

What did they do that Auntie didn't? Well for a start they played good records, including the smaller and more experimental labels. They also concentrated on playing album tracks, and in this respect they were instrumental in shifting the taste of a wide section of the pop public away from the Top 20 and towards the possibilities of pop music as a more profound means of expression. They were also less chart-fixated than the BBC.

Secondly, these stations were for the kids. They not only gave them all what they wanted but they projected it with a certain evangelical conviction. Nor was it all mid-Atlantic hype. There was room for excellent specialist programmes, on the blues for instance. The pirates were usually willing to experiment, and by so doing they discovered a trend of a surprising and unlikely nature. Radio London was responsible. It put out a late-night show called *The Perfumed Garden* created and presented by John Peel. The success of this 'underground' programme was phenomenal, and it was most certainly a taste of things to come.

Eventually, the pirate stations were outlawed. They had long been a thorn in the government's side, a kind of caricature of free enterprise; but there was an unsavoury side to them, and the Postmaster General's hand was strengthened by the occurrence of a genuine boarding party leading to a death by shooting on a pirate radio station called Radio City in the Thames Estuary. This, more than any of the earlier arguments

against taking up air channels that might be needed by sinking ships or crashing planes, gave the authorities a popular excuse to act, and by the late autumn of 1966 the pirate radio stations were outlawed and forced to shut ship.

## Radio One

Then the BBC, having regained their monopoly with government assistance, appeared overcome by guilt and determined to try and replace exactly what they had just destroyed. To this end they ditched the old Light/Home/Third structure in favour of Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4, of which Radio One was intended to provide a faithful equivalent to the late pirates.

The Corporation's first step was to sign up (on admittedly judiciously short contracts) almost all the ex-pirate DJs, and then to photograph them – as a proof of good intent – on the steps of Broadcasting House in London. Then the day was chopped into sections, each allocated to one of the new whizz-kids, the old family were either dismissed or put out to grass on the squarer pastures of Radio Two, and a series of pseudo-jingles extolling the new wavelength were taped in readiness. The results were dire.

Where did the BBC go wrong? The heart of pirate radio, its main attraction, was its illegality. Everything else stemmed from that. Its DJs might stammer and stutter and get things wrong, its equipment break down, its ships go off the air for hours at a time, but none of this mattered. The illegality was the excitement. In particular, the jingles that the BBC played seemed totally meaningless. In the pirate days they had a function as clearly defined as hoisting the Jolly Roger – they identified the station. Now that the only station was the BBC, this identification was meaningless. Finally, Radio One made another thing clear: that most of the pirate DJs were hopeless at their jobs and would have to be dismissed at the end of their trial

periods. And so the old family – Messrs. Jacobs, Murray, Savile and Co. – were back aboard. Eventually, this imitation of pirate radio was watered down and Radio One became just another BBC channel.

There were successes, however. Several of those recruited from the mutineers were only too willing and eager to conform. Simon Dee was one. He went from DJ to TV star, with his own brand of chat show, to a member of the queue at his local labour exchange. The other pirate-boy-made-good is dear old Tony Blackburn... the housewives' pin-up. However, in addition to these, there were exceptions to the rule.

They came in the shape of 'The Emperor Rosko', alias Mike Pasternak; John Peel and last but by no means least, Kenny Everett. Everett, an original humorist, used pop music as the launching pad for the rocket of his surreal sense of fantasy. But he was hardly the apple of the BBC's eye. His over-independence and anarchy was too much for them, and he has frequently been under a cloud for irreverence. DJs, according to Auntie, are supposed to know their place.

Yet these three swallows are the only claims that Radio One has to a pop summer. There is no sign either that the new and more rigid proposals in that sad document *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, will lead to a more imaginative approach in the future.

In the month of October during the year of 1973, almost 15 years behind the States, Britain introduced the first of its commercial radio stations. Starting cautiously, they were a foretaste of the pattern that broadcasting in Britain was to take. It is ironic that the pop industry in Britain, which was based on its US counterpart in the '50s, developed quickly enough to rival it, while radio had been kept under a tight monopoly and unable to follow in the footsteps of the extraordinarily sophisticated series of networks in thousands of small stations across the Atlantic.

This is what the good ship Radio Caroline actually looked like. Right: the Caroline DJs relax on deck.



with him. He'd been there before the big break, and had even made some tapes for Joe Meek, with his group the Senators, in 1963. But afterwards Meek hadn't called.

At first, the A&R men that saw Jones didn't display the same foresight as Mills had done. They wanted groups, and Tom Jones and the Squires didn't count. Besides this his image was all wrong — he was too old at 24, his face was battered and he was altogether the wrong size and shape: 'It's not that I don't like his voice, it's just that . . . Next please.' Eventually, however, Mills managed to get him a contract with Decca. Jones recorded 'Chills And Fever', it was released as his first single, and it bombed.

During this period Jones stayed alive by running up Mills' overdraft and making demos. Naturally he made demos of Mills' own songs, so when Mills wrote 'It's Not Unusual' with Les Reed — hoping to place it with an already established female singer and thus stand a good chance of making it a hit — Tom sang it for the demo. His instant liking for the song was clear in the way he performed it. All a demo requires is competence, and after that it's the song that's being sold — not the singer — but Tom wanted 'It's Not Unusual' for himself, wanted it bad, and he got it.

The first no. 1 by a new singer is often described as a surprise hit, especially when the singer has no form at all. The term, though, is often a cover-up for the promoters who neglected to plug it, the journalists who didn't review it, and the DJs who didn't get around to playing it. In fact, 'It's Not Unusual' wasn't any kind of a surprise hit. It had a strong melody, a neat catch-phrase, and an exhilarating tempo; it was arranged brilliantly, and sung with more muscle than anyone had heard in ages. Knock the Seekers off the top? Easy. It was, quite simply, a natural.

### Classic Pop Song

Here, maybe, is the only time Gordon Mills played Tom Jones wrong. The kids who saw Tom on *Ready Steady Go!*, or heard the record on the radio and went out and bought it, weren't buying Tom Jones, they were buying 'It's Not Unusual'. They didn't buy it because they were attached to the way he looked, but because they were suckers for a classic pop song. What happened next was a failure to follow it. His next release, 'Once Upon A Time', which was supposed to push up through the charts when 'It's Not Unusual' dropped out in April, did nothing. It was a weak follow-up, but Tom's chances with it were killed stone dead when Joe Meek looked out those old 1963 Tommy Scott tapes and cut 'Little Lonely One'. Tom made statements in the press disassociating himself from its 'dated' sound, but Joe Meek insisted it was a good record and Tom should be proud of it. Whatever its merits though, it split the buyers and smothered what small life there was in 'Once Upon A Time'.

In July, an old Billy Eckstine number, 'With These Hands', reached no. 13 and

Syndication International. All other pics. Rex Features.



showed they were still plugging the voice. Then, in September, 'What's New Pussycat', a bizarre film title-song written by Burt Bacharach and performed in monstro bravura style by Jones did slightly better and reached no. 11. On the strength of these songs Jones was voted fifth in the British Male Singer category of *Melody Maker's* 1965 popularity poll, but after that . . . nothing. 'This And That', 'Stop Breaking My Heart', 'Thunderball', all got nowhere. Apart from 'Not Responsible', which scraped in to the Top 20 at no. 18, he didn't have a hit in Britain between September 1965 and November 1966. What he did have was a car smash and his tonsils out.

But the message had got through to Mills. Tom wasn't for the kids. That was the bad news. The good news was that if the kids didn't like him, another generation would. So he quit one-nighters that the pop stars and the groups did, put on a tuxedo, and moved into the cabaret circuit. There he cleaned up.

The cabaret audiences weren't all middle-aged, many were in their 20s, but they weren't young at heart. They were steady company men who wore suits and short hair and drove company cars. Maybe they'd been a bit wild in their teens – pulling girls, getting drunk, punching heads – but then they'd got married and settled down. If you were a junior company man you couldn't have long hair even if you wanted it and anyway, when you got married you had to smarten up a bit. Stands to reason. So they probably didn't like the long-haired groups – disapproved or envied the way they carried on – and their wives didn't like them either.

### A Real Man

Now, Tom Jones was different: he was clean, he was smart, he didn't have long hair. More than that, he was a real man. You could tell the difference between him and a girl without any trouble, and what's more he sang loud and clear and didn't mumble beneath the clangour of loud guitars. Here was a man's man – and a woman's man.

Tom really played up to them. He didn't find it difficult because he felt exactly the

same way. After all, he'd cut loose as a kid, then settled down in marriage, and in Pontypridd people had strong and traditional ideas about what was what. In interviews he invariably said all the right things: how, when he was a teenager, if he tried to tell his old man what to do he'd feel the backside of a hand across his face; how he hated the protest movement; how anyone could take drugs, but it took a man to hold his drink; and even sometimes felt like crying when he sang 'My Yiddish Momma' or 'My Mother's Eyes'; how he loved his mother; and how he phoned his wife every day he was away. Naturally he was the champion of male chauvinism. He once said: "I think a woman's job is to serve her man," and pronounced, "a woman may like to think she's equal, but she's not." His fans loved it. The men respected the way he handled himself and the women wished he was their breadwinner. Tom had it made from there on in. When he sang the manfully maudlin 'Green Green Grass Of Home' late in 1966, it went straight to no. 1 and stayed there for seven weeks.

