THE RADIO ONE

Story of Pop

THE FIRST ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS

SEX & DANCE: Sixty years of body talk

ROD STEWART: The looning superstar

PRESLEY: King of schmaltz?

PLUS: Haley. The Blues. Crooners. Lyrics & Pop File

PART 2

25p EVERY THURSDAY

AUSTRALIA [illegible] NEW ZEALAND [illegible] SOUTH AFRICA 70c NORTH AMERICA 95c

'The Rock & Roll Years' is the main theme of this issue; the years immediately following the unexpected explosion of young people's music. Black music is perhaps the most important influence on rock and modern pop and, accordingly, we start a series this week on the growth and development of it from its earliest beginnings to the point where it starts to become the music of an entire people and creep from the country into the towns and eventually the ears of the white majority. From black music, and particularly country blues, two important figures in rock found their inspiration – Elvis Presley and Bill Haley.

Each week this publication will be expanding on the BBC Radio One programme broadcast every Saturday and Sunday. Presley is the subject of this week's programme, which uses the voices of the people who knew and worked with him, as well as his own songs, to chronicle the roots and rise of the greatest rock singer ever. This week too, we publish the second part of the Elvis Presley story; which takes the star from his return from the Army, through his changing style and increasing solitude, up to his triumphant return to live performances. Also we print in full the lyrics to two of Presley's great early songs, both of which will be played in full on the radio programme.

The first rock star was undoubtedly Bill Haley, but, in many ways, he was a most unlikely candidate for international fame. We feature him and his story and also look at two men who helped Haley and others to the top. Neither were singers, but both were enormously influential and vital to the story: one was disc jockey Alan Freed; the other record producer Sam Phillips, through whose Sun record company passed most of the early rock innovators. These two men – 'The Midwives Of Rock & Roll' – helped to change not only a style of music but a whole industry and, in their way, hastened the downfall of the crooner. Music was never to be the same after them, but people like Sinatra had helped pave the way for the new order. The role played by the 'swing' singers is investigated in 'The Rise and Fall of the Crooner'.

In addition, this issue also looks at Rod Stewart, a superstar following the honoured tradition but also carving out his own niche in the pop story. We look too at dancing. The dance is an expression of sexuality, and we explain how and why rock & roll jiving was condemned as immoral.

This week's 'Story Of Pop', therefore, tells you how things were before the arrival of rock, what happened when it emerged, and brings you up to date with the people and styles of the latest trends.

**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.*

How to obtain future copies: The next part of the Radio One Story of Pop will be on sale in one week's time. The best way to make sure you do not miss any of the future parts is to ask your newsagent to keep a copy for you each week or deliver it to you. When you place a regular order in this way you are not putting yourself under any long term obligation. With two weeks' notice you can cancel your order at any stage. But the great advantage of placing a regular order is that you run no risk of missing one of your weekly parts.

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All charts positions and release dates refer to the UK unless otherwise stated.

Haley: the man least likely...

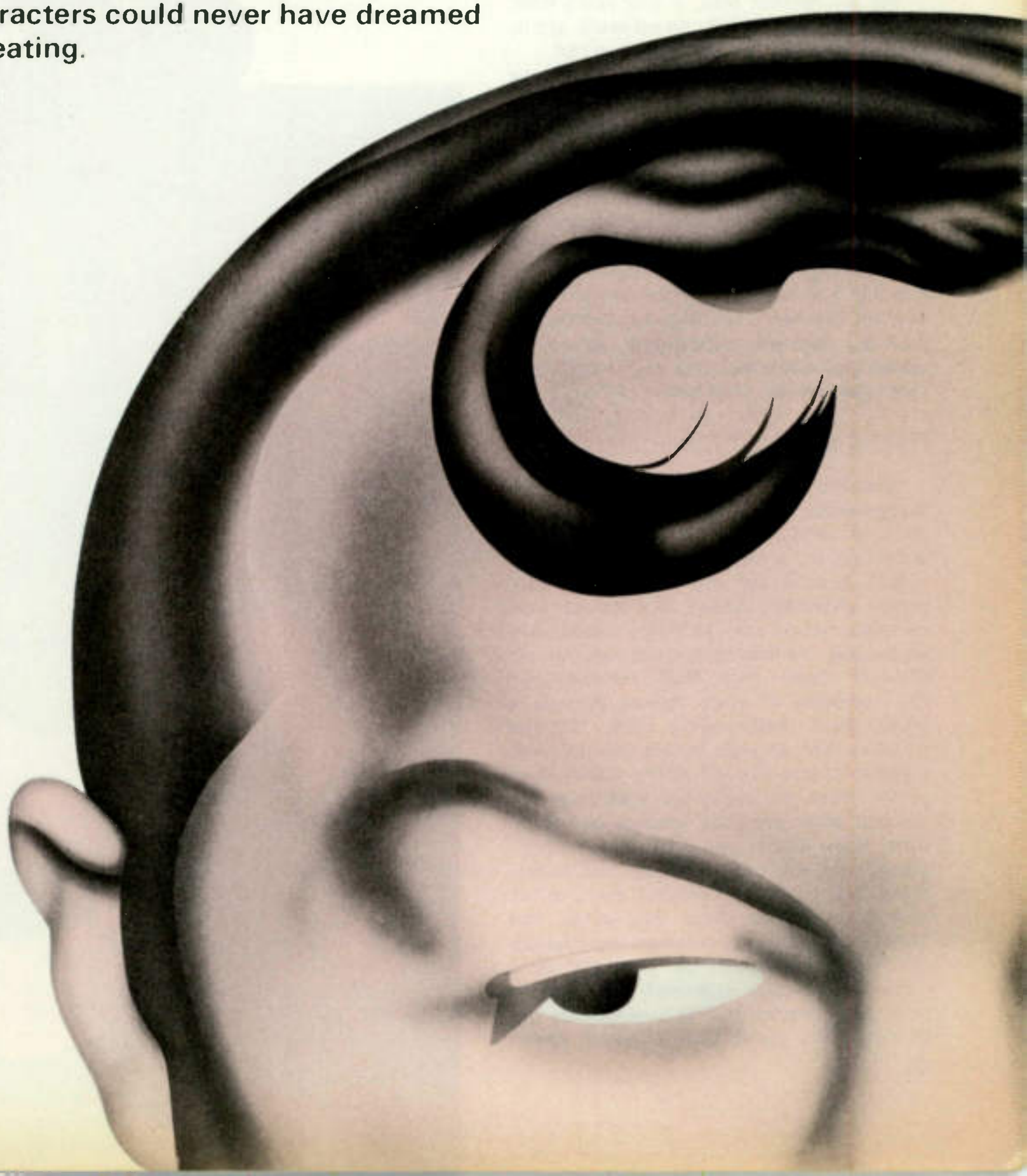
The world's first rock & roll star, the man whose music turned on millions of teens the world over, was nearly 30 when he burst to fame, married and with five children. As if that wasn't ironic enough – seeing that he sparked the revolt of one generation against their elders – the song that started a new era had originally been written as a novelty foxtrot by two members of the Tin Pan Alley establishment who stood for everything that R&R wasn't, one of whom was 63 years old! From these unpromising beginnings a music was born, and it's a sure-fire certainty that those three principle characters could never have dreamed what a monster they were creating.

The man, of course, was Bill Haley: the song, 'Rock Around The Clock'. How was it, then, that this man – twice the age of his audience – and this song should awaken the latent power of teens?

Bill Haley was born in a Detroit suburb in 1927. From his earliest years he was destined for a career in music but, as the years rolled on, it became apparent that while he'd make a steady and unspectacular living, he'd never, but NEVER, be a star. Just to look at him you could see that stocky, chubby, moon-faced Haley was not the stuff that stars are made of.

At 13 he was picking guitar for a buck a gig, firmly into country & western, doing the rounds of the Mid West – steady, dependable and dull. He'd played at auctions, at touring medicine shows, and on local radio billed as 'The Rambling Yodeller'. In the backwoods towns of America artists like him are as much part of the landscape at Coke ads and road houses. Radio offered him a secure niche and he became institutionalised as Programme Director of an independent station in Pennsylvania, at the same time fronting and organising hillbilly bands with lacklustre names like 'The Four Aces Of Western Swing' and 'The Saddlemen'. The more you saw him, the less you could imagine him playing anywhere larger than a local college.

But Haley – like Alan Freed – had one great advantage – a good ear. He didn't just shut his senses off from what was happening around him. Certainly he played hillbilly and C&W but that didn't deafen



Mike Cook

him to the music that was causing young whites to tune their radios to the illicit black stations or sneak off at night to the black quarters – the wrong sides of the mid-western tracks – and learn how to click their fingers, move their bodies, and talk in a language unknown in their homes. What's more they learned to jitterbug. Haley heard this music and analysed its appeal – the beat. He played regularly at high school hops and saw the kids doing these lunatic dances and shouting 'crazy, man, crazy', 'go man go' and other outlandish expressions.

Haley started to experiment, pulling in other streams to his predominantly C&W repertoire. "What we played", he said, "was a combination of country and western, Dixieland, and old-style R&R."

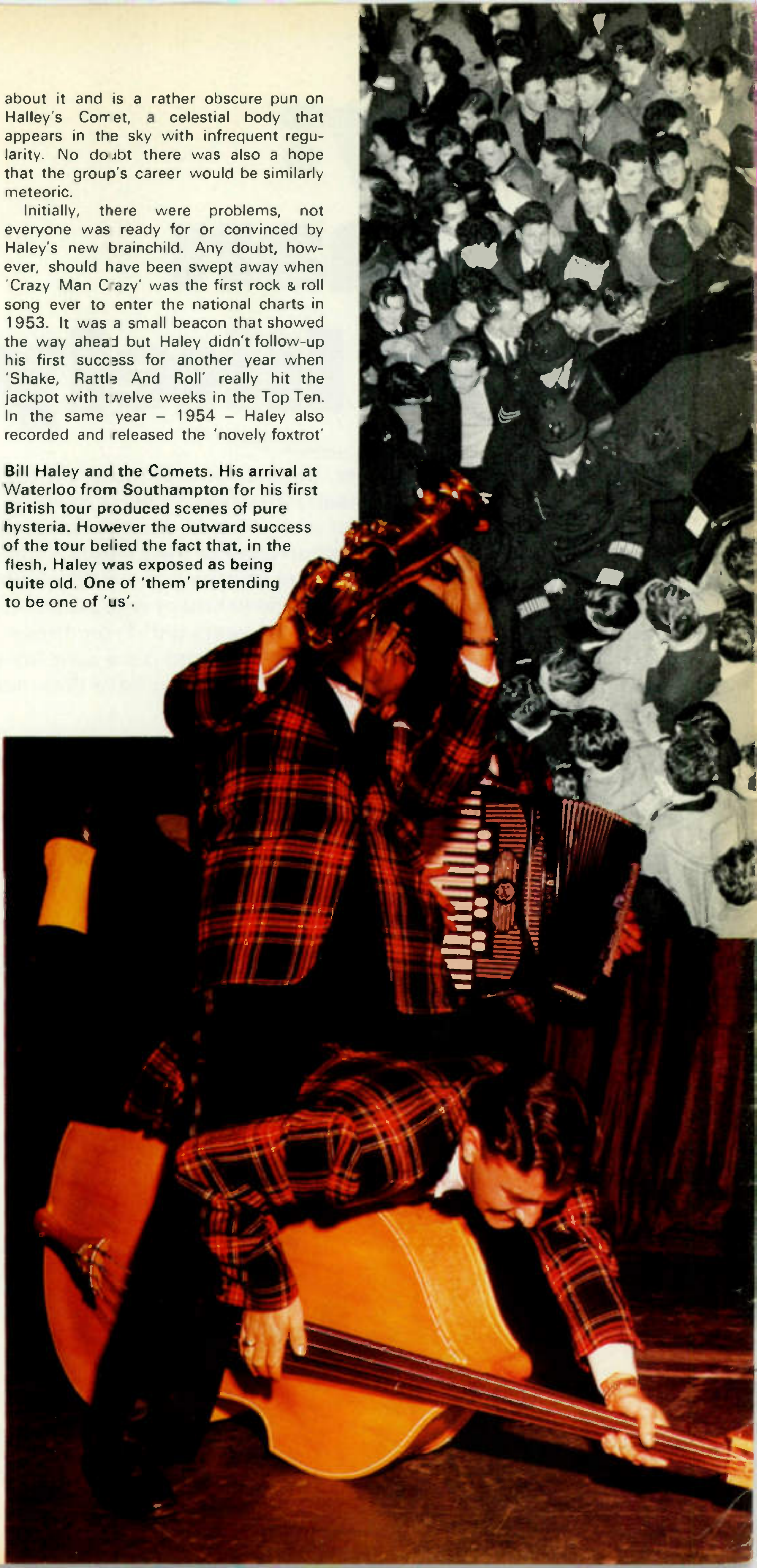
Haley was no fool. He saw that the strict tempo formality of the hugely popular Big Bands was offering the kids no excitement. By the late '40s he saw that things were ripe for change and he had the musical know-how, picked up from years of playing and touring, to put together a synthesis of the most exciting musical styles around. "We decided to try for a new style", he said, "mostly using stringed instruments but somehow managing to get the same effect as brass and reeds." And excitement – the excitement that, a few years later, was going to make kids rip up seats, stomp around cinemas and generally run riot.

First the excitement had to be in the music. Haley, by his own admission was not the first to appreciate this but he was the first to define it AND, more importantly, to create it. "Around the early '50s the musical world was striving for something new, the days of the solo vocalist and big bands had gone. About the only thing that was making any noise was progressive jazz but this just went above the heads of the average listener. I felt that if I could take a beat the listeners could clap to as well as dance this would be what they were after. From that the rest was easy . . . ."

Hybrid Sounds

What in fact he did was to take two recognisable forms of music – C&W and R&B – and create a synthesis that appeared as a new form. This was the classic formula and the reaction was very potent chemistry indeed. But the rest was certainly not as easy as Haley would have us believe. At first he put out very run-of-the-mill C&W and R&B numbers on the topsides of discs issued through a small, local, independent label. But the flipsides had strange hybrid sounds with weirder names like 'Rock The Joint'. Even in the titles the Haley ear was accurate; He just took everyday sayings picked up from high school gigs, like 'crazy, man, crazy', 'see you later, alligator' and 'shake, rattle and roll' and, wedding them to his new beat, turned them into songs. But Bill Haley and the Saddlemen were hardly the image demanded by 'hep-cats' so a name change was indicated. The Saddlemen were buried and re-emerged as the Comets. The name had a feel of speed about it and is a rather obscure pun on Halley's Comet, a celestial body that appears in the sky with infrequent regularity. No doubt there was also a hope that the group's career would be similarly meteoric.

Initially, there were problems, not everyone was ready for or convinced by Haley's new brainchild. Any doubt, however, should have been swept away when 'Crazy Man Crazy' was the first rock & roll song ever to enter the national charts in 1953. It was a small beacon that showed the way ahead but Haley didn't follow-up his first success for another year when 'Shake, Rattle And Roll' really hit the jackpot with twelve weeks in the Top Ten. In the same year – 1954 – Haley also recorded and released the 'novely foxtrot'



Bill Haley and the Comets. His arrival at Waterloo from Southampton for his first British tour produced scenes of pure hysteria. However the outward success of the tour belied the fact that, in the flesh, Haley was exposed as being quite old. One of 'them' pretending to be one of 'us'.

Press Association

Rex Features

– 'Rock Around The Clock', but it didn't mean a thing. Rock was conceived and entering labour pains, it was yet to be born, kicking and screaming, into the world.

