

That's Right — The Hudson Brothers Are Recording Artists

by Stephen Fuchs

LOS ANGELES — There's a faster way of getting a smirk out of your neighbor in this town than by asking to borrow a cup of prunes. That is, walk down the streets of Tin Pan Alley West and tell the first person you see what a smash you think the new Hudson Brothers single has got to be. Sure, this is Hype City, but there's more to this story than meets the press release.

Information

In fact — sorry, Rogers & Cowan — the problem of the Hudsons runs deeper than a mere flow of information. The boys suffer, according to this doctor, from an acute form of the aerospace syndrome, the same disease that keeps engineers from feeding their families since rockets aren't taking off from the Cape like they used to. The malady is called "overqualification." Coupled with a slick ability to cope with television, film, stage and recording circumstances, the condition not only creates confusion within those the patient comes in contact with, but jealousy and fear as well.

Jealousy is what I felt the first — and only — time I ever saw the Hudsons perform on a summer TV replacement series while in Las Vegas some time back. Here were three brighter than white entertainers, obviously younger than myself, singing, playing instruments and *having a good time*, damn it, right up there on the tube! Why should this bother me? Because they didn't look like they'd done any starving in order to get there. Because they looked middle class. Because they were too close to home and it bothered my ego to identify with them. Nevertheless, they had scored and far be it for me to bemoan

someone else's success. After all, I make my living writing about things like that.

The confusion factor didn't become obvious until recently, however, when a very hot recording crossed my desk as singles reviewer for **Cash Box**. It separated itself from most of the others in a subjective fashion, admittedly, but in a way I would hesitate to qualify. The only words that seem to qualify "Spinning The Wheel" as anything other than an automatic stone smash, are those found on the label copy, reading: "Hudson Brothers." And that confuses me.

"The two worlds of music and television don't match; they don't move together," ponders Bill Hudson. "You've got to take a different approach," interjects brother Brett. "You've got to do one thing at a time," concludes Mark Hudson. "One thing at a time seems to be a rough proposition when three are doing it at once," thinks the writer, "but these guys are fuel-injected, so why not?"

'Razzle Dazzle'

"We're musicians and we make our own records. But when we produce our own music the rock world says we're television people. They think about our Saturday morning show, 'Razzle Dazzle' and our summer show and can't believe we could be serious musicians as well." (Since the Hudsons are so tuned into one another that one picks up speech where the other leaves off, we will omit trying to identify individual quotes.)

"Like Clark Gable doing that part of an Irish leader — a total stiff. Terrible reviews. Then he went right back to his 'normal' image that everybody knew him for and whom! You can't confuse the

public; but the industry is even more narrow-minded. If they love you they're raving about you. But if they become confused..."

Image

There's that word again. Could it have to do with a bubblegum image that programmers hold little regard for? What do the Hudsons have to say about the publicity they've been given in teen magazines?

"We don't hate it. Those kids are smarter than everybody thinks. The problem is that everybody is sophisticated. And it's pseudo-sophistication. Kids will walk across the street to see something because they aren't inhibited; their minds haven't been raped by social pressures. If they like it, they go and see it. They don't care if it's Frank Sinatra, Led Zeppelin, Elton John, David Cassidy, it doesn't matter. Your problems lie with people our own age because we're all trying to be cool. And that's putting it mildly. While your little sister may like the Hudson Brothers and your parents may like the Hudson Brothers, your 18-35 age bracket is going to reject the same things the rest of the family likes. That's the period you formulate your own ideas — not those of your mother or sister."

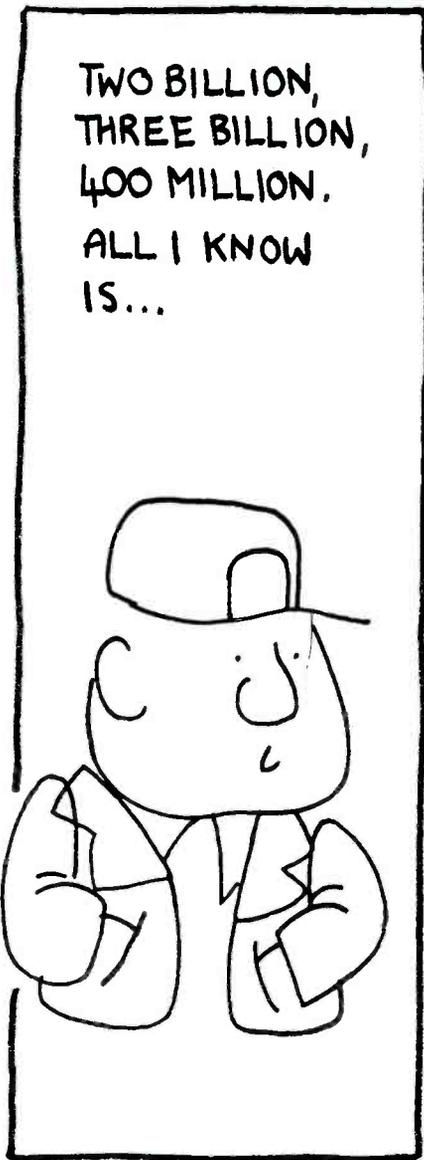
Does the same fear of independent thinking get in the way of radio programming? Apparently, although no one **CB** contacted was willing to say anything in print.

"Dennis Morgan at Rocket has done some really interesting things with our record," say the Hudsons. "He's the na-

tional promotion man. He sent a copy of 'Spinning The Wheel' to a rock programmer in San Diego. Only it was a test pressing — unidentified. The pd listened to it and called back saying it was the greatest record in the world and who is it? Dennis said 'Just play it for a couple of your jocks.' The jocks also flipped. Then Dennis told them it was the Hudson Brothers and they said 'sure ... come on.' But it's happened. You know where it happened? In Chicago. Paul McCartney came up to us and said, almost apologetically, 'we knew you worked in television and we thought you were crazy. But then our kids bought your albums and we listened to them and you're all right.' And it's kind of upsetting when you sing and play and get recognized by other musicians but can't get the credit due just because of your namesake, you know?"

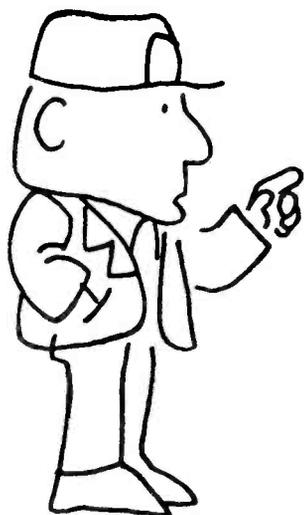
Where It's Really At

Jealousy ... fear ... confusion. It looks like the only way around this terminal disease of overqualification may lie in a bit *more* qualification. From the powerhouse behind their label, Rocket Records. Similar to the domestic endorsement he gave to Neil Sedaka, perhaps if Elton opened some tour dates with the Hudsons — who are produced by Bernie Taupin, perhaps then the exposure would take on a bit more meaning. Once the public fully accepts them as musicians, it stands to reason that radio will follow. And who knows music better than Elton John? After all, believe it or not ... the Hudson Brothers are recording artists.



... THE RECORD BUSINESS IS IN GOOD SHAPE.

ME, PERSONALLY, I'M DOING GREAT...



• IAN DOVE •