During this period he also conquered the States, where the rift between the over-25s and pop music was even greater – they didn't just have the longhairs, there they had the Monkees as well. Also, they didn't really have Elvis any more since he'd become a recluse in Memphis, unseen in years apart from his movies. So Tom moved in and took over his live audience. On stage, in fact, Tom resembled the early Presley in the uninhibited movements of his body. Off stage his views were pretty popular as well, especially when he said he thought you should fight for your country. He became the hard hats' hero, and the fantasy of the blue-rinsed matrons.

Eventually he took the Copacabana in New York, the Flamingo and Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. Elvis Presley went to watch his act, and Frank Sinatra said he was Tom's number one fan. His British-made TV series showed weekly to enormous ratings, and the stars queued up to be his special guests. These days, as a result, he spends six months of every year in the States. Not bad going for a hod-carrier from the valleys.



## BACK TRACK

**Born 1940 in Glamorganshire; real name Thomas Woodward. He married at 16, and supported his wife and child working as casual building labourer. He earned a few pounds singing in pubs as Tommy Scott.**

**1963: Formed a backing group, the Senators, went to London to audition for Joe Meek – turned down.**

**1964: Gordon Mills 'discovers' Scott in Pontypridd – changes name to Tom Jones and the Squires. Eventually signs with Decca.**

**Singles, all with Decca:**

**1964: 'Chills And Fever' (miss).**

**1965: 'It's Not Unusual', 'Once Upon A Time', 'With These Hands', 'What's New Pussycat', 'Not Responsible', 'Thunderball'.**

**1966: 'Green Green Grass Of Home'.**

**1967: 'Detroit City', 'Funny Familiar Forgotten Feeling', 'I'll Never Fall In Love Again', 'I'm Coming Home'.**

**1968: 'Delilah', 'Help Yourself', 'A Minute Of Your Time'.**

**1969: 'Love Me Tonight', 'Without Love'.**

**1970: 'Daughter Of Darkness', 'I Who Have Nothing'.**

**1971: 'She's A Lady', 'Puppet Man', 'Till'.**

**1972: 'The Young New Mexican Puppeter'.**

**1973: 'Letter To Lucille', 'Golden Days'.**

**Albums:**

**1965: 'Along Came Jones'.**

**1966: 'A-tomic Jones', 'From The Heart'.**

**1967: 'Green Green Grass Of Home', 'Tom Jones "Live" At The Talk Of The Town', 'Thirteen Smash Hits'.**

**1968: 'Help Yourself'.**

**1969: 'This Is Tom Jones', 'Tom Jones "Live" In Las Vegas'.**

**1970: 'Tom', 'I Who Have Nothing'.**

**1971: 'Tom Jones Sings She's A Lady', 'Tom Jones "Live" At Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas'.**

**1972: 'Close Up'.**

**1973: 'Body And Soul', 'Tom Jones Greatest Hits'.**

Popperfoto

## THE SUPERSTARS

# This Is... TOM JONES

It's ironic that Tom Jones' career should have begun with an appearance on British television's *Ready Steady Go!*, for he was the anti-thesis of everything the programme represented to most of its viewers.

By 1965 *Ready Steady Go!* was at its peak, and for countless kids the weekend really *did* start there. School and work were over, and while they dried their hair, pressed their clothes, and checked out their new shoes on the latest dance steps, they'd keep one eye on the TV screen to make sure they weren't shaping their hair into last week's style, wearing last week's colour, or tracing out last week's dance in the wrong shoes. *Ready Steady Go!* belonged to the Mods.

So what was Tom Jones doing up there on a tiny stage surrounded by these snappy kids who wanted to see Georgie Fame or the Who? Mods were neat, mostly tiny it seemed, and very cool. Jones was a hefty brute who threw himself about and worked up a sweat that stained his shirt. He must've disliked the kids just about as much as they loathed him, but he had a couple of things going for him: a great voice and a good song – and three weeks after it entered the charts, 'It's Not Unusual' was at no. 1.

Tom Jones' success with that song at that time is indicative of two things: the decline of the record buying public's interest in groups, and his manager's sharpness in spotting this trend. In 1964 only three solo performers had made no. 1 in the British charts: Cilla Black (twice), Roy Orbison (three times) and Sandie Shaw (once). The Top 20 was dominated by groups, 13 of which topped the charts at least once. 1965, though, was different. In April, Cliff Richard returned to the top for the first time in over two years, to be followed by singers such as Roger Miller, Jackie Trent, Sandie Shaw, Elvis Presley, Ken Dodd, Sonny and Cher, the Seekers, and even the Walker Brothers . . . all emphasising the enormous changes from only the year before.

The Beatles, and the group boom of the early '60s, had wrecked the careers – or at least broken the chart success – of most of Britain's male pop singers. Adam Faith only made the Top 20 three times after 1962, Mark Wynter twice, Eden Kane once, and Marty Wilde, Craig Douglas,

Lonnie Donegan, Jimmy Justice, John Leyton had no further hits. Only Cliff Richard survived and, for another three years, Billy Fury. So once the public's overwhelming infatuation with groups had subsided, there wasn't much left to offer as an alternative . . . which is where Gordon Mills comes in, with Tom Jones.

Jones had been around for a long time – in Wales, that is. Born in Treforest, Glamorganshire, in 1940, he was still hanging out in pubs drinking under age when rock & roll hit the valleys in 1956. His 'career' started with bar-room singing – and enough brawling to break his nose a few times – and he'd give everything that was popular from the big throat – first for beer, then pound notes. Since Welshmen, especially in groups, probably make up the greatest nation of amateur singers in the world, Jones must have had something powerful going for him to get the rest of the boozers to shut up enough to join in at the right places, if not just listen.

### Tommy Woodward

At that time he was calling himself Tommy Scott. Tommy was real enough, but Scott was just what he figured to be a good name for a rock & roller. Not that his real name was Jones – like half the families in his street it was Woodward. The Jones bit came later, an invention of Gordon Mills (who subsequently transformed Gerry Dorsey into Engelbert Humperdinck), and it wasn't chosen to go down well with the folks back home, but to exploit the enormous success of the film of the same name.

Scott, however, was stuck in Pontypridd bars and working mens' clubs until long after rock & roll died. He sang on through the early '60s – switching from the Top 10 to old rockers, and then to even older songs. In those days though, neither his repertoire, his voice, nor the extravagant movements he began to jerk and bump together, were enough to make him a living – especially with the wife and kid he'd had with him since he was 16. So he worked as a casual labourer during the day, and later when he was a star and people said he looked more like a hod-carrier than anything else, that was the reason why . . . he was a hod-carrier.

When the groups broke out of Liverpool in 1963, and every town with more than three strummers and a fourth inhabitant



Rex Features

who could keep time threw up its own pop group, it didn't make a whole lot of difference to Tom's music. All he did was pull a few locals together to back him, and carry right on singing the way he always had done. He knew it made one difference, though: it made it harder to sell himself outside his home town – and that was the only way he was ever going to make it.

Gordon Mills, meanwhile, had been playing with a couple of groups. First, the Morton Frazer Harmonica Gang – Larry Adler with laughs – and later the Viscounts, who had had two small hits in 1960 and '61 with 'Shortnin' Bread' and a cover of 'Who Put The Bomp?'. By 1964, though, he'd given up performing to try his hand at songwriting, and during this phase he went to see Mandy Rice-Davies' act at a club in Pontypridd, but she didn't show. However, Tommy Scott did, knocked Mills out, and believed enough of what Mills told him after the show to move up to London



SKR

## THE MUSIC: LYRICS.

# Talking 'bout my generation



### SUMMER IN THE CITY

by John Sebastian, Mark Sebastian, Steve Boone

*Hot town*

*Summer in the city.*

*Back o' my neck gettin' dirty and gritty.*

*Been down*

*Isn't it a pity;*

*Doesn't seem to be a shadow in the city.*

*All around people lookin' half-dead,*

*Walkin' on the sidewalk hotter than a matchhead.*

*But at night it's a different world.*

*Go out and find a girl.*

*Come on, come on and dance all night;*

*Despite the heat, it'll be all right.*

*And babe,*

*Don't you know it's a pity*

*That the days can't be like the nights*

*In the summer in the city.*

*Cool town*

*Evening in the city*

*Dressed so fine and lookin' so pretty.*

*Cool cat,*

*Lookin' for a kitty;*

*Gonna look in every corner of the city.*

*Till I'm wheezin' like a bus stop*

*Running upstairs*

*Gonna meet you on the rooftop.*

*(Copyright: Robius Music)*

Dylan had liberated songwriters by showing that their talents need not be bounded in subject by teen love, broken hearts and adolescent agonies. No subject was now beyond their range, and the second half of the '60s saw a burst of creativity in which imaginations soared, conventions shattered and music took on new meanings. Pop and poetry had never moved closer together. 'Summer In The City' and 'Marrakesh Express' took their free-wheeling forms from modern poetry (which was already over 60 years old), rendered the thoughts into simple phrases, and set them to music. Songwriting had taken a bold step forward.