The moment of birth was probably the release of *Blackboard Jungle* which carried 'Rock Around The Clock' as its theme music. After that Bill Haley was 'made'. With a rapidity that startled the portly singer, Haley found that he was a star, making films, notching hits, and the cult figure for millions of kids. Even in the exultant throes of stardom he cut a bizarre figure. Round, puppy-fat face topped with extraordinary 'kiss curls', dressed like a cowboy's dream of city chic – in fact the epitome of bad taste – garish tartan jacket and sporting braces, he just couldn't have been further from the standard image of a star. But his music was right and the Comets added to the excitement by presenting rather stagey – not to say stiff-jointed – athletics like rolling on their backs, jumping onto the piano and doing something unusual with a double bass.

His rise from 'Clock' in '55 was truly meteoric. He created rock & roll, Alan Freed named it. Haley took it out into America at large by way of records, TV and films and then, swiftly, to the world. Soon after American youth had found THEIR music, it was adopted by Europe. In Britain, Haley's movie – *Rock Around The Clock* – was a smash, and he was a hero of cosmic proportions. He made a few more hits and was swept on the crest of a wave, quite bewildered by his own success. As kids rioted, cinemas broke up and destruction, violence and mayhem (at least according to the press) ran rampant, Haley could only grin, nonplussed, and say: 'I'm just a country boy'. In fact, he was an unwitting Frankenstein who had bred a monster of terrifying proportions.

It couldn't last, of course, and it didn't. Following the movie Haley came to Britain. Fuelled by a blaze of publicity stoked by the press, his arrival at Southampton and his progress via special train to the capital were pure hysteria. Outwardly, the tour was a success but, as one commentator has said, 'Haley killed his own image by crossing the Atlantic. Whereas it had been possible to ignore the fact on film, in the flesh it became painfully obvious that this perspiring fat person was quite old. One of 'them' pretending to be one of 'us''.

Father of Rock

Almost as soon as it had begun, it finished. Standing at Haley's shoulder was the man who in every way fitted the music – Presley. Haley had made his pile, his name was in the books, his records – thin, reedy, impoverished things that they now seem – were in the archive collections. He faded as fast as the comet that christened his band and, like that same celestial body, duly reappeared every so often as an object of nostalgia – older, portlier, increasingly less hirsute.

Haley's place in the story is important and, indeed, honourable. He gave the music its first impetus, a recognisable form. All who followed him should be grateful for his ear and musical acumen but he, like all true trailblazers, burnt out to be replaced by the true heroes. Perhaps he is the 'Father Of Rock & Roll', but his trouble was that he fitted the paternal role too well. Now, perhaps, he deserves a certain reverence as the grandfather of it all – the man who set the world on fire to become the first superstar of rock, and show from the very beginning that rock music is about much more than sheer musical ability or smart looks.

NEXT WEEK IN ROCK: Jerry Lee Lewis – 'The Killer', one of rock's great characters, and greatest performers; the story with everything from child-brides to smashed pianos.

Sex and Dance

Hulton Picture Library

Dancing is an open expression of sexuality. When a couple take the floor they are, in movement and with rhythm, displaying to each other in much the same way that many animals go through mating rituals.

There is a clear erotic element in the couples' bodily movements, but it is 'safe' sex that can be performed in public with many other couples around. In other words, they are saying on a dance floor that they want to change from symbolic to *actual* sex in the near future.

Not all dancing is that overt of course; sometimes it's simply a way of establishing contact with others, almost a social greeting like a handshake, but ritualised and put to music. For the last 200 years however, there's been an uneasy feeling that behind the formalised steps of a particular dance there is something rather more basic than just saying 'hello'. Even the waltz, now considered a boring and sedate trot, was at first met with total horror, described as 'polluting' (morally, that is), and attacked in one Victorian journal with phrases like: 'Can any mother consent to commit her daughter promiscuously to the arms of each waltzer? Will a husband suffer his wife to be half-embraced by every puppy who turns on his heel or his toe?'

Such comments seem ridiculous now, but many new dance crazes from the tango to rock & roll have provoked similar outraged reactions. In this century the dances have grown ever less inhibited as sexual morals have loosened and as ballroom dances like the waltz, foxtrot and quickstep have become more stiff and formal. So we now have many dances – all aimed at the young – being introduced, each with a heavily sexual implication, and each meeting with bitter criticism.

THE TANGO: introduced from South America in 1912 it was greeted with a storm of outrage. The couple danced with their bodies all but fused together, slinkily creeping across the dance floor, snakily swinging around to a steady, erotic beat. The moralists had a field-day condemning it out-of-hand as a corrupter of youth, fuelled by the fact that single and married women fell prey to tango 'instructors' who were thought to be no better than gigolos selling their charms and sexual favours. This belief was enforced by the 'suggestive lateral movements of the hips' that were very reminiscent of the actions of copulation, and thought to be extremely depraved. Rudolph Valentino – the great screen lover – started his career by dancing the tango with unattached women in New York, and was thought extremely suspect as a result, a suspicion that was confirmed by the fact that he wore a wrist-watch – evidently a sign of total moral degeneracy! Sexy though the tango was it was quite rapidly accepted, and soon became respectable.

THE BLACK BOTTOM: well, apart from anything else the name itself was enough to cause decent and respectable people to burst blood vessels. The Charleston, Shimmy, and Black Bottom were all products of the Twenties and the 'Jazz Age'. They were thought so vulgar and blatantly sexual that established dance teachers at the time issued an official protest, pointing out that these dances had originated in negro brothels! The Charleston itself was named after a town in South Carolina, deep in the 'black' country where negroes, hooched up on liquor, were said to indulge in practices totally beyond the pale of polite society. 'Flappers' and 'Mashers' – the 'Bright Young Things' of the Roarin' Twenties – soon picked up the dances and abandonly threw their bodies around, shimmying and thus accentuating the breasts, opening and closing their legs in a most obvious manner, and even patting their behinds! One newspaper came out with a report claiming that the dances had been imported from Central Africa 'by a gang of Bolshevists (Communists) in America'.

JITTERBUGGING: youth again indulging in disgusting rhythm gyrations to the horror of adult onlookers. The jitterbug was essentially a bridge between the black-inspired dancing of the '20s and '30s and the eruption of rock & roll. In many ways it resembled R&R dancing, but was a trifle less frenzied and usually performed to the stricter tempos and disciplined arrangements of the big band sound. The couples no longer locked themselves together in the embrace of the waltz and other 'mature' dances, but came together infrequently as a prelude to throwing each other apart, fingertips clutched and one leg akimbo. Fun was very much the order of the day and inhibitions were cast aside. The jitterbug – as the name implies – was a more spontaneous and joyful assertion of youth, a reaction to the formality of the established dances of adulthood. The post-war young were beginning to assert themselves, and what happened in the early '50s soon became quite inevitable.

ROCK & ROLL: this was it. No longer was the sexuality guarded or disguised, it was now right out in the open. The very name itself was a black euphemism for the sex act, and the dance – jiving – was the most frank portrayal of sex yet performed. The man threw the girl between his open legs, bent her over backwards in a most sexual posture, flung her around asserting his dominance, and generally made it utterly clear that this was no mere dance but a frantic, frenzied attempt to re-create sexual intercourse right there on the dance floor. Bodily contact was spasmodic and often brutal, with the girl clutching her legs around the man's waist, offering herself to him in ways that were more reminiscent of the *Kama Sutra* than the *Ballroom Gazette*. Behind them all the time were the pounding, heart-beat rhythms of a rock & roll combo; urging, encouraging, exhorting the couples to further excesses, greater energy. To adults, of course, it was the total breakdown of all moral values, but the permissive society had not quite been born. It is likely that the bodily athleticism displayed on the dance floor was not yet generally followed in more private surroundings. Perhaps rock & roll was being used – in those more repressed times – as a substitute for the real thing.

Redferns

THE TWIST: after the deeply sexual couplings of rock & roll, the '60s brought a very strange phenomenon – dance with absolutely no bodily contact. Possibly the twist was one of the last of the great dance crazes, certainly it was a very commercial enterprise spearheaded by Chubby Checker (above), who promoted the dance itself as well as several twisting songs. The lack of physical closeness didn't necessarily mean that there was no sexuality attached to the twist. The fact that there was no touching involved in the twist has been interpreted as the reverse of the reason there was so much in the dances of the '50s – the permissive society was creeping in and, because the kids were not so inhibited in their sex lives, they felt less need to fake it in discos. But the twist was not uniquely and solely the preserve of the young. Its simplicity gave it wide appeal, and very quickly it was being danced by middle-aged 'swingers' in plush nightclubs throughout the world, as much as by kids in basement clubs. Pop was being adopted all too fast by adults.

TINA TURNER: with the fall of crazes, dancing became a much more solo activity and was incorporated increasingly into stage acts. Certain artists became known as much for their movements as their music. The most noticeable female was Tina Turner, who brought an almost Hollywood sexual glamour into pop. Tina Turner could, arguably, pack a hall with men who came to admire her sexuality. A lithe, beautiful, sensuous and totally uninhibited black woman, she is a sexual-fantasy figure who gave her body up entirely to the music. The viewer was left in no doubt about the appeal of the music. It hit not the head or heart but somewhere down from the waist, and the limbs were offered up to move accordingly, free of restriction, strictness of tempo or constraint. Sex, movement and music were inextricably fused, and Tina Turner's superb stage performances were soon being copied by kids in discotheques everywhere.

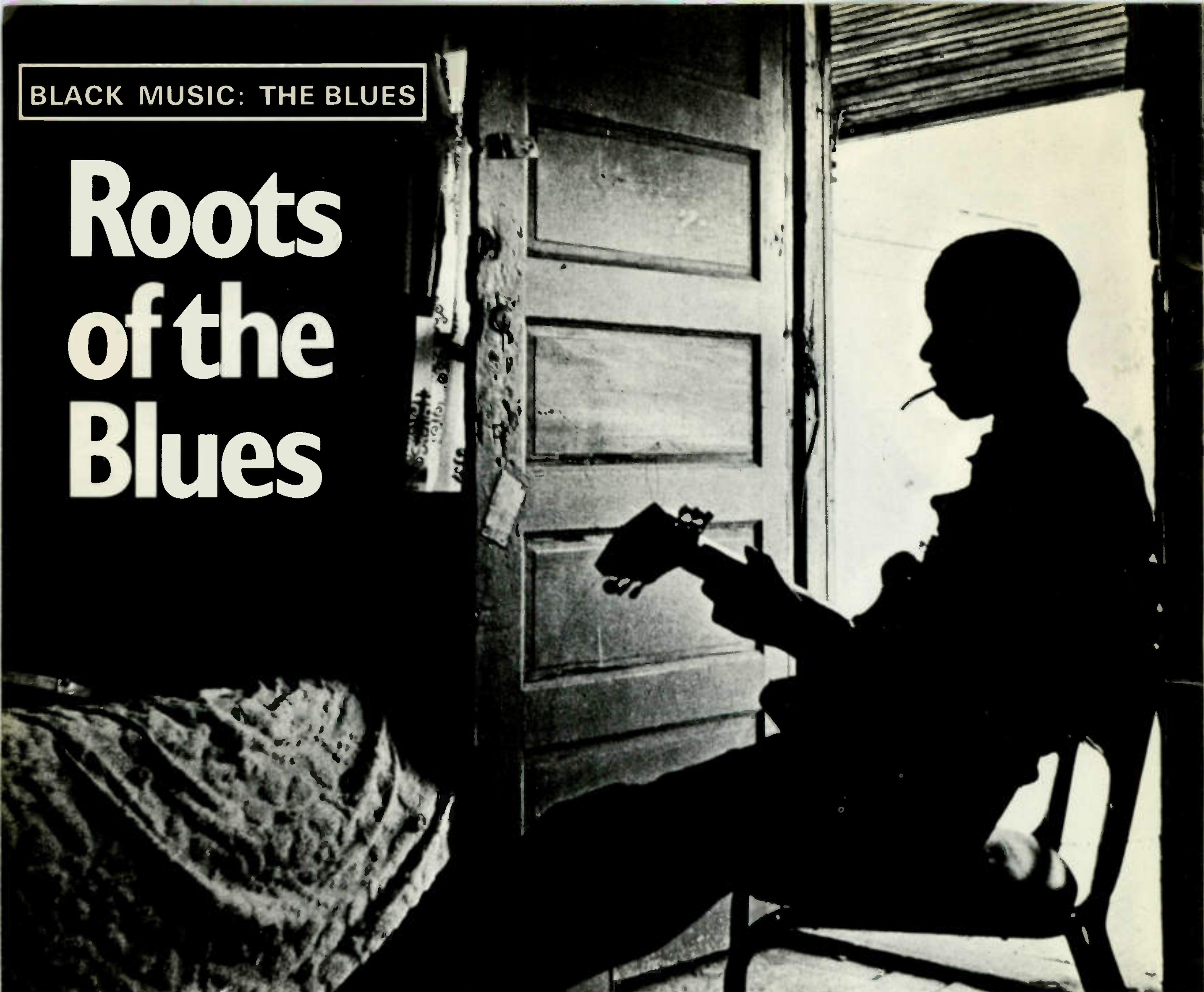
'IDIOT' DANCING: after Jagger's initial thrust, dancing became intensely personal. The hypnotic effects of the new music, the more physical effects of drugs, made dancing an introspective activity in which partners were largely abandoned and the individual danced in a world of his own, unaware of anything except the music and his own body. The flowering of festivals, the increased permissiveness, took dancing to its logical conclusion. All inhibitions were cast off as, quite often, were clothes. Here the young were actually recognising the sexuality of music and dancing, and using them not as a substitute for or prelude to sexual intercourse, but as a part of it. It's hard to see whether a dance – in the sense of a conventional set of movements choreographed to a particular beat – will ever return. After all, why dance, why simulate sex, when you can actually do it?

MICK JAGGER: the body that launched a million bad impersonations was the male equivalent of Tina Turner and had a fantastic impact in the early '60s. People who had never heard a Stones record knew about Jagger's movements. His was an extraordinary sexuality; now totally masculine, now sinuously feminine, always strutting, arrogant, and perfectly in tune with the music. What Jagger did on Mondays others attempted on Tuesday. High-stepping, hip-swinging, hair-whipping, body-jerking posturings that left no one in doubt about the sexuality of his music, the aggression in the beat. Jagger was and is the supreme showman whose body is an extension of his music, as integral a part of the Stones as Charlie Watts' drumming. To adult eyes his appearance, his life-style, his music and most of all his flaunting, teasing sexuality were a red rag. He was dubbed dirty, degenerate and filthy . . . nobody, but nobody, had ever come on so strong in public, had immersed themselves so much in the music, allowed it to possess them and take them over. His dancing had a dervish quality of near-madness, and to anyone even slightly out of touch with the times it was deeply disturbing. To see sex paraded so openly and publicly – without even the stereotyped conventions used by strippers – was to allow one's control to go and one's whole being to be dominated by a beat. Once Jagger had breached that last sexual barrier the way was open for more and more outrageousness, and dancing could never be the same again. Probably no one since Isadora Duncan at the start of the century had done so much to alter the popular conception of the dance. What Jagger did, and still does, is to translate the style lying at the heart of rock into a way of dancing and moving that reflects the essence of the music itself.

G. McCarter

Ron Reid

Roots of the Blues



THE BLUES HATE BARRIERS...

