

MONKEES—something new

HOLLIES—sorting out time

By Bob Dawbarn



BBC censors will have to get to work

THE casualty rate among pop TV shows has been enormous of late — with shows either murdered by executives who hopefully announce that pop music no longer interests viewers, or prodded into suicide by rigid adherence to once-successful formulae.

New ideas are obviously desperately needed. And BBC-TV's The Monkees could be one answer, with zany comedy and story lines tagged on to America's answer to the Beatles.

The first show was promising rather than a huge success, but on his recent flying visit to his native Britain, the Monkees' DAVY JONES warned me that the series doesn't really take off until about the fifth show.

One thing is certain, the show has given an enormous boost to the Monkees' second single to be released in Britain, "I'm A Believer". The demand has been fantastic, and it shows all the signs of being the biggest seller in a long, long time. This week it's number five in the MM Pop Fifty.

Several shops, in fact, told the MM that they had run out of supplies and were unable to meet the demands of their customers.

The four young men with the pop world at their feet are MIKE NESMITH, from Texas; PETER TORK, from Washington D.C.; MICKY DOLENZ, from Los Angeles; and DAVY JONES, from Manchester, England.

TEN INSTRUMENTS

"Micky was originally a guitar player but they made him into a drummer," Davy told the MM. "In a year he has turned into a great drummer."

"Peter is the best rock guitarist around today. He plays about ten instruments in all — just about everything with strings. Mike and I also play guitars, although we are not in Peter's class."

A British tour is being lined up for next month and, according to Davy, it should be something new.

"We are trying to give the kids something different," he says. "I know everybody always says that, but we really mean it. For a start we do about an hour and ten minutes and we have lots



says DAVY JONES

of costume changes instead of just standing up there in spangled suits.

"We all do solo spots. I will sing 'Yesterday' or a Herman's Hermits thing. Micky does a James Brown and then Mike has a sort of Motown thing. Pete does a folksinger act. While each one is doing his performance the others are changing costumes. The whole show is moving all the time, it never stops."

The TV show already has an enormous following in the States and one thing about its British screening worries Davy.

"I've been putting in all sorts of things I've pinched from British artists, from the Goons to Norman Vaughan," he admits. "In America they think it's great, but British audiences will know where it comes from."

"And I reckon the BBC censors will have to get to work because I've been coming out with some really good phrases that don't mean a thing in the States — but they certainly do in Britain."

To judge by the examples he quoted, he could be right.

Group image? You get buried under it

"I'M cheesed off with everything at the moment." Graham Nash stared gloomily into his Scotch and Coke. "I find it hard to live my life the way I want to."

"I suppose you can put it down to insecurity. Our recording contract with EMI is up and we have formed our own production company. Ron Richards will still be with us and EMI will release the records, but we are recording tonight for the first time in a different studio."

"We've got to get a new single out quickly — particularly for the American market. We could hang on in Britain for another month, but 'Stop Stop Stop' is just out of the American charts and that means we have to get another one out there quickly. You have to release twice as many singles in America as Britain."

"Will the new studio mean a change of sound? Who knows. We are recording originals again — one called 'Carousel' and the other 'When Your Light's Turned On.'" Graham ignored my weak joke about that getting banned by the BBC.

"If we have time, we shall also record a new one Graham Gouldman has written for us, called 'Schoolgirl'."

At the end of the month, the Hollies go to San Remo, Italy, where they will be singing in Italian, at the annual festival. They then play eight days of concerts in Italy, return to Britain for a few days before going to Germany.

"We've got nothing fixed up for England at all yet," admitted Graham. "We may do another tour in April, but that may be a bit soon after the last one."

HAPPY MEDIUM

The Hollies have been on the road for four years now. Have they, like the Beatles, had enough of it?

"Not really," says Graham. "There are still other countries for us to conquer yet. But I must admit I'm fast approaching the point where I will want to pack up a lot of the touring thing. My ambition leans more to the academic and business side of things — record producing and song-writing."

"Everybody in England must have seen us by now and we have finished travelling up and down the country on one-night stands. We shall prob-



says GRAHAM NASH

ably do two concert tours a year from now on. "I am approaching the stage where I want to sort my own life out. So many things that are really important get passed by when you dedicate your life to a group as I have over the past four years."

"Now, I'd like to strike a happy medium, spend more time doing what I want to do."

Graham was newly home from the Hollies' latest American tour.

"Touring wasn't so bad this time as we had our own plane," he said. "Things over there are better than ever for us. It's really started to happen for us in the States — I can feel it bubbling about."

The inevitable question to put to a Holly concerns the group's image. I put it. Why is it that they have survived without any strong group image?

"All that has changed a lot over the last year," said Graham. "Anyway people who do have a group image tend to get buried under it. We have tried to bring out our individual personalities—to present the Hollies as five different people rather than any publicity-created image. And I think it has worked."

We returned to the subject of the new production company.

"We intend to record other people as well as ourselves," confided Graham. "As a favour to Harold Davison we did Paul and Barry Ryan's new one. It's the first time I've recorded brass and we are all very pleased with it."



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