'Summer In The City' is just as it implies: a song about the heat of an urban summer, with the lyrics pared to the bone and not one word more than necessary. Set to the street sounds of

### MARRAKESH EXPRESS

by Graham Nash

*Looking at the world through the sunset in your eyes.*

*Travelling the train through clear Moroccan skies –*

*Ducks, and pigs, and chicken call, animal carpet wall-to-wall.*

*American ladies five-foot tall, in blue.*

*Sweeping cobwebs from the edges of my mind,*

*Had to get away to see what we could find.*

*Hope the days that lie ahead bring us back to where they've led.*

*Listen not to what's been said to you.*

*Don't you know we're riding on the Marrakesh Express.*

*Wouldn't you know we're riding, on the Marrakesh*

*Expressly taking me to Marrakesh*

*All aboard that train –*

*I've been savin' all my money just to take you there.*

*I smell the garden in your hair.*

*Take the train from Casablanca going south.*

*Blowing smoke rings from the corners of my mouth.*

*Coloured cottons hang in the air, charming cobras in the square,*

*Striped djellebas you can wear at home.*

*Let me hear you now –*

*Don't you know we're riding on the Marrakesh Express.*

*Don't you know we're riding on the Marrakesh Express.*

*They're taking me to Marrakesh –*

*All on board that train,*

*All on board.*

*(By permission of Warner Bros.)*

honking horns and power drills, this isn't the lush, sensual magic of the Californian sunshine, but a harsher, more stifling atmosphere of New York. Accordingly it is reported in short, bitten-off lines that themselves reflect the pace of city life. But, somehow, the romance remains. The magic of young nights and people making love in the open air gives the song an utter simplicity.

Graham Nash's 'Marrakesh Express' has much more mystery. It captures the glamour and adventure of a long train journey to exotic places. It is composed of fragments, glimpses of things half-seen, snatches of things overheard. The sights and sounds of North Africa are brilliantly created and the words rattle along, tripping off the tongue in time to the rattling rhythm of the music that echoes the sound of a train hurrying through the landscape.

**NEXT WEEK:** The lyrics to 'Whiter Shade Of Pale' and 'Groovy Kind Of Love'.

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# Rock Politics

Just as the protest singers of the early and mid-'60s had used rock music in order to voice their discontent, and the discontent of much of their audience; so, towards the end of the decade, definite political attitudes arising from this discontent found expression through the same medium – in other words the music became a vehicle for propaganda.

Of course this wasn't the first time that particular ideas had been expressed through popular music: country music in the States and straight Tin Pan Alley in Britain are areas in which no-nonsense patriotism or a rousing tune in praise of the military have always been good hit material. Regular march tunes like 'The Dambusters March' (in the British charts in 1955) or 'Colonel Bogey', given the right promotion (especially tied to a movie release), have regularly made the Top 20 from time to time. The old formula of 'love in khaki' didn't end with Lili Marlene and the peace of 1945 either: songs like Anne Shelton's 'Lay Down Your Arms' (no. 1, 1956) were potent propaganda in the sense that they *assumed*, without actually stating the fact, the basic virtues of the army, navy or whatever.

In C&W music the message often was stated, and in no uncertain terms. The classic example is 'Deck Of Cards', resurrected in the '70s by Max Bygraves, although originally a Wink Martindale number that made the charts in 1959 and 1963. This song can well be viewed as a piece of direct propaganda for the military and down-home fundamentalist Christianity, with the soldier explaining to his superior why he was dealing cards in church.

In much of country music, the basic assumptions of 19th Century White Anglo-Saxon Protestant morality are taken for granted – the virtues of 'salutin' the flag' and 'respectin' the Good Book', the defence of private property (whether it be money, land or women), and in this last pursuit the acceptance of violence as the obvious means to an end. Jerry Lee Lewis has always been forthright in his expression of traditional Southern values, no more so than in his early Sun recording 'The Ballad Of Billy Joe', in which violence is not only presented in a sympathetic light as the only solution to the problem of his girl's infidelity, but the subsequent death

penalty is also accepted as the just outcome of the saga:

*'I'll be hung tomorrow  
Just because I killed that little rat  
'Cos I swore he wouldn't get away with  
that  
And Billy Joe never got away with that'*

An apparent contender for the all-time prize piece of redneck country pie was Merle Haggard's 'I'm Just An Okie From Muskogee'. This song attacked all forms of '60s dissent, from long hair and pot-smoking to draft-dodging and demonstrations, but in later interviews Haggard suggested that the whole thing was in fact an elaborate put-on to ridicule and expose the backwoods attitudes it appeared to represent.

These attitudes have since been given a once-and-for-all seal of approval with an album of 'readings' by John Wayne under the title 'America, Why I Love Her'. Here, with suitable red-blooded backings, Wayne goes through monologues like 'Face The Flag' . . . 'flag that guarantees the rights for men like me and you' . . . and 'The Pledge Of Allegiance' that, as patriotic exercises, eclipse even the 'Ballad Of The Green Berets' – a US hit at the height of the Vietnam war.

Whereas right-wing conservative propaganda has tended to appear (not unnaturally) in traditional musical contexts (that is in traditionally 'accepted' forms of popular music); out of the radical end of pop has tended to come (when it's come at all) what could be described as leftist propaganda. The reasons for the appearance of this in the late '60s are as rooted in social history as they are in musical developments.

## Folk/Protest Boom

Through the '30s and '40s the radicals of American music in terms of politics were the group of folk-singers who later became the inspiration for much of the folk/protest boom of the early '60s – the most prominent being Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. Whereas much of the 'protest' singing that followed was just that, *their* songs were truly propagandist in that they clearly expressed a definite political stance. Guthrie's guitar bore the inscription 'This Machine Kills Fascists', and his songs like 'Union Maid' and 'Talking Union Blues' (that he wrote with Seeger) were equally explicit – lines like: 'some rob you with a six gun, some with a fountain pen' (from his 'Pretty Boy



Above: Grace Slick, singer with

Floyd) established Guthrie as a major voice – not just of music, but of *ideas*.

Guthrie and Seeger (particularly the latter) were political activists, not just entertainers, and were involved in strikes, demonstrations and various socialist and communist groups. These groups were at the time the only expression of left-wing dissent in an America that mistrusted even a whiff of socialism in the haven of free enterprise.

Later, in the '50s, such groups became prime targets in the face of McCarthy and his notorious House Un-American Activities Committee – a witch-hunting government agency that scoured politics, journalism and the arts (including music) for any sign of Red sympathies. Merle Haggard came up with 'House Un-American Activities Blues/Dream', which summed up what most of liberal America thought of McCarthyism.

It was a response to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) that led to the early development of the New Left in the States, and through the '60s this was to grow as the 'Movement' and became closely linked with the radical end of rock music.

The musical extension of the Movement at this stage was the 'protest' song – which in itself was to undergo some fairly revolutionary changes in the early '60s –



Fair Enterprises

Jefferson Airplane, a group whose material was very politically slanted.

when America felt the effect of the Beatles through all its popular music. But at the beginning of the decade protest singing was a 'respectable' sort of radicalism, in the same way as the Civil Rights movement (or Ban-The-Bomb in Britain) was, and heavy propaganda wasn't really a part of the picture at that stage.

### President Kennedy Assassinated

What happened through the '60s was a gradual erosion within the 'Movement' in general, of any faith that might have existed in the American democratic tradition. The assassination of J. F. Kennedy, the realisation that his administration hadn't been *that* idealist as was once hoped (for instance in the Cuban missile confrontation), the bombing of North Vietnam for the first time – all these factors made the radical youth of America less and less convinced of the virtue of reforms, and more inclined to revolutionary ideas and tactics. At the same time rock (largely through the influence of Bob Dylan) had become 'literate' in its lyrics, and could now be a vehicle for *ideas*. Then, as modern jazz and folk music gained a middle-aged sort of respectability, rock as a music of experiment and change became *the* music of the new radicals.

Another important development was the

gradual acceptance of the idea of Black Power as opposed to the reformist approach of the Civil Rights movement. This approach meant there was a growing acceptance of the idea of *self-determination* on the part of a group within society in order to create an *alternative* for themselves; instead of the old approach of working *within* the system to effect change. When this approach was applied to the new white youth culture, encouraged by both academics like Herbert Marcuse and hip-mystics like Timothy Leary (turn-on, tune-in, drop-out), then the Alternative Society (so-called) wasn't far away.