The Blues have played many parts in the story of pop, coming forward with sounds and words and tunes and ways of putting them across – but most of all with intensity; a rugged, straightforward, no-nonsense feeling that affects not only the music, not only the musician, but the audience too.

The Blues are superb at banishing the stiffness and formality from musical performances. You don't hold up a blues number for approval and respect, like a symphony; it's stuff that exists in the few feet of crackling electrical air that separates musician and audience. The Blues hate barriers, they need to be *felt*, and their lifeblood is communication.

Blues, then, share the spirit of today's best rock. And one of the reasons may be that Blues emerged rather as rock did – not as a neat development from a chain of styles before it, but as a rather sudden and surprising blend of all sorts of available materials. Sure, there was music quite like rock & roll well before rock & roll; but rock still arrived as a bewildering novelty. So, too, the Blues: they echoed sounds that were already around, but nevertheless they struck as separate, distinctive, *new*.

Think of those well-travelled suitcases that carry stickers and labels from all over, proclaiming themselves citizens of the world. The Blues arrived rather like that. There was a decorative, if faded, sticker saying 'Minstrel Shows'; another, 'Ragtime'. There were the more sober emblems of the Southern Sanctified Churches. There were well-worn labels commemorating Mississippi, Texas, Georgia – just about every Southern state. A little hand-lettered poster said 'Field Holler', another 'Jug Bands', another 'Country Dances'. And all that was just the top layer . . .

History, at the level most of us first get taught it, is a matter of dates, but there are few hard-and-fast dates in the history of the Blues. The question anyone would ask first – 'When did they start?' – has never really been answered – in any case, Blues caught on in different places at different times. We shan't be far out, though, if we fix a starting-point some-

Valerie Wilmer

THEY NEED TO BE FELT

where in the last quarter of the last century. The Blues, in fact, are probably just about coming up for their centenary.

About other details we can be surer. The Blues are not the whole of Black American music, but they *are* essentially a music of Black America, and their origin was in the Deep South where most blacks then lived. This is more than just a geographical fact. Blues are an expression of their singers' lives and backgrounds, and their qualities are ones that could only have been formed in the South. At the start – and even to some extent today – they were countrymen's music, about the happenings of country lives: farmwork, hunting, fishing, the constant repetitions of the rural year.

The Blues shared their country roots and background with white country music of the time. This too was one of the elements of what we can call *pre-Blues* – the musical spectrum from which the Blues were to emerge. In the centuries between the arrival of the first slave-ships from West Africa and the birth of the Blues, there had been a rich blending of white and black music, as blacks brought their African heritage to bear on the melodies of the white South – melodies largely derived from an Anglo-American heritage that stretched back to the Mother Country. From very early on it seemed a good idea to leave slaves to play the fiddle; it provided ever-ready entertainment for parties and balls – and accomplished slaves were prized, as contemporary Lost-and-Found columns attest:

> '**Run** Away: a Negro fellow named Peter, about 44 years of age . . . he carried away a fiddle, which he is much delighted in when he gets any strong drink.'

And there was an advantage in becoming a plantation's music-maker – it freed you from harder work. That remained true long after the days of slavery had passed. One of the greatest of blues-singers, Big Bill Broonzy, once described the easy life of a farming community's musicians:

> 'Them men didn't know how cotton and corn and rice and sugar-cane grows and they didn't care. They went out dressed up every night, and some of them had three and four women.'

In time, Southern country music became a black-and-white patchwork. Everyone played the well-loved fiddle-tunes, 'Turkey In The Straw', 'Soldier's Joy', 'Leather Britches'. Music was for dancing, or a background for picnicking, and musicians played in groups, *for* groups. If there was any solo music-making, like the blues-singers that were to follow, nobody said much about it in the diaries and travel-books that tell us most of what we know about this period.

Another place for group music was the church, particularly the Sanctified or 'Holiness' churches that the poorest country blacks belonged to. The Sanctified congregations were the most unrestrained and joyful of all, and in addition they permitted 'ungodly' instruments like guitar and banjo at their gatherings. Classier churches forbade any but the organ and piano. Sanctified church-meetings have the same get-happy atmosphere as Saturday-night dances, and many blues-singers were first exposed to music in churches like these, where the effect on their music-making must have been tremendous.

Coon Songs

Black music, whether God's or the Devil's, always fascinated whites, and in the 19th Century it spread beyond the plantations to the concert stages of the North, inspiring the minstrel show. Troupes of performers would black-up (with burnt cork) and perform songs, jokes and sketches in what they imagined, or pretended, was the Southern 'darky's' style. As soon as this became big business – and it soon did – many of the troupes made world tours, and they were especially popular in Britain. The minstrel shows began to travel in the South which had begotten them, and black country musicians in their turn learned from them. This was important, because it offered a way out of the convention of group music – a chance for the one-man show.

This was particularly evident towards the end of the 19th Century, when the 'coon song' craze was under way. Writers fell over each other turning out titles like 'Every Race Has A Flag But The Coons' and 'All Coons Look Alike To Me'. And other songs gathered up all the stereotypes of black life. 'Chicken, You Can Roost Behind The Moon' ('but you can't roost too high for me'), was a tale of night-time fowl-stealing. 'I Got Mine' was about a sharp guy, a 'member of high society', who always got his and then got away again. These songs had a great welcome – from blacks as well as whites – and, when another commercial medium became available, they were carried all over the place.

This new medium was the medicine-show. Travelling patent-medicine salesmen would invest in a wagon, some singers and dancers, and whistle-stop through the country towns putting on shows in the market places. The performers drew the crowd, and the 'doctor' fleeced it of its money. It was a splendid opportunity for the musician who could give a good show and didn't mind travelling, and many figures later to become popular on record had this apprenticeship. Memphis notables like guitarist Furry Lewis, and banjo-player Gus Cannon (both still active) came up that way. Cannon would sing his composition 'Walk Right In' (the same that became a world hit many years later, when a folk group unearthed it), and then engage a fellow-performer in a little cross-talk:

> 'Say, boy, if it takes a rooster three weeks to pick up two ounces of sawdust, how long will it take a Plymouth Rock hen to lay a sixteen-foot oak bowl?'
> 'Man, you out of my jurisdiction. I don't know – I give up.'
> 'Well, so did the hen. Else she'd 've been into the lumber business!'
> ... collapse of both parties.

And so on, while the crowd invested in the virtues of 'Black Draught', or 'B.B.B.', or 'Swamp Root'. Whether the 'medicines' had much *medical* effect is doubtful, but some of them were fairly potent, and it was probably as cheap a way of getting high as any.

While the medicine-shows were giving some musicians a chance to spread their ideas around (and hear other people's as well), other performers were adventurous enough to roam on their own account. The Texas singer Henry Thomas sounds typical of the travelling pre-Blues musician, with a repertoire as wide as the state he came from, and a novel gimmick in the panpipes

Fair Enterprises

Valerie Wilmer

Top left: Mance Lipscomb. Top right: Big Bill Broonzy. Bottom left: Gus Cannon. Bottom right: Mississippi John Hurt.

Melody Maker

Fair Entertainments   Library of Congress

he slung round his neck and played as another man would a harmonica. They called him 'Ragtime Texas'.

In fact, Ragtime wasn't a deep influence on the Blues – but it was echoed in the barrelhouse piano music that grew up in the Texas logging-camps, another solo form at the heart of the early Blues. The set-up was simple: you got a shed or barn, laid in some barrels (hence the name), hired a piano-player, and summoned the locals for a stomp. In the hard life of the lumber camps it was the only weekend partying available, and playing the barrelhouse circuit was a tough school for the entertainer. As one veteran recalled, some of the piano-players 'died real young – and some lived to be 35 or 40.'

Chance Recording

But all this is music at some sort of business level; whether on the minstrel stage or in the barrelhouse, it was music someone was being paid for. The backbone of it as always was home music, the continuing tradition of community music-making, and there were many singers who never moved far, if at all, from their own little stamping-grounds. If we know about them, it's usually because of an accident. Take Mississippi John Hurt. He made some records in the '20s – but only because of a chance recommendation by a white fiddler who lived in his town and had a recording contract. Then he turned up again in the '60s – but only because someone listened to the words of one of those old records and followed a clue that led to him. And John Hurt turned out to know it all, almost. Blues were the least part of his repertoire – he sang little comic songs of the minstrel era, little naughty specialities, ballads, hymns, almost all the different music forms that the Blues had mixed together. In the years of his rediscovered period (he died in 1966), he gave present-day listeners a unique view of the Blues' ingredients, all concentrated in the singing and playing of a single man, just as they'd been preserved for 50 years or more. An hour with John Hurt wasn't just fun; it was a musical history lesson.

Or there's Mance Lipscomb, who has farmed in Navasota, Texas, for most of his 70-odd years. He's also played guitar, and been the region's most noted songster, all that time. Mance plays, as John Hurt did, from a long memory, and he can take you back into those pre-Blues shadows, back to the whirling dancers of the 'Alabama Jubilee':

'Old Parson Brown, goin' round like a clown,
Pickin' 'em up, puttin' 'em down . . .'

Or, by way of a change, to 'It's a Long Way To Tipperary' – Lord knows where he learned *that*, but he still does a delightful version of it. One more indication of the incredible *variety* of the pre-Blues scene.

Closest of all the pre-Blues music to the Blues themselves were the field hollers. Some called them 'arhoolies'. Try shouting the word 'arhoolie' at the top of your voice: take it *up* on the '-hoo-' and linger there; come *down* on the '-lie-'. Rising and falling, bending and twisting, the field hollers were the songs of the solitary man. Chained in a row, as you were on the prison farms, you all sang together – but when you were standing in the middle of your own field, you sang to and for yourself. At first wordless hollering, then phrases, then whole verses:

'Oohooh, if the times don't get no better he-yere,
I'm goin' down the road . . .
I'm goin' away to leave you-hoo,
If the times don't get no better here,
I'm, down the road I'm goin'. . .'

From those lonely country shouts – from the brisk syncopation of barrelhouse piano and plantation banjo – from the skirling fiddles of street musicians and the raggy guitars of medicine-show troupes – from riverboatmen and tobacco-pickers and dockers and prison-gangs – from one-legged harmonica-players and blind guitarists – from all this, but at the same time bringing a new flavour all its own, there came the Blues. And the Blues spoke, as the music before them hadn't, for the *individual*. It gave trouble a name, but also gave a means of getting over it. Because of things like that, the Blues came to stay. It's hard to see how they can ever go away again.

NEXT IN BLACK MUSIC:
Country Blues. Part two of this four-part history of the Blues concerns the Golden age of Country Blues between the Wars, in the Mississippi Delta, Texas, Georgia and Carolina, through to today.

Freed, Phillips:

If proof is needed that rock & roll was really an accident, a marvellous mischance, then all you have to do is look at some of its early figures, many of whom stumbled into it in the oddest of circumstances.

Alan Freed was one such figure. A Pennsylvanian, born 1922, his first steps in music were learning trombone and organising a high school swing band, doubtless in the prevailing Tommy Dorsey style. If he'd stayed with that he'd have been left way behind by rock & roll – Dorsey and his ilk were bitter antagonists of the new music. But, either because he was just bowled over by rock, or because he was naturally the kind of fellow to move with the musical times, Freed ended on the right side of the Swing vs Rock battle.

His professional schooling was as an announcer and sometimes DJ on various Pennsylvania and Ohio radio stations. He *may*, by then, have developed his taste for R&B – one doesn't know; but certainly he'd have had little enough encouragement to play the stuff on the air. The story of how all this changed is a dramatic episode, a pop equivalent of the Conversion of St Paul. Acting on information received from Cleveland record-store-proprietor Leo Mintz, Freed went along to see throngs of white teenagers dancing to what the business called 'race records'. A week's cogitation, and the Great Idea came – the rest is hysteria.

Chessboard Audience

On Cleveland's station WJW he started programming his *Moondog's Rock 'n' Roll Party*, and in public he staged *Moondog Balls*. The kids rolled up in droves – and they were what were called chessboard audiences: black and white mixed. In many places, at that time, this in itself was almost a revolution.

By 1954, Freed had enriched a lot of lives – and, in a car crash, nearly lost his own. But he came through, and moved to New York City's green pastures and station WINS. Here he captured another radio audience. He also put on shows at the Paramount Theatre. It was during one of these, in 1956, that Chuck Berry invented his famous 'duck walk' routine to distract the audience's attention from the wrinkles in his suit.

Berry was very much Freed's sort of artist. The DJ had no time at all for the big companies' white cover-versions of R&B hits, and he always promoted black artists heavily. But he realised that the utterly raunchy R&B figures – violent, unrestrained shouters like Bullmoose Jackson or Wynonie Harris – would never be adaptable enough to create the 'Everybody's Rock & Roll' he dreamed of. They were heavy missiles for his siege of the musical establishment, but the more effective strikes were insinuating undercover operations, like Berry's 'Roll Over Beethoven' or 'Rock And Roll Music'.

So Freed backed the Moonglows, a black harmony group that crossed the black/white sales barrier, and he was present, too, when Chuck Berry started recording rock for teenagers everywhere. His name is among the composer-credits on Chuck's 'Maybellene', but that's probably a tribute to business rather than art. It's not important, anyway; what Freed is remembered for is what he did with records *after* they had been made.

Still, accuracy demands a mention of Freed's own records, in which he fronted a hoot-and-honk R&R band, playing numbers like 'Rock 'n' Roll Boogie'. This stuff sounds pretty dated now, but Freed's place wasn't in the studio, it was on the airwaves. "Hi, welcome to Alan Freed and his Moondog Music and his little moon puppies!" Yap yap, howl howl. Or, even better, on the stage, where he could bop about in a tartan jacket and a dayglo face, blowing kisses and shouting "Go man go!" He may not have known a lot about Blues, but he recognised what was exciting in black music – jive, acrobatics, free-and-easiness, *getting it across*. Other men might be the premier technicians of rock & roll; Freed was its foremost public relations officer.

Sadly, Freed died in hospital in 1965, narrowly missing an era in which he would certainly have been feted. Unlike the singers he booked and the record-producers whose work he broadcast, he leaves hardly anything durable behind him; you can't re-issue a personality. But no rock & roll retrospect would be accurate if it bypassed that effervescent hustler who cast the words 'Rock & Roll' on a million airwaves and into millions of lives.

Right: Sam Phillips at the mixing desk. Below: Alan Freed with his fan mail.

ROD STEWART
Success and He wears it well

Back in 1971 rock had got very serious indeed. Many musicians were affecting an off-hand attitude by playing interminable guitar solos with their backs to the crowd. To show they were enjoying themselves on stage was most uncool. Then suddenly Rod Stewart bounced onto the scene with the Faces.

On stage Rod is dressed up to the eyeballs – but wearing an old scarf. He's dancing and prancing and joking with the group, hurling mike stands Into the air and kicking toot-balls out into the audience. He has brought a much-needed sense of fun back into rock, and he deserves to be remembered for this above all else in years to come.

"We're always available for parties, weddings and funerals," he told the audience at the Reading Festival last year. A big part of Rod's success over the last two years, which has established him in the same bracket as Roger Daltry, Robert Plant and even Mick Jagger, comes from the way he puts over a totally extrovert show without being at all remote from his audience.

For Rod, the main thing is going out on stage and playing to people. He doesn't enjoy recording very much, and it shows in the way his solo albums and the Faces' releases have the very opposite of lavish production. In fact a lot of them have been pretty rough; as if Rod rushed in, knocked off the album in a day, and then drove off again at high speed. "If I couldn't perform I'd give up," Rod told *Rolling Stone* magazine. "The recording side bores me stiff. I hate studios. I hate record company business. I hate writing songs. The only thing I get a buzz from is getting up and playing. When that goes I'll go with it. Do like the professional footballers do – retire at the top."

Rod the Mod

But Rod hasn't always thrived on the buzz of a live performance. Not so long ago it was an extremely nervous young 'Rod the Mod' hiding behind the amplifiers who used to sing with the Jeff Beck Group. It's only since the Faces have come together that Rod has overcome his stage-fright and found the confidence to go out and win an audience. He himself credits the group, and Ron Wood especially, with the change; and he is adamant that he would never have made it without the band.

Rod had been singing for seven years before he found success with the faces, and before that he seemed destined for a career as a professional footballer. He's fond of bringing up football when he's talking, and often compares his situation to that of a soccer star. "The best gig we ever did in Britain was in Glasgow," he once said. "I thought I was playing for Scotland in the World Cup."

Cleaning Boots

He was born Roderick David Stewart on January 10th, 1945, the youngest of five children in a family of football enthusiasts. His father wanted him to turn professional after he played as a wing-forward for his school team in Highgate (along with one Raymond Douglas Davies of Kink fame), and was picked for the England Schoolboy XI in an international. He did sign to the groundstaff of Brentford F.C., and after cleaning players' boots for a while made it onto the field for a few games before dropping the idea of a football career. He still plays the odd amateur game even now, and admits football is still a major interest with him. Audiences were quick to take up on this, and Rod gets the same terrace chant of *ROD-NEE* as footballer Rodney Marsh.

"My dad was a good footballer and my brothers were too," says Rod, "but I was the last hope in the family to make it big on the football field." Rod gives no particular reason for getting into music instead: "I just drifted into it. I don't know how it happened, I just started doing it."

Maybe another factor was the crowd he

got in with after leaving Brentford. He had a spell at Art School – the breeding ground for many rock musicians including John Lennon, Pete Townshend and Eric Clapton – and lived on a derelict houseboat at Shoreham in Sussex with some 20 other 'beat' characters. It was people like this who were the driving force behind the British blues boom of the early '60s in which Rod played his part.

Rod first started playing guitar and harmonica and singing for his own amusement. His two major influences were Sam Cooke and Al Jolson; his mother had always had piles of Jolson's 78s around the house, and took Rod to see all his films. Rod was bowled over by him and somehow the influence rubbed off. Then in the late '50s he first heard the black American singer Sam Cooke. "He was the first funky singer, and I've got every album he ever made," says Rod. "He really made a big change in my life." Such a change in fact that Rod closely modelled his style on Sam Cooke, and even imitated him to the extent of drinking Cognac before he went on stage because he heard that's what Cooke used to do. Sam Cooke still remains Rod's favourite singer, and he doesn't like other people, including himself, doing Cooke material. Eventually though he succumbed, and put 'Twistin' The Night Away' onto his 'Never A Dull Moment' album.

Early Days

It was with these influences that Rod toured Spain and the South of France with folk singer Wizz Jones. 'Tour' is a bit of an elevated work for this jaunt – the two of them slept on beaches and got deported from Spain for vagrancy. Legend has it that they slept under the arches of Barcelona football stadium while Rod turned down offers of professional football contracts.

Back in Britain he got his first job in rock as second singer and harmonica player with Jimmy Powell and the Five Dimensions, a group that was highly rated in the early '60s R&B boom on the club circuits, but which never got beyond that stage. The band had a residency at the Ken Colyer Club in London along with another group called the Rolling Stones. It was here that Rod got to know Mick Jagger – they are still friendly, and are glad to bump into each other on tour and have the chance to play together.

In 1966, three years after Rod joined Jimmy Powell, Mick Jagger produced a solo single for him. A Goffin/King song called 'Come Home Baby', it was released on Decca, but along with other singles including a version of 'Good Morning Little Schoolgirl' it passed unnoticed. By this time Rod was singing in Steam Packet, Long John Baldry's group that included Elton John, Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll. But when Baldry stopped singing blues, and found short-lived success as a singer of soft ballads, Rod joined Shotgun Express. This group included Beryl Marsden and Peter Green – who was later to form Fleetwood Mac of 'Albatross' fame.

Shotgun Express didn't stay together long, and never recorded, but Rod made some solo recordings in 1967 including 'Little Miss Understood' for Immediate, and 'In A Broken Dream'. In 1972, re-released under the name of Python Lee Jackson, 'In A Broken Dream' eventually made the Top Ten.

Just a Lamborghini

With Shotgun Express Rod had learned what life on the road was like, and had built himself a reasonable reputation as a singer. His next move took him a stage further. In 1967, he joined the original Jeff Beck Group and found himself alongside Beck sidemen Viv Prince (ex-Pretty Things drummer), Jet Harris (ex-Shadows bassist), and Ron Wood (from the English group the Birds). This group didn't last long, and Beck reformed his band with Ron Wood switching from guitar to bass, and Mickey Waller coming in on drums. This band spent most of its time in America, where Beck was a huge name from his days in the Yardbirds, and Rod had his first taste of large concerts and fan-mania. The group recorded two fine albums, 'Truth' and 'Beck-Ola', and Rod had by now established himself on the recording scene. Last but not least Rod struck up a close friendship with Ron Wood, and when Beck sacked Wood, Rod tried to get him back in the group. Ron did return when the replacement bassist didn't work out, but by this time Ron and Rod were both looking elsewhere.

Before the band finally split, Rod signed a solo contract with Lou Reizner of Mercury Records. There was no money involved in the deal, and Rod settled for a Lamborghini. Around the time Rod recorded his first album 'An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down' (released in the US as 'The Rod Stewart Album'), the Beck group spilt up. "Ronnie was really pissed-off," says Rod, "as he should have been, because he'd been sacked and it hurts the pride. He was looking for another group to play with and when the Faces opportunity came up he left. I was really close to him as I still am and I didn't want to be in the band if he wasn't – so I split."

Bunch of Losers

That opportunity arose after Small Faces singer and guitarist Steve Marriott left the group in 1969 to form Humble Pie. The Small Faces were unjustly looked down on as a 'mere' teenybopper pop group, and no one gave the remnants much chance of further success. But Kenny Jones, Ronnie Laine and Ian McLagan decided to stick together, and invited Ron Wood to join. Soon Rod came in as well and after some rehearsals at the Stones' studios in Bermondsey, the Small Faces were no more – and the Faces were in existence.

There wasn't much trumpeting about the birth of the new group, and few people imagined that the Faces would become a bigger name than Humble Pie seemed likely to be. The popular feeling was that the Faces were a bunch of losers, and their first album, 'First Step', released in February 1970 at the same time as Rod's 'Raincoat', didn't do much to dispel that opinion – in Britain at any rate. It was on the college circuit in the States that the Faces first scored. They toured there three times in a year, breaking box-office records in the process, but it wasn't until 1971 that Britain woke up to the fact that Rod and the lads were a giant name across the Atlantic.

Rod had released his second album, 'Gasoline Alley', in September 1970, and the following spring the Faces came out with 'Long Player' which enhanced their reputation. But it was only when Rod released 'Every Picture Tells A Story' in the summer of 1971 that the Faces got their due recognition. Suddenly things changed. 'Maggie May' topped the singles charts across the world, and the Faces put on a knockout show at the Bangla Desh concert at the Oval cricket ground in September. They had at last made their mark in Britain, and went away the heroes of the hour.

Wreckers Extraordinary

But success brought problems for Rod. 'Maggie May' came from one of his albums not one of the Faces', and rumour had it that Rod was going to quit the Faces, who were seen as holding him back. It seems there was a crisis in the group at the time, but Rod sensibly reckoned that everyone had had a part in the success of 'Maggie May', and decided to stay put. Later he told a reporter, "I'd always said that I'd never be with another band and I meant it. I could have formed my own band – and I'd have been a total failure. Ninety per cent of the reason I've been successful is because of the band."

Anyway Rod's next single 'Stay With Me' came from the Faces' third album 'A Nod's As Good As A Wink To A Blind Horse'. From that point on he has successfully combined a solo and a group recording career, with his album 'Never A Dull Moment' released in August 1972, and the Faces 'Ooh La La' released at the beginning of 1973. He's had further hits with 'You Wear It Well' and 'What Made Milwaukee Famous' for himself, and 'Cindy Incidentally' for the group. It's an odd situation but it doesn't seem to cause trouble anymore: Rod and the Faces are mutually dependent, and the departure of Ronnie Laine in June 1973 is unlikely to make any difference to that feeling. The group play on Rod's albums as session men, while Rod sees himself as just one of the group when it comes to recording or stage appearances. They decide things among themselves when decisions have to be made. "I don't know if I could ever lead a band as such," says Rod.

The Faces live a full life as a group, unlike groups like the Who who only see

The Midwives of Rock & Roll

National Film Archive

Sam Phillips could well be seen as one of history's prime losers. He discovered Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, and Johnny Cash. He recorded them all; lost them all. A sort of King Midas in reverse – everything he touched turned to somebody else's Gold Record.

But, who knows, maybe that was how Phillips wanted it. For a businessman he was well placed, with a good recording studio in Memphis, a city that would always need one. He knew all the markets. He got good prices for the contracts he sold, considering the time and the circumstances, and all.

To laugh the man down, or even commiserate with him, you would need to be surer of your ground than most journalists have ever been with regard to Phillips. He *could* have played himself up as one of rock & roll's creators – instead, he hardly ever gives an interview. Most likely, he isn't a man to spend time reflecting on the past.

But it *is* an eventful past, no question. It began in Florence, Alabama, which, by a curious coincidence was also the birthplace of W. C. Handy, pioneer black blues-composer, bandleader, and writer of 'The Memphis Blues'. (Handy's statue now stands in Memphis – in Handy Park, indeed.) After World War Two, Phillips came to Memphis to become a DJ on station WRAC, and a booker of acts for the plushy Peabody Hotel. He discovered that the area's black musicians – of whom there were many, most of them very fine – could only get on record when West Coast companies troubled to bring their equipment over. In 1950 he set up his own Sun Studio, recorded the Memphis blues, and sold them to the current big wheels – labels like Chess and Modern. He had proved straightaway that he could pick good musicians and record them with a technical expertise and flair altogether new in the business.

Early Phillips productions included most of Howlin' Wolf's first records; some of B. B. King's; some of Bobby Bland's. Also Junior Parker, Ike Turner, Doctor Ross, and Shakey Horton. The market for men like these was so buoyant that Phillips advanced to creating his own record label. Sun Records started in 1953, initially a blues concern, and in those terms way ahead of just about all the possible rivals of the day.

Then came Presley – a story too familiar to need any summary here – and, after Presley, the other great Sun discoveries we've already listed. All these singers profited greatly from the arranging and engineering trademarks Phillips and his crew had invented: the hollow, empty studio-sound; the crisp, percussive bass-playing; the wildly oscillating echo on the guitars. And as the stars took their futures elsewhere, so other companies profited from Phillips' innovations. Even the biggest of the majors, RCA Victor, when cutting its first release by its new signing Elvis Presley, could think of no improvement on Phillips' ideas. 'Heartbreak Hotel' is 90% faithful to the Sun sound.

Rather Splendid

But the role of control-board wizard wasn't what Phillips had fixed his sights on either. As soon as a would-be producer with ideas came along – it was Jack Clement, now prominent in Nashville's A&R circles – Phillips handed over the studio secrets, the keys, and the engagement-book, and left town for a trip. Sun Records? And that squalling new-born baby they were calling rock & roll? Let 'em wait a while – that was business, and business is something you have to get away from now and then. On the other hand, this business Phillips was being casual about *was* a solid goldmine. Well, if somebody wanted to buy the mining concession, that was OK too. It might be gold, but digging it out could be hard, dull work. And Presley and the others would certainly get further with the big companies; Sun didn't carry that weight, and putting it on might spoil a satisfactory set-up. Good luck to them, Phillips probably said.

You could call that odd, but you could call it rather splendid too, because it shows Phillips' determination to go his own way regardless. That, after all, was what independent companies were all about. And so it's easy to recognise the affection in Jerry Lee's description of Phillips, which can be our epigraph:

> "Sam's crazy. He's as nutty as a fox squirrel. He's just like me, he ain't got no sense. Birds of a feather flock together. It took all of us to get together to really screw up the world . . ."

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THE SUPERSTARS

ROD STEWART
Success and He wears it well

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On stage Rod is dressed up to the eyeballs – but wearing an old scarf. He's dancing and prancing and joking with the group, hurling mike stands into the air and kicking footballs out into the audience. He has brought a much-needed sense of fun back into rock, and he deserves to be remembered for this above all else in years to come.

"We're always available for parties, weddings and funerals," he told the audience at the Reading Festival last year. A big part of Rod's success over the last two years, which has established him in the same bracket as Roger Daltry, Robert Plant and even Mick Jagger, comes from the way he puts over a totally extrovert show without being at all remote from his audience.

For Rod, the main thing is going out on stage and playing to people. He doesn't enjoy recording very much, and it shows in the way his solo albums and the Faces' releases have the very opposite of lavish production. In fact a lot of them have been pretty rough; as if Rod rushed in, knocked off the album in a day, and then drove off again at high speed. "If I couldn't perform I'd give up," Rod told *Rolling Stone* magazine. "The recording side bores me stiff. I hate studios. I hate record company business. I hate writing songs. The only thing I get a buzz from is getting up and playing. When that goes I'll go with it. Do like the professional footballers do – retire at the top."

Rod the Mod

But Rod hasn't always thrived on the buzz of a live performance. Not so long ago it was an extremely nervous young 'Rod the Mod' hiding behind the amplifiers who used to sing with the Jeff Beck Group. It's only since the Faces have come together that Rod has overcome his stage-fright and found the confidence to go out and win an audience. He himself credits the group, and Ron Wood especially, with the change; and he is adamant that he would never have made it without the band.

Rod had been singing for seven years before he found success with the Faces, and before that he seemed destined for a career as a professional footballer. He's fond of bringing up football when he's talking, and often compares his situation to that of a soccer star. "The best gig we ever did in Britain was in Glasgow," he once said. "I thought I was playing for Scotland in the World Cup."

Cleaning Boots

He was born Roderick David Stewart on January 10th, 1945, the youngest of five children in a family of football enthusiasts. His father wanted him to turn professional after he played as a wing-forward for his school team in Highgate (along with one Raymond Douglas Davies of Kink fame), and was picked for the England Schoolboy XI in an international. He did sign to the groundstaff of Brentford F.C., and after cleaning players' boots for a while made it onto the field for a few games before dropping the idea of a football career. He still plays the odd amateur game even now, and admits football is still a major interest with him. Audiences were quick to take up on this, and Rod gets the same terrace chant of *ROD-NEE* as footballer Rodney Marsh.

"My dad was a good footballer and my brothers were too," says Rod, "but I was the last hope in the family to make it big on the football field." Rod gives no particular reason for getting into music instead; "I just drifted into it. I don't know how it happened, I just started doing it."

Maybe another factor was the crowd he

got in with after leaving Brentford. He had a spell at Art School – the breeding ground for many rock musicians including John Lennon, Pete Townshend and Eric Clapton – and lived on a derelict houseboat at Shoreham in Sussex with some 20 other 'beat' characters. It was people like this who were the driving force behind the British blues boom of the early '60s in which Rod played his part.