When the West Coast bands emerged in the flower power summer of 1967, they included in their number many bands with definite political leanings – especially those in contact with the radical campus movement centred around Berkeley. One of the original 'Berkeley Bands' was Country Joe and the Fish, and in their jug-band mixture of rock and good-time music ran a strong line in politico barn-storming, no more so than in the song they are most remembered for, 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die-Rag'.

Another California band of '67 that managed to hand out some hard-line stuff among all the love and flowers were the Doors. In singer Jim Morrison they had the perfect antidote to the overdose of

peace and tranquillity that the acid summer had produced. He was black leather and raunchy, and along with the sex managed to get in his contribution to the revolution of youth. In his '68 'Five To One' he defines the struggle to come:

*'The old get old and the young get stronger  
It may take a week, it may take longer  
They got the guns but we got the numbers  
We're gonna win, yeah we're takin' over'*

. . . melodramatic maybe, but propaganda all the same for the growing cult of youth that was becoming the focal point of dissent all over the world.

### Mayor Daley's Police

1968 was the year that youthful dissent spilled out on to the European streets in Paris, London and Berlin – the Paris events in May inspired like-minded groups elsewhere to take to the streets, and the big confrontation in the States took place a month or so later at the Democratic Convention in Chicago. The infamous handling of the demonstrators by Mayor Daley's police, and the subsequent conspiracy trials of the Chicago Seven, made Chicago a landmark in the Movement.

One of the immediate effects was the final break-up of the Movement, many joining more extreme revolutionary groups like the White Panthers and the Weathermen (here it seems worth noting a Dylan observation from his 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' of 1965: 'don't need a Weatherman to know which way the wind blows'). The Panthers, a Detroit outfit formed by John Sinclair, are only of interest here in as much as they were the situation in which the MC5 operated. The MC5 formed in 1967 and were managed by Sinclair – who also ran the White Panther Party and a centre called the Trans-Love Energies Commune. Their 'Kick Out The Jams' album was a considerable success, but when Sinclair went to jail on a drugs charge the band quickly lost its revolutionary fervour, and their old boss wrote from inside: 'You guys wanted to be bigger than the Beatles, and I wanted you to be bigger than Chairman Mao.' Sinclair still enjoys the support of the 'hip Left' in America, and received the accolade of a song on John and Yoko's 'Sometimes In New York City':

*'It ain't fair, John Sinclair  
In the stir for breathing air'*

The Yippies were another manifestation after Chicago, and represented the 'hippy revolutionary' approach of two of the Seven – Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman. The whole Yippy thing was anti-authoritarian rhetoric mixed with acid-freak jargon, and laced with plenty of references to rock music. It summed up the propagandist end of the 'Woodstock Nation', a term used by Hoffman to describe the significance of the festival at Woodstock in 1969.

Jefferson Airplane had been around since the West Coast days of 1967, and



J. Stevens

L.F.I.

Paul McCartney and John Lennon, who have both, separately, made political comments about the Irish struggle.

came on frequently with explicitly political material such as their 1969 'Volunteers' album. One track on this, 'We Can Be Together' (originally titled 'Revolution') was in fact virtually a call to the nations' disenchanted.

In British rock, meanwhile, there has always been much less sloganeering, mainly due to the fact that the youth of Britain always seems less seriously alienated from 'straight' society than in America and other parts of Europe. John Lennon is the only British rock musician who has really become involved in the political thing, and his involvement has anyway been in the American context. The late '60s, though, saw a couple of bands on the British rock scene who touched on political matters on stage: the Liverpool Scene poetry/rock group would end their sets with a diatribe against the right-wing politician Enoch Powell; and around the same time (and since) Edgar Broughton has kept the (red?) flag flying with his 'American Boy Soldier' and audience-chant of 'Out Demons Out' (and, perhaps more

significantly, with his constant attempts to keep rock a 'people's music' by playing lots of free concerts and benefits).

Northern Ireland (sometimes called Britain's Vietnam) has drawn surprisingly little response in terms of propagandist rock. For quite separate reasons, the only two prominent examples have come from John Lennon and Paul McCartney. McCartney wrote 'Give Ireland Back To The Irish' two days after the Derry shootings of 1972:

*'Give Ireland back to the Irish  
Don't make them have to take it away  
Give Ireland back to the Irish  
Make Ireland Irish today'*

. . . and Lennon's comments came on the 'Sometime' album, in 'Sunday Bloody Sunday':

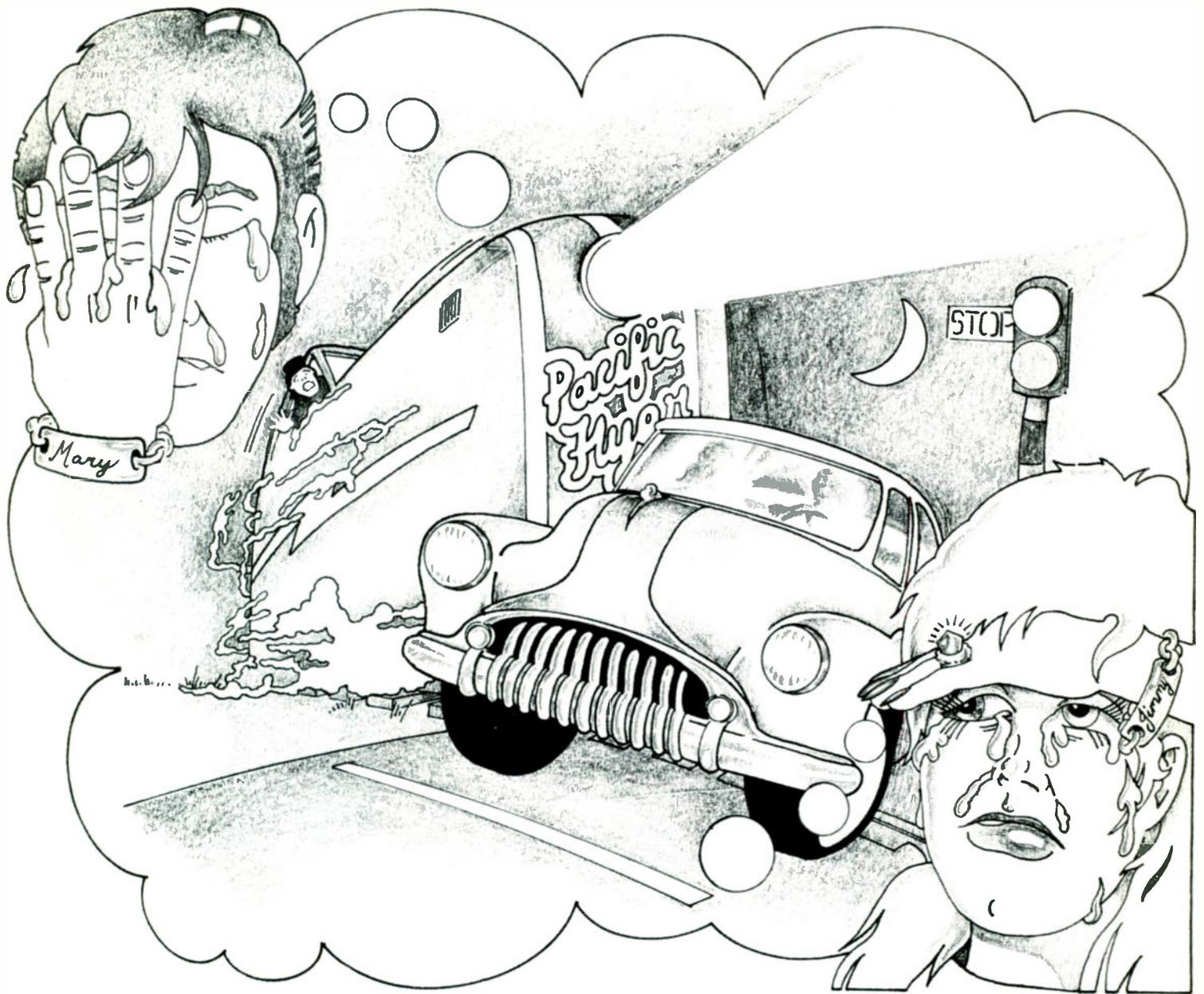
*'Not a soldier boy was bleeding  
When they nailed the coffin lids'*

and 'The Luck of the Irish':

*'In the 'Pool they told us the story  
How the English divided the land . . .'*

As has already been pointed out, Lennon's revolutionary stance is as much part of the 'hip Left' of New York, and in the 'Sometime' album he tends to blunt the edge of his attack by having a go at everything – Women's Lib., Angela Davis, Sinclair, Ireland, Attica State Prison – they all feature in songs on the album. The effect was a lot keener on 'Imagine', with only two directly propagandist items, 'I Don't Wanna Be A Soldier Mama' and 'Gimme Some Truth'.