Rod first started playing guitar and harmonica and singing for his own amusement. His two major influences were Sam Cooke and Al Jolson; his mother had always had piles of Jolson's 78s around the house, and took Rod to see all his films. Rod was bowled over by him and somehow the influence rubbed off. Then in the late '50s he first heard the black American singer Sam Cooke. "He was the first funky singer, and I've got every album he ever made," says Rod. "He really made a big change in my life." Such a change in fact that Rod closely modelled his style on Sam Cooke, and even imitated him to the extent of drinking Cognac before he went on stage because he heard that's what Cooke used to do. Sam Cooke still remains Rod's favourite singer, and he doesn't like other people, including himself, doing Cooke material. Eventually though he succumbed, and put 'Twistin' The Night Away' onto his 'Never A Dull Moment' album.

Early Days

It was with these influences that Rod toured Spain and the South of France with folk singer Wizz Jones. 'Tour' is a bit of an elevated work for this jaunt – the two of them slept on beaches and got deported from Spain for vagrancy. Legend has it that they slept under the arches of Barcelona football stadium while Rod turned down offers of professional football contracts.

Back in Britain he got his first job in rock as second singer and harmonica player with Jimmy Powell and the Five Dimensions, a group that was highly rated in the early '60s R&B boom on the club circuits, but which never got beyond that stage. The band had a residency at the Ken Colyer Club in London along with another group called the Rolling Stones. It was here that Rod got to know Mick Jagger – they are still friendly, and are glad to bump into each other on tour and have the chance to play together.

In 1966, three years after Rod joined Jimmy Powell, Mick Jagger produced a solo single for him. A Goffin/King song called 'Come Home Baby', it was released on Decca, but along with other singles including a version of 'Good Morning Little Schoolgirl' it passed unnoticed. By this time Rod was singing in Steam Packet, Long John Baldry's group that included Elton John, Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll. But when Baldry stopped singing blues, and found short-lived success as a singer of soft ballads, Rod joined Shotgun Express. This group included Beryl Marsden and Peter Green – who was later to form Fleetwood Mac of 'Albatross' fame.

Shotgun Express didn't stay together long, and never recorded, but Rod made some solo recordings in 1967 including 'Little Miss Understood' for Immediate, and 'In A Broken Dream'. In 1972, re-released under the name of Python Lee Jackson, 'In A Broken Dream' eventually made the Top Ten.

Just a Lamborghini

With Shotgun Express Rod had learned what life on the road was like, and had built himself a reasonable reputation as a singer. His next move took him a stage further. In 1967, he joined the original Jeff Beck Group and found himself alongside Beck sidemen Viv Prince (ex-Pretty Things drummer), Jet Harris (ex-Shadows bassist), and Ron Wood (from the English group the Birds). This group didn't last long, and Beck reformed his band with Ron Wood switching from guitar to bass, and Mickey Waller coming in on drums. This band spent most of its time in America, where Beck was a huge name from his days in the Yardbirds, and Rod had his first taste of large concerts and fanmania. The group recorded two fine albums, 'Truth' and 'Beck-Ola', and Rod had by now established himself on the recording scene. Last but not least Rod struck up a close friendship with Ron Wood, and when Beck sacked Wood, Rod tried to get him back in the group. Ron did return when the replacement bassist didn't work out, but by this time Ron and Rod were both looking elsewhere.

Before the band finally split, Rod signed a solo contract with Lou Reizner of Mercury Records. There was no money involved in the deal, and Rod settled for a Lamborghini. Around the time Rod recorded his first album 'An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down' (released in the US as 'The Rod Stewart Album'), the Beck group spilt up. "Ronnie was really pissed-off," says Rod, "as he should have been, because he'd been sacked and it hurts the pride. He was looking for another group to play with and when the Faces opportunity came up he left. I was really close to him as I still am and I didn't want to be in the band if he wasn't – so I split."

Bunch of Losers

That opportunity arose after Small Faces singer and guitarist Steve Marriott left the group in 1969 to form Humble Pie. The Small Faces were unjustly looked down on as a 'mere' teenybopper pop group, and no one gave the remnants much chance of further success. But Kenny Jones, Ronnie Laine and Ian McLagan decided to stick together, and invited Ron Wood to join. Soon Rod came in as well and after some rehearsals at the Stones' studios in Bermondsey, the Small Faces were no more – and the Faces were in existence.

There wasn't much trumpeting about the birth of the new group, and few people imagined that the Faces would become a bigger name than Humble Pie seemed likely to be. The popular feeling was that the Faces were a bunch of losers, and their first album, 'First Step', released in February 1970 at the same time as Rod's 'Raincoat', didn't do much to dispel that opinion – in Britain at any rate. It was on the college circuit in the States that the Faces first scored. They toured there three times in a year, breaking box-office records in the process, but it wasn't until 1971 that Britain woke up to the fact that Rod and the lads were a giant name across the Atlantic.

Rod had released his second album, 'Gasoline Alley', in September 1970, and the following spring the Faces came out with 'Long Player' which enhanced their reputation. But it was only when Rod released 'Every Picture Tells A Story' in the summer of 1971 that the Faces got their due recognition. Suddenly things changed. 'Maggie May' topped the singles charts across the world, and the Faces put on a knockout show at the Bangla Desh concert at the Oval cricket ground in September. They had at last made their mark in Britain, and went away the heroes of the hour.

Wreckers Extraordinary

But success brought problems for Rod. 'Maggie May' came from one of his albums not one of the Faces', and rumour had it that Rod was going to quit the Faces, who were seen as holding him back. It seems there was a crisis in the group at the time, but Rod sensibly reckoned that everyone had had a part in the success of 'Maggie May', and decided to stay put. Later he told a reporter, "I'd always said that I'd never be with another band and I meant it. I could have formed my own band – and I'd have been a total failure. Ninety per cent of the reason I've been successful is because of the band."

Anyway Rod's next single 'Stay With Me' came from the Faces' third album 'A Nod's As Good As A Wink To A Blind Horse'. From that point on he has successfully combined a solo and a group recording career, with his album 'Never A Dull Moment' released in August 1972, and the Faces 'Ooh La La' released at the beginning of 1973. He's had further hits with 'You Wear It Well' and 'What Made Milwaukee Famous' for himself, and 'Cindy Incidentally' for the group. It's an odd situation but it doesn't seem to cause trouble anymore: Rod and the Faces are mutually dependent, and the departure of Ronnie Laine in June 1973 is unlikely to make any difference to that feeling. The group play on Rod's albums as session men, while Rod sees himself as just one of the group when it comes to recording or stage appearances. They decide things among themselves when decisions have to be made. "I don't know if I could ever lead a band as such," says Rod.

The Faces live a full life as a group, unlike groups like the Who who only see

BACK TRACK

Born January 10th, 1945, the youngest of five. Signed with Brentford FC when he left school. He then went to art school in Shoreham, Sussex. Next came a 'tour' of the South of France with Wizz Jones which ended in deportation for vagrancy.
1963: Rod joined Jimmy Powell and the Five Dimensions, who had a residency at the Ken Colyer Club in London, along with the Rolling Stones. Rod and Jagger became friends at this time.
1964: January, Rod joins Long John Baldry's Hoochie Coochie Men. October, first single 'Good Morning Little School-girl.'
1965: Rod joins Steam Packet, with Long John Baldry, Elton John, Julie Driscoll and Brian Auger.
1966: Jagger produces Rod's single; 'Come Home Baby' on Decca.
1967: Rod joins Shotgun Express. 'Little Miss Understood' and 'In A Broken Dream' (re-released under the name of 'Python Lee Jackson') were recorded as solo singles. Then Rod joined Jeff Beck's new band.
1968: Rod storms America with Beck, and the amazing album 'Truth' released.
1969: 'Beck Ola' album released, and Steve Marriott leaves the Small Faces. Rod leaves Beck along with Ron Wood and they form the Faces.
1970: The Faces tour America three times. February, 'First Step' for the Faces, and 'An Old Raincoat Won't Ever Let You Down' for Rod. September, 'Gasoline Alley' for Rod, and in November 'Long Player' for the Faces.
1971: July, 'Every Picture Tells A Story' for Rod, and November, 'A Nod's As Good As A Wink' for the Faces.
1972: August, 'Never A Dull Moment' for Rod.
1973: March, 'Ooh La La' for the Faces. July, 'Sing It Again Rod'.

Bearded Rod Stewart with Jeff Beck in 1967.

S.K.R. Photos International

each other when they're working. They have a reputation, not only as hotel-wreckers extraordinary, but as a real group guaranteed to liven up any situation. At a Warner Brothers' Christmas party they once took over a whole room, and devoted themselves to throwing posters out of the window and kicking a football around while Rod was seen dismantling a telephone, apparently 'repairing' it for a distraught secretary.

Rod and the Faces are one of the few groups that turn *Top Of The Pops* into a party. Their most memorable appearance was when John Peel came on with them and mimed mandolin, while Ron Wood polished his guitar and Rod sang his lyrics from a scrap of paper. They turned a routine mime into an entertainment as they so often do. And it's all done on 'Boozo The Wonder Drug'.

Rod has modestly described himself as 'just a crooner', but he's more than that – or, for that matter, more than just a show-man. The large number of albums he's now recorded show him as a distinctive and flexible singer, a fine songwriter, and an excellent judge of what are the right songs for him to sing. Also, despite his avowed distaste for recording, he isn't a bad record producer either.

One of the Lads

Rod Stewart has now been singing professionally for some nine years, so he's certainly no overnight success. He's now won himself all the traditional trappings of the fully fledged pop-star – a £100,000 Berkshire house, two Lamborghinis and a Rolls – but all this doesn't appear to have unhinged his head. He hasn't joined the Cannes jet-set, or gone to live on top of a Tibetan mountain; he's stayed out there on the boards – a full-time rock & roller. Rod has said he's glad that he's hit the heights at 28, because he hates to think what it might have done to him 10 years earlier.

The 'one of the lads' image he puts over isn't just a mask for the benefit of the public, it's very much an expression of the lad himself. "I try to be home to catch the six o'clock news," he says. "I don't feel cut off from the world. I'm quite ordinary in what I want out of life: peace of mind, good health, that kind of thing."

But you can't go on rocking forever – or can you? Anyway, Rod is quite clear about his future intentions. "If the time comes to pack it in then I'll know. When people aren't so enthusiastic I'll knock it on the head. I'll miss making live appearances, I really will; like a whole bit of me will have fallen off. It's a real crunch for people to have to give that up, but if you carry on it can all end up a bit pathetic."

In the meantime Rod Stewart has found the success he's long sought – and he's wearing it well.

NEXT WEEK SUPERSTARS – SLADE: The 'working class heroes' of rock, Slade have no intellectual or political pretensions, they're just a fine example of a 'good-time' rock & roll band; a sadly neglected tradition.

PRESLEY PART TWO: 1958–73

After the Army...the new plastic pelvis: a mixed-up money-making show biz machine

Amongst the men conscripted into the US Army in 1958 was the undisputed King of Rock. Elvis was just the meanest, sexiest, heaviest thing around.

When Elvis Presley came out of the US Army in March 1960, it should have been like Christ coming back to earth. Somehow, it wasn't quite like that. The fanfares sounded, the fans (if not the angels) sang, but the King of Pop Kings didn't quite set the world on fire again like he should have done.

It would have been impossible perhaps to match the myth which his absence had only strengthened – the Presley legend was *too* big to live up to. 'Elvis Presley' – the very words on the page produced, in those last days of the '50s, a kind of emotional charge in the mass of the music-buying public. They stood for power and anarchy and sex and the ultimate music, with a vividness that no superstar's name today can match.

The fact that through most of 1958 and all of 1959, Presley was away from the scene – even away from America, stationed mostly in some obscure part of West Germany – only served to make him more thrillingly untouchable, more charismatic, a star of greater magnetism.

Old Shep

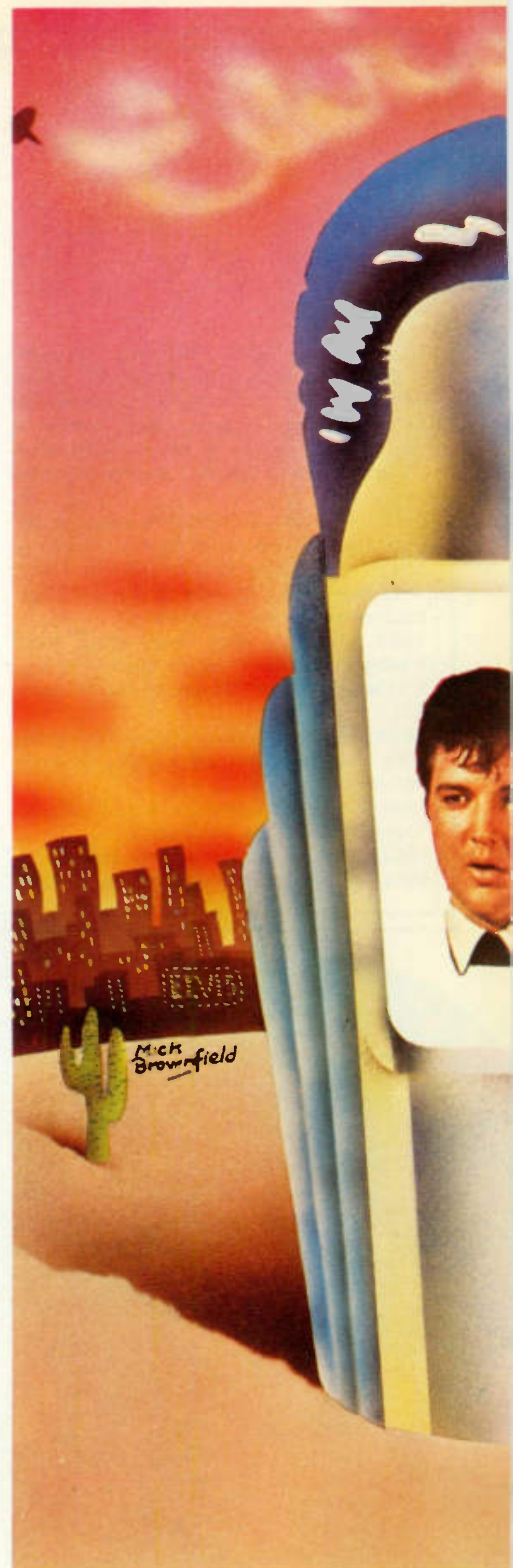
In the meantime his record company, RCA Victor, had material they could release. Quite a lot of material in fact – especially for those days, when it was unusual if an artist cut many more tracks than were needed for immediate release. The self-indulgence of today's superstars, given to whiling away large parts of their lives in studios, was an unheard-of thing. But where Elvis was concerned, RCA Victor were fortunate. They not only had spare masters on hand, but indeed spare masterpieces – excellent, highly commercial stuff. The smash hit singles 'I Got Stung'/'One Night', 'A Fool Such As I'/'I Need Your Love Tonight', and 'Big Hunk O'Love' were all issued and turned gold in 1959, while Elvis was away in the US Army.

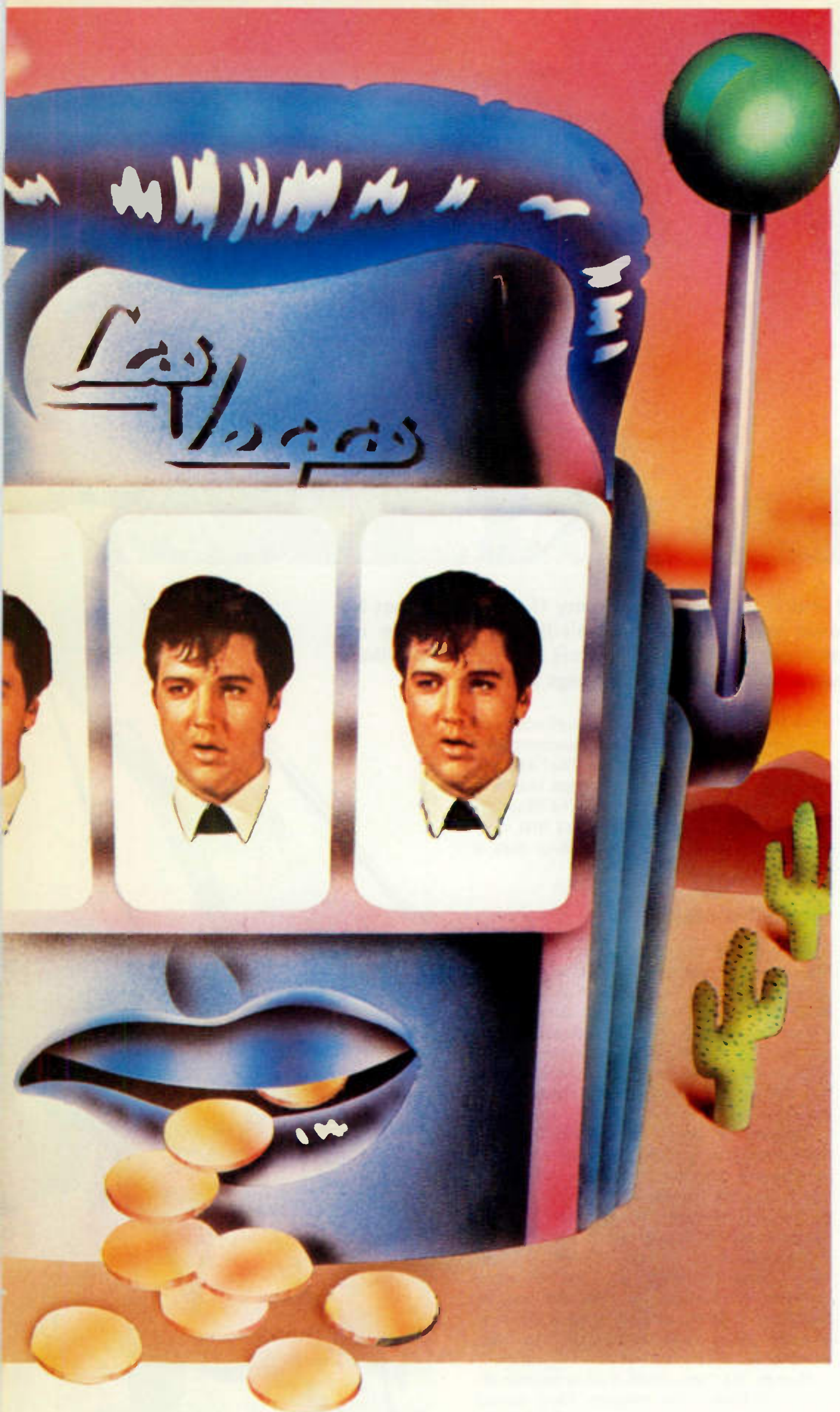
And then by pretending – quite shrewdly – to have run out of unissued material, RCA Victor managed at a stroke to pep up people's eagerness even more, and to sell a scraped-together EP so heavily that it climbed high up the British singles chart. The tracks were assembled from much earlier sessions and included the all-time greatest tear-jerker, Presley's incredible version of 'Old Shep'. New gold.

Back in the USA

This was the situation when Elvis got back to the USA, but things went slightly wrong, from the fans' point of view, straight away. A newly-recorded single – first proof of the continued existence of Elvis' phenomenal voice – was released, was great, and sold 1,000,000 copies in six days. But it was chart positions that mattered above all else, and in the charts this new Presley single, 'Stuck On You'/'Fame And Fortune', didn't quite pull it off. It failed to hold the top slot in the States for as long as the return of the Messiah would have warranted, and was toppled unceremoniously by the Everly Brothers. In Britain, where fever-pitch fanaticism was supposed to run higher, the let-down was worse still. Far from crashing straight in at no. 1 as expected, 'Stuck On You' came in at no. 6, went to no. 2, stayed there only a fortnight and then plunged to no. 8. It never made the top position at all.

Now obviously, a record that goes gold in under a week, tops the US charts – US record sales then represented 70% of the world market – and jumps straight from nowhere to the middle of the British Top Ten is doing pretty well. No other artist, except the Beatles at the height of Beatlemania, would have felt any pangs of regret or twinges of disappointment over that. But it was less than the total blitz that Elvis Presley's return to the scene was meant to achieve.





There was no escaping that unpalatable fact; and crazy as it may now seem, many fans, especially in Britain, found it *very* unpalatable indeed. Many Presley fans at the time regarded it as a personal affront that 'Stuck On You' was kept off the no. 1 slot – kept off not only by other (lesser) artists, not only by other British (and therefore *much* lesser) artists, but by what seemed like a terrible cockney conspiracy. Lonnie Donegan's 'My Old Man's A Dustman' and then 'Do You Mind' by Anthony Newley were the guilty parties. It was as if the tiger had been refused entry to the Ark, in order to make more room for the sheep.

Anyhow, there it was. And it wasn't the only thing wrong. Presley promptly appeared on a US TV-Special, being welcomed back by the very man whose music and life-style was supposed to have been vanquished by Presley's early rock & roll pioneering – Frank Sinatra. Sinatra was widely regarded by many rock fans as 'the enemy': the nastiest pseudo-jazz smoothie of them all.

A bad move. Well-nigh betrayal, in fact. And if Elvis Presley's fans had let themselves stop to read it, there was the proverbial writing on the wall. There had been a lot of worrying publicity stories during Elvis' military service about what a good boy he was, about how his officers were proud of him, about how he was just an ordinary, humble, regular guy. And now, back he was with a shameful lack of sideburns and a good deal less grease on his hair, slapping Frank Sinatra on the back and swapping his army uniform for another – an evening-suit. Elvis Presley in an evening-suit!

Hollywood

There was no escaping it. The tiger was turning tame; the mean, moody rock & roll supremo was going soft.

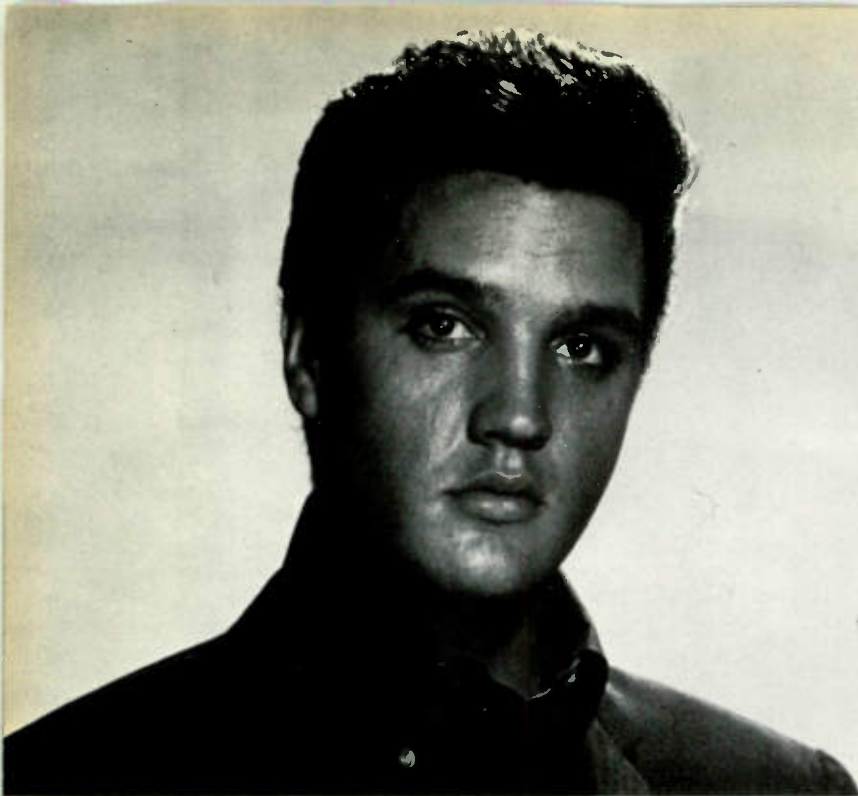
And of course, he was. Presley was being steered, as ever, by Colonel Tom Parker, his manager; and Parker was steering him, also as ever, towards wherever most money was waiting. It was waiting, naturally enough, in a broader record-buying market – which is why the songs after 'Stuck On You' did indeed 'go soft' – and it was also waiting in Hollywood.

So Presley churned out waterfalls of ballad singles, and a matching torrent of light-entertainment Hollywood films. The singles were bigger smashes all over the world than any of his pre-Army rock records, and the films were far better box-office draws than any of his pre-Army celluloid adventures.

A couple of these new movies happened to be interesting, or even good, like the consecutive *Flaming Star* and *Wild In The Country*; and a couple of the records were pretty fine as well. But such results were beside the point. The point as far as Colonel Parker was concerned was that Presley was getting $3,000,000 plus out of Hollywood every year for a total of nine weeks' work; and record-royalties were bringing the annual income of Elvis Presley Inc. up beyond the four million mark. And the point as far as the rock music audience was concerned was that they had lost a unique, unmeasurable talent – and gained instead a plastic replica whose only uniqueness was as a money-making show-biz machine.

Certainly the thing that showed most clearly the yawning gap between the real Elvis and the new plastic one was the quality of the albums from 1961 onwards.

There were two early exceptions – 'Elvis Is Back', the first fruit of his return to the studios which drew, like his early records, on old blues songs; and a religious



Rex Features

Above: Elvis may not have changed much but after the Army (far left), he lost his sideburns which (far right) have grown again, while his hair has slipped over his forehead as a concession to the Beatles and all that. Live, Elvis still comes on like a regular superstar although his sneer has lost its promise of things to come.

album cut very soon afterwards, 'His Hand In Mine', on which Elvis' voice retained most of its power and sexiness, but achieved a new high of delicacy and precision. (It was from this session that, five years later, RCA Victor took and released 'Crying In The Chapel' – the first Presley single to top the British charts after the advent of Beatlemania.)

Apart from those two albums, Elvis' output was dismal. Most of the albums were the soundtracks for his films though not, in fact, the actual soundtracks: the films always had strings dubbed over the vacuous bubblegum songs, whereas the records didn't for a surprisingly long time. It's strange, and to Elvis' credit, that on his records he held out against the Mantovani syndrome until 1965. 'All That I Am', a particularly lame single of that year, was in fact the first-ever Presley track with strings on.

Elvis is Dead

And the Beatles, of course, made Elvis Presley's mid-'60s output look as obsolete as it was. They had set out, in John Lennon's words, "to be bigger than Presley," and by the end of 1964 they had done it. When they arrived at Kennedy Airport at the start of their first US tour, they were met by scenes of hysteria the like of which had not been seen since Presley's 1957 concerts. And placards bobbed above the heads of the crowds with pointed messages like 'ELVIS IS DEAD: LONG LIVE RINGO'.

As a source of any kind of musical freshness Elvis was indeed dead. Even as a money-making machine, he was getting in need of an overhaul. Colonel Parker and RCA Victor began to have a hard time of it. They had set Elvis firmly in the direction of the lucrative All-Round-Entertainment field – comedy films, like *Follow That Dream*, and mickey-mouse novelty songs like 'Big Boots', and 'There's No Room To Rhumba In A Sports Car'. Yet they found that they weren't making quite the killing they'd expected.

King of Schmaltz

They found it was no longer enough to make empty, plot-less, star-vehicle movies rigidly rooted in the tradition of '30s and '40s Hollywood. With every film – and Elvis made over 30 of them between 1960 and 1968 – not only did 'Golden Boy' seem weaker and more hopelessly out of touch, but the box-office returns diminished. And Hollywood itself was in decline.

Besides all that, the switch of image from rock star to Everyman was not overwhelmingly successful. Elvis Presley's name was too heavily associated with rock & roll and teenage hooliganism for the mums and dads to take him to their hearts.

Sensing this, Colonel Parker tried to have Elvis straddle all the different markets: tried vainly to keep his star as the 'King of Rock', as well as have him turn into the 'King of Schmaltz'. He was overambitious.

It was the 'jack-of-all-trades-master-of-none' problem. The records Elvis issued swayed waywardly between rock and pop and popcorn, and they didn't succeed in pleasing anyone very much. At times he released new but spineless semi-rockers that few old fans and no mums and dads were going to buy – records like 'Blue River' and 'Do The Clam'. At other times he issued dire middle-of-the-road material like 'All That I Am' and 'You'll Never Walk

R.C.A.

Alone'. They still made the charts, but they weren't impressive and nobody got excited about them. Neither kind of record could re-tap the loyalty of rock fans who had come out of childhood with Elvis' early records and were, by 1967, living in a very different musical world – the world of Sgt. Pepper and Bob Dylan and the California hallucigroups: the world of 'progressive' music.

Holy Writ

Elvis Presley was resolutely anything but progressive. He was positively retrogressive: so much so that sometimes, in desperation, RCA Victor had released singles that Elvis had recorded way back in the mid-'50s because at least they were better (and no less old-fashioned) than the stuff in his current bag. 'Aint That Lovin' You Baby' and 'Tell Me Why', both recorded in 1957 and rejected as sub-standard at that time, were issued as bidding-for-the-charts singles in the mid-'60s.

It was a sorry situation, except in one respect. There was still a considerable vestige of magic in Elvis Presley's name – enough to give him an aura of professional immortality, and enough to make a lot of people keep hoping that one day he would kick the mud off his boots and make some more music again. Great music, that is.

And then, by the end of 1967, time – which had seemed to be running out for him – suddenly started to be on his side. The rock audience had matured enough to start breaking free of its old (pop) prejudices. Suddenly the charts weren't Holy Writ any more. Suddenly 'modern versus old-fashioned' seemed a silly dispute, and the word 'new' stopped meaning 'therefore better and hipper than anything made three months ago'. Suddenly people found virtues in older music, and got genuinely interested in the history, the roots, of rock music.

Suddenly, the long-standing pop maxim that 'you're only as good as your last record' wasn't true any more.

For Elvis, this meant that he was in with a chance. It meant that if he cared to stop Hollywooding about, he could try to make some quality albums and expect recognition for them – as well, of course, as a new recognition for his pre-Army recordings. He could free himself of the impossible obligation to be up-to-date (which had even led to a film set in 'Swinging London', though filmed entirely in Hollywood!) and could take advantage of the widening of taste that people were undergoing.

He tried. He gradually disentangled himself from all those awful filming plans, and began to take a hold on his recording career. He was largely foiled by the cautious Colonel Parker, who seemed, by 1968, to have lost forever his once-infallible instinct. And the story of Elvis Presley's recording career from 1968 until now is the sad but still not quite hopeless tale of that caution and that loss.

Elvis in Memphis

There were plenty of people around, by 1968, who wanted to take Elvis into a studio and make him come up with a good no-shit new album. Chris Moman was one of them, and he was given the chance.

He brought Elvis back to Memphis to record – for the first time in 14 years; he selected a bunch of songs because they were good rather than because Elvis Presley Inc. would get more money by relying on certain washed-out composers; he got an exceptional team of musicians together and got them jamming and loosening up nicely with Elvis; and he threw all the Colonel Parker henchmen and hangers-on out of the studio!

There were two results: one was a good album, 'From Elvis In Memphis'; the other was a guarantee that the mortified Colonel Parker would never allow such a thing to happen again.