As the fervour appears to have died down with the ending of the Vietnam war – as with the demise of flower power – what once seemed a profound statement on various rock records often appeared rather opportunist. But with rock being such a potent force in shaping the lifestyles and ideas of the '70s, it is bound to become from time to time a powerful vehicle for the kind of political propaganda that emerged during the '60s.



ROCK: '50s-'60s

# Death Discs

In the late 1950s the American pop industry stumbled upon a new and startling hit-making formula: the 'death disc'. Jody Reynolds started the ball rolling with his big 1958 hit 'Endless Sleep', a song covered successfully in this country by Marty Wilde. Suddenly, death discs were big business.

*'I looked at the sea and it seemed to say  
I took your baby from you away  
I heard a voice crying in the deep  
Come join me baby in my endless sleep'*

Death discs sparked off the biggest pop controversy since Elvis and the rise of

rock & roll. 'Endless Sleep' and its successors were received as further signals of universal teenage degeneracy, condemned as 'sick' and 'unhealthy' by parents, teachers, politicians, preachers, journalists, psychiatrists and pundits everywhere.

Strictly speaking, death discs were not rock & roll. But they were its mutant offspring, and quite inconceivable without it. Rock & roll effectively transformed the audience for popular music, making it more and more exclusively teenage. The popularity of rock & roll, and the astonishing readiness and willingness of teenagers to spend their money on it, at first took the music industry establishment by surprise. They were used to catering for older and

wealthier sections of the community, whose tastes more closely mirrored their own. But by the late 1950s they had adapted pretty well to the new situation, and were cheerfully churning out pop songs that attempted to connect with teenage interests, preoccupations and fantasies.

Sooner or later, someone was bound to discover that teenagers were also interested in death. After all, nearly everyone thinks about death at one time or another, and teenagers are certainly no exception to that. People have always enjoyed hearing songs about death, they can be found in traditional English folksong, in white American country music, in black American blues and gospel, in Tin Pin Alley sheet music.

But the teenage death disc, when it finally arrived, was a new kind of song about death, located in a distinctively teenage universe, a clearly recognisable separate *genre*. 'Endless Sleep', with its sub-Presley vocal and heavy sexual undertones is very obviously a death disc, where the Kingston Trios' earlier, and equally controversial, 'Tom Dooley' is merely a song about death. The story line

of 'Tom Dooley', an old folk tale about a murderer about to hang, is entirely foreign to the teenage universe in which 'Endless Sleep' and its true successors are set.

The teenage universe of 'Endless Sleep' is pretty much the same place occupied and celebrated by Pat Boone and Fabian and Neil Sedaka and all the rest of the teenage crooners of the 1950s. It is a universe, peopled by teenagers facing great obstacles to their love. But the teenagers in death discs don't just break up after an argument over who's been untrue, or because they're too young to marry: they are split up finally and definitively by an implacable, external force – by sudden and terrible death.

## Teen Angel

And though it's a universe created for teenagers, it's more truly child-like in its conception and essential appeal. The lost loved one usually becomes a Teen Angel, ascending to Heaven on the wings of ethereal choirs, there to await the one he or she loves, for eternity:

*'Now it's too late to tell this boy how  
great he was  
He's waiting at the gates of Heaven for  
me'*

Twinkle, the English one-hit-wonder of 1964, described her own death disc 'Terry' perfectly: 'It was just a fairy tale' (*Let It Rock*, May 1973). A fairy tale banned by ITV's famous pop show *Ready Steady Go!* as 'sick, unsuitable and morbid'. Yet a fairy tale all the same. Terry and Twinkle, Romeo and Juliet – death discs plunder universal mythology. The props may be up-to-date (stock cars, trains, motorcycles) but the tragedy is timeless. It's pulp tragedy, for sure, but it has a certain elegance and simplicity, and it always sounds like it's all very deeply felt. The best death discs have the hard, bright clarity of the comicbooks. And, no doubt, they appealed to very much the same audience.

*'Teen angel can you hear me?  
Teen angel can you see me?  
Are you somewhere up above?  
And am I still the one you love?'*

All this ceaseless yearning and unashamed sentimentality appears to be a very long way from the real rock & roll of the mid-'50s, from the insistent demands for gratification of Elvis and Chuck Berry. The narrator in a death disc never complains or protests: Fate has triumphed, and all protest is redundant, if not actively sacrilegious. And yet, like all good fairy tales, death discs cast light upon barely conscious hopes and fears. Ray Peterson's US hit of 1960 'Tell Laura I Love Her' (covered in Britain by Valance) took up the theme of teenage social problems originally introduced by Chuck Berry and Eddie Cochran. Tommy, in this song, loved Laura and wanted to buy her a wedding ring. But he had no money. He entered a stock car race for big money prizes, 'the youngest driver there'. And of course, he

crashed and died. His famous dying words:

*'Tell Laura I love her  
Tell Laura I need her  
Tell Laura not to cry  
My love for her will never die'*

It's a dated song. No one except maybe Donny Osmond would now make a hit record about teenagers desperately wanting to get married. But for its time, it was exactly right. Teenagers in those days, or at least teenage girls (to whom death discs were primarily addressed) expected to fall in love. Everything around them told them that they should: records, movies, radio, TV, magazines.

So, on the one hand teenagers were being bombarded with propaganda for love: it was the miracle selling ingredient in all the teenage entertainment industries. But on the other hand, they were denied sexual expression of their love, both inside and outside marriage. These conflicts enter the teenage fantasy of 'Tell Laura I Love Her', force Tommy into his vain attempt to escape his teenage, social and economic powerlessness and get rich quick. And yet, there can be no happy ending. The conflicts involved in being a teenager are finally resolved only by death. Heroic death.

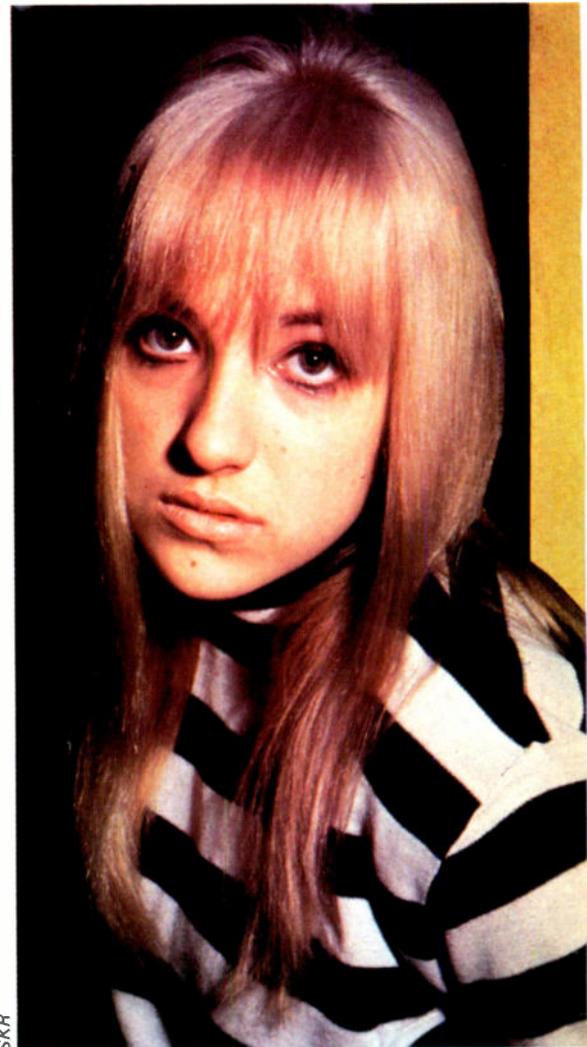
The death disc craze seemed to peter out in the early '60s. In many ways, it was typical of the decadence of post-Presley pop, circa 1959–63: manufactured, soft-centred and exploitative. The American critic Richard Goldstein hailed the Beatles as saving the world from 'death songs, pretty boys and payola'. Yet the death disc clearly touched some vital nerve in the teenage audience. And even after the Beatles had supposedly regenerated pop, death discs for a while gained sporadic success.

## Fatal Drag Race

The Californian duo Jan and Dean hit big in 1964 with their 'Dead Man's Curve', the story of a fatal drag race. 'The last thing I remember doc/I started to swerve . . . ' 'Dead Man's Curve' was a fairly straightforward teen-movie morality tale, gaining its appeal from the very evils it was supposedly condemning. True love was nowhere in sight: just speed and necrophilia and the shadow of James Dean.

In the same tradition of highly polished and totally fabricated studio pop music came the New York girl group, the Shangri-Las. Romeo and Juliet, speed and machinery, the pains of being a teenager – the Shangri-Las integrated all these obsessions into the one inarguable classic of the death disc genre, 'Leader Of The Pack': a number one US hit in 1964, banned from English TV on its first release, a hit all over again here on its recent re-cycling:

*'My folks were always putting him down  
They said he came from the wrong side  
of town  
They told me he was bad  
But I knew he was sad . . .'*



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The narrator of this song, 'Betty', recalls how she had to tell Jimmy, the motorcycle gang leader, that her father has forbidden them to see each other. Jimmy took the news hard.