On a smaller scale, the occasional sortie into good records continued – 'Suspicious Minds', 'If I Can Dream' and 'Burning Love' were good singles, and 'Elvis Country', a 1971 album, was impressive. And in addition, the TV-Special Elvis did in late 1968 (his first television appearance since the one with Sinatra nearly nine years earlier) had many great and powerful moments.

But basically, Presley was perversely kept pointing firmly down the road to plasticity. The films stopped, but super-rich Las Vegas supper-clubs took their place and Elvis got into a new rut, imitating his old hip-swivels and 'All Shook Up' grunts every night for an audience of rich, middle-aged women.

And that is the Elvis Presley that today's posters and documentary films of him show – a man who exudes money-glamour, whose wardrobe is enough to shame Barbarella, and who is surrounded by an entourage and a stage-management that is truly fit for a King. Solid-gold Tutankhamen come back to a fair imitation of real life.

That's the superficial picture. Underneath lies something far healthier. Take away all the theatre and there is a dynamic stage presence. Take away all the horrific brass and orchestra-noises from recent 'live' albums like 'Elvis: Aloha From Hawaii Via Satellite', and there is a fine basic rock group working for Presley. Plough through all the rubbish he has put out in the last few years, and you'll find about an album's-worth of actively good and promising tracks.

That's the frustrating thing about him. He still shows signs of an enormous talent. It peeps through the plastic now and again.

But he has to choose. Against him is the whole deathly weight of the American money-machine. He can either go down in history as the last of the great manipulated stars who, for lack of integrity and lack of self-respect, clutched at every last show-biz straw and droned on for decades after he should have been put out of his hollow misery; or he can go down in history as one of the true 20th Century musical greats.

R.C.A.

BACK TRACK

Elvis was born on January 8th, 1935 in Tulepo, Mississippi. His parents were poor Southern whites, living in a two-roomed log cabin. When he was 13 years old the family moved to Memphis.

1954: Elvis met Sam Phillips who signed him to Sun Records. They had an 'instant' local hit with 'That's All Right Mama'.

1955: At the end of this year Elvis signed with 'Colonel' Tom Parker and moved to the RCA label.

1956: 'Heartbreak Hotel' was released in January, and became Elvis' first Gold Record; followed by three more that same year.

1958: After two years of solidly dominating the rock scene, Elvis was drafted into the US Army.

1960: An out-of-touch Elvis came out of the Army to an anti-climactic return to the charts. 'Stuck On You' only made no. 2 in Britain.

There then followed 'The Hollywood Years', with Elvis making $3,000,000 per year from films alone. His records from then on went into a steady decline, with titles like 'Kiss Me Quick' (1963), 'Kissing Cousins' (1964), and 'If Every Day Was Like Christmas' (1966). Elvis keeps threatening to return to his former glory with the odd record such as 'In The Ghetto' (1969), and the 'From Elvis In Memphis' album.

There are over 40 Elvis albums currently available. The following list represents the key material:

1 'Elvis World Wide 50 Gold Award Hits': a four-album package with one or two weak tracks.

2 'Elvis 'Golden Records' Vol 1': a must for every rock fan; contains 'Hound Dog', 'All Shook Up', and 'Heartbreak Hotel'.

3 'Elvis Rock 'n' Roll': 'That's All Right Mama', 'Mystery Train', 'Blue Suede Shoes', and 'Trying To Get To You'.

4 'A Date With Elvis' (deleted, but much missed): 'Baby Let's Play House', 'Blue Moon', and 'Good Rockin' To-night'.

5 'Elvis 'Golden Records' Vol 2': 'Jailhouse Rock', 'Teddy Bear', and 'One Night'.

6 'Elvis Is Back' (uneven): 'Girl Of My Best Friend', 'Reconsider Baby', and 'Such A Night'.

7 'Rock 'n' Roll Vol 2': 'Paralyzed', 'Rip It Up', and 'So Glad You're Mine'.

8 'Elvis' Golden Records Vol 3' (patchy): 'His Latest Flame', 'It's Now Or Never', and 'Stuck On You'.

9 'Elvis TV Special': an NBC TV programme soundtrack.

10 'From Elvis in Memphis': 'In The Ghetto'.

11 'Memphis To Vegas'.

12 'Vegas To Memphis'.

NEXT WEEK – ROCK & ROLL FILMS: In issue three those '50s films that had a R&R hero, R&R music, and a plot that the kids could happily identify with.

Talking 'bout my generation

George Hardie NTA

TROUBLE

If you're lookin' for trouble,
You came to the right place.
If you're lookin' for trouble,
Just look right in my face.
I was born standing up and talkin' back.
My daddy was a green-eyed mountain jack!
And I'm evil. My middle name is Misery.
Yes I'm evil. So don't you mess around
with me!

I've never looked for trouble but I never ran,
I don't take no orders from no kind of man,
I'm only made out of flesh, blood, and bone,
But if you're gonna start a rumble,
Don't try it all alone.
Cos I'm evil, my middle name is Misery.
Yes, I'm evil, so don't you mess around
with me.

Written by: Leiber and Stoller.

HEARTBREAK HOTEL

Now, since my baby left me
I've found a new place to dwell,
Down at the end of Lonely Street
At Heartbreak Hotel.
I'm so lonely,
I'm so lonely,
I'm so lonely, that I could die.

And tho' it's always crowded,
You can still find some room
For broken-hearted lovers
To cry there in the gloom.
And be so lonely,
Oh, so lonely,
Oh, so lonely, they could die.

The bell-hop's tears keep flowing,
The desk clerk's dressed in black.
They've been so long on Lonely Street,
They never will go back.
And they're so lonely,
Oh, they're so lonely,
They're so lonely, they pray to die.

So, if your baby leaves,
And you have a tale to tell,
Just take a walk down Lonely Street
To Heartbreak Hotel,
Where you'll be so lonely,
And I'll be so lonely,
We'll be so lonely, that we could die.

Written by: Mae Boren Axton, Tommy Durden, and Elvis Presley.

Presley has probably been embarrassed by – and made hits out of – more banal songs than any comparable performer. His early career, however, was marked with some outstanding songs, notably the two published here.

'Heartbreak Hotel' was his first British hit, reaching no. 2 in 1956. It's not obviously a rock number, but his delivery – a brooding, moody power – coupled with the song's natural appeal to teens and its slightly surreal imagery, was a perfect combination.

'Trouble' is a superb song for Presley; it embodied everything about the singer that delighted his generation – arrogance, rebelliousness, and uncompromising masculinity – and terrified their parents. Nothing could better sum up the image of the early Presley. Significantly, it was written by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, two of the most consistent songwriters in the rock idiom, who managed to crystallise the menace of Presley in a few short, jabbing lines.

Everyone has their favourite Presley tracks, but both 'Heartbreak Hotel' and 'Trouble' illustrate the range of his talent, and the carefully nurtured image that he sought to project.

NEXT WEEK IN MUSIC: The Songs Of Buddy Holly. The singer/songwriter who pioneered a new boy-next-door kind of rock. Plus the lyrics to 'Wake Up! Little Susie' and 'Cathy's Clown'.

The rise and fall of the crooner

The end of the danceband era can be fairly accurately pinpointed to the last month of 1946, when nine of the major big bands – including such illustrious names as Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, and Harry James – broke up within a period of eight weeks. The rise of rock & roll may be said to date from the first week of 1955, when Bill Haley's 'Rock Around The Clock' entered the record charts. The eight years in between were those that saw the rise and fall of the crooner.

The big 'swing' bands had long held sway over the public. For live appearances at concerts or dancehalls, it was always the Big Bands that drew the crowds. Their dominance of the music scene was equally reflected in terms of record sales: between 1937 and 1941, they accounted for 29 of the 43 million-sellers.

When the Depression started to lift in the mid-'30s and the prohibition laws were repealed, America started to have a good time. The first few years saw the frenetic

Mick Wells. Photo Hulton Picture Library

music of 'swing', but by the end of the '30s it had calmed down to a much cooler, more sophisticated level. The dancebands were suddenly turning out 'orchestrated', more *precise*, music, exemplified by *the* most popular band of the time the Glenn Miller Orchestra, with such pieces as 'In the Mood' or 'Moonlight Serenade'.

Although it was the *music* that drew the crowds, all of the bands used vocalists for some lighter relief. Featured danceband singers went right back to the days of the megaphone, blazers and boaters. Singing through a megaphone, the vocalist had to restrict himself to a fairly narrow range in order to be heard clearly above the band. This style of singing resulted in the characteristic rather deadpan delivery.

The introduction of electric amplification and the microphone didn't destroy the singing style known as 'danceband crooners'; the best-known of these being Al Bowlly, Rudy Vallee, and of course, Bing Crosby.

Wartime Culture

All of the big dancebands had 'featured vocalists'. Crosby himself was with Paul Whitman's, Ella Fitzgerald was with Chick Webb, Perry Como sang for Ted Weems, Kay Starr for Charlie Barnet, Frank Sinatra, who was to revolutionise the industry and lead the rise of the crooners, sang for Harry James and then Tommy Dorsey. Even the bands at the very top, whose whole reputations lay on their distinctive instrumental sounds, had vocalists. Benny Goodman, 'The King of Swing', had Peggy Lee, and Glenn Miller used Ray Eberle with sax-player Tex Beneke also taking a turn.

That the demise of the dancebands should come at the end of the Second World War was no coincidence. It was just an unfortunate by-product of the social, political and cultural upheaval that accompanied the armistice. After a trauma the proportions of a world war, there is a deep need to eradicate the event from the memory. The dancebands were such an integral part of wartime culture that they needed to be erased too. The bands survived the immediate few post-war years, as some war-time psychological needs persisted while people picked up the pieces of their homes and lives, and the soldiers who did come back celebrated their survival. But as the war-time hangover was shaken off, a new generation emerged seeking their own cultural values and heroes rather than simply inheriting those of their parents. The heroes they chose were the singers.

Inevitably the changes happened in America first since they moved away from the war-time feeling faster, having experienced less on the civilian side of it (no blitz, massive civilian bombing, etc.). As has already been mentioned, eight of the name bands (Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, Les Brown, Tommy Dorsey, Harry James . . .) broke up within an eight week period at the end of 1946 rather than take a back-seat to their previously only 'featured' vocalists.

The singers, who were mostly paid much less than the featured instrumentalists, were undoubtedly helped in their rise by a musicians' strike in August 1942. Following the growing importance of recording, the American Federation of Musicians was pressing for royalties on radio and juke-box use of records. A 'no-recording' ban lasted two years before their demands were met. The singers, not covered by the AFM, continued to cut records. With the market to themselves, they couldn't fail, and by the time the bands were prepared to return to the recording studios, the singers had seized the initiative. As front-singers to the bands, vocalists had been restricted to rigid dance-tempos, but freed from this constraining influence during the strike, they blossomed into entertainers in their own right.

Left to right, above: Dean Martin, Frankie Laine, Al Martino, Tony Bennett. Below: Glenn Miller, Perry Como, and Rosemary Clooney.

R.C.A./Conway Picture Library/Popphoto

Screaming and Swooning

The singer who emerged as far and away the most talented, most original and most popular, was Frank Sinatra. Like Crosby before him, he had managed to prevent the organisation of the Big Band from stifling his talent. By 1940 he was much more popular than the bands he sang for and so the strike only cemented his already unassailable position.

Sinatra had thrown away the standard danceband crooning style in favour of his own highly individual timing of phrases. This ability comes from the simple technique of breath-control. Sinatra is said to have *the* best breath-control of any singer, living or dead. (The story is that he acquired the talent through underwater swimming).

Timing wasn't Sinatra's only talent. The quality of his voice, its richness and ability to precisely express emotion and feeling, is well-known. But it was the blending of these talents which enabled Sinatra to make every song a personal testament. He reached out and touched the audience and they felt it.

Sinatra also had an Image. Slight in build, emaciated, prominent cheekbones, the dark handsome Italian looks: Sinatra looked (and sounded) vulnerable. The combination was overwhelming and in 1942 when he was voted best singer, he left Tommy Dorsey's band to be a solo performer. Soon he was creating all kinds of sensations with girls screaming and swooning, rioting, and trying to claw their way to him.

The relaxed, romantic style of Sinatra was widely imitated, but it wasn't the only style. There was also a great demand for a more strident, powerful approach, epitomised by Frankie Laine, who sang such epics of love and fury as 'Jezebel', 'That's My Desire', and 'Mule Train'. Like Sinatra, Frankie Laine was of Italian stock: his real name was

Redferns
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Above: A recent picture of Peggy Lee. Below: The Daddy Of Them All; Bing Crosby.

a much-too-ethnic Francis Lo Vecchio.

In fact the Italian-Americans dominated the scene. The most notable ones, apart from Sinatra and Laine, were Tony Bennett, Dean Martin, Buddy Greco, Al Martino, Perry Como and Vic Damone. This dominance is none too surprising, since Italian-Americans were also prominent on the other side of the industry and, naturally enough, preferred to promote their own kind.

American singers were held in great esteem by the British public and so too were the American bands. But while the singers could tour Britain, American musicians couldn't, and British musicians couldn't tour the United States.

Ted Heath

This was because the AFM and the English Musicians Union couldn't reach an agreement. This rather ridiculous situation had existed since 1935 and it went on until 1955, when a reciprocal arrangement was drawn up. The first exchange came that year when Ted Heath and His Music toured America (with Nat King Cole) and in return Stan Kenton's Orchestra came to Britain in 1956.

That Heath's band should be the first to go was a tribute to the man's service to British music. His had long been the established British band providing the industry with most of its leading musicians, bandleaders and singers.

Britain wasn't short of bands – Eric Delaney, Ken Mackintosh, Joe Loss, Cyril Stapleton, Jack Parnell, Johnny Dankworth, Ronnie Scott – and each had their own vocalists. The shift in emphasis from the band to the vocalist, that America had seen, swiftly followed in Britain and for the same reasons.

Most of the British performers were fairly run-of-the-mill, and very straight: Lita Roza, Ronnie Hilton, Ronnie Carroll, Dennis Lotis, Ann Shelton, Joan Regan, Alma Cogan. But a few were, in their own way, a cut above the rest, although still far below American standards.

The most popular of the British crooners was Dickie Valentine. A Londoner by birth, he had been a page-boy at the London Palladium and the press made much of the fact that he had been sacked only to return years later top of the bill. His first record 'Never', wasn't a success at all, but his next 'The Homing Waltz' set him on his way. Dickie Valentine was voted Britain's top singer consistently from 1952 to 1958 – right into the rock & roll era.

He was very likeable and didn't take his singing too seriously. He had a good ear and eye for mimicry, and would always include in his act impersonations of the singers of the day. His speciality for a long time was Johnny Ray and later, of course, a hip-swivelling Elvis Presley. Despite his status in the British industry, he still lived in awe of the American stars, and when Johnny Ray turned up personally to witness his impersonation, Valentine collapsed backstage.

When rock & roll did take a grip on the scene, Valentine still found lots of work in the clubs, and on television and radio shows until his death in a road accident in 1971. The singer who eventually displaced him as Britain's top singer wasn't from the ranks of rock & roll, however, but simply another, but younger crooner, Frankie Vaughan.

Like Dickie Valentine, Vaughan had dark handsome 'Italian' looks and brash confidence. He appealed directly to women, sexy, but not over-playing it. He is undoubtedly a British show-biz institution now and has had his share of hit records over the years. His classic was 'Give Me The Moonlight', but some other of his more well-known records are 'Green Door', 'Kisses Sweeter Than Wine', 'Tower of Strength' and 'Loop-de-Loop'.

Both Vaughan and Valentine were from the 'Frankie Laine' school of crooners, singing very powerful songs in a very powerful way. The soft approach, though, was provided by Michael Holliday. Although like Frankie Vaughan, brought up in Liverpool, he was actually born in Dublin, and spent many years as a merchant seaman. He began his singing career after winning a talent contest during one of his trips, and started in holiday camps before joining Eric Winstone's band.

His first hit, albeit a small one, came with a cover of Mitch Miller's 'Yellow Rose Of Texas'. More followed and he soon had his own television series. Featuring just himself and his guitar, Holliday had the same completely relaxed manner, and a voice as rich and deep as that of his idol, Bing Crosby. His whole approach in fact was North-American, although his Liverpool-Irishness showed through.

Holliday had eight major hit records and many more minor ones, topping the lists twice with 'Starry-Eyed' and 'Story Of My Life'. Unfortunately, the story of his own life wasn't as successful. The relaxed personality was confined to his public performances and concealed a nervous and tense disposition. In 1963 he took his own life.

Unknown Artist

In 1955, the music press introduced charts based on record sales in place of those based on sheet music sales. In the very first British chart, no. 1 was 'Finger Of Suspicion' sung by Dickie Valentine. He had another record in the Top Twenty, Ronnie Hilton also had two, as did the American singer, Rosemary Clooney. Ray Anthony, Bing Crosby, Billy Eckstine, Frankie Laine, the Chordettes and the Four Aces featured from America, and the remaining British performers listed were Vera Lynn, Ruby Murray, Alma Cogan and Winifred Atwell.

There was, however, another really unknown artist in the lists with two records: at no. 10 with 'Shake Rattle And Roll' and no. 17 with 'Rock Around The Clock'. The artist was Bill Haley and the Comets, and the music industry was never going to be the same again. Or was it?

NEXT WEEK IN POP: Johnny Ray started the cult of personality rather than musical ability in pop.

POP FILE

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

BRIAN AUGER started out as a jazz pianist, being voted 'brightest hope' in the *Melody Maker* Poll of 1964. He was one of the many jazz musicians sucked into rock by the R&B boom of the mid-'60s, when he joined the famed but unsuccessful Steam Packet which included Rod Stewart, Julie Driscoll, Long John Baldry and Elton John among others.

Dezo Hoffman

He then formed the Brian Auger Trinity with Julie Driscoll. Two years hard touring brought the usual 'overnight' success. Unusually they had their first hit on the continent with 'Save Me' and then went on to conquer Britain and New York with 'This Wheel's On Fire'. Julie breifly became the 'IT' girl of 1968, and the group was somewhat overshadowed by her publicity. Julie and Auger split in 1970 and the Trinity was disbanded in 1971.

Then, tempting fate, Brian formed a jazz-rock group called Oblivion Express. Unfortunately, fate appears to have taken up its option and Brian's career is now temporarily obscured, although he is still releasing records through CBS.

THE BACHELORS were an Irish group, who hit the charts early in 1963 with 'Charmaine'. They followed this with nine more hits up to 1967 including a no. 1 with 'Diane' in 1964. They sang straightforward sentimental songs in a polished style with an insistent but light beat. Their other hits included 'I Believe'

Redferns

(1964), 'Ramona' (1964), 'I Wouldn't Trade You For The World' (1964), 'Marie' (1965) and 'Sound Of Silence' (1966).

JOAN BAEZ started out singing in the clubs of Cambridge, Mass., but arrived in New York City in 1960 where she began to make a name for herself in Greenwich Village. Although she sang too well to be regarded as 'authentic' by the purists, she was the

Redferns

first of a new wave of folk singers who became nationally famous and turned a whole generation of White America on to folk music. It was Joan who gave young Bob Dylan a start by persuading him to join her on stage when they would sing each other's songs.

After putting three albums into the Top Twenty in November 1962, Joan forsook material such as 'Plaisir d'Amour' and 'Mary Hamilton' for more political songs, much in the tradition of Pete Seeger, Jack Elliott and Woody Guthrie. As well as singing the songs she organised protests against the Vietnam war and was often seen at the head of demonstrations for peace, civil rights and student rights. Since opening a School For Non-Violence in 1967 she emerges only for the occasional major concert or tours, or for a political gesture such as spending Christmas 1972 in Hanoi.

GINGER BAKER started out as a jazz drummer and was almost 'apprentice' to the late Phil Seamen. After playing with Alexis Korner, Ginger joined the Graham Bond Organisation, a group that was very influential on the club scene in the early '60s. Ginger spent two years with Bond, whose bass player was Jack Bruce, and it was in this band with its then quite unusual free-style jazz influence, that Ginger laid the foundations for Cream, formed at the beginning of 1967. While with Jack Bruce and Eric Clapton in Cream, Ginger was voted 'World's Top Drummer' in the music press, an honour he has received many times since. Ginger's extended solo 'Toad' became not only a high point of Cream's stage act but a source of ideas for many drummers in groups that followed the lead Cream had given. After Cream split in 1968, Ginger Baker and Clapton began jamming with Stevie Winwood which led to the ill-starred Blind Faith. Nothing went well for what was hailed as 'the supergroup of supergroups' right from the British debut on June 7th, 1969. After Blind Faith, Ginger formed his own band

Airforce, which made an album, but never really got off the ground. In 1971 Ginger scripted and produced a film record of his visit to Nigeria, which was shown on BBC television in July 1973. Since then Ginger has spent a lot of time in Lagos, and has started a recording studio there. His latest venture is Salt, a band made up of African and European musicians.

LONG JOHN BALDRY was a giant on the early '60s British blues scene in more than one sense – he is six foot seven tall – Baldry sang with Alexis Korner and then led Cyril Davies' R&B All Stars after Cyril's death in 1964, changing the name to the Hoochie Coochie Men. In 1965 he formed Steam Packet, which included Rod Stewart and Elton John in the line-up. Despite his authentic blues voice, Baldry's only record success was with two slushy sentimental ballads, 'Let The Heartaches Begin' (a no. 1 in 1967) and 'Mexico' (1968). Since then Baldry has disappeared from the scene although recently it has been said that Rod Stewart and Elton John plan to produce a new blues album by their old guv'nor, who was the Big Boss Man of British blues.

THE BAND started out playing together in Canada in 1959, playing with Ronnie Hawkins and making some records themselves as Levon and the Hawks, named after Levon Helm, the drummer. The other members of the Band are Rick Danko (bass, vocals), Garth Hudson (organ, vocals), Richard Manuel (piano, vocals) and Robbie Robertson (guitar, vocals). In 1965 they were playing in New Jersey when a phone call came out of the blue

London Features International

from Bob Dylan, who wanted a backing group when he made his controversial move into rock. Up to 1967 they spent their time touring with Dylan and making a number of unreleased recordings (e.g. the famous 'basement tapes' and 'live at the Albert Hall' recordings that have appeared on bootleg albums). They then developed a style of their own, displayed throughout their album 'Music From Big Pink' but most brilliantly in their 1968 hit single from this record 'The Weight'. Their first recordings made an impact through good songs and a free, relaxed style of impeccable good taste developed through years of playing together. Robertson emerged as a fine guitarist and songwriter, especially on their second album 'The Band' which successfully evokes the mood of rural and small-town America in a natural way that no other group has done. Succeeding albums 'Stage Fright' and 'Cahoots' developed the same themes equally successfully. In 1969 the Band played with Dylan again at the Isle of Wight Festival and in 1971 toured Europe in their own right. Their latest release, a live album featuring mainly tracks they have already recorded, suggests that they may have already said what they had to say.

JOHN BARRY was musical director on most of Adam Faith's string of hits 1959–64, he also ran an instrumental outfit – the John Barry Seven – which featured trumpet and sax as well as guitar. For a while they were second instrumental group to the Shadows in Britain when they made the Top 20 in 1960 with 'Hit And Miss' and a cover of the Ventures' classic 'Walk Don't Run'. Barry reached no. 7, the Ventures no. 8. After recording 'The James Bond Theme', a hit in 1962, Barry has concentrated on writing film music.

LIONEL BART wrote a string of hit singles in the '50s including Tommy Steele's 'Handful Of Songs' and Cliff Richard's 'Living Doll' as well as a series of successful musicals that broke away from the established lush and sentimental style and introduced an element of social comment and modern music and dance, as in 'Fings Ain't Wot They Used To Be', 'Oliver!' – an adaptation of Oliver Twist – and 'Blitz!'.

JEFF BECK joined the Yardbirds as Eric Clapton's replacement and made a name for himself as one of the few rock guitarists who can make his solos really count. In 1968 he stormed America with the legendary Jeff Beck Group that then featured Rod Stewart (vocals), Ron Wood (bass), Nicky Hopkins (piano) and Mickey Waller (drums). The bands' albums 'Truth' and 'Beck-Ola' have since become collectors' items. Beck hit the charts in 1967 with 'Hi Ho Silver Lining', which was re-released in 1973 much to his annoyance. Since Stewart and Wood quit to form the Faces, Beck's career has been patchy, including a period of absence from the music scene. He has gone on to play with ex-Vanilla Fudge members Tim Bogert (bass) and Carmine Appice (drums). Beck made a stunning guest appearance during David Bowie's 'last' concert; which hopefully marked the beginning of a new period for the long-trucking and much-respected guitarist.

THE BEE GEES Barry, Maurice and Robin Gibb – began their career in Manchester in 1956 as the Blue Cats. In 1958 their parents emigrated to Australia, where from 1963 they scored a hat-trick of no. 1 records. In 1966 the brothers arrived back in Britain and started a series of million-selling hits with 'New York Mining Disaster' in 1967. They followed this with 'Massachusetts' (a five-million seller that reached no. 1 in the US), 'To Love Somebody', 'I Got To Get A Message To You', 'I Forgot To Remember' and others. In 1967 they opened their debut tour of America with a $50,000 concert. By 1969, the brothers were arguing amongst themselves and the Bee Gees split up, Robin and Maurice going solo and Barry turning to songwriting. The two Australian members of the group Vince Melouney and Colin Peterson went their own ways. In October 1970 the Gibbs reformed the Bee Gees and scored two more US no. 1 singles and collected two more Gold Discs.

S.K.R.

POP FILE

In the next issue

POP

Johnny Ray: Christened the 'Nabob of Sob', Ray bridged the gap between the crooners and rock & roll. In his time, a startling and outrageous performer, flaunting his emotions in an age of the stiff upper lip. The singer with a deaf aid who cried all the way to the bank.

POP INFLUENCES

Mountain Shacks to Cadillacs: Which traces the emergence of country music, the music of White America, and the rise of Nashville as its centre with the weekly 'Grand Ole Opry' show. From the 'spit and prayer' beginnings through to C&W's Bob Dylan, Hank Williams.

ROCK

Jerry Lee Lewis: Thrown out of England during his first tour because he had married his 13-year-old cousin, Lewis nevertheless cut some of the all-time great rock singles, such as 'Great Balls Of Fire'. Still an amazing performer, he shifts between rock and country as the mood takes him.

POP CULTURE

The Rock & Roll Movies: Hollywood was onto the importance of the adolescent rebellion almost before the record industry. The success of *Blackboard Jungle* and *Rock Around The Clock* led to a rush of rock films with appalling plots around which were hung a few songs to cash-in quick.

BLACK MUSIC

The Country Blues: The second instalment of this four-part history of the Blues, covering the Mississippi Delta, Texas, the East Coast, Georgia and Alabama, during the '30s – and what remains in the '70s.

THE MUSIC

Songs of Buddy Holly: In partnership with Norman Petty, Buddy Holly pioneered a new rock sound, more 'studio produced', softer but very tight, which allowed every anaemic boy-next-door to dream of future stardom.

THE SUPERSTARS

Slade: An unpretentious 'good-time' rock & roll band, Slade have come a long way from being a Skinhead group playing the pubs and clubs and being ignored by the pop press.

Plus: Pop File and more Lyrics

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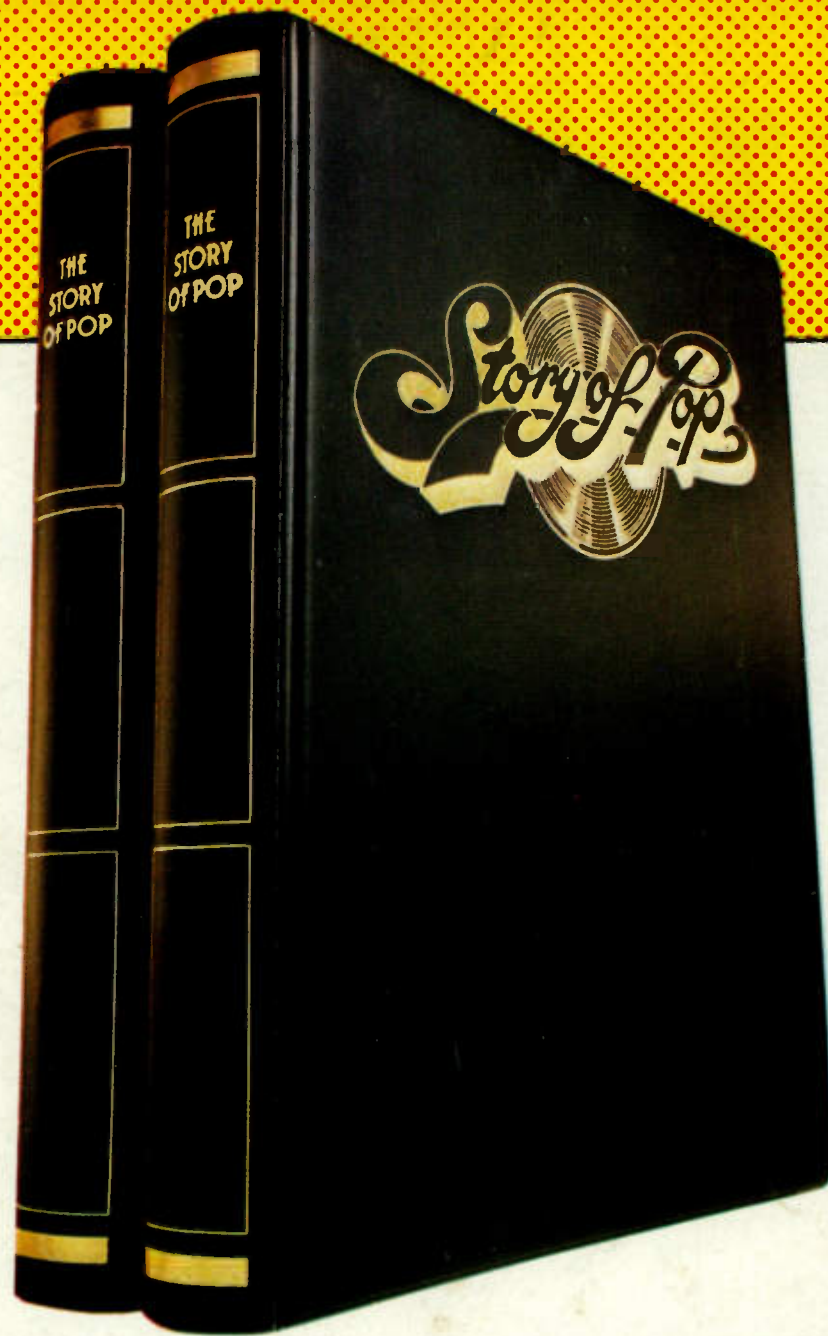

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