*'He sort of smiled  
And kissed me goodbye  
But the tears were beginning to show  
As he drove away on that rainy night  
I begged him to go slow  
But whether he heard I'll never know . . .  
CHORUS: Look out! Look out! Look out!  
(sound effects: a bike crashing)*

Very high melodrama, performed with passionate involvement.

Shangri-La Mary Weiss summed it all up fairly exactly: "We try to stay real close to our audience. Most kids have a hangup with their parents and a lot of girls want to be the centre of attention, the way the girl in 'Leader Of The Pack' is." Jimmy is a martyr to parental prejudice and blindness. And Betty is the living heroine of the tale, choking back her tears, the centre of attention. She's lost Jimmy, but in a strange way she's won. By losing him forever she can love him forever, thereby shaming and defeating her interfering parents. And meanwhile, ennobled by her grief, she can maintain the admiration and respect of her friends. A perfect fantasy.

While the Shangri-Las never did equal



Twinkle, the one-hit-wonder of 1964, and the Californian duo Jan and Dean.

'Leader Of The Pack', they did make some very interesting and imaginative extensions on the death disc theme. In 'Give Us Blessings' (a song previously recorded unsuccessfully by Ray Peterson) Mary and Jimmy are both very young, but as much in love as two people can be, and 'all they wanted was to be together/and share their love eternally'. Mary's parents refuse them permission to marry. Worse, they *laugh* at the children. Mary and Jimmy drive away, elope. The next day they are found dead. *See what you did?* This song screams out to the now grief-stricken parents.

Then, in 'Out In The Streets' the Shangri-Las successfully reversed 'Leader Of The Pack'. This time the boyfriend is accepted by the girl's parents, cuts his hair and throws his boots away, settles down in suburbia. He's won the girl, but lost out to the system, because 'his heart is out in the streets'. It's a song of spiritual rather than physical death, and implies that the latter would have been far more noble.

Most heartbreaking of all is 'I Can Never Go Home Anymore'. This time a complete turnaround. A daughter walks out on her mother to live her own life. She's haunted by guilt, by loneliness, by the Yiddish lullabies her mother used to sing, but she has too much 'girlish pride' to return home. The final tragedy – she can never go home

again because her mother has died of a broken heart.

*'She got so lonely in the end  
the angels picked her for a friend...'*

With these songs the Shangri-Las and their songwriters presented a finely balanced picture of the middle class teenage condition, *circa* 1959–1965. A condition of impossible tension. You can't leave home and you can't stay. If you marry Jimmy he'll be unhappy in suburbia, but if you break up with him he'll die. Problems, problems, problems. Death is the only way out, and yet no way out at all. It's a mistake to view these songs as naive. They were, in fact highly sophisticated corn.

Finally, death discs just died away, apparently made redundant by the arrival of the first fully-fledged teen Protest songs, and appeared quaint and irrelevant to the Love Generation. Protest kicked much harder and louder than death discs against the adult world. And then, acid-rock chose to deal with the problems evoked by the Shangri-Las simply enough, by refusing even to admit their existence. Acid-rock was characterised lyrically by a complete disregard for the opinions of the older generation, by a total indifference to their feelings. Or, in rare instances, by outright

hostility. 'Kill the father', screamed the Doors. Oedipus unbound.

But teenagers did not cease to exist in 1967. They still lived at home, putting up with the same sort of parental aggravation and very often in a state of subdued civil war. If the romance comics are anything to go on, young teenage girls still fantasise about forbidden love and elopement and even death. Death, for the young, is still a very potent myth, in no way matter-of-fact. Not all that much has changed. Death discs may have passed temporarily out of fashion, but all the reasons for their previous popularity are still present: we have the recent renewed success of 'Leader Of The Pack', primarily with a new generation of record buyers, to assure us of that. And any one of the new teenage pop idols could probably still score successfully with a death disc.

### Newspaper Campaign

Why were death discs so very controversial? Were they really 'sick'? At this distance in time, it's often difficult to imagine what all the fuss was about. Why, for example, did the *Sunday People* choose to mount a campaign against the US no. 1 of 1964, 'Last Kiss', by J. Frank Wilson and the Cavaliers? What was so offensive about a boy stealing a last kiss from his dying girlfriend in the wreckage of his father's car?

*'She's gone to Heaven  
So I've got to be good  
So I can see my baby when I leave this  
world...'*

Offensively sentimental, no doubt – but sick? The campaign against death discs seemed to rest on the notion that death was a subject best kept away from the children. Or at least, death as a cause for concern. Death in westerns or war films was perfectly alright, but not death that upset anyone, and certainly not teenage death. Then again, perhaps the campaigners discerned the thin edge of teenage rebellion somewhere behind the mists of Heaven in those morbid fairy tales . . .

Death discs weren't sick, but they were usually pretty sickly. They were cheap, mass produced mimics of emotions, produced specifically for an emotionally vulnerable and immature audience. They tell us a lot about what it means to be a teenager.

They also tell us quite a bit about the mentality of some record producers – the pop industry can be an extremely boring place in which to work, and one can imagine the great fun that was to be had in the studio, dubbing on the sound of crashing motor-cycles, cars and planes, and getting the singer to sound 'sincere' in all the right places, when in reality he/she was probably rolling round the floor having hysterics.

Maybe death discs were the classic example of the young being cynically manipulated by calculating capitalists, or maybe they just brought a little drama into boring suburban lives – who can say, but at the time they were not to be laughed at.

# Drugs In The Rock Culture

Of all the elements that make up today's youth culture, drugs are probably the most controversial. Yet few people would attempt to deny that drugs are now in widespread use among the young. Equally, this use of drugs is opposed and condemned by many influential sections of the community. How then have we reached a state of affairs where so many young people are prepared to run the risk of both disapproval and possible legal repercussions?

Cannabis (also known as marijuana or Indian hemp) grows wild in North America and has long been used by the American Negroes. The gangsters of the Prohibition Era were the first large group of white people to make use of the drug, but by the '30s the habit of smoking marijuana had been adopted by many white American jazz musicians as one of the many influences that they had absorbed from their black counterparts.

Cocaine, a drug that produces artificial energy, also has a history that stretches back to the black slave culture, where it was sold to Negroes on the cotton plantations to help sustain them at their back-breaking tasks of cotton planting and picking. By the '40s it was generally acknowledged that cannabis, cocaine, and heroin were all in widespread use among the jazzmen and blues musicians of the time, both black and white.

## Individual Freedom

In the '50s the Beat Generation, spearheaded by novelists Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs and poets Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Gregory Corso, evolved a non-conformist style of life that depended on individual freedom, mobility, sexual permissiveness and the use of drugs of all sorts. The Beats rapidly gained an enormous following among the young, and whole new areas of the American community, particularly the children of the middle classes, came into contact with drugs for the first time.

It is generally believed that the first widespread, illegal use of drugs in Britain started with the extensive immigration of West Indians into Britain in the mid-'50s. Cannabis had long been in everyday use in the Caribbean and, naturally enough, many of the new immigrant population continued

using their traditional form of drug relaxation after they had settled into their new lives. At the same time a number of jazz musicians in Britain took to using cannabis (as others were later to use heroin) in imitation of their American musical idols.

Also about this time many young people in Britain, inspired by the novels, poetry, and widely-publicised exploits of the luminaries of the Beat Generation, adopted a non-conformist life-style that included the considerable use of the drugs cannabis and heroin. By the end of the '50s the 'reefer' (cannabis cigarette), if not the 'fix' (heroin injection), had become an acknowledged (if not socially acceptable) part of the life-style of an amorphous sub-culture in Britain made up of beatniks, West Indians and jazz musicians.

Sometime around 1960 the amphetamine craze started in London's West End, and by 1963 it had become nationwide. Amphetamines were in everyday medical use on prescription as a pick-me-up for tired housewives and the like (a situation so aptly parodied by the Stones' 'Mother's Little Helper'), and there were a number of spectacular robberies from chemists' shops and pharmaceutical warehouses to satisfy the ever-growing black market demand for amphetamines.

An integral part of the frenetic life-style of the Mods, amphetamine pills such as Purple Hearts, French Blues and Black Bombers, made it possible for Britain's newly-rich working-class youngsters to cram a week's experience into the 60 continuous hours of the weekend that was their only real free time. The *Ready Steady Go!* TV programme, with its 'The weekend starts here' slogan epitomised the desperate, hell-for-leather hedonism of the Mods.

The Mods, perhaps because of their extremely localised origins, managed to create a culture that was both stylistically cohesive and ideally suited to the regular use of 'pep pills'. The Mod clubs that rapidly sprang up, first in London's Soho and West End, and later across the whole country, acted both as clearing houses for the illicit buying and selling of pills and as a focus for the overall Mod experience – and the music produced in those clubs both reflected and created the pre-occupations of their audiences. The Who's 'My Generation' (October 1965), with its stuttering parody of the speech habits of a kid blocked out of his head with pills, wasn't the first song to reflect the pills craze . . . but it was by far the most effective.

While the Mods went on from strength

to strength, endlessly refining their style in pills, clothes, hairdos and music, their counterparts among the young British middle classes were gradually absorbing the great 'reefer' tradition of the '50s – first through the Trad Jazz clubs and events like the Beaulieu Jazz Festivals and later, and more potently, through the crop of seedy all-night blues clubs and folk clubs that began to spring up in 1963 and 1964.

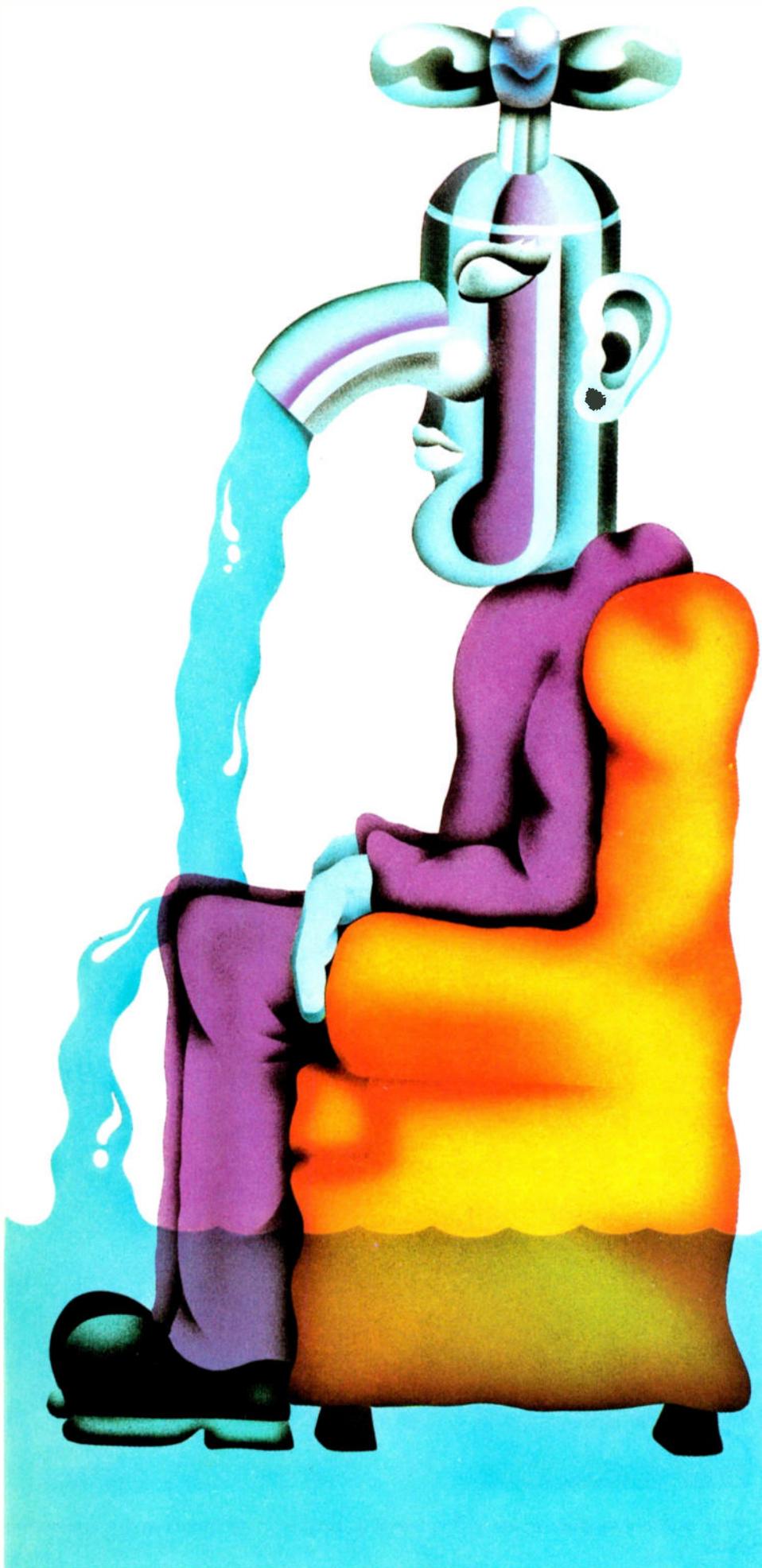
Lonnie Donegan enjoyed a substantial chart success in the early '60s with a bowdlerised version of the traditional cocaine-sniffers' song 'Have A Whiff On Me', and Reverend Gary Davis' 'Cocaine' became a standard on the folk/blues circuit. By the end of 1964 the R&B boom was well under way, carrying the blues (and with them, the 'reefer') further into established middle-class strongholds like the universities and art colleges. It was no coincidence that the 'B' side of the Stones' second single, 'I Wanna Be Your Man' (December 1963), was called – simply – 'Stoned'.

## Bohemian Centres

By the '60s, beatniks as such had disappeared, but traces of their culture remained most obviously in the widespread use of cannabis by students, artists and other habitual non-conformists on both sides of the Atlantic. In the States, New York's Greenwich Village quarter and San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district were both noted bohemian centres, and both acted as focal points for the ever-accelerating drug revolution of the '60s.

Greenwich Village rapidly achieved prominence as a centre of the American folk boom, and Village clubs like the Gaslight, the Bitter End and the Playhouse became breeding grounds for the new drug culture. The American folk boom is memorable above all for bringing to prominence a young folk-singer called Bob Dylan – and it was Dylan, with his song 'Mr. Tambourine Man', who produced the first great drug anthem of the '60s.

While Dylan on the East Coast was starting his gradual rise from local to international stardom, major changes were also taking place on the West Coast. When the original impetus of the Beat Generation had fizzled out in the early '60s, Ken Kesey, a noted beat novelist, had settled in San Francisco. Like many of the American Beats, Kesey had experimented with the hallucinogenic drug Mescaline, and when the synthetic hallucinogen LSD became readily available



in the early '60s, he moved on to experiment with this new drug. Sensing the enormous potential of this powerful, consciousness-expanding drug, Kesey recruited an intrepid band known as the Merry Pranksters, who were dedicated to the idea of introducing as many people as possible to the delights and horrors of acid.

In 1965, Kesey and the Pranksters staged the notorious series of 'Acid Tests' in San Francisco, events at which large numbers of people were unknowingly dosed with LSD and then left to sort out the consequences. In 1966 they took their ideas a stage further when, working in conjunction with Augustus Owsley III, the noted acid manufacturer, and the newly-formed Grateful Dead rock & roll band, they staged the famous Trips Festival in San Francisco's Longshoremen's Hall . . . an event which introduced the 'mixed-media' idea of simultaneous music, tapes, films and light-shows that was later to become a flower power cliché.

By 1967, drugs had become a focal point in the growing conflict between the younger generation and the rest of society – as the release in June, 1967, of 'Sgt. Pepper' (an album steeped in drug mysticism and full of veiled references to drugs) by those darlings of the older generation, the Beatles, so clearly demonstrated. The much-publicised trial of two of the Rolling Stones on drug offences at this time only served to emphasise the gulf that was steadily widening between the old and the young.

### Oriental Wisdom

The process of taking sides in the age war was accelerated by the arrival, along with 'Sgt. Pepper', of 'flower power', an idealistic youth philosophy that was based primarily on drugs, rock & roll music and scraps of oriental wisdom. Out of flower power was born the succession of festivals that started so hopefully with Monterey, Woodstock, the Isle of Wight, Bath and Glastonbury, and eventually deteriorated into the psychic horror of Altamont and the obvious capitalist exploitation of many of those that have followed.

Since the 1960s the use of acid has declined somewhat, and the activities of psychopaths like Charles Manson have made many people realize that the effects of LSD are not automatically beneficial, nor is acid necessarily a guaranteed short cut to Utopia or Instant Karma. The great acid dream may have been over, but drugs of all sorts – including more recently an increasing number of 'downers' (barbiturates, Mandrax and tranquillisers) – were in widespread illegal use in society and came to be irrevocably linked with rock & roll music. Like it or not, drugs became an integral part of the life-style of the rock generation – though the quest for mind expansion has given way to a search for oblivion which when drugs and music combine is often possible.



Joseph Stevens

While on tour with Wings, in August 1973, Paul McCartney was arrested by Swedish police in Gothenburg for smuggling marijuana. Above: Linda, protesting on Paul's behalf.

# POP FILE

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

**GUY MITCHELL** was one of the smooth, sports-jacketed American singers to be washed away by the mid-'50s rock revolution. He made the original version of 'Singing The Blues' which was no. 1 early in 1957 in Britain and the US (Tommy Steele also made no. 1 in Britain with his cover version). In 1957 he also scored with 'Knee Deep In The Blues' and 'Rock-A-Billy', but despite his attempts to accommodate himself to the new music after 'Heartaches By The Number' (1959) he faded from popularity.



**JONI MITCHELL** was born on November 7th, 1943 in Alberta, Canada, and was a student at Alberta College of Art in Calgary, intending to become a commercial artist, when she took up ukelele. She began playing some local coffee houses and left Alberta for Toronto, where she continued to sing and began writing her own songs. She married in Toronto in 1965, and moved to Detroit with her husband in 1966. The marriage was soon dissolved and Joni continued singing in Detroit and then moved to New York. She made a name for herself among the New York folk fraternity more as a songwriter than a singer, but released her first album 'Joni Mitchell' in 1968. Once some



big names, including Judy Collins, Buffy St. Marie, Tom Rush and Dave Van Ronk, had recorded her material and people started taking notice of the slim, pale-faced Canadian girl. Among the songs she has written are 'Both Sides Now', 'Chelsea Morning', and 'Woodstock' as well as 'Big Yellow Taxi', which was a hit for her. Her other albums are 'Clouds', 'Ladies Of The Canyon' and 'Blue' (all on Reprise). She is now working on another to be released on Asylum.

**MOBY GRAPE** were Jerry Miller (guitar), Peter Lewis (guitar), Bob Mosley (bass) and Don Stevenson (drums). They were launched in a blaze of publicity by Columbia in May 1967 when Skip Spence, ex-Jefferson Airplane drummer played rhythm guitar with them. No less than five singles and one album ('Moby Grape') were released on the same day. The singles weren't hits and the album was unremarkable, run-of-the-mill West Coast music. In 1968 the Grape counter-attacked with a double album (released as a single album in UK) 'Wow/Grape Jams', with a fine surreal cover painting, a track that plays at 78 r.p.m. and

the first of the recorded jams, which feature the group playing with Al Kooper and Mike Bloomfield, as well as improved songs (notably 'Murder In My Heart For The Judge'). In 1968 Spence left the band, which continued as a four-piece and produced 'Moby Grape '69' before disbanding. From the outset the Grape were determined to make it big at all costs, and maybe that overriding determination contributed to the whole misfire operation.

**THE MONKEES** were formed in 1966 in answer to an advertisement placed by a group of American businessmen, led by producer Don Kirschner, for a four-piece group for a TV series they had set up. The series was obviously derivative of the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night*, and the four successful applicants appeared complete with Beatles haircuts and smiles. Mickey



Dolenz, Davy Jones, Michael Nesmith and Peter Tork jumped through the hoops demanded of them and became the idols of the teenes and weenies. They also made some good records in the process (though it's doubtful whether they played on most of them) including 'I'm A Believer', 'Last Train To Clarksville' and 'Daydream Believer'. In 1969 Tork left the group which continued as a three-piece for a while.

**THE MOODY BLUES** were formed in Birmingham in 1966 with Clint Warwick, Mike Pinder, Denny Laine, Ray Thomas and Graeme Edge. In 1964, 'Go Now' reached no. 1 in the UK and no. 5 in the US, but the group disappeared shortly after, apparently one-hit-wonders. John Lodge and Justin Hayward replaced Clint and Denny, and the band played cabaret until 1967, when Mike Pinder got into Mellotron. The group unveiled their new sound on the 'Days Of Future Passed' album, from which their 'Nights Of White Satin' single was taken. This marked the beginning of a new era for the Moodies, who have produced a series of orchestrated, progressive albums including 'In Search Of The Lost Chord', 'On The Threshold Of A Dream', 'To Our Children's Children', 'Every Good Boy Deserves Favour' and 'Seventh Sojourn'. In 1969 the group launched its own record label Threshold.

**THE MOOG SYNTHESIZER** was originated by Robert Moog in the mid-'60s. It is an instrument that is capable of making a vast range of electronically generated sounds, but it is played on a keyboard which made it less laborious to make complex music on than previous electronic systems. Walter Carlos' CBS album 'Switched On Bach' was the first well-known album where all the sounds are made by a Moog, while the Beatles were among the first to use a Moog in the rock field. Since then many groups including Pink Floyd, ELP, The Who, Manfred Mann's Earth Band, Curved Air and Roxy Music have made use of the Moog and other synthesizers that have followed it.

**VAN MORRISON** was raised in Belfast by working-class parents. He was influenced by his father's collection of jazz and blues records, and sang with a number of local groups before forming a group called Them in 1963. The following year he brought the group to London, and they made the charts with 'Baby Please Don't Go' and 'Here Comes The Night', as well as recording that memorable B-side 'Gloria'. The band never



repeated that success, and after three overlooked albums, numerous personnel changes and an unsuccessful US tour, Van broke up the group and left for the States to pursue a solo career. Initially he recorded with Bert Berns (writer of 'Here Comes The Night' and 'Hang On Sloop') before signing with Warner Brothers, where he has produced a fine series of albums including 'Astral Weeks', 'Moondance', 'Tupelo Honey', 'St. Dominic's Preview' and 'Hardnose The Highway'. He now lives in America and made his first solo appearances in the UK in 1973.

**MICKIE MOST**, after some years of attempting to make it as a rock singer, turned to record production and found his real talent. His most notable success was the Animals' 'House Of The Rising Sun' although he produced all the original Animals' recordings, as well as Lulu, Herman's Hermits, the Jeff Beck Group, all of Donovan's earlier records and Terry Reid's first album. He has formed his own label, Rak.

**THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION** were formed by Frank Zappa in 1966 as a deliberately outrageous and satirical group, although the quality of the music has always been important to them. Over the years Zappa has revealed himself to be an adventurous experimental composer, rock composer, record producer, hustler, commander-in-chief and guitarist. Their early albums 'Freak Out', 'We're Only In It For The Money' and 'Crusin' With Ruben And The Jets' contained sharp comments on both 'straight' and 'hip' America, but, after 1969, Zappa moved the group away from satirical material, into avant-garde music. He eventually split the group and then reformed it to perform part of his 200 Motels piece in 1970. Tempted by a vast sum of money to play at the Bath Festival that year, the touring Mothers appeared again. This line-up, which included Britain's Aynsley Dunbar on drums, as well as Mothers' original Ian Underwood, Howard Kaylan and Jeff Simmons, and Mark Volman, continued working until Zappa fell off the stage at the Rainbow, London, in 1971. The group then split leaving behind a bewildering variety of sounds and poses which may be added to by possible future editions of the Mothers.

**MOUNTAIN** were formed by record producer Felix Pappalardi in 1969. Inspired by his work with Cream as producer, he formed his own group that played free-form rock. Felix played bass, Leslie West guitar, Corky Laing drums and Steve Knight keyboards.

**THE MOVE** were formed in Birmingham in 1965 with the line-up Bev Bevan, Trevor Burton, Ace Kefford, Carl Wayne and Roy Wood. In 1966 they had their first UK hit with 'Night Of Fear', which they followed with others, including 'I Can Hear The Grass Grow', 'Flowers In The Rain', 'Fire Brigade', 'Blackberry Way' and 'Curly'. The group attracted considerable publicity



in 1968, when British Prime Minister Harold Wilson took out an injunction to prevent the group using a picture of him on promotional material. After various personnel changes the group ended up as Bev Bevan, Roy Wood and Jeff Lynne. Then, in 1971, the Electric Light Orchestra was started as a separate enterprise. This soon led to Jeff Lynne leading ELO and Roy Wood starting his own group, Wizzard, and so the Move was no more.

**GRAHAM NASH** formed the Hollies with his Manchester school friend Allan Clarke. He was responsible for playing acoustic guitar and singing, providing the distinctive vocal harmonies that were a major part of the group's sound. At the end of 1968, he left the band because they planned to record an album of Bob Dylan songs, and went to America where he teamed up with Steve Stills and Dave Crosby to form Crosby, Stills and Nash. He has released his own solo album and still works with Dave Crosby.



**JOHNNY NASH** was born on August 19th, 1940 in Houston, Texas. He was one of the first black entertainers to work on Houston TV. He later won a talent contest after which he dropped plans to attend UCLA, to appear regularly on the Arthur Godfrey radio and TV show. In 1967 he hit the US charts with 'A Special Kind Of Love' and had his first UK hit in 1968 with 'Hold Me Tight', which he has followed with 'Cupid', 'You Got Soul', 'Stir It Up' and 'I Can See Clearly Now', making him probably the most successful reggae-influenced artist.

**NASHVILLE** is the centre of America's country music industry, largely through the influence of its radio station WSM, and by the '50s, many record companies had studios there. Among the names who have recorded there are Chet Atkins, Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Charlie Pride, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Glen Campbell, Buck Owens and Bob Dylan.

**POP FILE**



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